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STUDENT'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GREAT AMERICAN WRITERS

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Volume I: Beginnings to 1830

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ANDREA TINNEMEYER

Patricia M. Gantt, General Editor

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List of Writers and Works Included

Series Preface

The *Student's Encyclopedia of Great American Writers* is a unique reference intended to help high school students meet standards for literature education and prepare themselves for literature study in college. It offers extensive entries on important authors, as well as providing additional interpretive helps for students and their teachers. The set has been designed and written in the context of the national standards for English language arts, created by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, the two professional organizations that have the most at stake in high school language arts education (see http://www.ncte.org/standards).

The volume editors and many of the contributors to this set not only are university scholars but also have experience in secondary school literature education, ranging from working as readers of Advanced Placement examinations, to developing high school literature curricula, to having taught in high school English classrooms. Although the volume editors all have extensive experience as scholars and university professors, they all have strong roots in high school education and have drawn on their experience to ensure that entries are stylistically appealing and contain the necessary content for students.

The set's five volumes are organized chronologically, as many literature textbooks and anthologies are. This system is convenient for students and also facilitates cross-disciplinary study, increasingly common in high schools. For example, a section on the Civil War in history class might be accompanied by the study of Walt Whitman and Stephen Crane in English class. To help students find what they need, each volume contains two lists of all the authors included in the set: one organized chronologically and the other alphabetically.

Within each volume, authors are presented alphabetically. Each author entry contains a biography and then subentries on the author's major works. After each subentry on a work is a set of questions for discussion and/or writing. Another set of broader discussion questions appears near the end of each author entry, followed by a bibliography. The entire five-volume set therefore contains more than 1000 discussion questions. These questions make up perhaps the most important and useful features of the set, encouraging further creative thought and helping students get started on their own writing. Many of the questions reference not only the subject literary work or author but also related works and authors, thus helping students to make additional literary connections, as emphasized by the literature standards.

The authors and works included in the set were selected primarily from among those most popular in the high school classrooms—that is, those often featured in secondary-school literary anthologies and textbooks; those often appearing on age-appropriate reading lists; and those most often searched for in Facts On File's online literary database Bloom's Literature Online, used primarily in high schools. In addition, we have endeavored to include a range of writers from different backgrounds in all periods, as well as writers who, though not perhaps among the very most popular today, appear to have been unjustly neglected and are gaining in popularity. No selection could be perfect, and those writers favored by scholars and critics are not always as popular in the high school classroom, but the general editor and volumes editors have attempted to make the set's coverage as useful to students as possible.

Above all, we hope that this set serves not only to instruct but also to inspire students with the love of literature shared by all the editors and contributors who worked on this set.

Patricia M. Gantt

Volume Introduction

Early American literature is an exciting and often bewildering amalgamation of voices. The authors commonly taught today in surveys of the period had a variety of backgrounds and had equally varied reasons for writing. Included in this volume are authors identified as explorers, colonists, former slaves, ministers, founding fathers, poets, farmers, and journalists. The explorers wrote in different languages and hailed from different countries, such as France (Samuel de Champlain), Italy (Christopher Columbus), Spain (Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca), and England. What they all had in common is that they explored and wrote about territory that later became part of the United States of America.

Many authors included in this volume write from the perspectives of newly forged identities, whether as colonists arrived in a new land, or converts to a new religious faith, or people freed from slavery or captivity. The most prominent writers among the early colonists were Puritan ministers born in England. One of them, John Winthrop, compared his new home to "a city upon a hill," thus projecting onto the newfound landscape an image for future generations to emulate. For Winthrop, his new identity was to be a model for later Americans. Other early Puritan writers who immigrated to the new colony, such as William Bradford and Anne Bradstreet, were just as spiritually minded, often seeing the American landscape as a means of gaining paradise on earth. The land's provisions for its colonists were to them symbolic of God's divine love for his chosen people.

Some early writers found themselves forced by events into adopting a new identity. A Puritan female voice in the wilderness, Mary White Rowlandson wrote what historians have identified as the first female captivity narrative, a disjointed tale of the time she spent with native peoples. In her tale and in most tales involving prolonged contact with American Indians, Europeans colonists reveal some difficulty in maintaining the prejudices they previously held about America's indigenous population. Other captivity narratives addressed in this volume include John Smith's famous tale and that of the explorer Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, whose time among native peoples resulted in his transformation from conquistador to healer and reformer. Cabeza de Vaca's narrative provides an example against which to place the other accounts. His insistence that natives are more moral than the conquistadors makes his account of captivity vastly different from the more conventional tales presented by Mary White Rowlandson and John Smith.

One of the greatest poets of early America was Rowlandson's contemporary, the Puritan minister Edward Taylor, whose work was only published long after his death. Taylor too examined landscape and other elements of nature as encoded messages from God that he needed to meditate on in his own writings. As had his predecessor, the poet Anne Bradstreet, Taylor turned to writing to seek solace for difficult times, such as after the deaths of family members.

The transformation of other people's identities, as embodied in the conversion of individuals to a particular form of Christianity, was the central aim of many Puritan settlers, particularly Cotton Mather. He writes not only on the subject of the conversion of African slaves, "The Negro Christianized," but also on the temptations that Puritans themselves faced in the form of witchcraft. Mather's documentation of the Salem witch trials has provided literary scholars, sociologists, and historians with a wealth of information on how the Puritans conducted their trials, what their beliefs were, and how they justified the deaths of several women and young girls. Another influential minister was Jonathan Edwards, whose famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is an unforgettable expression of the Puritan mentality.

Subsequent writers were not so purely religious in outlook. As the colonists established themselves in the new land, many of their authors chose to tackle the difficult social and political issues of their time, such as the colonists' relations with the English government, the persistence of slavery and domestic servitude, and the cause of democracy and attendant rights for women. The event that galvanized these voices and forged a national identity was of course the Revolutionary War, in which the original thirteen colonies fought for their independence from England. The greatest pamphleteer among the revolutionary writers was Thomas Paine. Through the plain style of his work, Paine introduced ordinary readers to many of the central ideas of the Revolution, such as political and economic independence from England. Paine's writing was purposefully straightforward and did not employ the eloquent, even lyrical language that would appear in the writings of other founders, such as Thomas Jefferson. Rather, Paine's *Common Sense* promoted itself as a direct and reasonable series of arguments for the separation of the colonies from England, then represented by King George. Another writer famous for his revolutionary passion was Philip Morin Freneau, sometimes called the "poet of the American Revolution."

Ben Franklin was another writer immersed in politics, but his achievement was much richer and more varied than Paine's. Using the common language and images that distinguish Paine's rhetoric, Benjamin Franklin took on various personas to launch his critiques not only at the British government, but also at the foolish people in America as well. His *Poor Richard's Almanac* offered contemporary readers entertaining essays on such various topics as government rule, personal economy, and other forms of homespun wisdom. His *Autobiography* likewise painted a public face for a private man, referring to his own attempts to create an elevated image of himself as a learned, moral, and sophisticated gentleman and providing readers with a guideline to self-improvement.

The ideas of the American Revolution are seen most clearly in the actual document that launched the war: the Declaration of Independence. Here, Thomas Jefferson articulated the central beliefs that the former colonists were willing to shed blood for: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is telling that the Declaration of Independence appears as a piece of literature in American literature courses and as a central document examined in American history courses as well. As literature, the Declaration, as well as the changes made in it by Jefferson's peers, provides readers with insight into the common interests held by members of the original thirteen colonies as well as their disputes, especially over the issue of slavery. Jefferson's document reflects the loftiest, most sublime views of democracy on paper, and the enthusiasm that this founder had for America is also reflected in his more personal, yet equally public document, *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

The personal ramifications or potential effects of the American Revolution may be explored in a variety of texts addressed in this volume. One notable example is the lively and intimate correspondence of Abigail and John Adams, in particular the letter in which Abigail uses humor earnestly to request the inclusion of women in the discussions about rights. Another important example is the poetry of the emancipated slave Phillis Wheatley. Many of her poems not only examine figures from the Revolution, such as her panegyric for George Washington, but also revel in its spirit of freedom and of inalienable rights, hinting gently and indirectly at the limitations of revolutionary ideals as applied to the enslaved.

Other authors who provide insight into the institution of slavery include Olaudah Equiano, whose first-person account of early childhood in Africa and of the middle passage to America marks the first such description to appear in print from the perspective of a former slave. His narrative should be considered alongside other major early American life writings, such as those of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams, as well as the work of other figures living at the margins of American life, such as Samson Occom, Jupiter Hammon, and Phillis Wheatley.

In his own autobiographical work, entitled *A Short Narrative of My Life,* Samson Occom reveals the difficulties facing a converted Mohegan who is no longer fully culturally associated with his own tribe, but is also not completely acknowledged or embraced by white Christians. Similarly, Jupiter Hammon, a minister and poet, reveals the difficult position of converted Africans who were not fully embraced with the attendant rights and privileges as fellow European Christians. Hammon spoke directly to fellow slaves, most famously in his 1786 "Address to the Negroes of the State of New York," urging them to seek solace for their enslaved conditions by looking to the life to come and reading key passages in the Bible.

The "woman question" was a central topic for many important writers of the new nation. Just as the private letters exchanged between John and Abigail Adams touch upon the possibility of suffrage for women, the public articles of Judith Sargent Murray in *The Gleaner* consider many of the popular beliefs and arguments employed to deny women the right to full citizenship. Hannah Webster Foster's *Charlotte Temple* cautions women against the seductive powers they might succumb to if they travel away from home and find themselves without the sage advice of female friends or their mothers. On the surface, the novel might seem to work assiduously against the movement for women's rights, and yet its insistence on the power of women's knowledge and experience works to justify different types of intelligence other than that acquired through schooling. The subject of women's education is taken up in Foster's other novel, *The Boarding School.*

American literature started to come into its own in the early 19th century. The natural world, not only the natural resources of America, but the beauty, splendor, and distinctive quality of American landscapes, became the central subject matter for the poets William Cullen Bryant and the novelist James Fenimore Cooper, whose Leatherstocking (Leather-Stocking) Tales were the first great successes in the American novel. Of course, nature had already been an important influence on American writers. Philip Morin Freneau's nature poems are usually regarded as more successful than his political ones. Even Thomas Jefferson, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia,* elevates his prose beyond a simple recitation of facts to wax poetic about the profound beauty he found in the American landscape.

To other writers, the landscape was also a source of anxiety and fear. Through the psychologically probing prose of Charles Brockden Brown, predecessor to later figures such as Edgar Allen Poe, whose works Brown was first to publish, readers can penetrate the minds of mentally disturbed and distressed figures. Brown transplanted the gothic novel to an American landscape. Similarly, Washington Irving situates his famous tales "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in a dangerous American landscape that acts almost as its own character in the stories, hiding threats to the pusillanimous teacher Ichabod Crane and cradling the drowsy Rip Van Winkle.

Early American literature not only laid the foundation for the great American writers of the future, but also provides a strange and often powerful pleasure to lovers of literature today.

John Adams (1735–1826) and Abigail Adams (1744–1818)

You will see, in a few days, a Declaration setting forth the causes which have impelled us to this mighty revolution, and the reasons which will justify it in the sight of God and man.

(John Adams in a July 3, 1776, letter to Abigail Adams)

I will never consent to have our sex considered in an inferior point of light. Let each planet shine in their own orbit. God and nature designed it so—if man is Lord, woman is *Lordess*—that is what I contend for.

(Abigail Adams in a July 19, 1799, letter to Elizabeth Smith Shaw Peabody)

JOHN ADAMS'S EARLY LIFE

John Adams, best known as the second president of the United States, was born on October 30, 1735. Yet Adams left behind an extensive diary and autobiography, as well as numerous essays, letters, and political documents.

Born and raised in the North Precinct of Braintree, Massachusetts (incorporated as the town of Quincy on February 22, 1792), Adams was a fourth-generation New Englander and the descendant of Puritans. Adams's great-great-grandfather, Henry Adams (ca. 1583–1646), arrived in the late 1630s and settled near Mount Wallaston, in Braintree, near Boston. He lived with his wife, Edith, and eight sons and one daughter.

Henry's son Joseph, born in 1626, married Abigail Baxter. Joseph Jr. (1654–1737), one of Joseph and Abigail's 12 children, married Hannah Bass, who was a great-granddaughter of John and Priscilla Alden "of the Plymouth landing and *Mayflower* epic" (Diggins 17). In turn, John and Priscilla had a son named John—this was President John Adams's father. John married Susanna Boylston, who was from a well-known Massachusetts medical family, and they had three sons—the eldest of whom was John Adams, the future president.

The elder John was a deacon, a farmer, and a shoemaker who, as had his predecessors, lived in Braintree, Massachusetts, and who wanted a college education for his son with the hope that he would enter the ministry. The younger John enjoyed outdoor activity far more than intellectual work. When he told his father that he would rather not pursue that path, his father assigned him the task of digging a ditch on their property. After two days of backbreaking work, the younger John decided that studying Latin grammar might be a good idea after all (Diggins 18).

In 1751 Adams entered Harvard College when he was 15 years old. He studied Greek and Latin, logic, rhetoric, physics, and, in his senior year, moral philosophy and metaphysics (Diggins 18). When he graduated in 1755, he accepted a teaching position at a grammar school in Worcester. Teaching during the colonial period was a particularly poorly paid profession so he began to look at other options.

Soon Adams began to study law in the offices of James Putnam in Worcester, Massachusetts, in August 1756. On November 6, 1758, he was

admitted to the Suffolk County Bar. In 1762 the young lawyer was admitted as a barrister before the Superior Court of Judicature.

Adams's first published pieces appeared during summer 1763, when the *Boston Evening Post* and the *Boston Gazette* printed articles signed by "Humphrey Ploughjogger" and "U."

ABIGAIL SMITH ADAMS'S EARLY LIFE

Abigail Smith Adams was born in Weymouth, Massachusetts, on November, 11, 1744 (November 22 by the Gregorian calendar). Though perhaps best known as the wife of John Adams and the first first lady to live in the White House, she was an avid letter writer, who maintained correspondence with many people during the revolutionary and early republic periods. People with whom she corresponded include her husband during his lengthy absences; Mercy Otis Warren, a political satirist, dramatist, and poet; and James Lovell, a Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress.

Abigail's parents were William Smith (1706–83), a Congregationalist minister, and Elizabeth Quincy (1721–75). Her father was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts (January 29, 1706), and died in Weymouth, Massachusetts (September 1783). William, Abigail's father, was an ordained minister of the North Parish Congregational Church of Weymouth. He was "descended from a prosperous family of merchants with branches in South Carolina and the West Indies," yet "his parents pointed him toward Harvard College and the ministry" (Akers 2).

Abigail's mother, Elizabeth (born in Braintree, MA; died in Weymouth), was a member of the prominent Quincy family. Elizabeth was the daughter of John Quincy, a member of the colonial governor's council, a colonel of the militia, and a speaker of the Massachusetts Assembly. John Quincy held the latter post for 40 years, until his death at age 77. He died in 1767 just three years after his granddaughter, Abigail, married John Adams.

William Smith and Elizabeth Quincy married in 1740. They had four children: Mary Smith Cranch (1741–1811), Abigail Smith Adams (1744–1818), William Smith (1746–87), and Elizabeth Smith Shaw Peabody (1750–1815). And "Parson Smith joyfully baptized each babe the first Sabbath of its life and dutifully recorded the act in his parish records" (Akers 3).

As someone who had no access to formal education, Abigail advocated an education for girls in the public schools that was equal to the education boys received. Abigail herself was educated at home. She learned to read and write and had access to the personal libraries of her father and maternal grandfather. She showed interest in philosophy, theology, Shakespeare, the classics, ancient history, government, and law. Richard Cranch, her sister Mary's suitor and, later, husband, tutored Abigail in French and "challeng[ed] her mind with the fine points of English literature" (Crane 745–765). By the time Abigail was in her thirties, "her intellectual social climbing" gave her access to Homer, Plutarch, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jonathan Swift, Montaigne, John Locke, Pope, and Molière among others (Crane 746).

JOHN AND ABIGAIL ADAMS

On October 25, 1764, 29-year-old John Adams and 20-year old Abigail Smith married in Weymouth. They had three sons and two daughters: Abigail "Nabby" Amelia Adams Smith (1765–1813), John Quincy Adams (1767–1848), Susanna Adams (1768–70), Charles Adams (1770–1800), and Thomas Boylston Adams (1772–1832). The arrival of the Adamses' firstborn in 1765 coincided closely with John's entrance into public political discourse. The pattern inextricably linking family and politics continued throughout their lives—even extending into subsequent generations.

Adams entered into public politics as a response to the Stamp Act of 1765. This act meant that for the first time in history colonists had been taxed directly, and when news of this legislation reached Boston, people "exploded in anger. Tax collectors were tarred and feathered, stamp seals seized and burned, effigies hung and bonfires lit, and the house of Peter Oliver, Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's brother-in-law, was stormed and smashed into shambles; soon after, Hutchinson's own luxurious house full of paintings, silver,

china, and rare books was gutted" (Diggins 24). Adams, shocked by the violence and mob rule, "wondered whether liberty could survive the passions of a mob riot" (Diggins 25).

Adams wrote *A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law,* which was published in the *Boston Gazette* during the months of August through October 1765. The essays, originally published anonymously, later appeared in London, and in this work he "was attempting to explain the meaning of America to America and to the world" (Diggins 25). According to John Patrick Diggins, "The Dissertation signaled Adams's most radical moment when he seemed to be questioning authority in the name of liberty and obedience in the name of resistance" (25).

On the night of March 5, 1770, in Boston shots rang out. British soldiers had killed two townspeople and mortally wounded three others. Among those killed was Crispus Attucks, the first person of African descent to be killed "in the cause of American freedom" (Diggins 26). As a consequence of the Boston Massacre, as the event came to be known (so dubbed by Sam Adams, John's cousin), an arrest warrant was issued for Captain Thomas Preston on March 6. Preston, a 40-year-old Irishman and the officer in charge of the troops involved in the shooting, was arrested in the middle of the night, and eight soldiers under his command were arrested hours later. John Adams successfully defended the British soldiers and was elected the Boston representative to the General Court; it "was a mark of Adams's legal attainments that he instantly assumed the role of senior counselor on the weightiest legal and constitutional issues" (Grant 89).

In 1774, when Adams was elected a Massachusetts delegate to the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia, the period of long separations between John and Abigail began. It was during these periods of separation that most of the letters between the couple were written. The *Boston Gazette* published his "Novanglus" essays in January–April 1775. For much of the remainder of that year (May–July, September–December), he attended the second Continental Congress. He proposed George Washington as commander in chief on June 15. Two days later his wife, Abigail, and his eldest son, John Quincy Adams (approximately one month shy of his eighth birthday), witnessed the battle of Bunker Hill from Penn's Hill in Braintree. Then in July, John Adams was elected to the Massachusetts Council, a position he held until April 1776. On October 28, 1775, Adams was appointed chief justice of Massachusetts, but he never served in the position and resigned on February 10, 1777.

His absence from home for most of 1775 continued the following year, 1776. He attended the Continental Congress from February to October. He wrote his "Thoughts on Government" in March and April. Abigail, who was quite familiar with her husband's political work and philosophy, wrote the famous "Remember the Ladies" letter on March 31; in it she suggested that women should be recognized by the new government.

Adams served on the committee to draft a declaration of independence and gave the principal speech in favor of the resolution for independence. The resolution was approved on July 2. The text was debated and the document was adopted on July 4. Afterward, he drafted the "Plan of Treaties," which was to be a blueprint for the new country's foreign policy.

From January to November 1777, Adams attended the Continental Congress. He was away from home when Abigail gave birth to a stillborn daughter, Elizabeth, on July 11. Congress elected Adams, along with Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee, to a joint commission to France. Adams departed for France in February 1778, taking his young son John Quincy Adams, who was merely 10 years old. They sailed on board the frigate *Boston* and arrived in Paris on April 8; there they took up residence with Benjamin Franklin. On May 8, John had his first audience with Louis XVI.

While John and his eldest son were in France, Abigail had "discovered an opportunity to develop her entrepreneurial skills; she became a merchant" (Gelles 509). Abigail began by selling goods that John had sent from France to help supply their domestic needs. Soon Abigail began to request

specific items: "Such were the beginnings of a business that was to become a more complex and important source of income in the next six years. As it became apparent that John could provide European goods to his wife without too much trouble, the amount and variety of goods escalated" (Gelles 510). Thus, Abigail provided a means, in effect, to subsidize her husband's political career.

On February 11, 1779, John learned that the joint commission was superseded by Benjamin Franklin's appointment as minister to France. John and John Quincy Adams sailed from Lorient to Boston on board the French frigate *Le Sensible*. Abigail wanted their son to travel with John because "his going out into the world was the best way to improve his understanding and sense of responsibility" (Diggins 30). Furthermore, she chose to stay behind because the trip itself was a dangerous two-month ordeal, plus her husband, as a prominent rebel, could be tried for high treason and locked up in the Tower of London to await hanging if the ship were captured. Their children, Abigail felt, should have at least one parent if the worst were to happen.

Shortly after his return to Massachusetts in August, he proposed founding the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which was incorporated in 1780. During September and October he drafted the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, which was adopted on October 25, 1780. John Adams composed "A Translation of the Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe . . . into Common Sense and Intelligible English" between April 19, 1780, and July 14, 1780. It was published in Amsterdam in November and in London in January 1781.

On June 29, 1780, Congress commissioned John Adams to raise a loan in the Netherlands. John, John Quincy, and Charles Adams traveled from Paris to Amsterdam. While in Amsterdam, John Adams wrote his "Letters from a Distinguished American" in July 1780; they were published in London in 1782. In 1780 John spent much of his time traveling between the Netherlands and France negotiating treaties. Between July 27 and August 10, John and his sons John Quincy and Charles traveled from Paris to Amsterdam. On December 29 John was commissioned by Congress to conclude a commercial treaty with the Netherlands.

On May 2, 1781, John presented a memorial to the States General of the United Provinces calling on it to recognize and conclude a commercial treaty with the United States and then published the memorial as a pamphlet in English, French, and Dutch. Then on June 15, 1781, Congress revoked John Adams's commissions to negotiate Anglo-American peace and commercial treaties in favor of creating a joint commission of Adams, Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and THOMAS JEFFERSON to negotiate a peace treaty. Despite this personnel switch in negotiating for an Anglo-American treaty, Adams returned to Paris to discuss the proposed Austro-Russian mediation of the war and opposed American participation without prior recognition by Austria and Russia of American independence.

Adams fell seriously ill in Amsterdam with a fever. His son Charles left the Netherlands for America on board the *South Carolina*. And John's "A Translation of the Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe . . . into Common Sense and Intelligible English" was published. Shortly after the State General of the Netherlands recognized American independence on April 19, 1782, Adams presented his letter of credence as minister plenipotentiary from the United States to William V, stadholder of the Netherlands. On April 22 he took up residence in the Hôtel des Etats-Unis at The Hague, the first American legation building in Europe. After successfully negotiating treaties with the Netherlands, including trade treaties and a loan of 5 million guilders with a syndicate of Amsterdam bankers, he traveled to France. Once in Paris, he, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay signed the preliminary peace treaty between the Americans and Great Britain.

John Adams stayed in Europe during 1783 and 1784. He traveled among Paris, The Hague, and Amsterdam negotiating treaties. On September 3, 1783, he signed the definitive peace treaty with Great Britain. He suffered another serious fever during September and October 1783. Once recovered, he spent the remainder of the year traveling with John Quincy Adams to England, where they visited London, Oxford, and Bath.

On June 20, 1784, after an extended absence from her husband, Abigail sailed from Boston for England with her daughter Nabby. They arrived in London on July 21 and were reunited with both John Adams and John Quincy Adams by the end of the month. From August 1784 to May 1785, the Adamses resided at Auteuil, near Paris. Then, after John Adams was named the first American minister to Great Britain, the family moved from Paris to a house in Grosvenor Square in London. In June 1785 John Adams, Abigail, and Nabby were presented to King George and Queen Charlotte.

In 1786 Thomas Jefferson visited John Adams in London to negotiate commercial treaties with Tripoli, Portugal, and Great Britain. While he was there, Jefferson and Adams toured English gardens. Later in the year, John and Abigail visited the Netherlands to exchange ratifications of the treaty with Prussia. In September John began his three-volume *A Defence of the Constitutions of the United States.* The following year, in July and August, the Adamses took care of Mary "Polly" Jefferson, Jefferson's nine-year-old daughter, and her traveling companion, Jefferson's slave Sally Hemings. Abigail grew quite fond of Polly. Years later, it would be the occasion of Polly's untimely death at the age of 25 that compelled Abigail to contact Jefferson after years of separation.

Adams petitioned Congress to allow him to return home in 1787. After a farewell audience with George III in early 1788, John and Abigail returned to Massachusetts and moved into their new home. The next year began a new chapter in John's political life when he was elected the first vice president of the United States. He took the oath of office on April 21, 1789, in New York. His written work continued after he began the serial "Discourses on Davila." The title was taken from Enrico Caterino Davila, the 17th-century author of *Historia delle guerre civili di Francia,* "an eighteen-hundred-page chronicle of the French civil wars of the late sixteenth century" (Grant 364).

In 1790 John and Abigail moved to the new U.S. capital, Philadelphia. Then in May 1791, John was elected president of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, a role in which he served until 1813. His political career continued when he was reelected vice president in February 1793, and then, in 1796, narrowly defeated Jefferson in the presidential election.

Shortly after Adams was sworn in, a diplomatic crisis between the United States and France arose. The new French government, a five-headed executive committee called the Directory, "had refused to accept the credentials of America's minister to France, Charles Pinckney, and ordered him expelled from the country" (Diggins 96). The Jay Treaty, which "had America siding with England and breaking the alliance it had with France during the Revolution" had upset the French government. Adams sent an envoy to France, and French officials, dubbed X, Y, and Z, solicited bribes. President Adams declared a state of quasi-war with France and published the XYZ papers to document French attempts to bribe American diplomats. French ships attempted to confiscate goods traveling between the United States and Great Britain. Adams then proposed, and Congress approved, the creation of the Department of the Navy.

In July President Adams signed the Alien and Sedition Acts, laws that were designed to curtail foreign influence and criticism of the government. The acts became a serious point of contention in the presidential race between Jefferson and Adams, an election in which Jefferson prevailed.

In September 1800 Alexander Hamilton attacked the Adams administration with the publication of his *Letter from Alexander Hamilton, Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq. President of the United States,* a letter highly critical of the president, which Adams would address two years later when he began writing his autobiography. Then in October 1800, American diplomats concluded the Convention of Mortefontaine with France, ending the quasi-war, and the Franco-American alliance of 1778. In November Adams became the first president to live in the White House. On December 1, 1800, John and Abigail's son Charles Adams died in New York City. Later that same month, Jefferson defeated Adams in the presidential election. On the eve of Jefferson's inauguration on March 4, 1801, Adams

packed up his belongings and retired to his farm in Quincy.

The retired president began writing his autobiography in 1802, a project that continued until 1807. Upon hearing of the death of Jefferson's daughter, Polly, Abigail wrote a letter of condolence to John's former political rival. In 1807 John wrote 10 letters to Mercy Otis Warren to protest her *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution.* His literary efforts continued into 1809, when he began a series of letters to the *Boston Patriot.* Adams resumed his correspondence with Jefferson in January 1812, and their exchange provided insight into the philosophical beliefs of two former revolutionaries.

Abigail Adams, who managed to avoid various outbreaks of smallpox during the revolutionary period, succumbed to typhoid fever on October 28, 1818. Adams died on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, just hours after his old friend and rival Jefferson.

Correspondence of John and Abigail Adams

Both John Adams and Abigail Smith Adams corresponded with multiple people, including each other, for much of their lives. Letter writing was an important medium for communication during the 18th century—particularly for people like John and Abigail Adams, who were separated by war, political duty, and family duty for months or years at a time. Indeed, just reading the letters between John and Abigail gives a sense of the trials and tribulations that led up to, occurred during, and remained after the American Revolution. Their exchange also provides contemporary readers with rare insight into the relationship between an extraordinary man and woman in the late 18th century.

Their grandson, Charles Francis Adams, first published a collection of his grandmother Abigail's letters in 1840. By the end of the decade, four more editions of that collection appeared. Their grandson then edited and published between 1851 and 1856 a 10-volume collection of the writings of John Adams that continues to be an authoritative source for material not yet reedited in the ongoing Adams Papers project (Shuffelton vii). In 1876 Charles Francis Adams published a single volume of letters written by John and Abigail, for "as Charles Francis Adams saw it, the American Revolution had typically been portrayed in terms of the great men like Patrick Henry, James Otis, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Samuel Adams who were thought to have made it." What Charles thought was missing from these early histories were accounts that "recognize the 'moral principle' behind the Revolution" (Shuffelton vii). Such a history would include the work of his grandfather and suggests that other Adamses, aside from John Adams as discussed in his own autobiography, also believed that the second president's political contribution to the revolutionary effort was misunderstood.

The most famous exchange, or certainly the most widely anthologized, between the two begins with a March 31, 1776, letter from Abigail to John:

> I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation. (Adams, *Letters* 148)

John, in turn, responds in a April 14 letter:

> As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our struggle has loosened the bands of government everywhere; that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges were grown turbulent; that Indians slighted their guardians, and negroes grew insolent to their masters. But your letter was the first intimation that another

> tribe, more numerous and powerful than all the rest, were grown discontented. . . . Depend upon it, we know better than to repeal our masculine systems. (Adams, *Letters* 154)

Because of Abigail's famous call to "remember the ladies," there is much debate over the level of seriousness with which her comments should be taken and whether or not such statements constitute some type of feminist consciousness.

In "Political Dialogue and the Spring of Abigail's Discontent" Elaine Forman Crane suggests that "Abigail expropriated republican ideology and gave it a gendered twist that was both subtle and nuanced. She connected political philosophy to women's rights, but did so deviously—and in the grand tradition of eighteenth-century European literature" (745). In other words, Abigail uses language from the revolutionary effort and applies it to the situation of women.

Abigail frequently discusses politics with her husband, so the political aspect of that letter in itself is not unusual. In fact, she passes on local news pertinent to the Revolution whether it is her report on witnessing the battle of Bunker Hill (1775) from Penn's Hill in Braintree or local sentiment regarding revolutionary activities. Along with discussions of politics and political philosophy, Abigail and John correspond on more mundane matters, some of which provide a glimpse into the everyday lives of regular citizens—including the consequences of inflation during revolutionary times, labor shortages, and outbreaks of smallpox.

Both Abigail and John exchanged letters with other people as well. Both corresponded with Thomas Jefferson and Mercy Otis Warren. In fact, after the infamous break between Jefferson and John Adams, Abigail was the first to broach that divide. On May 20, 1804, Abigail wrote to Jefferson after learning that his daughter, Mary "Polly" Jefferson Eppes, had died on April 17, 1804. The former first lady knew Polly from their days in London, when Jefferson's daughter, then nine years old, felt lonely. Thus, when news of Polly's death reached Quincy, Abigail reacts with genuine sorrow. After Abigail's letter of condolences, Jefferson and Abigail exchanged several letters in which they began to clear the air regarding past political disagreements (Levin 412–413). Abigail, however, cut off the correspondence on October 25, 1804, because she did not want to enter "a correspondence on 'political topicks' when she had written him" (Levin 418).

Jefferson, however, held on to the letters and forwarded copies of his correspondence with Abigail to Dr. Benjamin Rush on January 16, 1811 (Levin 419). Rush, in turn, sought to reconcile Jefferson and Adams and succeeded when the latter wrote a letter to Jefferson on January 1, 1812 (Diggins 153–155; Grant 440–442), and the two men corresponded for much of the remainder of their lives, discussing a variety of subjects including philosophy, politics, religion, and their own experiences of aging. These letters provide insight into two minds behind the Declaration of Independence.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Abigail and John Adams wrote about a variety of subjects including improving the political status of women. Using Abigail's letter of March 31, 1776, to her husband as a launching point, locate and discuss the views that each expresses.
2. Critics have viewed the correspondence between John and Abigail Adams as documents that provide an intimate portrait of 18th-century domestic life. How do they express the roles they occupy as husband and wife?
3. Compare Abigail's letters with John with Anne Bradstreet's poems written to her husband. How do they imagine themselves as wives? How do they view their husbands?

Autobiography of John Adams (1807)

The autobiography is divided into three parts, called "Part One: To October 1776"; "Part Two: Travels and Negotiations, 1777–1778"; and "Part Three: Peace, 1779–1780." Adams himself created these divisions and Adams himself explained the purpose in writing his own story at the outset of his project. Including the first paragraph of this

work in its entirety allows Adams's purpose and style in this work to become clear:

> As the Lives of Phylosophers, Statesmen or Historians written by them selves have generally been suspected of Vanity, and therefore few People have been able to read them without disgust; there is no reason to expect that any Sketches I may leave of my own Times would be received by the Public with any favour, or read by individuals with much interest. The many great Examples of this practice will not be alledged as a justification, because they were Men of extraordinary Fame, to which I have no pretensions. My Excuse is, that having been the Object of much Misrepresentation, some of my Posterity may probably wish to see in my own hand Writing a proof of the falsehood of that Mass of odious Abuse of my Character, with which News Papers, private Letters and public Pamphlets and Histories have been disgraced for thirty Years. It is not for the Public but for my Children that I commit these Memoirs to writing: and to them and their Posterity I recommend, not the public Course, which the times and the Country in which I was born and the Circumstances which surrounded me compelled me to pursue: but those Moral Sentiments and Sacred Principles, which at all hazards and by every Sacrifice I have endeavoured to preserve through Life. (253–254)

In short, he feels misrepresented and wants to clarify his life and actions to his children. Perhaps *because* he does not intend his work to be read by the public, the autobiography develops as a particular aspect of his life comes to mind. He works by association rather than chronology, and later on in the work he begins to pull entries from his diaries and inserts them into the autobiography.

John Adams began writing his autobiography on October 5, 1802. He had lost his bid for a second term as president to Thomas Jefferson in 1800. Famously, he packed up his family and left Washington on the eve of Jefferson's inauguration in 1801 to retire to private life in Quincy, Massachusetts. Adams felt that he had been misunderstood and misrepresented. Indeed, while Adams was seeking reelection in 1800, Alexander Hamilton attacked the Adams administration in his "Letter Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq." Adams chose to present his side of the story in an autobiography.

Within the pages of the first section of his autobiography, Adams was intently self-scrutinizing. He chastised himself for acting in a false or selfish manner and examined his own actions, words, and motivations in a merciless manner. In the past, critics and historians have attributed this almost obsessive level of self-scrutiny to his Puritanism. His biographer John T. Morse views Adams as "an admirable specimen of the New England Puritan of his generation, not excessively straitlaced in matters of doctrine, but religious by habit and by instinct, rigid in every point of morals, conscientious, upright, pure-minded, industrious" (6). Similarly, the biographer Page Smith would echo Morse's conception of Adams as a traditional Puritan: "Protestant Christianity, Calvinist in its temper, if increasingly relaxed in its dogma, dominated [Braintree's] life, shaped it, directed it, made it in its own view at least, an important arena in the universal drama of salvation. To spend one's boyhood in such a community meant to bear its imprint for life on the conscious and subconscious levels of one's existence" (5). For these biographers, then, Adam's autobiography and its attentiveness to self-correction and introspection are in accordance with Puritan doctrine and the general atmosphere of his childhood home, which Adams could not but breathe in and be influenced by. Recent critics, however, have examined the autobiography's indebtedness to the indomitable figure of Cicero.

Adams's affection for and admiration of Cicero were rich and deserve attention as a means of understanding his influence on Adams and his self-portrait in the autobiography. As did Cicero, Adams believed himself to be misunderstood and unappreciated. In a poignant and candid letter to his friend Benjamin Rush, Adams wrote, "Mausoleums, statues, monuments will never be erected to me. Panegyrical romances will never be written, nor flattering ora-

tions spoken, to transmit me to posterity in brilliant colors" (reported in Farrell 505). This mourning for a lack of public recognition and celebration was a deep emotional connection Adams felt with Cicero, who was convinced "all Rome was admiring the wisdom, activity, integrity, and benevolence of his administration" when in fact he had been forgotten. Similarly, when Adams returned to America after years spent abroad in diplomatic service, he "returned [to] one third of my best friends dead—another third superannuated, and the remaining third grown unpopular" (reported in Farrell 506). Further connection with Cicero included their mutual belief in the power of language and the influential role of the statesman-orator.

Adams's attempts to fashion himself as the likes of Cicero is readily apparent in his autobiography, in which he opens with his own career as an orator. Early in his autobiography, he frames his rhetorical skills in public speaking as a key characteristic and a strength recognized widely by his peers and those in positions above him. He makes much of a speech he gave in town, a speech according to the historian James Farrell that is "insignificant" "by conventional historical standards," yet rises to assume "great importance as [Adams's] first public act, which set the pattern for the narration of later rhetorical events" (513). Not surprisingly, Adams inserts himself into a more distinguished position in national history by highlighting his July 1776 speech as the pinnacle of his *Autobiography* and an essential moment in national history. Farrell characterizes "Adams's speech for independence—his showcase, his master stroke, his tour de force—[as] the last great oratorical moment related in the first section of his *Autobiography*" (520). Read in this light, Adam's use of sections from his diary, letters, and paraphrases of his speeches in the following two sections is explained as secondary to this pivotal moment, his independence speech. Critics have cited the odd mixture of narrative, diary entries, excerpts from letters, and paraphrases in Adams's *Autobiography* as a central reason for the absence of substantial critical accounts of it. The critic Bernard Bailyn believes "the *Autobiography* hardly exists as an integral document at all" (242).

It is on the basis of his oratorical skills that Adams pits himself against figures whose position in the public limelight cast him into the shadows of obscurity. Such figures with whom Adams contended in his *Autobiography* for glory and fame include Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. On the subject of Franklin, Adams writes condescendingly of his use of the spoken word, "He has the most affectionate and insinuating way of charming the woman or the man that he fixes on. It is the most silly and ridiculous way imaginable, in the sight of an American, but it succeeds, to admiration, fulsome and sickish as it is in Europe" (2:121).

Adams dismisses the centrality of Paine's *Common Sense,* stating, "It has been a general opinion that this pamphlet was of great importance in the Revolution. I doubted it at the time and have doubted it to this day" (3:335). Adams writes further that this "star of disaster [only] gleaned from those he saw the common place arguments concerning independence" (3:330). Adams continues, "[Paine] came from England, and got into such company as would converse with him, and ran about picking up what Information he could, concerning our Affairs, and finding the great Question was concerning Independence. . . . Dr. [Benjamin] Rush put him upon Writing on the Subject, furnished him with the Arguments which had been urged in Congress an hundred times, and gave him his title of common Sense" (Adams, *Diary* 3:330). Though Adams admits that "the Arguments in favour of Independence I liked very well," he is less impressed with "his Arguments from the old Testiment," calling them either "honest Ignorance, or foolish Supersti[ti]on . . . or from willfull Sophistry and knavish Hypocricy on the other" (Adams, *Diary* 3:330–331). And, as Farrell states, "Rather than being a hero of the Revolution, Paine, as Adams portrayed him, is little more than a hack writer who lacked, 'Veracity, Integrity or any other Virtue'" (Farrell 517).

As for Thomas Jefferson, Adams treats him a bit more kindly than Paine. While admitting to Jefferson's skills with a pen, he nonetheless takes him to task for having never spoken in public. Adams

believes Jefferson "could stand no competition" from orators in Congress with regard to "elocution and public debate" (reported in Farrell 517). Adams concludes his written battles with these figures of the Revolution by including the venerable father of the nation, George Washington, in the following statement: "The examples of Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson are enough to show that silence and reserve in public are more efficacious than argumentation or oratory" (3:336).

Adams attributes his own rhetorical prowess, most particularly his ability to speak extemporaneously, to the absence of his mark on national history. As he opines in his autobiography, "I never wrote a speech beforehand, either at the bar or in any public assembly, nor committed one to writing after it was delivered" (3:310). In other words, because Adams spoke in the moment and never committed his speeches to paper, posterity is deprived of an accurate portrait of his skills and thus of his rightful position in the history of the republic.

L. H. Butterfield, editor of the *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams,* writes that John Adams "was jolted by an earthquake into starting a diary. With this record of a young schoolmaster's daily thoughts and experiences, the family records may be said truly to begin. . . . The habit of making and keeping written records became as persistent a trait among the Adamses as the distinctive conformation of their skulls" (xiii). This legacy in writing that Adams began with his diary and continued with his autobiography, as well as more public documents and writings, continued in the following generations.

James M. Farrell makes compelling arguments regarding John Adams's desire to be remembered, particularly as an orator, in "John Adams's *Autobiography:* The Ciceronian Paradigm and the Quest for Fame": "Even in the first histories of the Revolution and commentaries on his administration, Adams saw evidence that his part in the American historical drama would be misrepresented, his motives misunderstood, his character mistreated, and his historical image misshaped" (505). Indeed, much of the earlier portions of his autobiography are used to correct "what he saw as inaccurate and often intentionally distorting accounts of his own participation in the American experiment. . . . At the same time, he created a self-portrait that could validate his claim to the title of America's patriot-orator" (Farrell 510).

For Discussion or Writing

1. John Adams is particularly interested in leaving a legacy in writing while wanting to be remembered as an orator. Consider the relationship between oral and written communication in Adams's time. How does that differ from the relationship between oral and written communication in our own time?
2. Locate and examine passages in which John Adams draws from classical sources in his autobiography and diaries. What role does allusion have in his work?
3. John Adams writes about Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* in his autobiography, his diary, and letters to his wife, Abigail. Examine these passages. Does his view of *Common Sense* change over time?
4. How does Adams characterize Jefferson's political opposition to him in his autobiography? In his diary?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON ADAMS AND ADAMS AND THEIR WORK

1. In his correspondence, diary, and autobiography, John Adams laments that he will not occupy a more prominent position in national history. Compare the hopes and aspirations Adams held for the republic with those of Franklin and Jefferson. Are they the same? Do the men see their roles in the nation differently? If so, how? If not, what might account for Adams's relative obscurity?
2. Abigail Adams is most famously known for a phrase in her letter to her husband in which she pleads that he "remember the ladies" in drafting the Constitution. Compare the remarks Abigail Adams makes in favor of the

rights of women with those of more outspoken figures such as JUDITH SARGENT MURRAY. Are their arguments similar? What is their basis for suffrage?

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William Bradford (1590–1657)

> What could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men—and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not.
>
> (*Of Plymouth Plantation*)

William Bradford was born in 1590 in Austerfield, Yorkshire, as the only son of William Bradford and Alice Hanson and was baptized on March 19 of the same year. His father, who was a yeoman farmer, died when William was but a year old. His mother, who was the daughter of a village shopkeeper, remarried, and care for the young William fell to his grandfather and uncles. When he reached the age of 12, William joined a group of Separatists led by William Brewster, who would later be a founding member of the Plymouth Colony. William expressed an earnest desire to read the Bible, and in his writings, such as *Of Plymouth Plantation,* he would often quote from the Geneva version. As Brewster was in the nearby village of Scrooby, the young Bradford soon moved there. His involvement in the Separatist Church, later called the Congregational Church, would continue throughout his lifetime and would deeply influence his view of himself and the colony in New England. In his biography of Bradford, Cotton Mather reports that Bradford's relatives scorned and scoffed at the young man for becoming a church member in 1606.

When the church, following the leadership of John Smith, John Robinson, and William Brewster, quit England to seek out religious freedom in Amsterdam, Bradford set sail with them. He used the money he had inherited from his family to purchase a home in Leyden, where the church remained for 12 years before journeying to what is currently the United States. During his time in Amsterdam, Bradford earned a living as a weaver and taught himself Dutch in order to communicate with the locals. In his religious pursuits, Bradford worked assiduously on Latin and Hebrew, languages deemed essential for religious leaders and scholars. His appetite for knowledge led him to acquire a considerable library, which he took aboard the *Mayflower.* By the time of his death in 1657, Bradford's library had grown to nearly 400 volumes, including John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments,* John Speed's *Prospects of the Most Famous Part of the World,* Peter Martyr's *De Orbe Novo,* Jean Bodin's *De Republica,* and Pierre de la Primauday's *French Academy* (Morison xxxvi).

While in Amsterdam in 1613, Bradford met and married his first wife, Dorothy May. She accompanied him in 1617 on their famed voyage and died by drowning while their ship was anchored in Provincetown Harbor. Although Bradford does not mention her death in *Of Plymouth Plantation,* he learned of it during his absence from the *Mayflower* when he joined an expedition to explore Cape Cod. She had accidentally fallen overboard and drowned before anyone could offer her help. Historians such as Samuel Eliot Morison attribute the silence surrounding Dorothy Bradford's death to the belief that it was suicide rather than accident (xxiv). Probably the rumor of Dorothy's suicide

originates in an article written in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in June 1869, entitled "William Bradford's Love Life."

This article, essentially a historical romance, begins with the theory that William Bradford was originally in love with the woman who would become his second wife, Sarah Carpenter Southworth. As the story begins, Bradford is in London awaiting departure for Holland, has already proposed to Alice, and is impatiently waiting for her response. Alice, however, described as a "spoiled little beauty," artfully demurs, postponing her decision until the following morning. She even belittles Bradford when he remains at her house awaiting her answer, teasing him, "Truly the elders of your church did ill to entrust their mission to such a dreamer and laggard as yourself" (135). He responds seriously, describing "our people [as] mindful to remove to some country over seas where shall be room for all and opportunity for all to thrive by honest labor" (136). Bradford's dedication to the church prevails over his own love life, as evidenced from his absence the following days from dear Alice's home. She learns through her father that Bradford and "the deputies from the dissenting folk at Leyden had returned thither," and heartbroken, Alice readily agrees to marry Edward Southworth (136).

Bradford learns that Alice is married and, as she has, he quickly marries the next available woman, Dorothy May. She agrees to marry him even though she is aware of his recent heartbreak about Alice. When they make their fated trip to America aboard the *Mayflower,* Bradford requests that May and their newborn baby join him. Initially, Dorothy was to remain behind with her mother, only to join Bradford in the future after she and the baby were well and sturdy enough for the journey. When Bradford learns that Alice's husband has passed away, and that she will be traveling to America to join her father, Bradford requests that Dorothy join him and leave their child behind with her mother. In true melodrama form, the *Harper's Monthly* author writes, "and that day she began to die." In one of the last sections of the story, entitled "Dorothy Bradford's Journal," she documents repeated nightmares of her dead baby and reports that Bradford has been dreaming about Alice. These fictional journal entries abruptly end, followed by a love letter from Bradford to his beloved Alice, reminding her of his first proposal and expressing his interest in her as a future wife. It is quite interesting that the unnamed author of this fictional tale should turn to the tale of William Bradford, a leading Puritan figure, and address him as a character second to the two women in his life—Alice Carpenter Southworth and Dorothy May. It is also quite telling that the author follows the same format Bradford does in *Of Plymouth Plantation*: She incorporates letters and journal entries. Perhaps because of this element of the story, or perhaps because of the popular interest in the fate of Bradford's first wife, this fictional tale has become part of the lore associated with the arrival of the *Mayflower.*

In 1621, when Bradford was 31, he was elected governor of Plymouth Colony. His election followed the death of its first governor, John Carver. Bradford remained governor, being reelected 30 times to the office, until 1656. The only gap in his 30-year span as governor was a five-year period in which Edward Winslow and Thomas Prence served. In 1623, when additional members of the Leyden church sailed for the colony, Bradford met his second wife, a widow named Alice Southworth, who had two sons by her previous marriage. Together the two bore a family of three additional children, two sons and a daughter.

He began his most famous work, *Of Plymouth Plantation,* in 1630, "sure . . . that New England would be the model for Old" (Daly 561). The narrative recounts the rise of the Separatist Church out of the forced Catholicism under James I of England, and the rifts and divisions separated that faction even further. Critics believe that Bradford began work on his chronicle in 1630 because it was a historical moment in which he felt confident and assured of the colony's success in fulfilling their special covenant with God as his chosen people. Just two years later, in 1632, his greatest hope would turn to despair as he was witness to a hurricane, the

loss of their furs in a ship that sank, their near starvation, and the departure of the young members of the colony for Duxbury and Marshfield. Dejected, Bradford quit writing the journal in 1648 and only returned to it in 1650 to write out a list of passengers on the *Mayflower*.

The critic Mark Sargent believes that Bradford attempted to return to his task of recording the colony's history with a series of three dialogues that attempted to reconcile its past with its present. Entitled "A Dialogue or the Sume of a Conference between Som Younge Men Borne in New England and Sundery Ancient Men That Came Out of Holland and Old England 1648," the dialogues were a genre popular among Elizabethan Separatists (Sargent 390). Sargent attributes the survival of the first dialogue to Bradford's nephew, Nathaniel Morton, who copied it into the Plymouth Church Records (391). The second dialogue has been lost, but the third was found among Thomas Prince's collection of books and manuscripts in 1826 (391). Through an analysis of the two extant dialogues, Sargent argues, readers can discern "many of the pressures that were diverting [Bradford's] attention from the chronicle" (392). Among those pressures were the "signs of reconciliation between Puritan Congregationalists and Presbyterians" that began in 1648 (Sargent 400). Bradford was emboldened by the attacks on the Separatists in the late 1640s and thus took up pen again to work out the dialogues (Sargent 401). Bradford's chief accuser was the Scottish Presbyterian minister Robert Baillie, who in 1645 published *Dissuasive from the Errors of Time,* which contained a direct attack on "a small company at Leyden" (reported in Sargent 402). Baillie argues that the Separatists undermined the possibility of reforming a national church. He engaged in a heated debate, through publications, with John Cotton and Edward Winslow, a chief ally to Bradford and member of the Plymouth Colony who returned to England to answer charges against the colony.

Bradford revisits the early history of the Separatist Church in the wake of criticisms against him and his colony for their intolerance of Anabaptists, a charge launched against Bradford in 1645 that he omitted from *Of Plymouth Plantation*. In his first dialogue, Bradford reframes the past less as the necessary isolation of one sect from all others who were prone to various forms of idolatry or sin, and more as part of a larger trend with the French, Dutch, and Scots, their former enemies (Sargent 406). In the spirit of casting the Separatists with a larger body somewhat removed from the Church of England, Bradford writes of a "Church of Christ" with "visible Christians professing faith and holiness" (406). He goes further in his attempts to recast the past by imagining an "implicit covenant" existing between the Separatists and the Church of England (406). The voice of the ancients in Bradford's first dialogue admits to their former mistake in insisting upon "too rigid" a separation: "Out of some mistake and heat of zeal . . . [they had shunned] communion in lawful things with other godly persons" (reported in Sargent 407).

Bradford also takes pains to dissociate the Separatists from Robert Browne, a figure whom the youth in Bradford's dialogue imagine to be a leader for the sect. John Cotton is invoked by the young, who cast Browne, the author of *A Treatise on the Reformation without Tarrying for Any,* as the "first inventor and beginner" of the Separatist movement, with his publication functioning, as Sargent describes it, as their "chief manifesto" (407). In his reinvention of the Pilgrims' collective past, Bradford not only removes the taint of Browne, who was labeled an "apostate," but also distances them altogether from the title of Separatist. The conspicuous absence of this term leads Sargent to write: "'Separatism' was now as much an allegation as it was a creed, and Bradford wore the title with both respect and reluctance" (408).

By the third dialogue, written between 1648 and 1652, Bradford returns once again to the confident voice that dominates much of his text. This assuredness is due in part to Oliver Cromwell's military victories against Charles II and the Scots. Bradford interprets these triumphs as vindications for the Congregational Church, which he now uses as a self-identifying term rather than Separatists. Flush with this success, Bradford again returns to the Deuteronomic formula shaping *Of Plymouth Plantation*. He views the Pilgrims as an exemplary colony that

sparked the religious change in England. This image was difficult to create and sustain, given the reality of the Plymouth Colony in 1652, just five years before Bradford's death. The churches in Plymouth lacked steady ministers, and Bradford felt the need to reinvent the colony's past in order to keep it relevant and central to movements in England and Massachusetts. Critics argue that by the time Bradford began his third dialogue, he had stopped working on *Of Plymouth Plantation* altogether.

Some of the additional writings included in this third dialogue that were not part of the series of conversations provide readers with insight into one of the subjects that began to preoccupy Bradford's mind, the study of Hebrew. The inside cover of his third dialogue contains the Hebrew alphabet, and a Hebrew verse from Proverbs appears on the manuscript's cover page. Further, Bradford included three passages from Psalms in Hebrew on the Dialogue's cover page, all indications of his growing interest in and ease with this ancient language. In a picture poem roughly dated in 1650, Bradford expresses his own desires to acquire knowledge of Hebrew:

Though I am growne aged, yet I have had a
  longing
desire, to see with my owne eyes, something of
  that most
ancient language, and holy tongue, in which
  the Law,
and oracles of God were write; and in which
  God,
and angels, spake to the holy patriarchs of old
time; and what names were given to things,
from the creation. And though I cannot
attaine too much herein, yet I am refresh-
ed, to have seen some glimpse hereof;
(as Moyses saw the Land of ca-
can a farr of) my aime and
desire is, to see how the words
and phrases lye in the
holy texte; and to
discerne somewhat
of the same,
for my owne,
contente.

The format of the poem is quite significant since the inverted triangle was viewed as both a symbol of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) and the symbol of morality in the 17th century (Westbrook 103). What also makes the poem so significant is that it exists at all. Given the Puritans' general distrust of all art forms because they could seduce the reader and writer into worldliness and play upon the writer's natural inclination to the sin of pride, there is a scarcity of Puritan poetry. Bradford's use of this form to convey his desire to learn Hebrew gives readers an indication of the deeply profound connection he made between the language and its access to the Bible, referred to as the "Law" and "holy texte" in the body of the poem. Many religious scholars believe that learning Hebrew is essential to understanding the Bible in its original language, stripped of its layers of interpretation and translation. For Bradford, who describes himself at the beginning of the poem as "growne aged," the quest for a more personal and spiritual connection to God and the Separatist religion through linguistic skill is in keeping with his current situation. The Separatist movement has been rendered obsolete, even an obstacle to the reconciliation of the branches of Christianity, and the colony has not fulfilled his deepest wishes. Bradford's only solace, then, lies in a retreat to his religion, and a deeper understanding of it gained through knowledge of the language in which it was written. The biographer Percy Westbrook believes that Bradford probably taught himself Hebrew, with the aid of a Hebrew grammar book and Hebrew lexicon, which were both in William Brewster's extensive library (102).

His choice of the poetic form was not limited to the poem cited; indeed, on his deathbed, Bradford expressly requested that his executors be mindful of his various writings, to include both *Of Plymouth Plantation* and poems that were found in a "little book with a black cover." Westbrook declares that although the original book has been lost, the contents were preserved by Thomas Willett, the 15-year-old son of John Willett, who was one of the executors of Bradford's will. In an attempt to edify young Willett, it is quite likely that he was made

to copy out Bradford's poems (Westbrook 104). The very titles of the poems reflect Bradford's own requests on his deathbed: "I commend unto your wisdom and discretion some small books written by my own hand to be improved as you shall see meet; in special I commend to you a little book with a black cover wherein there is a word to Plymouth, a word to Boston, and a word to New England with sundry useful verses" (reported in Westbrook 104).

Of Plymouth Plantation (1630, 1644–1650)

Of Plymouth Plantation is Bradford's most famous work. The narrative recounts the rise of the English Separatist Church from the time of mandated Catholicism under James I and proceeds to describe the journeys the Separatists undertook, the establishment of a new colony in Massachusetts, and the difficulties faced by the colonists. He began writing the work in 1630, probably because at this time he felt confident and assured of the colony's success in fulfilling its promise. Just two years later, in 1632, his hopes would turn to despair, as he was to see the colonists suffer through a hurricane, the loss of their furs in a sunken ship, their near-starvation, and the departure of the young members. Dejected, Bradford quit writing the journal in 1648 and only returned to it in 1650 to write out a list of passengers on the *Mayflower*.

Chapter 1 of the chronicle likens the Separatist struggle against "popery," "popish trash," and "relics of that man of sin" to an epic battle against Satan. As he begins the first chapter, Bradford chronicles how "Satan hath raised, maintained, and continued against the Saints, from time to time, in one sort or other" (3). The Saints, or God's chosen people, as the Puritans preferred, were martyrs and true Christians who resisted conversion to the ceremonies and rituals that were associated with Catholicism. The tale then does not pursue a "broadside at Catholicism" but rather builds a "case for Separatism" (Sargent 398). As they "shook off the yoke of Antichristian bondage," they joined to form the Separatist Church, which would be called the Congregational Church in later years (9). Bradford briefly mentions a few central leaders in the formative time of the Puritan movement and church: John Smith, John Robinson, and, most famous of the three, William Brewster (9–10). The latter formed the Separatist congregation at Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, which Bradford joined as a young man (xxiii). After meeting together in worship for a year, the group determined to flee to Amsterdam, where they might enjoy religious freedom (10).

Chapter 2 addresses the trials the Separatists faced, both on land and at sea, once they had resolved to abandon England for Holland. The first company climbed aboard ships supposedly bound for Amsterdam only to discover that they had been betrayed when they were robbed, and their possessions rifled through and ransacked (12). Their second attempt to board ships was hurried by the unexpected appearance of an armed company, which resulted in the separation of men from their wives and children, since the men were the first to board (13). Although the families were reunited eventually, Bradford depicts the ordeals faced by the separated family members with considerable emotional resonance. While the men faced rough sea conditions and prayed for God's deliverance, the women and children, without homes to return to, were shuttled between constables, who were uncertain of where to place them. Bradford appears to undermine the wives' anxieties by writing that the constables were "glad to be rid of them in the end upon any terms for all were wearied and tired with them" (14). The women and children appear to be more a nuisance for the various constables than the loyal and suffering male members of the Puritans who endured hardship as testimony to their faith.

Oliver Cromwell's victory in England, coupled with widespread reform within the Church of England, made it rhetorically impossible for Bradford to characterize the Separatist Church against the image of a popish and religiously intolerant England. In fact, Bradford concedes this point, albeit in 1646 and on the back of one of the pages of the first chapter: "Full little did I think that the downfall of the Bishops . . . had been so near, when I first began these scribbled writings" (reported in Sargent 398). Bereft of an image of England against which to rally

his Separatists, Bradford turned instead to dissension within the group, forged by the unorthodox teachings of John Smith. The flock loyal to John Smith had "fallen into contention with the church," so the leaders Robinson and Brewster determined to remove to Leyden "before they were any way engaged with the same" (16). Having remained in Leyden for 12 years, the Separatists decide to leave and embark once again on a journey, this time to the New World. Bradford enumerates the reasons for their departure, stating that he does so to dispel the "slander" that they were importuned to remove to New Netherland, or were influenced by "any newfangledness or other such like giddy humor" (22, 23). Indeed, as historians and critics alike remark, Bradford was especially sensitive to criticism launched against him and the Separatists, and it is from a defensive position that he writes his tale and resumes it after a 10-year silence.

The dangers presented by a harsh environment, the brutality of savages, and that of the Spaniards, who already had colonies in Florida and the Southwest, were listed as central reasons to select Guiana over America, but ultimately, Bradford writes, they decided "to live as a distinct body by themselves under the general government of Virginia . . . and to sue His Majesty that he would be pleased to grant them freedom of religion" (29). When the king refuses to grant their request, they begin consultations with the Virginia Company directly and obtain a patent under the name of *John Wincop*; despite all of their effort and considerable financial loss, the Separatists did not make use of this patent (34–35). Instead, they relied upon Thomas Weston, who procured a patent for them, and, after much debate over the conditions for their colony in America, they embarked. Bradford includes a list of the conditions, commenting on the two amendments from the original, as well as letters from the future governor of the colony, John Carver, and Robert Cushman, who was a chief organizer of the *Mayflower* expedition but who did not sail on this ship because of his disputes with Weston's articles (38, 42–46). He justifies including such correspondence and dwelling so minutely on the details leading up to their journey on the *Mayflower*: "I have been the larger in these things, and so shall crave leave in some like passages following . . . that their children may see with what difficulties their fathers wrestled in going through these things in their first beginnings; and how God brought them along, notwithstanding all their weaknesses and infirmities" (46).

In his description of the initial departure from Leyden to Southampton, aboard the *Speedwell,* Bradford refers to the colonists as "pilgrims," and historians credit this first use of the term as influencing future references to the *Mayflower* company as *pilgrim fathers* (47). The voyage was not without incident, as leaks were discovered twice in the lesser of the two boats, causing delays in Dartmouth and in Plymouth. Eventually, the smaller ship was deemed unseaworthy, and its passengers and their luggage were removed to London while the *Mayflower* set sail alone (52–53). Among those who voluntarily quit the voyage were Mr. Cushman and his family, whose absence from the enterprise Bradford seems to deal with in an especially harsh manner, including an admission that those reading the enclosed letter written by Cushman while the ship was being repaired will "discover some infirmities in him (as who under temptation is free)" (54). In dealing so roughly with Cushman, Bradford reveals a tendency to punish and publicly humiliate those who have disappointed him in one manner or another; this pattern of ridicule will continue throughout the narrative, most especially when the colony finds itself challenged economically, politically, and religiously.

Chapter 9, which details their landing at Cape Cod, contains the most famous passage from *Of Plymouth Plantation* and provides a singular reading of the American wilderness that the critic David Laurence believes was nearly two centuries before its time. "The depiction of the Pilgrims' landing at Cape Cod stands out almost freakishly within Bradford's writing and also from the entire seventeenth-century context. No mere backdrop to the event, the setting functions as the crucial figure that reveals the Pilgrims' relation to spirit" (56). Bradford himself pauses and stands "half amazed at this poor people's present condition," noting the lack of any of the comforts of civilization such as houses or friends, as well as the hostile "savage

barbarians" who inhabit the "hideous and desolate wilderness" (61–62). Some of this sense of despair stems from the season: "summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face, and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue" (62). Markedly absent from Bradford's account of their arrival is the self-assured sense of God's benevolence, his guiding hand in taking his chosen people to such an ominous and forbidding place. The very land itself appears to be alive and endowed with the characteristics of its native inhabitants, for Bradford employs similar adjectives, including *savage* and *wild*, indiscriminately for both. Laurence argues, "The sublimation of anxiety into exultation is the true subject of the passage" (57). In writing of the landscape in such a manner, Bradford, in Laurence's estimation, shifts the very phenomenon that challenges the Pilgrims' legitimacy into a symbol of their triumph (57). Despite their presence in a hostile environment in winter, Bradford and his pilgrims prevail, and in their survival they transcend the obstacles facing them.

Bradford immediately follows this account of their dismal first landing with assurances of their favor with God, and their praise of him for taking them to the "desert wilderness" (63). God's favor is attributed repeatedly to the events that follow their first explorations of the landscape of New England. They discover corn and seed to plant and are left unharmed by the American Indians who attack them. All of these events serve Bradford as "a special providence of God" (63–70). After their "First Encounter," Bradford writes, "Thus it please God to vanquish their enemies and give them deliverance; and by his special providence so to dispose that not any one of them were either hurt or hit, though their arrows came close by them and on every side of them" (70). Other instances of divine intervention include the drowning of a man who had cursed the Pilgrims immediately juxtaposed with the tale of the near-drowning of a young Pilgrim, John Howland, who "became a profitable member in both church and commonwealth" (59).

Shortly after this account, Bradford ends the first book. The critic Robert Daly reads the first book and the annals of the second, which spans 1620 to 1632, as given over to the fulfillment of the Deuteronomic formula. As Bradford's numerous references to this particular gospel, and to God's special providence on the Pilgrims attest, he imagined the recording of their history as didactic in principle, providing future generations with lessons on their privileged relationship with God. "This belief in the validity of earthly evidences" was a central component of the Deuteronomic formula, which expected rewards and other signs of God's preference to be bestowed on the select people with whom he had formed a covenant (Daly 558). Viewed in this light, Bradford's selective recounting of history in the years following 1632 becomes more clear. "He records only those events which affect or clarify the progress of his colony" (562). Thus, the death of his first wife, Dorothy, along with those of other individuals not central to the grand design are simply omitted from the account.

He does provide brief detail of the death of the colony's first governor, John Carver, who appears to have suffered a stroke or aneurism: "He complained greatly of his head and lay down, and within a few hours his senses failed, so as he never spake more till he died, which was within a few days after" (86). Carver's wife, described by Bradford as "a weak woman," dies five or six weeks afterward (86). Thus ends the life of the first governor and begins Bradford's position of supreme power as both religious and civil leader (86). Interestingly, Bradford refers to himself and his election to the governorship in third person, although he uses first person at other times in the account, such as his initial description of the *Mayflower*'s landing. It is quite likely that such a rhetorical device was employed for the sake of humility, as the pilgrims were admonished to place God as the agent of all the good events or fortunes that befell them, and as they were to share equally in food, housing, and so forth, and thus cultivate a communal rather than individual identity.

The appearance of Squanto, the surviving member of the Patuxet tribe who had acquired English as a slave and traveler in England and Newfoundland, was heralded by Bradford as "a special instrument sent by God for their good beyond their expecta-

tion" (81). Through Squanto, who served as an interpreter and intermediary figure between the Pilgrims and neighboring tribes, especially the Wampanoag, who were led by Massasoit, a peace treaty was brokered. Bradford details the six terms mutually agreed upon, which included a pact between the two cultures to aid each other in war and to traffic in trade with each other unarmed (80–81). As a result of Squanto's intervention on the pilgrims' behalf, they engaged with several neighboring tribes in trade, to include the lucrative fur trade. In relating the "first Thanksgiving," which Bradford refers to as a "small harvest," there is no mention of Squanto or other American Indians. Rather, Bradford seems intent on dispelling the disparaging remarks made regarding the quantity of food that they report enjoying: "Many afterwards writ so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned but true reports" (90). The historian John H. Humins provides a more detailed account that includes the presence of Massasoit and 90 of his warriors, who engaged with the Pilgrims in a somewhat friendly display of their military prowess (61).

Squanto, as Humins reports, has been given undue credit for ensuring the pilgrims' survival, as his desire to gain fame and notoriety at the expense of Massassoit threatened to undermine the very peace agreement he helped to forge (54). When Massasoit begins to mistrust Squanto for fear that he has been purposefully creating strife between the Massachusetts, he demands that Bradford return him to the Wampanoag to receive a just punishment. Bradford reveals the indispensable role Squanto has begun to fill when he refuses to hand over the Patuxet, who later dies (99). Bradford's characterization of him was difficult to sustain, however, once he learned that Squanto was selling protection against smallpox under the pretext that the Pilgrims could control the disease: "He made them believe they kept the plague buried in the ground, and could send it amongst whom they would" (99). After Squanto's death, peace resumed between the pilgrims and Massassoit and his tribe, thus justifying Captain Myles Standish's preference for the sagamore over the ambitious interpreter (70).

Bradford's characterization of his most famous enemy, THOMAS MORTON, would also fall under question, even during the former's own lifetime. Daly attributes Bradford's great conviction to initial beliefs in the veracity of his account of the "former pettifogger of Furnival's Inn" (564, 205). Seeing Morton as the embodiment of all possible threats to the Pilgrims, Bradford labels him the "Lord of Misrule," who he claims "maintained (as it were) a School of Atheism" (205). On the basis of Bradford's accusations against Morton, which included trafficking in guns and alcohol with the local tribes, Morton was arrested and returned to England. The modern historians Minor W. Major and Robert Daly believe that the accounts were not factual but were based rather in Bradford's "prejudices," meaning his conviction that the Plymouth Colony was destined for greatness and that Morton posed a "great threat" to its destiny (Minor 1–13, Daly 564–565). Even with the removal of Morton, the Plymouth Colony was not safeguarded against further calamity.

After 1632 and the arrival of the larger and more prosperous Massachusetts Bay Colony, Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* begins to take on a different form, shifting in voice and form, as Robert Daly believes, from eloquence and self-assurance to "a tedious account of unsorted administrative details" (557). A host of events, including the prosperity of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in contradistinction to the natural and human-caused disasters that befell the Pilgrims, forced Bradford to abandon the narrative of progress and divine intervention (Daly 566). His own people migrated to other colonies in search of more arable land to plant crops, and Bradford likens the departure to "an ancient mother grown old and forsaken of her children" (334).

The Pequot War in 1637, in which the colonists prevailed, seems to be a singular event in a series of unfortunate disasters. In a chapter entitled "Wickedness Breaks Forth," Bradford details "the breaking out of sundry notorious sins," employing a language that makes these various acts seem like a plague or contagion, as though the appearance of one prompted others to follow. One reason, Bradford cites, "may be that the Devil may carry a greater spite against the churches of Christ and the gospel here . . . that Satan

hath more power in these heathen lands, as some have thought, than in more Christian nations, especially over God's servants in them" (316).

Bradford concludes this tale that would have chronicled the exemplary progress of Plymouth Colony but instead records its rise and fall, with the much anticipated but never realized return of Edward Winslow from England. He leaves entries for the years 1647 and 1648 entirely blank, as a testament to the inability to marshal the events of those times in the spirit of the Deutoronomic formula. Instead, he provides a list of the passengers who journeyed with him on the *Mayflower,* stating, "I have thought it not unworthy my pains to take a view of the decreasings and increasings of these persons and such changes as hath passed over them and theirs in this thirty years. It may be of some use to such as come after; but however I shall rest in my own benefit" (443).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Bradford's characterization of Squanto with John Smith's of Pocahontas. How have these images of red/white encounter been perpetuated in American literature and culture? How do these intermediary figures aid in the colonial enterprise?
2. Thomas Morton appears as diabolical to Bradford as the Amerindians, if not more. How does Bradford transform this fellow Englishman into an instrument of the devil, and to what end? Consider Morton's critique of Bradford in *New English Canaan.*

◆

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON BRADFORD AND HIS WORK

1. Consider the language Bradford employs to describe the American landscape. In what ways is it echoed by other early settlers such as ÁLVAR NÚÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA, Smith, and JOHN WINTHROP? How do their details of their natural surroundings elucidate their relationship with the native populations?
2. Many of the early travelers suffered adversity, harsh conditions, and loss. How does Bradford address these hardships? Do they detract from or contribute to the overall success of the endeavor? Compare Bradford's treatment of difficult times with that of Smith, a traveler who was not so bound by religion.

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Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672)

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue / Who says my hand a needle better fits.

("The Prologue")

In the same year that the poet Anne Bradstreet (née Anne Dudley) contracted smallpox and nearly died, she also married. She was 16. We know this because years later she wrote about the illness in "To My Dear Children," a memoir she left her children to aid in their spiritual development after her death: "About sixteen, the Lord laid his hand upon me and smote me with the smallpox. When I was in my affliction, I besought the Lord and confessed my pride and vanity, and He was entreated of me and again restored me." Had Bradstreet not listed her age, we would have only known that she suffered from the illness sometime around the year she married, or we might not have known at all. There are no records of her birth.

We do know that in 1630, when she was about 18 years old, she left the England she knew to board the ship *Arbella* with her parents, siblings, and new husband, Simon Bradstreet. Under the reign of Charles I, there was growing threat of excess taxation to pay for the king's military exploits in Europe. According to Rosamond Rosenmeier, Anne's father felt the growing tension directly. Founding members of the Massachusetts Bay Company, her father and new husband had worked out a plan to emigrate to New England as part of the new venture, but also in order to escape political and religious persecution (37).

Their sea voyage across the Atlantic was to last six weeks. When they landed in Massachusetts Bay, Anne and her family had their first taste of "the blazing heat of an American June" (Rich ix). They also had their first glimpse of the immensity of the American wilderness, the close quarters of a Salem home, and their first understanding of meager provisions.

In England Anne Bradstreet's father, Thomas Dudley, had been a steward to the earl of Lincoln. The Dudley family lived at the earl's manor house in Sempringham, where Anne had access to the earl's sizable library. She read the great Renaissance poets Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and probably John Milton, Ben Jonson, and William Shakespeare (Martin 21). It would be an understatement to say that her life in the New World offered fewer comforts than what the family had left behind. While her family held no tremendous stature, their needs were met, and they lived on a large estate. As the poet Eavan Boland writes, in England, for a time, the Dudleys "lived in the shadow and peace of greatness" (179). Contrast this image to the one painted in a letter Thomas Dudley sent from America to the countess of Lincoln in England:

> There is not a house where is not one dead, and some houses many . . . the natural causes seem to be in the want of warm lodging and good diet, to which Englishmen are habituated at home, and the sudden increase of heat which they endure that are landed here in summer . . .

> for those only these two last years died of fevers who landed in June or July, as those of Plymouth, who landed in winter, died of the scurvy. (Cited in Rich x)

In the same letter Dudley also complains that in their first Salem home, there was no table or desk to compose the letter he was writing, and that the Dudleys and the Bradstreets, all living under one roof, were cramped into one room with a fireplace. Even though her father and husband were founding members of the Massachusetts Bay Company and would each eventually become governor and lead a prosperous life, the initial move to New England took them to an environment that was more confined indoors and vaster than they had ever imagined outside.

For the young Anne Bradstreet, this was quite a change, tempered perhaps only by the lengthy sea journey's poor conditions, which offered a brief period of adjustment. Of her first response to America she would later write, "I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it and joined the church at Boston." Rosenmeier is careful to point out that "new manners" are not necessarily bad manners, but that they represent new habits and ways of living that were foreign to Anne Bradstreet: the ways people kept house, their responses to tight quarters, their basic coping mechanisms in such a wild and unpredictable terrain (73). Critics agree that Bradstreet's phrase "at which my heart rose" refers not to any welcoming feeling, but to feelings of rebellion and disgust: Her heart rose *against* these new manners. After reflection, Bradstreet resigns herself to her situation because "it is the way of God." Note her use of the word *submitted*. A theme that arises often in Bradstreet's poetry is that of resistance followed by resignation—to death, to her husband's absence, to the patriarchy, and to God.

A woman often visited by sickness and lameness (her first poem we know of, written at the age of 19, was entitled "Upon a Fit of Sickness, Anno. 1632") now living in a land plagued by death and hardship, Anne Bradstreet in some ways needed to give up her own control over her body and life to that higher power, if only to maintain a sense of structure and reason. Adrienne Rich posits that "in a society coarsened by hardship and meager in consolations, any religious doubt must at times have made everything seem dubious" (x). It is indeed arguable that Bradstreet herself would have had to struggle to locate some control over her own life, being passed, as young women were, from father to husband. Even her first book was published without her control or knowledge. Raised a Puritan, Bradstreet practiced a religion that encouraged the belief in which every affliction, every woe, every setback was an opportunity for a lesson and an exercise of God's will upon his chosen people.

There is a tension, however, always at play in Bradstreet's life and work, between what she observes in the world around her and what she is told, and much energy is spent trying to reconcile the two. She acknowledges the times she was "sitting loose from God": finding joy in the physical world, questioning Puritan doctrine or the existence of God, privately musing that Catholicism might have the same merit as the Puritan order. In her poetry, this too plays a role alongside the twin impulses to resist and to yield. The critic Wendy Martin makes note of these tensions:

> Although she played the role of a dedicated Puritan and a dutiful daughter and wife, Bradstreet often expressed ambivalence about the male authorities in her life, including God, her father and husband, and the literary critics and authors whose models she initially copied. On one hand, she very much wanted their approval and, on the other, she was angered by their denial of the value of her experience and abilities. (16)

Critics' responses to Bradstreet's relationships with men are as varied and complex as her own formulation of resistance and resignation. Even though her husband was 11 years her senior and a man she married when she was, even by the standards of the time, a bit young to marry, she loved him passionately, or grew to. This love is evidenced by

her marriage poems. Rosenmeier speculates that the marriage was something planned by her family. Anne's husband, Simon, was almost like a son to the Dudleys, having been orphaned at 14 and taken to work under Anne's father for the earl, and the difference in their ages meant that he was equipped to take care of her (Rosenmeier 38). Anne Bradstreet is a complex figure; she took pleasure in her life as a wife and mother of eight, and, unlike many other Puritan women, she was given the space to read, write, and reflect—and was essentially respected for it by both men and women.

Although Anne had no formal education, her father made sure to expose her to language and literature. Lacking a university education himself, Thomas Dudley was tutored in England by an Oxford graduate. According to biographers, he encouraged his daughter to read and probably taught her Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French. Equipped with these tools, a motivated reader of the era could approach any text and understand it. Her father valued books so much he took his library along with him to the New World. Anne had access to all his books and absorbed their breadth and style in her own early poetry.

Most notably, the French Calvinist poet Guillaume Du Bartas is seen as a great influence on her work. In fact, in an introductory verse to her first book, Nathaniel Ward refers to her as "a right Du Bartas girl," implying that her work exists only as a clever imitation. While celebrating her ability as a poet, Ward diminishes her achievement by comparing her to male poets and showing both a sense of disdain and trepidation toward women who choose to write. In the last two lines of his poem he suggests that a woman writer can do no more than dress up in her male counterparts' clothing, this "right Du Bartas girl," Anne Bradstreet, is "shod by Chaucer's boots, and Homer's furs, / Let men look to't, lest women wear the spurs." Note his implication that women will be good poets only in disguise, and that these trappings—the boots, the furs, the spurs—are not inherent qualities to women writers, but simple accoutrements that are easily removed when the woman is needed in her more traditional roles. Paradoxically, Anne Bradstreet would demonstrate—especially as her poetry matured—that a woman poet can exist simultaneously in traditional and nontraditional roles, her poetic nature deeply embedded within her consciousness, not her clothes.

Worthy of note is the literary period into which Anne Bradstreet entered. While she is indeed the first published American poet (and a woman, too), her work is also tied to a long tradition of European poetry, on the heels of the English Renaissance. Eavan Boland observes that in 1612 Bradsteet was born "in an England that had been nine years without its imperious queen, and would, in another four, lose William Shakespeare and the raffish ethos of the Tudor world" (179). Boland surmises that the young Anne must have heard stories of the great Elizabethan age, as evidenced by her elegies celebrating Queen Elizabeth and Sir Philip Sidney in her first book. But the England Anne was born into was a country slowly shifting, under the strain of unrest, verging on the edge of civil war. Had she stayed in England, Boland concludes, Anne Bradstreet probably would not have been offered the same freedoms in her writing as she had in her new continent. After England's restoration of the Crown, "women," Boland claims, "would be considered bait for princes, rather than poets in their own right." And Anne Bradstreet would have remained voiceless as a poet. "She left a poetic tradition in which she would almost certainly have remained anonymous and founded another in which she is visible, anomalous, and crucial" (Boland 181).

Still, New England had its own brand of unrest and dangers for women. Anne Bradstreet's careful handling of authority—private resistance accompanied by resignation—kept her safe from the fates of her own sister, Sarah Keane, and Anne Hutchinson, both excommunicated from the church at Boston and exiled from the community for overstepping their intellectual and religious bounds (Martin 16–17). Both Bradstreet's father and her husband sat on Hutchinson's trial. Thomas Dudley, then deputy governor, was a magistrate, and Simon Bradstreet was an assistant at the General Court proceedings. According to Rosenmeier,

Simon Bradstreet "does make a point of saying that he is not opposed to women's meetings and thinks such meetings 'lawful'" (83). Thomas Dudley, however, vehemently opposed Hutchinson and the antinomians. While there are no records of Anne Bradstreet's reactions to the Hutchinson trials, we can be sure that she was aware of the proceedings. Perhaps the absence of a response by her indicates why she avoided the same fate.

Ten years later, Anne's closest sister, Sarah Keane, was also heard preaching, but not on American soil. She had followed her husband back to England after he abandoned her. John Winthrop's brother, Stephen, reported to him that his "she Cosin Keayne is growne a great preacher" after hearing her speak openly about religion (Martin 59). He was far from impressed, and the use of the term *great preacher* is laced with irony. When she returned to Massachusetts without her husband, she was charged with "irregular prophesying in mixed assemblies" (quoted in Rosenmeier 93). What is more, her husband had previously sent letters to John Wilson and Joseph Cotton proclaiming that Sarah had "'impoisoned' his body with syphilis" (quoted in Rosenmeier 93). As is often the case with such accusations, there is no evidence that Sarah had given him the disease. Laura Ulrich observes, "Attacks upon religious dissenters frequently included charges of sexual irregularity, as though disruption on one social boundary inevitably entailed the disruption of another" (quoted in Rosenmeier 93). The couple divorced, and Sarah was banished. Critics differ over the degree of Thomas Dudley's anger at his daughter; there are reports of disinheritance and there are reports of a small sum left to her after his death. To be sure, living in such proximity to these events, through family and geography, must have been distressing for Anne Bradstreet, a woman with a strong mind and her own ideas about God and nature. Unlike her sister, she let her ideas leak out quietly through her poetry and private meditations rather than in the church. "Only by careful execution of her prescribed responsibilities could she escape [their] fate," claims Wendy Martin (17).

Puritan belief—and probably any belief system on the edge of famine, death, and what could seem a threatening wilderness—does tie the body to religious piety, and illness, in the form of the venereal disease Anne's sister was accused of spreading, or Anne's own illness, was regarded as an opportunity for either judgment and condemnation or spiritual cleansing and self-examination. We know that Anne viewed her own illnesses as entrances into a closer bond with divinity by way of punishment for having at the age of 14 or 15 what she called a "carnal heart," one that valued worldly desires and pleasures over God's will. In her spiritual memoir she surmises that "it pleased God to keep me a long time without a child, which was a great grief to me and cost me many prayers and tears before I obtained one." Her inability to conceive is viewed as God's will—his pleasure—and the delay, albeit painful, is something Bradstreet accepted, possibly aligning herself with Abraham's wife, Sarah, in Genesis. Similarly, her great illness, "a lingering sickness like a consumption together with a lameness," which inspired her first poem, is perceived as a correction applied to her moral sensibilities. One could also read causality, as Anne probably did, in her sickness in 1632, her supplication to God, and the conception of her first child, born the next year.

For contemporary readers, this sense of punishment meted out by God as infirmity may also imply that any disfigured or ill person during that period was perceived by Puritans as having turned away from God. This of course is the danger of 17th-century Puritan ideology. So it might be surprising that during Anne Bradstreet's long illness, her family's absence from the Boston church was tolerated. Rosenmeier concludes that it was quite possible that Anne's illness coupled with the winter weather kept her family home. After all, the Bradstreets and Dudleys would have had to cross water to attend church services in Boston, already an all-day undertaking in itself (75–76). Rosenmeier points out that absence from church was more common than we would expect, and not cause for condemnation. Apparently, a woman's preaching in mixed company was more odious.

Anne's illness allowed her not only to discover a more private form of faith than that being practiced in the church; it also helped her recognize her

own mortality. It is quite possible that her deepened understanding of the body allowed her to differ in the thinking from the predominant feelings of shame associated with the body that one would expect in Puritan culture. Bradstreet's discussion of the body and its functions is characterized by Rosenmeier as "frank and positive" (4). As her great-nephew COTTON MATHER will echo years later, she sees the activity of the bowels as vital and, in some ways, miraculous: "'transmutation . . . but not excretion'" (Rosenmeier 4). This differs sharply from the Puritan ideology of the intestinal process as the filthy and horrendous "'loathsomeness of the inner man'" (Rosenmeier 4) or EDWARD TAYLOR's view of the body as a "dunghill." Physicality, according to Puritan doctrine, was the antithesis of the soul's flight, yet for Anne Bradstreet, it is a source of fascination, despair, and passion—ultimately, a route to God. Consequently, the physical world—bodies, death, fire, nature, love—is also a wellspring for her poetry.

The Bradstreets and Dudleys packed up house and moved to new outposts many times. Critics speculate that Bradstreet began writing in earnest after her family's move to Ipswich in the mid-1630s. The poems she was writing during this period were celebrated by many at the time, but the majority of them have lost their luster, or at least pale in comparison to her later poems. The poet Adrienne Rich surmises that had Bradstreet stopped with these early poems or simply carried on with similar work, she would have possibly become "at best a literary fossil" (xiii).

When her brother-in-law the Reverend John Woodbridge traveled back to England in 1647 to negotiate with King Charles, he took a manuscript of Anne Bradstreet's collected poems with him, without Bradstreet's knowledge. He arranged for the book to be published in London. No other manuscript by a resident of the New World had yet been published. Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America, or Several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, Full of Delight* was the first. When the book was published in 1650, Bradstreet was 38 years old.

The book was prefaced by a variety of introductory comments written by men endorsing the poet and the work, followed by three anagrams of Anne Bradstreet's name. Nathaniel Ward wrote the simultaneously condescending and celebratory verse introduction, honoring the remarkable nature of her accomplishment in a man's arena while also suggesting that she is merely putting on the trappings of a poet. John Woodbridge, the man who took the book to London, wrote an epistle to the reader that declared Bradstreet's piety and discipline as a wife and mother, and her remarkable achievement in the creation of these poems:

> It is the work of a woman, honored, and esteemed where she lives, for her gracious demeanor, her eminent parts, her pious conversation, her courteous disposition, her exact diligence in her place, and discreet managing of her family occasions, and more than so, these poems are the fruit but of some few hours, curtailed from her sleep, and other refreshments. (A3)

He is sure to protect her dignity in what most Puritans would consider her primary occupations, those of wife and mother. Hence, she has stolen only from herself in the creation of these poems. This move makes her seem all the more disciplined as both mother and poet. In case her piety is not already clear, he adds that he has decided to publish these poems without the author's knowledge, "to bring to public view what she resolved should never in such a manner see the sun" (A3). In actuality, when Woodbridge returned to Massachusetts and placed the book in her lap, Bradstreet's feelings were mixed. Certainly the thrill of seeing one's work in print was great, but she would have preferred to have had the opportunity to revise the poems, clean up the rhyme structures, and correct any errors. This is clear in her later poem, "The Author to Her Book," which, through a clever figurative conceit of motherhood and child rearing, narrates the story of the publication of this book, her "rambling brat."

Despite Bradstreet's reservations, the book did quite well on both sides of the Atlantic, listed in the *Catalogue of the Most Vendible Books in England* in 1658 (Martin 29). The book contained

her Quaternions, four long poems of four sections each, covering the four elements, humors, ages of man, and seasons. The book also included her "Dialogue between Old England and New," her elegies for Queen Elizabeth and Philip Sidney, and the one poem from the book that is still considered a truly important part of her work and of our history, "The Prologue." Vacillating from modesty to feminist outrage and back, "The Prologue" is impressive in its quiet, revolutionary tone. It is the only poem from *The Tenth Muse* to be discussed in this volume.

Critics and poets agree that Bradstreet's greatest work was yet to be done. The poems in *The Tenth Muse* do indeed follow their influences a bit too closely; they seem lofty, "elaborate and conventional," writes Boland. "The public tone often falters; the language rarely shines" (Boland 183). There is a "clumsy percussion" (183) to the work, as if, Josephine Piercy observes, Bradstreet was "a beginner doing finger exercises" (xi) at a piano. Piercy, along with other critics and poets, is quick to point out that if Bradstreet had known the work was to be published, *The Tenth Muse* might have become a much different book. And she soon set about revising it for a second edition.

The second edition, which corrected some portions of the first and included newer poems, did not reach print until six years after Anne Bradstreet's death in 1678. One can easily imagine this self-scrutinizing and proud poet revisiting and revising her poems again and again. Her later poems are the ones for which she is best known. They are the most revolutionary in content and the most important to literary and cultural history. They become more personal, dealing more with the daily struggles she witnessed in her life, and responding also to the majesty and vastness of the New England landscape.

In 1653 Thomas Dudley died. This is an important moment for Bradstreet. Critics and poets note that after her father's death, Bradstreet began crafting different poems. It would be a mistake to say that Dudley's death was the only experience to change her work, but we also must recognize its importance, remembering that, in a way, he was Anne's first teacher and literary guide; she read from the books in his library. No doubt—and this is evident in some of the poems—she wanted to write poems that would please him and correspond to his aesthetic tastes, his notions of the qualities that made a poem good. Let us not forget, too, Dudley's role in Anne Hutchinson's trial and his disappointment with his daughter Sarah when she was excommunicated. Perhaps Anne Bradstreet worried about how he might receive and judge her work. Wendy Martin speculates that

> perhaps her father's death in 1653 as well as the publication of her work in 1650 gave her the psychological freedom necessary to express herself more openly. The more honestly she wrote of her emotional and religious tensions and her desire for recognition and her love of life on earth, the more accomplished her poetry became. (17)

Eavan Boland describes the ways Bradstreet's poetry changed after her father's death in terms of subject, emotion, tone, and music—all elements still considered crucial to lyric poetry today. She notes that Bradstreet's "subjects closed in" to the world she was experiencing. Instead of writing "elegies for lost courtiers," Bradstreet was exploring her feelings, marriage, and home. Her elegies were instead for her grandchildren and for her burned-down house. Boland notes that as the music of the poetry shifted to something richer and fuller, "the volume turned down" and "the voice became at once more private and more intense" (183–184). She was writing her best and most moving poetry. The lines were no longer strained, or if they seemed so, it was probably an intended component in the poem's craft, or a shift integral to the meaning of that line.

It was in this period that Bradstreet wrote what some consider her best poem, "Contemplations," a long and difficult poem of 232 lines that some contend is the first American nature poem. In it, the poet reconciles her admiration for the earth

and its creatures with her own awe at God's creation. The sun is asked, "How full of glory then must thy Creator be, / Who gave this bright light luster unto thee?" The poem's eighth stanza prefigures Emerson's or Hawthorne's journeys through the New England landscape: "Silent alone, where none or saw, or heard / In pathless paths I lead my wand'ring feet." The mastery of these lines is that they at once celebrate nature, its untrampled paths, and display a self-consciousness of the poet's act of making: It is through these pathless paths that she, the poet, leads her "wand'ring feet," punning on the term used to define poetic meter, *feet.* This pun, while at once quite clever, is equally modest, because she admits they wander. She constructs a self in her poems that is awestruck, intelligent, approachable, and fallible.

Other poems Bradstreet wrote in her later years approach subjects that had not previously been written about from a woman's perspective, with images culled from daily life. Interestingly, Bradstreet's greatest contribution to literature might very well lie in her confidence in covering new territory with her subjects. Adrienne Rich notes, "Her individualism lies in her choice of material rather than in her style" (xix). In an age that did not reward individualism as it is recognized today, writing something new and different was a brave thing to do. Bradstreet wrote movingly about the deaths of her young grandchildren and the burning of her house in 1666. These poems, in their quiet lyric intensity and in their powerful imagery, make daily colonial life extremely present for her readers. That she felt the power to privilege her daily experience in verse is remarkable. Boland asks, "Where did she get permission for this?" (185). It is a good question. Bradstreet's later poems carved new spaces of possibility. No longer derivative, Bradstreet's poetry—her marriage poems, for instance—may employ extended metaphors, such as the hunt, that originate in English Renaissance love sonnets, but the difference arrives in the occasion for her poems—her husband's absence. She turns what might be a familiar masculine image into her own. These later poems "were sharp and musical and impossible to overlook" (Boland 187).

It is arguable that in this period Bradstreet's poetry became, as Josephine Piercy notes, an "outlet for pent-up emotions created by her environment" (*Anne Bradstreet* 116). Her passions for her husband, her grief over outliving her grandchildren, her deep sadness over the house fire that destroyed, as she attests, not only possessions but memories are expressed in these poems, where the poet also seeks a means of comprehension and synthesis, sometimes seeking the hand of God, to make sense of unruly situations beyond her control.

A great deal of Bradstreet's life was indeed beyond her control: her health, her early marriage, her emigration from England to America, the publication of an unready book. Through synthesis of her varied and often contradictory roles of daughter, wife, sister, mother, grandmother, Christian, and poet, she is able to locate a sense of a multidimensional self in which all experience is one. "She came to enact in her life and in her work a world of action, faith, expression, family, and ordinary adventure. . . . And so she generates a poem in which they are indivisible, from a sensibility that is not divided" (Boland 188–189).

The mother of eight children, Anne Bradstreet, her cheeks scarred from the smallpox that nearly killed her as a teenager, died at the age of 60. She was quite frail at the end of life, "wasted to skin and bone . . . much troubled with rheum," her son Simon wrote (quoted in Martin 76). She questioned and wrestled with Puritan ideas of God, of behavior, of the divisions between this world and the next, and sought her own definitions. As Wendy Martin writes, "Her faith was based on a profound desire to remain connected to life, whether in this world or the next. Repeatedly, she observes that if it were not for death and decay, earth would be heaven" (76).

Anne Bradstreet has had a profound impact on poetry, most notably in the 20th century and beyond. In 1959 John Berryman published a long poem entitled *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet.* In it, he conjures up and commingles with what he imagines to

be the spirit of Anne Bradstreet. Although the poem is a great technical feat and was considered masterful in its time, feminist scholars and poets alike have come to understand his construction of Bradstreet as merely that: a construction of a woman created by a man. Eavan Boland characterizes Berryman's quest as "the poet's voice usurping the very identity [Bradstreet's] he is seeking out" (178). Still, she admits, his poem drew Bradstreet to her attention when she was a young poet. More than 100 years before William Wordsworth would celebrate the common man, Bradstreet was celebrating common, everyday female experience, while also defending her abilities as a female poet. This, along with her observations on nature, has influenced contemporary women poets such as Eavan Boland, Mona Van Duyn, Mary Oliver, and Adrienne Rich. Bradstreet's legacy is this: that her work invites readers to identify with her, so that women poets of any era, when they read her, are strengthened.

"In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory" (1643)

In the proem, or preface, to this elegy for Queen Elizabeth I, Bradstreet faces the difficult task of placing herself and her tribute "'mongst hundred hecatombs of roaring verse" (11). As she will later write in her famous poem "The Author to Her Book," Bradstreet employs the poet's conceit of poverty and humility. Bradstreet relies upon Queen Elizabeth's graceful "acclamations of the poor as rich" to "deem [her] rudeness [in writing the poem] is no wrong" (16–17). Because the queen never cast aspersions on the work of the poor, Bradstreet's own verse, which "bleating stands before thy royal hearse," might be just as welcomed by the queen as the famous works written on her behalf by Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, John Speed, and William Camden that Bradstreet references in the opening lines of the poem proper (12, 19–20). Even as Bradstreet acknowledges the greatness of these literary predecessors, she feels confident enough in her own literary skill to add her own voice to theirs. Rather than returning to the conventional stance of humility often affected by young or new poets when faced with the daunting legacy of their predecessors, Bradstreet instead considers the grandness of Queen Elizabeth I to be deserving of additional praise, stating: "No Phoenix pen, nor Spenser's poetry / No Speed's nor Camden's learned history / Eliza's works, wars, praise, can e're compact" (19–21). Bradstreet's strategy is rather clever; instead of placing herself and her poem in direct comparison with those of more famous learned men, she instead makes the argument that there can never be enough praise of Queen Elizabeth I, and thus her offering must be welcomed and even necessary.

The aspect of Elizabeth that seems most appealing to Bradstreet appears early in the poem: "She hath wip'd off th' aspersions of her sex" (29). Elizabeth's position as a strong, admirable, even bellicose queen makes her a celebrated figure for women everywhere. Bradstreet attributes Spain's attack on Britain to Philip II's underestimation of a female ruler and considers Britain's sound defeat of the Spanish Armada to be a triumph over such sexist assumptions: "She taught them better manners, to their cost" (32). Interestingly, it is Queen Elizabeth's military record rather than other aspects of her reign that garners most attention from Bradstreet in her poem. She references the queen's ordered attack on Portugal under the command of Sir Francis Drake, the defeat of Philip II of Spain's armada, as well as the submission of the Irish under Hugh O'Neill, second earl of Tyrone, to the British Crown (44–47, 55–56). Elizabeth's military victories are attributed less to the men who carried them out and more to her own wisdom; Bradstreet compares her to Minerva and Pallas Athena, the Roman and Greek goddesses of wisdom, respectively (58, 60).

The poem concludes with its praise of Elizabeth as an extraordinary queen and exemplary symbol of women's potential: "Nay masculines, you have thus taxed us long / But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong" (97–98).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603; the major works dedicated to her were published at least 20 years before Bradstreet penned her elegy. Why might Bradstreet have felt compelled to write "In Honour of . . . Queen Elizabeth"?
2. Bradstreet offers two epitaphs for Elizabeth. Compare them to one another. How do they differ in tone and subject matter? Consider them both in the context of the poem and in its particular celebration of Queen Elizabeth.
3. Compare Bradstreet's praise of Elizabeth with Sor Juana's "In Reply to a Gentleman from Peru." What arguments against women do the two poets address? How do they counter these arguments?

"A Dialogue between Old England and New" (1643)

One of Bradstreet's earliest poems, "A Dialogue between Old England and New" provides a different aesthetic and subject matter from the more personal and spiritual concerns that will occupy her later, more well-known works. The poem's format, a dialogue, is rather unusual for Bradstreet, although it is certainly a traditional form. Bradstreet embodies two separate voices in the poem: Old England, who is characterized by a "wailing tone" and "mournful guise," and New England, who, though her "humble child," offers sage advice and guidance for the mother's future. She casts the relationship between the colony and England as daughter and mother, respectively, and thus seems to naturalize their relationship. This dynamic, however, is ruptured in the final portion of the poem, in which New England calls for the end of monarchical rule and the shift to Parliament as the source of legal and moral authority.

As a dialogue, the poem allows Bradstreet not only to launch criticisms at England for the violence and bloodshed that have resulted from monarchical rule and religious intolerance for Puritans like Bradstreet who fled to America, but also to have England respond to these charges. Almost like a lawyer in a court case trying England, Bradstreet provides a long list of specific crimes that Old England has committed, to include the execution of those touting royal bloodlines: Edward V and Richard, who were murdered by Richard III, and Lady Jane Grey, who was executed by Queen Mary (112–113). Aside from these murders, which were committed by those who wished to possess the British throne themselves, Bradstreet delves into the source of England's woes: "punishments ordain'd on high" (85). Old England confesses her "sins—the broach of sacred Laws" (90). As a Puritan, Bradstreet identifies the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church as two corrupting factors that have brought about "Idolatry." As specific examples of the means by which England has sinned, Old England delineates: "foolish superstitious adoration / Are lik'd and countenanc'd by men of might / The Gospel is trod down and hath no right / Church Offices are sold and bought for gain / That Pope had hope to find Rome here again / For Oaths and Blasphemies did ever ear / From Beezlebub himself such language hear" (92–98). New England's response is rather militant: Burn all items associated with the Anglican and Catholic Churches and attack the seat of Catholicism, Rome (232–237, 266–281).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Bradstreet is by no means the only early American author to focus on England's religious intolerance or its supposed slide into moral depravity. Consider how the dialogue form of this poem compares with works of other authors such as John Winthrop and William Bradford who make similar points in different formats.
2. How does the metaphor of family, used by Bradstreet to compare Old England to a mother and New England to a daughter, compare with Thomas Paine's use of the family metaphor in *Common Sense*?
3. "A Dialogue between Old England and New" concludes, "Farewell, dear mother; Parliament, prevail" (294). What arguments does Bradstreet offer for the elimination of the succession of

kings? How does her argument for the destruction of monarchical rule in England compare to PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU's in "On the Causes of Political Degeneracy," BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's "An Edict by the King of Prussia," or Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*?

For Discussion or Writing

1. Discuss the poem's final image, which compares unrefined ore to gold. How does Bradstreet convey humility here? How does the image subvert typical assumptions of value?
2. Addressing the poem as an argument, locate and discuss Bradstreet's thesis.

"The Prologue" (1650)

"The Prologue" introduces readers to Bradstreet's feminism and her subtle deployment of humility. This poem is a prime example of her ability to criticize the patriarchy while appealing to it through consistent claims of inferiority as a female poet.

The first four stanzas lure the reader through repeated claims of imperfection in the face of the great poets she admires. Bradstreet assures the reader that her "obscure lines," her lack of skill, and her "foolish, broken, blemished Muse" make her inferior simply because nature made her a woman. Unlike Demosthenes, who overcame a speech impediment through his art, she suggests her "weak or wounded brain" cannot be cured and is unable to compete with the poetry of men.

Then the tone shifts dramatically: "I am obnoxious to each carping tongue / Who says my hand a needle better fits." Comparing the needle associated with domesticity to the typically masculine pen, she reveals the attitudes she anticipates from male readers. They will think either that she is lucky or that she stole the ideas. In a way, that is how Nathaniel Ward portrays her in his verse introduction to her own book.

Following the vein of her feminist argument, Bradstreet is still able to maintain the charming modesty of the early stanzas, but she also suggests that her poetry is more earthy and real than the overpolished work of men. Refusing the traditional laurel wreath ("I ask no bays"), she prefers the domestic herbs of here and now: "thyme or parsley," wholesome, humble. By maintaining her humility throughout the poem, she highlights the "pomposity and cruelty of those male writers and critics who disdain women" (Martin 32).

"To the Memory of My Dear and Ever Honored Father" (1653)

As Bradstreet notes in the full title of the poem, her father, Thomas Dudley, passed away on July 31, 1653, at the age of 77. He had been the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for four separate terms and had served as deputy governor under JOHN WINTHROP, with whom he had several conflicts. In her elegy, Bradstreet acknowledges both aspects of her father's identity. She refers to his key role in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the following lines: "One of thy Founders, him New England know" and "True Patriot of this little Commonweal" (23, 27). Because of her father's notoriety, Bradstreet writes in the poem: "Nor was his name, or life lead so obscure / That pitty might some Trumpeters procure. / Who after death might make him falsly seen / Such as in life, no man could justly deem" (13–16). The lines work in two ways: They assure the reader that Dudley's fame and reputation will shield him from any other characterization, either by a devoted daughter or by those filled with "malice" and "envy" (11). In other words, Dudley's prominence, which makes him the target of those animated by "malice" and "envy," also protects him from them because he is too well known for false tales about him to be believed. That said, Bradstreet, too, is hampered in her elegy for her father; she cannot praise him too much for the same reason that others cannot chastise him or cast dispersions on his character.

Bradstreet eschews the traditional aspect of an elegy, which is to offer praise in remembrance and honor of the person who died. She does so not only because such a turn is in keeping with Puritan tra-

dition, but also because it helps to temper the feelings held by those who believed Dudley to be too desirous of the power that John Winthrop wielded over the Massachusetts Bay Colony. She writes: "Nor honour pufft him up, when he had part; / Those titles loathed, which some do too much love / For truly his ambition lay above" (36–38). Bradstreet's father, a good Puritan, sets his sights above worldly accomplishments and rewards, for "he a Mansion had, prepar'd above" (50).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Bradstreet's view of her father to John Winthrop's characterization of Thomas Dudley in his journal.
2. How does Bradstreet's description of her father compare with her other poem written for him, "To Her Father with Some Verses"? How does the theme of debt appear in both poems?
3. Offer an interpretation of the opening line of the poem: "By duty bound, and not by custome led."
4. How does Bradstreet cope with the loss of her father in this poem compared with her later poems in which she expresses her feelings on the loss of her grandchildren?

"In Reference to Her Children, 23 June, 1659" (1659)

Bradstreet sustains a bird metaphor throughout this poem in which she captures a moment in her life when her role as mother is somewhat in flux. Of her eight children, "eight birds hatched in one nest," she describes the current lives of the eldest four, who have matured, left home, and begun careers or families of their own. Although the bird imagery that casts leaving home as taking flight seems to make these movements seem natural and in accord with the progression of life, Bradstreet maintains a constant refrain for their return. Even of her first-born son, Bradstreet pleads, "Leave not thy nest, thy dam and sire / Fly back and sing amidst this choir" (11–12). The use of a natural metaphor—birds leaving the nest and taking flight—undermines Bradstreet's pleas for her children to return home, making this request seem both unlikely and unnatural. Tellingly, when Bradstreet details the lives of her second- and third-born children, both daughters, she is silent on the plea for their return. Perhaps because both daughters have married and created families of their own, Bradstreet cannot impose a mother's wish on daughters who, too, have become mothers. She seems content that the firstborn daughter, who originally married and moved "Southward," has "norward steered with fill sails" (18). The daughter's proximity seems enough to content the mother bird, and yet of the second-born daughter, also married but living "where Aurora first appears," Bradstreet makes no plea for a return home or a move closer to home (25).

Similarly, the gender expectations that a mother has for her "cocks" and "hens" appear yet again when Bradstreet details the life of the second-born son: "One to the academy flew / To chat among the learned crew; / Ambition moves still in his breast / That he might chant above the rest" (27–30). One can imagine the mother vicariously delighting in the ambitions of her son, and thus expressing pride as a parent in a manner more befitting Puritan women. Indeed, she seems to impose high expectations on the most recent son who has left home: "My fifth, whose down is yet scarce gone, / Is 'mongst the shrubs and bushes flown, / And as his wings increase in strength, / On higher boughs he'll perch at length" (33–36). By imagining the son as a recently matured bird, "whose down is yet scarce gone," Bradstreet makes her expectations for his success and achievements seem natural. When "his wings increase in strength," Bradstreet anticipates that he will abandon the lowly position he currently occupies "'mongst the shrubs and bushes" for "higher boughs."

Bradstreet unites the children when she discusses how she worries over them, even more than she did when they were still in her household and under her care and supervision. She lists a variety of dangers that might befall them, fearing that in protecting them too much she has kept them ignorant

of the perils that might lie ahead of them. These fears are quickly allayed, however, as Bradstreet shifts to the topic of her own inevitable flight to "a country beyond sight." The poem concludes with the belief that in their tales of her and her love for them, Bradstreet "thus gone, amongst you I may live" (90).

For Discussion or Writing

1. As in her poem "To My Dear Children," Bradstreet anticipates her own death, writing of it in a very frank and open manner. How does her treatment of a topic that understandably must be difficult for her children to read, much less contemplate, differ in this poem from that in "To My Dear Children"? To what extent does the form of the poem account for this difference?
2. What insights into 17th-century domestic life might readers derive from reading this poem?

"Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House July 10th, 1666" (1666)

The tension between the substantial, material world and the spiritual realm is again enacted in this poem, yet another elegy, but this one for her house and belongings turned to ash. The other, less noticeable tension at play in this poem, the one that seems impossible to untangle in all her work, lies in the reconciliation of domestic identity with her identity as a poet. Ultimately, the two tensions are intertwined here. The domestic sphere, the house, the place of Bradstreet's duty as a Puritan wife and mother, is gone.

When Bradstreet grieves for her home, she mourns also her own identity as a woman in her culture and in her religion. This is evident in some of the most moving lines of the poem: "Under thy roof no guest shall sit, / Nor at thy table eat a bit." After cataloging many of the material objects that are also witness to marriage and family—the trunk, the chest—she arrives at this image of the absence of guests—hence, the absence of her hospitality and her ability to provide nourishment. The house is not only her "dwelling place"; its importance lies deeper than that, in Bradstreet's particular relationship to her complex identification with domesticity.

In her early poem "The Prologue," Bradstreet rejects the misogynist notion that she is better suited to traditionally female duties such as sewing than she is to writing. At the end of that poem, however, she privileges parsley or thyme, domestic herbs, over the laurel wreath thought, by men, to crown great poets. Later, in her "The Author to Her Book," she conflates the act of writing with child rearing and domesticity even further: She dresses the child-book in "homespun" cloth. The "needle" and the "pen" are at odds, in that the expectations prescribed to women counter those offered to men. But Bradstreet finds ways to embrace the paradox as unifying.

As in this poem's catalog of what will never happen in this house, one way to read this poem is through its absences and omissions, essentially in what remains unsaid. Note that there is no reference in the poem to any place where she wrote: no desk, no special table, and no ink bottle. Bradstreet includes places where she lay and sat, but the closest she approaches to discussing writing is in the couplet "No pleasant tale shall e'er be told / Nor things recounted done of old." Those are stories told, not poems, not books. A closer look at the poem's epigraphic subtitle, "Copied Out of a Loose Paper," is quite telling. Her beloved books, her own poems in progress, her pen, her ink, all are gone; hence, she must write the poem on "loose paper" and start again, perhaps through the writing of this poem that laments the loss of her domestic space.

Worthy of note is her husband's absence. He was in London at the time and writes in his diary that his father-in-law's library of 800 books was destroyed, and that his own books and papers were lost. Anne, on the other hand, wakened by the fire's "thund'ring noise," misses the furnishings, the comfort, the ability to provide for guests. This could be a strategic move to make the poem's speaker seem more common.

However painful the fire may be, for both poet and reader, Bradstreet's focus is on the lesson she must gain from tragedy. Here lies the poem's overt

tension. She moves from near personification of the beloved house to a litany of introspective questions accusing the speaker of caring too much for the things of this world. Ending on an affirmation of "that mighty Architect['s]" "house on high" that awaits her, the poet seeks—and in this case, finds—some comfort in her faith.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider the similarities between this poem and "The Flesh and the Spirit." In each poem, how is heaven portrayed in comparison to earth? Compare the dialogue in this poem between two sides of the self and the dialogue between the two sisters in "The Flesh and the Spirit."
2. Consider the importance of marking the date in the title of this poem and in the elegies to her grandchildren.
3. Compare Bradstreet's resolve to deny the things of the material world for the treasures of heaven with Mary White Rowlandson's view of her own losses after her and her children's captivity in *The Sovereignty and Goodness of GOD.*

"On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet, Who Died on 16 November, 1669, Being But a Month, and One Day Old" (1669)

This poem marks the loss of two grandchildren in fewer than six months. In three years Anne Bradstreet herself will die, but now she grieves for her third grandchild taken by death, this one "no sooner came, but gone, and fall'n asleep." The elegies for her granddaughters Elizabeth and Anne devote not more than two lines specifically to Christ or God; in this poem Bradstreet focuses much more on accepting God's will, or at least trying to accept it.

The dead children are represented by "three flowers." In each elegy, in fact, Bradstreet plants floral imagery: Anne is a "withering flower," while in the elegy for Elizabeth the poet modifies Shakespeare's famous sonnet: "Summer's lease hath all too short a date" becomes, in her elegy, "buds new blown to have so short a date." The baby Simon is blown "i' th' bud." Bradstreet rationalizes the senseless deaths by offering that they were "cropped by th' Almighty's hand; yet is He good." The semicolon after *hand* is significant. It marks a quick shift in perception, tone, and temperament. Referred to as a caesura, the abrupt division of the line seems too swift, too hasty. More tellingly, the word order of the second half of the line, "yet is He good," inverts the subject and verb when it is not necessary for the rhyme or meter of the poem; the line would sound the same either way. We invert subject and verb when we form questions. It is very possible that Bradstreet intends this not to be so much a sea change as an expression of doubt.

Throughout the poem she implores herself and the reader to accept God's will quietly and not question it. But this advice rings hollow—what she knows they should do, but not what she feels. This is especially apparent in the line "Let's say He's merciful as well as just." The poet could have used countless words to evoke certainty here, if that is what she was after; "let's say" could become "we know," for instance. But the construction as it is is more honest, more human. She knows they are supposed to say these things, but she still has trouble understanding God's mercy or justice in the deaths of these children.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How do you account for lines 5 and 6, "With dreadful awe before Him let's be mute, / Such was His will, but why, let's not dispute," given the presence of the poem? Is Bradstreet sincere in calling for silence and acceptance of God's will?
2. Compare the tone, imagery, and ultimate message in this poem with Bradstreet's other two marking the premature deaths of her grandchildren. In what ways are they similar? In what ways do they differ?

"As Weary Pilgrim" (1669)

Three years prior to her death, Bradstreet composed "As Weary Pilgrim," a contemplative poem

anticipating the ultimate end of all her "sins," "cares," and "sorrows" (20). As the poem opens, Bradstreet casts herself in the role of "weary pilgrim, now at rest" (1). The metaphor is an apt one because the Puritans referred to themselves as pilgrims once they arrived in America; by using this term, Bradstreet identifies the religious context for her poem as well as the conventional sense of the term, one who has journeyed. As does a bird, she "hugs with delight her silent nest," grateful for having all dangers in the "past, and travails done" (2, 6). Once again, the pilgrim metaphor operates on two levels: It represents the toils and strife that are humans' fate in a postlapsarian world, and it signifies the reflections of a person for whom death is nearer than life.

For Bradstreet's "weary pilgrim," life offers nothing more than suffering, psychological, spiritual, and physical. The second stanza represents the landscape itself as hostile: filled with a "burning sun," "stormy rains," "briars and thorns," and "hungry wolves." For the pilgrim anticipating the end of life, these antagonistic elements no longer pose a threat because "He erring paths no more shall tread" (11). The dangers of an earthly existence are identified as the results of treading a sinful path, or living a life of sin, which was considered to be an inevitability for Puritans given the fall of humankind with their expulsion from Eden. As further support for Bradstreet's link between suffering on earth and the sinfulness of the flesh, the second stanza concludes with the metaphor of diet: "Nor wild fruits eat instead of bread" (12). Readers should be attentive to the presence of the morally corrupt adjective *wild* as a descriptor of fruits as well as the marked absence of any adjective describing the bread. Bradstreet makes clear that the abandonment of the "erring paths" is intimately linked to abstaining from a diet of "wild fruits." The weary pilgrim is no longer tempted by the ways of the physical world, nor victim to its devices for suffering.

This theme of renunciation of the physical world for the spiritual gifts of the afterlife informs the remainder of the poem, in which Bradstreet, her "clay house mold'ring away," anticipates the day when the "corrupt carcass" is transformed into a "glorious body [that] shall rise" (22, 35–36). The resurrection of the body is a power reserved "by Christ alone" (38). Such a moment when "soul and body shall unite" becomes the poem's ultimate hope as it shifts from the early images of decay and suffering in a hostile environment to "lasting joys" that "ear ne'er hear nor tongue e'er told" (39, 41–42).

For Discussion or Writing

1. As Bradstreet does, Emily Dickinson imagines Death or Christ as a bridegroom in her famous "Because I Could Not Stop for Death." Compare the use of this characterization of either death or Christ in the two poems.
2. How does Bradstreet's anticipated spiritual deliverance relate to that of her fellow Puritan and poet EDWARD TAYLOR in "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor"?

"The Author to Her Book" (1678)

Responding to the publication of her book without her knowledge, Anne Bradstreet narrates the process by which her brother-in-law and minister—"friends, less wise than true"—planned to print the book in England. Through an extended metaphor, a conceit, she represents her book as a child. Addressing this child-book, this "ill-formed offspring of [her] feeble brain," heightens the stakes for a poet and mother in Puritan society, writing about poetry and child rearing in such a way that they are inseparable, hovering together as metaphor. Although the poem's conceit structure is influenced by the English metaphysical poets Bradstreet read, it differs greatly in subject. Bradstreet's ability to cast herself as the book's multifaceted mother, and to do so modestly, lovingly, and cruelly, performs feats of wit that rival any of her predecessors'.

Although the poet initially wants to reject the book for being prematurely published/born, hid-

eous, and deformed, she cares for it because it is hers: "Yet being my own, at length affection would / Thy blemishes amend, if so I could." She lovingly attempts to revise, noticing the way her alterations make matters worse. Aware of the uneven meter in her early poems, Bradstreet cleverly puns on the word *feet* in the line "I stretched thy joints to make thee even feet." As the poet dresses the book-child, she can find nothing but "homespun cloth," an image that connects domestic life to the act of versifying, comparing the cloth's weft and weave to the placement of lines and the use of language. They are inseparable. Unlike children raised in a home, however, this child significantly has no father, emphasizing the solitary act of writing by the female author. In the poem Bradstreet acknowledges that she alone has created something fatherless, imperfect, cherished, and worried over.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Do you see the poem's final act, sending the book-child out the door, as abandonment or as a release of the book back to the public? Is it an act of submission, or is it a recognition of the book as a separate, imperfect entity?
2. What role does Bradstreet envision for the poet or for the audience in this poem? How does this role differ in her poems directly addressed to her flesh and blood children such as "To My Dear Children" or "In Reference to Her Children, 23 June, 1659"?
3. Compare Bradstreet's sense of herself as a poet and the role that poetry should have to that of Sor Juana, who writes of herself as a poetess in "In Reply to the Gentleman from Peru."

"To Her Father with Some Verses" (1678)

As "The Author to Her Book" does, this poem employs a conceit to compare the relationship between Bradstreet and her father to financial indebtedness. The sonnet is tight and quick-moving, employing the language of finance used in the 17th century with words like *principle, yield,* and *stock*. It does not behave like an Elizabethan or Italian sonnet but is held together by the swift structure of heroic couplets, common to much of Bradstreet's poetry, every two lines rhyming together. The form is thus at odds with the poem's content because Bradstreet flouts the traditional structure of the sonnet even as the poem itself displays a very traditional sense of filial obligation. She seems to derive the sense of singularity that allows her to divorce herself from these traditional sonnet forms by focusing on her singularity in repaying her debt to her father: "Such is my debt, I may not say forgive / But as I can, I'll pay it while I live."

In the body of the poem, Bradstreet never alludes specifically to a father and a daughter; the title is the only part of the poem that tells its reader what kind of relationship the conceit represents (Rosenmeier 42). Bradstreet recognizes, from the beginning of her apostrophe to this man, the tremendous debt she owes to her father. He is "dear" to her in more ways than one: beloved and costly to repay.

Her characteristic modesty weaves its way through this poem, but it is more somber than in "The Prologue." Burdened with the awareness that her father's investment (spiritual, emotional, educational) in her has not paid off in the way she would have hoped, she questions her own worth. She feels she has squandered what he has given her; now it "amounts but to this crumb." Her "stock," her worth, is "so small" her only means of partial repayment is "this simple mite." Although not entirely clear, a reasonable interpretation of "this crumb" and "this simple mite" could be this very poem, this speck of verse that is anything but simple.

Aware, in the sonnet's turn, that she is the only one who can pay off her filial bond, she proclaims that it is a lifelong debt to continue paying until her death.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider why Bradstreet feels the debt will not be paid until she dies, rather than in the hereafter. How does this relate to other Puritan notions of filial obligation?

2. Compare Bradstreet's emotional debt to her father in this poem to the dynamic she reveals in "To the Memory of My Dear and Ever Honored Father."
3. Consider this poem in comparison to "The Author to Her Book," in which Bradstreet describes herself as "poor." How does this use of the language of economic status work for familial relationships or those that exist between an artist and her work?

"The Flesh and the Spirit" (1678)

The verse dialogue was quite popular among poets in Bradstreet's time. On the other side of the Atlantic, Andrew Marvell composed verse dialogues between the resolved soul and created pleasure, and between the body and the soul. There are parallels between their poems, notes the critic Wendy Martin, but "Bradstreet stresses the *pleasures* of eternity" (52).

Curiously, Bradstreet's experience with her own sick body only briefly enters into her dialogue between the flesh and the spirit, without acknowledging that in periods of illness she felt closest to God. In her poem both Flesh and Spirit are portrayed more through the desires that separate them and the pleasures offered by their respective realms. Flesh is the embodiment of desire and pride. There are pride and anger in Spirit, too, but she is a figure ever looking upward. Bradstreet seems mostly concerned with the interaction between the two figures and the rhetoric each uses to convince the other of the superiority of earth or heaven. They are complementary parts of the same whole.

It is important to note that the poem's speaker hears the conversation; rather than present the dialogue on its own, Bradstreet uses an intermediary party who listens in. Flesh and Spirit are two sisters, twins with different fathers: The father of Flesh is Adam, and the father of Spirit is God. They bicker. They fight. Spirit refers to Flesh's disingenuous nature: "Thou speak'st me fair, but hat'st me sore, / Thy flatt'ring shows I'll trust no more." Flesh, on the other hand, wonders whether Spirit's high-mindedness is mere hallucination, grasping "at shadows which are not." In short, they are typical sisters, with a bit more enmity between them than most.

Flesh berates her sister for having no substantial existence, for living on "Nothing but meditation." Her attempts to convince Spirit to enjoy the pleasures of the earth at first surprisingly refer to qualities many value highly: industry and honor. But these are tricks; industry has its rewards, and honor confers fame. In her answer, Spirit reminds her sister of all the times she tricked her in the past. She has sworn to defeat her. Wendy Martin explains that "in the Christian ethos," the battle between body and soul "is resolved only with the destruction of the body" (51), and Spirit desires to be the victor. Spirit's passionate description of heaven differs little in substance from the attempts Flesh makes to convince her sister to give in to secular pleasures. Both places are described in terms of this world: cities, gold, pearl, what can be gained there, beauty, sparkle, pleasure. Martin notes, "Her belief in heaven was actually a sublimated expression of her love of life on earth" (6).

For a poet so in love with this world, it is surprising that the struggle between the flesh and the spirit is easily won by Spirit, the figure who, once she defeats her sister, will be crowned, in her victory, with a laurel wreath, not parsley or thyme, the wreaths requested in Bradstreet's "Prologue." In this, her most assured presentation of Puritan ideology, the poet's reservations are evident.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare and contrast the values expressed in Bradstreet's "Prologue" and "The Flesh and the Spirit." How are earthly concerns portrayed? How are the skies portrayed?
2. How does Bradstreet differ from Edward Taylor in perceptions of the flesh?

"Before the Birth of One of Her Children" (1678)

Although Anne Bradstreet successfully gave birth to eight children, this poem is evidence of her very

real fear of death in childbirth, and the frequency of such deaths among 17th-century women. According to Rosamond Rosenmeier, "Since mortality rates for both mother and infant were high, the birth event was fraught with peril, but so too was it laced with significance. Prayer preceded sexual intercourse and accompanied the newborn into the world" (19). Given that the spiritual and physical importance of these events was so high, Anne Bradstreet seems the perfect author to intertwine them. Again, we witness the poet's complex integration of a female act with the traditionally male act of writing poetry. Strikingly, the poem reads as one written by a soldier going into battle, in effect the male equivalent, in mortality rate, of giving birth. In the form of a farewell letter, Bradstreet honestly speaks of those fears, "not," as Adrienne Rich observes, "from dread of what lies after death, but from the thought of leaving a husband she loves and children half-reared" (xvii).

Addressed to her husband, Simon, this poem points to a relationship of equals, the woman here wise and strong. She speaks with authority and bravery about death and tries to comfort her husband with her recognition of the grim situation they may face. Theirs is a relationship of equals, uncommon at the time. Her use of the term *friend* suggests partnership and true fondness. Worthy of note is the exclusion of men from the infant's delivery in the 17th century. Should she die, Bradstreet recognizes, they may not have access to each other beforehand.

Bradstreet asks her husband to "look to my little babes, my dear remains. / And if thou love thyself, or loved'st me, / These O protect from stepdame's injury." She pragmatically recognizes the possibility of remarriage. Customarily, Puritan widowers in New England did not live alone; her husband would—and did, after her eventual death—need the help of a woman in his home; the stepdame was as inevitable as death.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the ways children replace their absent parents in this poem and in "A Letter to Her Husband."
2. How does the kind of motherhood addressed here relate to the motherhood presented in "The Author to Her Book"?
3. Imagine Bradstreet's poem functioning in the same way as Hannah Webster Foster's advice to young women in *The Coquette* or *The Boarding School*. How do the two writers imagine roles for women across the span of a century in America? Are their ideas different across time? Does religion play such an important role for both authors in defining the position that women can and should occupy?

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" (1678)

Anne Bradstreet's love poems to her husband shine because they surprise her readers. Taking on the passionate forms of the Renaissance poets Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney before her, in writing love poetry to her husband she steps out of the boundaries set for Puritan women and sets foot in more masculine occupations. She subverts the roles prescribed to her. Another way these poems surprise, especially this one, is that they are poems rooted in marriage. Unlike Sidney and Spenser, Bradstreet celebrates a love that is attainable and continuous. In so doing, she refreshes the genre while still utilizing traditional constructions and well-worn tropes.

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" has a logic to it, an if-then construction. Each heroic couplet is its own logical unit in the argument the poem sets forth. If the first line of the couplet is about the husband's love for the wife, the second line will be also, and then the next line will switch back to the wife, each line building toward the poem's concluding "then" moment, when the speaker, part wife, part cavalier, reveals to the husband through reason that they should continue loving each other in order to find, through love, eternal life. It is a tightly ordered poem. Curiously, it is two lines away from being a full sonnet and seems somewhat incomplete.

As a cavalier poet does, Bradstreet compares notes with an audience, but it is an imagined audience of "ye women," not men. The common tropes

of "mines of gold" and riches are deployed but made new because the acts of mining or producing riches had previously been reserved for men trying to impress women. Tackling these tropes, as well as the love unquenched by a river, Bradstreet has the freedom to compose in New England the kind of poem men like Donne and Marvell write in her old England.

For Discussion or Writing

1. In this poem Bradstreet refers to a love she "can in no way repay." How does this debt differ from the one described in "To Her Father with Some Verses"?
2. The poem concludes with a move to life after death, guaranteed by their love. Compare this notion with the shift away from worldly pleasures suggested in "The Flesh and the Spirit." Which is closer to Puritan doctrine?
3. Compare the relationship Bradstreet has with her husband, as indicated in this poem, with Edward Taylor's courtship poem for his future wife, Elizabeth, entitled "This Dove and Olive Branch to You."

"A Letter to Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment" (1678)

Leading on, it seems, from the two-in-one premise set up in "To My Dear and Loving Husband," Bradstreet moves toward a poignant cry in "A Letter to Her Husband Upon Public Employment." Previously, that image served as exaltation of the couple's love, ultimately persuading the husband to "persevere" in their love. "A Letter to Her Husband," however, responds to a greater strain, her husband's lengthy absences from Ipswich to work in Boston, and her despair without him. Again we see the image of two as one, phrased as a reminder—"If two be one, then surely thou and I"—but now it is followed by a question of lament, rather than a celebration: "How stayest thou there, while I at Ipswich lie?" The two-as-one theme occurs again in "Another [Letter to Her Husband]." If two are one, Rosamond Rosenmeier suggests, then each member takes an equal part in the union (116). Bradstreet asserts her importance in the relationship, which makes these poems seem at once particularly modern for a woman, while also echoing the techniques and themes used by male poets in England, bravely presenting them through a female perspective.

In the two-verse "Letter[s] to Her Husband upon Public Appointment" Bradstreet's characterization of her relationship with her husband is at once spiritual and natural, acknowledging the physicality of their union. In the first, she portrays herself as the earth, and he as the sun, who, when he is away, benights her days, leaving her chilled in a frozen landscape: "My chilled limbs now numb lie forlorn." His absence, read through the metaphor of the zodiac, creates the winter (Capricorn), and his presence, as her sun, carries in the summer (Cancer). Some critics view the sun image as a pun on the Son, implying that their union is one sanctioned by Christ and that her husband is a guiding force in her life. Bradstreet also references Genesis with her final lines, "flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone," suggesting that their union is ordained by God, created by God.

But this comparison to prelapsarian Adam and Eve also conjures, quite literally, the reality of the flesh. It is through flesh that she remembers and welcomes her husband home. When he is away, she remembers him through their children, "those fruits which through thy heat I bore." Through this very frank recognition of the couple's sexuality and parenthood, Bradstreet conveys a recognition of the cycle of life and the gifts of the body. She sees in their children "true living pictures of their father's face." Likewise, in the image of the "glowing breast, / The welcome house of him my dearest guest," Bradstreet simultaneously addresses physical desire and the heart beating inside that breast.

The second letter to her husband presents the marriage as natural by comparing it to varied animal species' reaction to separation from their mate. By beginning with the image of the deer, she hearkens back to images of the hunt often used in 16th-century love sonnets written by men, such as Wyatt's "Whoso List to Hunt." But here, it is

the doe seeking out her buck, waiting, hoping to detect some sign of his return. She thus subverts the common, masculine trope, while also lamenting her husband's absence. Comparing her state to the mullet fish thought to leap, suicidally, to shore when her mate is caught, Bradstreet expresses a level of sorrow deeper than in the other marriage poems. She feels she "seem[s] no wife" without her husband's physical presence.

For Discussion or Writing

1. The last two lines of each poem have a different rhythm than those that precede them. Instead of five stresses, there are four. Why do you think Bradstreet crafts her poem this way? How does this rhythm affect the ending?
2. Small words like *here, there, where, thence,* and *hence* are very important to these poems. In their use, does Bradstreet ultimately conflate their separate meanings? In other words, do these repeated markers dissolve the difference between them?
3. John Adams and Abigail Adams spent several years apart while he was functioning as an emissary for the fledgling republic. Compare the letters between John and Abigail Adams with Bradstreet's "letter" to her husband. How do they imagine their relationship?

"In Memory of My Dear Grandchild, Elizabeth Bradstreet, Who Deceased August, 1665, Being a Year and a Half Old" and "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Anne Bradstreet, Who Deceased June 20, 1669, Being Three Years and Seven Months Old" (1678)

In her marriage poems and in these poems marking the death of her grandchildren, Bradstreet is perceived by contemporary readers to portray the role of loving wife and mother. But Puritan dogma warned that earthly love may distract the flock from their duty and love of God. Notes Wendy Martin: "Although they accepted the necessity of marriage, Puritans worried that conjugal love would tempt the married couple to lose sight of God. . . . Similarly, it was important not to love one's children excessively" (69). She cites Benjamin Wadsworth's treatise in 1712: "'Let this caution be minded, that they don't love inordinately, because death will soon part them'" (quoted in Martin 69). According to this ideology, Bradstreet loves too much the things of this world, and doing so constitutes a transgression.

By lamenting the loss of her grandchildren, Anne Bradstreet seeks some sense of reason for their departure, a lesson about attachment. Not only does poetry provide her the "outlet" that Josephine Piercy writes of, but we can see the poet's striving to come to terms with her grief and having trouble doing so. The poetic form of these poems is the elegy, whose purpose is to lament and "find consolation in the contemplation of some permanent principle" (Preminger 215). However, locating a sense of consolation proves difficult with each of these elegies. The lessons seem thin compared with the enormity of her grief.

One could say that the frequency of deaths among children in the 17th century may have necessitated the doctrine of not loving one's children too much, a protective measure against grief. Bradstreet's elegies present contemporary readers with the harsh reality of child mortality in the Massachusetts colony. But the poems are also significant because Bradstreet recognizes the tragedy of her condition: As her full life is nearing its close, her grandchildren are mown down, having barely lived. It goes against what is assumed to be the natural order of things.

The elegy for her grandchild Elizabeth takes its form as a sonnet with a complicated rhyme scheme. Most of the lines are ordered in iambic pentameter meter, which helps contain the poet's sorrow. All but one. In the final line, which attempts to confirm God's reason, which is beyond our earthly control, "Is by his hand alone that guides nature and fate," the rhythmic structure breaks down. Instead of the five-beat line structure of the rest of the poem, this final line has six stresses, and the meter is far less regular. In resigning the baby's death to the sphere of God and accepting his power

and control, Bradstreet displays uncertainty via the line's irregularity. It is as if the poet is trying to make herself believe that the religiously acceptable solution should dry her tears.

In the elegy for her grandchild Anne, the poet's grief is even more palpable in her images of mutability. She recognizes she has pinned hopes on "fading things" and likens the child to "a bubble, or the brittle glass, / Or like a shadow turning as it was." The bubble will burst, the glass so fragile it will break, and the turning shadow—her grandchild a mere shade, and then—one turn and she is gone. These lines deeply grieve for the child's absence as they mourn the transient, brittle nature of life on earth. The poet seeks consolation in the proximity of her own death, which will reunite them.

For Discussion or Writing

1. In both elegies to her granddaughters, Bradstreet uses the term *lent*. Discuss the different meanings of the term and how they contribute to the poem.
2. Compare the manner in which Bradstreet treats the deaths of her granddaughters to her treatment of that of her grandson in "On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet." Do her poems reveal gender expectations for them?
3. Cotton Mather attributes deaths to God's judgment in *The Wonders of the Invisible World*. How does his belief differ from Bradstreet's as demonstrated in these two elegies to her deceased granddaughters?

"To My Dear Children" (1867)

Some time near her death Bradstreet composed a short prose memoir in the form of a letter to aid her children in their spiritual development after her departure. It was published long after her death. Ever modest, Bradstreet provides an apology: "This was written in much sickness and weakness, and is very weakly and imperfectly done, but if you can pick any benefit out of it, it is the mark which I aimed at." This is the last sentence of the letter. Critics make note of the absence of the forceful zeal we find in other Puritan works. Bradstreet only wants her grown children to "pick any benefit out of" her letter. She is not aiming to change their lives or immediately save their souls. Rosamond Rosenmeier observes that "nowhere do we meet a jeremiad; nowhere does Bradstreet rail at her readers, even when her readers are family members to whom she is writing instructions about how to live their lives" (4). Bradstreet's own experience of doubt and affliction narrated in "To My Dear Children" is key to her understanding of struggle's role in the pilgrimage of any soul. The letter is a thoughtful and revealing work of prose and has proven to be one of the most important documents to help biographers and critics understand Bradstreet's life, childhood, theological outlook, and response to the New World.

Her memoir reveals the undecorated life examined. Here we are not witnessing a poet in her effort to maintain the measure of a line or adhere to form. Openly confronting her early doubts and afflictions, Bradstreet presents the source for her poems' patterns of observation or grief followed by resignation and acceptance. She finds a direct relationship through her life between affliction or hardship and what she views as deepening her relationship with God:

> Among all my experiences of God's gracious dealings with me, I have constantly observed this, that He hath never suffered me long to sit loose from Him, but by one affliction or other hath made me look home. . . . I have no sooner felt my heart out of order, but I have expected correction for it.

Every hardship and illness is a "correction" for turning away. Seen through this lens, the hasty lessons provided in her elegies become perhaps more understandable; she is trying to come to terms with loss that she interprets as a divine lesson. This is symptomatic of the Puritan notion of the elect: that they are God's chosen people, so they must be the ones most guided by God. However, Bradstreet imagines that her Puritan contemporaries' experience of the divine is more complete: "I have often been per-

plexed that I have not found that constant joy in my pilgrimage and refreshing which I supposed most of the servants of God have." At least she is honest.

Her honesty in this letter sinks deeper than what any other Puritan would admit. She confesses her doubt, "many times by atheism how I could know whether there was a God." She then convinces herself of God's presence through observing the ordered beauty of the earth and seasons, "the daily providing for this great household upon the earth." Bradstreet also discloses her early doubts of the Puritan elect. She asks, "Yet why may not the Popish religion be the right? They have the same God, the same Christ, the same word. They only interpret it one way, we another." These doubts reveal the mind of an independent thinker. Although she casts herself as "an untoward child" of God, she conveys throughout this letter a sense of self-examination, awareness, and introspective theology.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Bradstreet interprets the act of writing this letter as going through the labor of birth again. Contrast this idea to the final sentence of the letter, and discuss how freedom plays in her understanding of her role in her children's lives.
2. How does the poet's presentation of heaven and hell in this letter compare to those conveyed by the Puritan fathers such as John Winthrop?

"For Deliverance from a Fever" (1867)

In this poem, published posthumously, Bradstreet ultimately praises God for his redemption of her, drawing heavily on the Puritan interpretation of the body's illness. Because Puritans were ever alert for signs of God's grace or disfavor as indications of an individual's position as a member of the elect, illness took on a spiritual dimension. One was not merely ill, but rather being punished by God or else being given the opportunity to search one's soul and purge oneself and one's body of the evils associated with the flesh and with life on earth. Bradstreet opens the poem with this double sense of illness in the third line when she refers to "pains within and out." One could interpret this description of her illness both as the physical agony she endured and as the spiritual crisis she underwent.

Bradstreet draws upon Puritan belief by casting these physical symptoms within a spiritual light: "Beclouded was my soul with fear / Of thy displeasure sore, / Nor could I read my evidence / Which oft I read before" (9–10). The term *beclouded* is worthy of mention because it is a visual and thus physical means of describing something that exists beyond the material world. A beclouded sky is a sky crowded by darkening clouds; Bradstreet uses this visual image to explain how her fear overwhelmed her soul, an intangible and invisible aspect of her. This fear was so great that it rendered invisible the link between the physical (her illness) and the spiritual (the state of her soul), thus the line "Nor could I read my evidence." Perhaps the fear of God's "displeasure sore," or more specifically the anxiety that stems from the belief that her illness might be a harsh sentence from God, causes her to lose the ability to consider the spiritual implications of her fever.

In her documentation of the prayers and pleas she offered to God during her illness, Bradstreet certainly gives evidence of the interpretation of her illness as a means of purging her body of its evils. Bradstreet refers to the illness as a trial, a test of her faith: "Though know'st my heart, and hast me tried" (15). She repeats the very pleas for healing that she offered up while ill, and they are for her soul, for the very source of her spiritual salvation. "O heal my soul . . . though flesh consume to nought" (17–18). Tellingly, despite her prayers for her soul and her praise of God's mercy, Bradstreet does not directly mention spiritual renewal but instead the termination of her corporeal pain and suffering. Bradstreet writes, "Thy rod Thou didst remove / And spared my body frail" (21–22).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Bradstreet's spiritual view of illness with Cotton Mather's as evidenced in *The Wonders of the Invisible World,* which recounts the Salem witch trials. How do the two writers address the Puritan connection between the physical and spiritual realms?

2. Unlike in other poems, in this poem Bradstreet employs direct quotations to represent her interactions with God. How do these reported prayers differ from the poem as a whole, which can be viewed as a prayer of deliverance?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON BRADSTREET AND HER WORK

1. Several of Bradstreet's poems address the issue of personal tragedy, whether it be an illness, the loss of a house, or the loss of a loved one. Examining a few of these poems together, what conclusion might you draw about how Bradstreet copes with loss? How do her views of loss relate to the Puritan belief that one should shun aspects of worldly existence in favor of the rewards of heaven?
2. Bradstreet is a lone female voice in early American poetry. How does she cast herself as a writer in her poetry? To what extent are her poems limited by the restrictions placed on women?

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Laurie Clements Lambeth

Charles Brockden Brown
(1771–1810)

Of all the forms of injustice, that is the most egregious which makes the circumstances of sex a reason for excluding one half of mankind from all those paths which lead to usefulness and honor.

(*Alcuin: A Dialogue*)

Born on January 17, 1771, to Quaker parents in Philadelphia, Charles Brockden Brown grew up in a liberal household filled with books. Because of his poor health, he was oftentimes indoors during his childhood and expressed an early penchant for writing essays and poetry. Writing would be the dominant force in Brown's life, which he referred to as a means of expressing a "soaring passion and intellectual energy" (Watts 2). His father, Elijah, and mother, Mary Armitt Brown, enrolled him in the Friends Latin School at the age of 11, and he studied with Robert Proud. Six years later, at the age of 17, he graduated.

Because Quakers were opposed to college education, Brown honored his parents' request and worked for six years in the law offices of Alexander Wilcocks. Brown vented his frustration over his obligation to study a career that he deemed to narrow his intellect: "I should rather think that he can only derive pleasure, and consequently improvement, from the study of laws, who knows and wishes to know nothing else" (Watts 32). However, he ultimately disappointed them when he decided not to pursue a legal career (Korobkin 723). He explained to his family about his moral objections to working in a profession that would have him defending guilty parties or furthering unjust causes.

Although Brown did not pursue a career as a lawyer, the critic Laura Korobkin believes that Brown's legal work significantly informed his fiction writing. More specifically, Korobkin argues that Brown's familiarity with the law shaped *Wieland,* not only in its meditations on questions of judgment, but also in its very structure of Clara's functioning as both a lawyer and a witness. The legal cases presented in Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* and Sir Geoffrey Gilbert's *The Law of Evidence* create the foundation for Brown's fictional treatment of the laws of evidence and the fallibility of eyewitnesses and their testimony (Korobkin 724–725). Many critics believe Brown drew on the gruesome tale of James Yates, a religious fanatic who under God's guidance killed his wife and four children in 1781, as the basis for *Wieland*. The law and its processes of determining truth and guilt would be the topic for other novels that attempted to plumb the psychological depths of its characters such as Arthur Meryn and the deceitful Welbeck.

In 1787, at the age of 16, Brown began the first of what would become a series of efforts undertaken throughout his short life to cultivate and support the talents of budding writers. This first endeavor, called the Belles Letters Club, sought to foster and support the literary talents of its members. When he delivered the keynote address for the club, Brown spoke of reason as "the authority which exerts over obedience" but insisted that it needed to be tempered by "the invigorating influence of the fancy" (Watts 29). His biographer Steven Watts believes

that Brown's advice regarding the balance between reason and fancy was quite personal. According to Watts, Brown was prone to "attention-seeking, despairing outbursts [that] seem to have become an emotional habit by his early twenties" (52). These feelings of despair affected his writing, as he repeatedly boasted to friends about various literary projects that he would begin and then promptly abandon (Watts 52, 78). In his correspondence, Brown first addresses the concept of a divided self, a private versus a public, that would manifest itself in his first novel, *Skywalker* (Watts 79). Brown's letters also reveal the deep anxiety he suffered around writing. Of the young writer's emotional vacillations, Watts writes that "Brown's frustrated psychological energy, literary commitments, and desire for social success comprised a coiled motivational spring. Its release powered a tremendous outpouring of fiction during the last two years of the century" (80).

When Brown left Philadelphia and moved to New York in 1796, he relied upon the introductions made by his dear friend Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith. Smith had met Brown in his hometown of Philadelphia and suggested that when Brown moved to New York, he consider joining a group of liberal-minded individuals called the Friendly Club. The chief pastime of the Friendly Club was to discuss the works of many of the radical authors of his time, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin's *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* (Ringe 19). Aside from the friendships Brown made through this club, he could rely upon the playwright William Dunlap, who would later write the first biography of Brown, to offer him support in launching his literary career. Indeed, the combined support of these two close friends, Dr. Smith and Mr. Dunlap, encouraged Brown to write his first book, *Alcuin: A Dialogue,* which advocated women's rights (19). Smith was Brown's publisher for this two-part text that appeared in April 1798.

Both Brown and Smith fell ill with yellow fever, contracted from an Italian physician who lived briefly in Smith's home. Dr. Smith's exposure proved fatal. Brown's good friend Dunlap provided him with a place to mourn their mutual friend's death, as well as recover from the fever. Remarkably, in that same year (1798), Brown published *Wieland* and seems to have written most, if not all, of *Arthur Mervyn*. The following year he began publishing and editing the *Monthly Magazine and American Review*. In the same year, Brown renamed the magazine *The American Review and Literary Journal,* and it remained in print under this new title until 1802. In the following year, he published two political pamphlets opposing the Louisiana Purchase. These notable pamphlets gave him the kind of public attention that he had previously failed to garner for his literary works. In this pamphlet, Brown assumes the persona of a French counselor of state who writes to Napoléon about the strategic and economic advantages of the Louisiana territory (Ringe 130).

In that same year (1803), Brown launched a new periodical, the *Literary Magazine and American Register*. In his "Editor's Address to the Public," he proclaimed the goals of his work: "In ages like this, when the foundations of religion and morality have been so boldly attacked, it seems necessary . . . to be particularly explicit as to the path which the editor means to pursue. He therefore avows himself to be, without equivocation or reserve, the ardent friend and willing champion of the Christian religion . . . [and] shall scrupulously aim at the promotion of public and private virtue" (reported in Watts 155–156). The morally ambiguous eponymous character, Arthur Mervyn, seemed a figure of the past in Brown's dedication to promoting and publishing works that contained moral virtues. His often anthologized short story "Somnambulism, a Fragment," first appeared in this new magazine in 1805. In that tale, the narrator finds himself lacking the kind of self-control that Brown earnestly pursued in his own life and in his courtship of his future wife, Elizabeth. Watts traces the arc in Brown's politics from "youthful utopian radical to stodgy middle-age conservative" (25). These political positions, Watts believes, follow the national trends as America transitioned from its days as an early republic into a nation shaped by a rising bourgeois and the emergence of liberal capitalism (25).

At the turn of the century, in 1800, Brown began his courtship of Elizabeth Linn, a woman

to whom he would be engaged for over four years. Once again, Brown's Quaker upbringing stood between him and his desires. Elizabeth's family was devoutly Presbyterian, and they did not look fondly on the prospect of their daughter's marrying a man of a different faith. Indeed, the Brown family's Quaker beliefs, which include pacifism, caused them to be briefly removed to Virginia during the American Revolutionary War on the false charges that Brown's father was sympathetic to the British. Nevertheless, Brown worked assiduously to make himself beloved by Elizabeth's family, and he succeeded. Their extended courtship made him close to every member of the Linn household, especially to Elizabeth's brother, John. As testament to his closeness with John, Brown published "Sketch of the Life and Character of John Blair Linn" in 1805, a year after the death of his brother-in-law, as an introduction to Linn's poem *Valerian* (Ringe 130). Perhaps the most telling example of Brown's closeness with the Linn family occurred on their actual wedding day. Elizabeth's father, who was a Presbyterian minister, performed their wedding ceremony on November 19, 1804 (Watts 148, 154). Brown's parents made their displeasure at the union known by remaining absent from the wedding. The Quaker meeting in Philadelphia censured Brown because of marrying outside his religious faith (Watts 154). Despite this controversy, however, Charles and Elizabeth appear to have had a very happy, albeit short marriage. In their five years together until his death in 1810, Elizabeth gave birth to four children: twin boys in 1805, their son Eugene in 1807, and their daughter Mary in 1809 (Watts 154).

Because of his deep interest in the unconscious, Brown's influence on the American renaissance writers Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne is easily recognized. In fact, Poe himself praised Brown's work. In his lifetime, he had written sentimental fiction, gothic novels and fragments, historical reports, editorials, and countless letters to family and friends. Some critics believe that he is remembered more for those figures of the American renaissance whom he influenced and who succeeded him; others believe that in his sudden burst of literary talent and energies, he produced intriguing tales that continue to engage readers. On February 22, 1810, Charles Brockden Brown died of tuberculosis. He was only 39 years old.

Wieland (1798)

Brown's gothic tale of infanticide and patricide, aided by religious fanaticism and the practiced arts of a rogue, is in many ways a meditation on the unforeseen impact that people's actions can have on others.

Told retrospectively from the diary of Wieland's sister, Clara, this novel is an American gothic tale of extraordinary events that befall one family after its encounters with Carwin. The novel opens with a tale of the patriarch, who is nearly maniacally taken up with his own sense of sin and desire for constant study of Scriptures. Although the father does not belong to any organized religion, he does remain faithful to his own form of worship, which involves spending the Sabbath in an outdoor church of sorts. It is this outdoor site that proves a source of mysterious power and ultimate madness and death for the family. While he is attending his own private worship, members of the family see a bright light, hear the discharge of a gun or cannon, and hear the moans of their father. He appears mangled, somewhat in shock, and delivers what seems to be a half-truth of the source of his injuries. A few days later, he dies.

Wieland himself hears the voice of his wife, Catherine, telling him that he is wanted back at home. Wieland's dear friend and brother-in-law Pleyel also learns from the disembodied voice of his sister that his beloved, Baroness Theresa de Stolberg from Germany, has died. Wieland's sister hears voices, too, that sound like murderers plotting her death from her nearby closet. Wieland and Pleyel, however, are awakened from their slumber and rush to her aid not because of anything that she said or did, but because they hear a voice warning them to awake and aid one of their own who is dying. The same voice of the murderer who suggested running her through with his sword awakens her as she sleeps outdoors near a stream on the family

property. This time, the voice repents its previous designs for her murder and warns her to stay away from the exact location for fear of death. The voice intimates that her fate, should she divulge this warning to anyone else or should it be unheeded, will be similar to her father's.

A bedraggled stranger, whom Clara spots wandering near her home, produces an uncommon reaction in her. She finds herself crying and unable to keep the man's face out of her mind. Indeed, she feels compelled to commit it to memory by drawing a portrait of him. Even the portrait seems to exude some unexplained power over her. When she shows it to Pleyel, he playfully promises to discover who this man whom Clara has clearly fallen in love with is. While in a coffeehouse in town, Pleyel espies Carwin, having known him previously when the two met in Spain. Although a native of England, Carwin had taken a Spanish surname, converted to Catholicism, and declared that he would live out his days in his newly adopted country. Carwin assiduously deflects all of Pleyel's inquiries into Carwin's current habiliment as a rustic and his return to America.

Carwin quickly becomes a frequent visitor to Wieland's house, and once they feel comfortable enough in his presence, they begin to recite the tales of disembodied voices heard by Wieland, Pleyel, and Clara. To their surprise, Carwin does not appear disjointed or shocked by their tales; rather, he becomes an animated and gifted storyteller, weaving tale after tale of similar extraordinary events eventually attributed to human agency rather than to God or some supernatural phenomenon.

When Carwin appears in Clara's closet near midnight and vaguely threatens to rob her of her virtue, Pleyel believes Carwin and Clara are lovers. As he approaches the house at night, he hears what he takes to be the voices of Carwin and Clara, which are really just a trick of Carwin's ventriloquism. The next morning, Pleyel upbraids Clara for what he imagines to be the loss of her virginity to such a fiend as Carwin and informs her that he is known to be a thief and a murderer. While Clara goes into town to plead her innocence to Pleyel, Wieland goes to Clara's abandoned house and is visited by a veiled specter, who orders him to take his wife to the house in order to kill her. When his servant gives him a packet of letters, Pleyel flies for Europe. Only after the deaths of Catherine and her children does Clara learn from her uncle that Pleyel fled to Europe in search of his love, Baroness Theresa de Stolberg, who had reported her own death in order to conceal herself in her pursuit of Pleyel in America.

The novel reaches its dramatic peak when Wieland, hearing voices that he believes to be divine, agrees to take his wife to Clara's empty house and murder her. Their children soon follow as victims of Wieland's madness. In courtroom testimony, Wieland calmly relays the tale of bloody murders by characterizing his actions as sanctioned by God. While confined, Wieland twice breaks out of his shackles and travels to the houses of Clara and Pleyel, intent on completing his sacrifices to God.

Wieland escapes from custody and arrives at his sister's house, intent on fulfilling his "divine calling" and adding her to the list of the dead. Just prior to his arrival, Carwin confesses to Clara his powers of ventriloquism and his morbid curiosity in determining how virtuous and brave she was, as well as plumbing the depths of Wieland's religious fanaticism. When Wieland threatens Carwin, he makes a hasty retreat, and Clara is left alone with her mad brother. Carwin returns to the house and hurries upstairs, where he speaks to Wieland as if he were the disembodied celestial voice who first bid him to sacrifice his family. Carwin commands Wieland to return to a rational state, recognize that he alone is responsible for the murders of his family members, and desist in his current plans of killing his own sister. Briefly restored to himself, Wieland grabs the penknife that Clara had recently been holding and stabs himself in the neck.

The novel concludes after a three-year break in which Clara and her uncle have moved to Montpellier and been joined by Pleyel, after the death of his wife, the baroness. Clara also relates the story of how Louisa Conway was orphaned. As Carwin affected her own family, Louisa's parents, the Stuarts, were likewise unduly influenced by a malevo-

lent character named Maxwell, who, failing in a duel against Louisa's father, contrived his revenge by attempting to seduce his wife, Louisa's mother. In order to flee Maxwell's influence, and the loss of her reputation, Louisa's mother disguises herself and travels with her daughter to America. Clara concludes that people should be cautious about the amount of influence they allow another person to exercise over them; had this admonition been heeded, she argues, Wieland, his wife and children, and both of Louisa's parents might all be alive.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the undue influence Carwin and Maxwell exercise in *Wieland* to characters in the short fiction of Poe and Hawthorne. Can you trace Brown's influence on these later writers?
2. Many critics consider *Wieland* an attack on rationalism. How might you explore this reading of the novel in your own essay?

Edgar Huntly (1799)

In his preface to this tale, Brown consciously adapts the "gothic castles chimeras" of European literature to fit the "native of America": "incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the Western wilderness." As such, he draws deeply on the American landscape to narrate a psychological tale of an insane murderer whose appearance, nationality, instincts, and natural dwellings and haunts make him the outsider of American civilization and thus present, along with gray panthers and American Indians, the dangers lurking on the edges of the newly formed republic.

Edgar Huntly journeys farther and farther into the wilderness, leaving the vestiges of domesticity (his uncle's home and the home of their neighbor, Inglefield) in pursuit of a madman whose wild nature young Edgar believes himself capable of taming. The source of Clithero's atavism seems to be the murder, in self-defense, of his beloved Clarice's father, and the subsequent death, by shock and heartbreak, of his patroness and the sister of the murdered man. Once Edgar learns the circumstances surrounding these two deaths, he follows his own compulsion to absolve Clithero of his overwhelming guilt and remorse, in the hope that he can rehabilitate him into society.

Critics have commented at length on Brown's detailed and romantic incorporation of the American landscape in his gothic tale of murder, stating that Edgar's frequent forays into the unknown wilderness surrounding his rural village mirror his psychological plumbings into the motivations of Clithero, a figure who symbolizes the dangers of a reversion to a life lurking on the periphery of civilization and its hallmark, domesticity. Edgar begins to resemble the object of his curiosity and his daily musings (Clithero) when he sleepwalks, waking to find himself deep within a pit, fitted only with a shirt, pants, and a tomahawk. His act of "going native" occurs when he kills the gray panther also occupying the pit by throwing the tomahawk at its skull, and this act is confirmed by his escape from the pit only to find himself among four "brawny and terrific figures," whom he does not at first correctly identify as American Indians. The occasion transports Edgar back to the murder of his own parents at the hands of American Indians in the last of the Indians wars and to a larger history of race relations in the region of Norwalk, where Edgar and his uncle reside.

He murders an American Indian by lodging his tomahawk in the man's chest, rescues a female captive, and finds himself wholly disoriented as the two effect an escape through an unknown landscape: "No fancy can conceive a scene so wild and desolate than that which now presented itself" (chapter 18). These actions—deliberate attacks upon symbols of the American version of the gothic—appear necessary for Edgar Huntly's return to the civilized world and for the conclusion of the novel.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How might you compare Brown's characterization and use of American Indians with that of James Fenimore Cooper?
2. How does the tale of Edgar's rude education in the wilderness compare to Natty Bumppo, Cooper's protagonist in the Leatherstocking Series?

Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793 (1798–1800)

As the novel takes place while a pestilence rages in the city, it is not surprising that its chief motifs are charity and human compassion in the face of certain death and adversity. On multiple occasions, Arthur is the recipient of charitable acts. Indeed, the novel opens as Arthur Mervyn, suffering from yellow fever, is miraculously rescued and nourished back to health by an unnamed narrator and his wife. Soon after his departure from his paternal roof, Arthur gains employment and residence with a wealthy man named Thomas Welbeck. Later in the novel, the hardworking farmer, Mr. Hadwin, gives Arthur room and board in exchange for his labors on the family farm. Even Colvill, the manipulative schoolmaster who seduced Arthur's sister and precipitated her suicide, is not without compassion. As Welbeck informs Arthur, Colvill took him in and nursed him back to health. When Arthur hazards his own life to search for Susan Hadwin's fiancé, Wallace, in the city, he is taken in and given food and a place to sleep by a neighbor living next door to the house where Wallace was recently employed.

Yet, just as much as the novel provides readers with multiple examples of human charity and compassion, it also includes the stuff common to the gothic genre—hidden motives, dying requests, treachery, seductions, and theft. When the family friend Wortley visits the narrator's house and reveals that he met Arthur before, the narrative quickly switches to the voice of the titular character, who tells of his flight from his parental home after the death of his mother and his father's unseemly marriage to a woman of low character. A simple lad from the country, Arthur is repeatedly duped by people, including the calculating Thomas Welbeck, who takes him in under the pretext of employing him as an amanuensis.

The second volume, published in New York in 1800, tests the reader's faith in and reliance on eyewitness testimony, as the narrator's friend, Mrs. Althorpe, begins to relate an entirely different tale of Arthur's childhood, his relationship to his stepmother, and the circumstances under which he left his paternal home. Thus, in the figure of Arthur Mervyn, Brown introduces readers to a potentially unreliable narrator who might prove guilty of being "a tissue of ingenious and plausible lies" as his accusers testify. Because his marriage to Achsa Fielding, an older European Jewish woman, calls into question Arthur's proclaimed affinity for Eliza Hadwin and a moral life, the critic Emory Elliott argues that it purposely "send[s] the reader back, with a new skepticism, to the beginning of Arthur's testimony" (144).

Dr. Stevens admits that had he read or heard Arthur's tale, he would not have believed it, "but the face of Mervyn is the index of an honest mind" (218). The degree to which Stevens trusts and defends the accused to "maintain his faith in humanity" reflects Brown's sense of the psychological aftermath of the Revolutionary War (Watts 160). His setting of Philadelphia during a yellow fever epidemic is emblematic of "the mercenary world of post-Revolutionary America" (160). In such difficult times, Arthur must try to adapt; the reader, too, must devise a more nuanced system for analyzing characters like Mervyn who surpass the black-and-white limitations of "guilt" and "innocence."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Arthur Mervyn mentions Benjamin Franklin as an author whose books he has read, and Charles Brockden Brown expressed an admiration for the founding father. How might you compare Franklin's autobiography to Mervyn's own narrative of moving from the country to the city, and from rags to riches? Is the comparison favorable or critical?
2. Critics have debated the true nature of Arthur Mervyn. Provide textual evidence in favor of his innocence and his guilt. What conclusion might you draw from your findings about the protagonist or life in postrevolutionary times?

"Somnambulism, a Fragment" (1805)

Although "Somnambulism, a Fragment" was published anonymously in the *Literary Magazine and American Register* in 1805, many critics and schol-

ars of Brown believe that it is his own work and base their belief on Brown's use of a somnambulist in his novel *Edgar Huntly* as well as Brown's common practice of supplying some of his own prose to the magazine when editions were found short. The tale opens with a fragment from a Vienna Gazette covering the tale of a "young lady shot dead upon the road" and the evidence that pointed to a youth who committed the crime "while asleep, and was entirely unknown to himself." Thus, Brown provides readers with the essential plotline of the story in order that he might dispense with these more conventional narrative techniques and focus instead on the psychology behind his young protagonist, Althorpe. As the tale goes, Althorpe makes several unsuccessful attempts to woo an already engaged woman staying at his uncle's house, a Miss Constantia Davis. His desires to accompany Miss Davis and her father during a nocturnal journey are also thwarted as neither father nor daughter subscribes to the level of danger and alarm that the protagonist feels, admittedly inexplicably, about their proposed journey. When Althorpe wakes the following morning, he learns from his uncle that Miss Davis was indeed shot the previous evening, just as Althorpe's dream portended, and the story ends with her death at the local doctor's home.

For Althorpe the evening concluded with him in a "profound slumber," waking the following morning with "images [that] were fleeting and transient but the events of the morrow recalled them to my remembrance with sufficient distinctness." When recollecting his memories of the previous night's dreams, Althorpe inverts the roles he and others played in real life. In his dreams, "his ideas were full of confusion and inaccuracy." All he recollects, he states, is that his efforts to protect Miss Davis were futile. Thus, most of his dream was taken up with pursuing the guilty, whom he imagines to have worn "an artful disguise." Readers familiar with the psychology of dreams or the workings of the subconscious would see in this phrase an indirect admission of guilt by Althorpe. He terminates his chase of the guilty party with a physical attack that "terminated his career with a mortal wound." Rather than avenge the murder of Miss Davis, however, Althorpe's actions actually cause her murder. His combined love for Miss Davis and mortification that she is engaged to another manifest themselves in this ultimate act, in which he interprets killing her as avenging her death at another man's hands.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Brown's employment of sleepwalking in "Somnambulism" and *Edgar Huntly*. How do these moments of somnambulism forward the tale's plots? To what degree do they provide insight into the psychology of characters?
2. How does Brown's tale compare to Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," in which another criminal functions as the narrator of the tale?
3. One possible figure suspected of the murder is Nick Handyside. How does this character compare to the unlikely character of the Hessian warrior involved in Washington Irving's "Legend of Sleepy Hollow"?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON BROWN AND HIS WORK

1. Charles Brockden Brown incorporates the unconscious in nearly all of his writings. Compare two of his works and draw conclusions about his use and sense of the unconscious. Is it like a separate character? How does the use of the unconscious comment upon questions of free will or determinism?
2. Brown incorporates unreliable narrators into his tales, particularly in "Somnambulism" and *Arthur Mervyn*. Reviewing these two texts, consider the position or positions that readers must take when they cannot entirely rely upon the narrator's perspective. What larger arguments or statements might Brown be making about reality and truth through his use of the unreliable narrator?

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William Cullen Bryant
(1794–1878)

Weep not that the world changes—did it keep / A stable, changeless state, 'twere cause indeed to weep.

("Mutation")

William Cullen Bryant, one of the "fireside poets" or "schoolroom poets" of early America, is best known for such poems as "Thanatopsis," "To a Waterfowl," "The Prairies," and "The Death of Slavery." However, any account of his literary achievements must also acknowledge his work as editor in chief of the *New York Evening Post* for almost 50 years. In this position, Bryant wrestled with the most important social issues of his time, such as slavery, states' rights, and free speech.

As a youth, Bryant loved the outdoors and reveled in the natural beauty of his family residence in Cummington, Massachusetts. The influence of nature's fragility and terror is witnessed in Bryant's poetry describing aspects of New England. He has been called "the American Wordsworth" for his reflective nature poetry akin to that of William Wordsworth in Great Britain (Wortham 281). When the adult Bryant rebelled at the demands and crowds of city life, he bought a family home on Long Island in 1843, and this historic residence called Cedarmere is still open to the public today.

His early family life was important for Bryant's personal and intellectual development. At the age of 10, he was translating Latin poetry. His father, Dr. Peter Bryant, was a medical doctor who encouraged his son to achieve and helped to provide a good education, but Dr. Bryant died young in 1820. William Cullen Bryant's mother, Sarah Snell Bryant, who happened to be a descendant of *Mayflower* pilgrims, was an industrious housekeeper who taught her children that "if you are never idle, you will find time for everything" (qtd. in Brown 10). Bryant later praised his mother's "excellent practical sense" and "sensitive moral judgment" (qtd. in Phair 92). Affirming the youth's talents, his first poem was published in 1807, and his politically satirical poem "The Embargo" was published in 1808.

Placed in a sophomore college class at age 16 as a result of his careful preparation in foreign languages, Bryant began study at Williams College in 1810 (Peckham 13). At college he participated actively in a literary society, for these groups were the center of all social life at colleges in early America (Peckham 15). However, Bryant was at Williams for less than one year. He returned home with hopes of attending Yale University, but there were inadequate funds. Instead, it was decided that Bryant would work in the legal profession as a way to earn a living. In 1811 he began studying the law in a lawyer's office in order to prepare for admission to the bar (Brown 51).

While continuing to compose poetry, Bryant completed his legal training in fewer than four years (Brown 71). For instance, he wrote "The Yellow Violet," a poem about flowers that, in a style that would prove typical for Bryant, described the flower but also offered a moral or lesson (Brown 72). He may also have composed "To a Waterfowl"

in 1815 during the months before beginning his legal practice, and since its publication in 1818, "To a Waterfowl" has always been honored as an important American poem.

By 1817 Bryant, who had never been enthusiastic about being a lawyer, was already dissatisfied with the job. He did practice law from 1816 to 1825 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts (McLean 13). Ultimately, despite his leaving the legal profession, Bryant's training in this area provided him effective background for engaging in the civic issues of his time as a newspaper editor. After 1817 the favorable response to his poem "Thanatopsis," first published in the *North American Review,* inspired him to try a different line of work for which he felt himself better suited—editing and writing for a magazine or newspaper. Because it was Bryant's father who submitted poetry to a literary journal on behalf of his son, there was some confusion about the authorship of the poem. Bryant finished revising "Thanatopsis" to his satisfaction in 1821 (Brown 102).

The year 1821 was an excellent year for Bryant, both personally and professionally. He published *Poems,* a book of only 44 pages but superior quality (Brown 101). He delivered a long poem, "The Ages," at the Harvard College Commencement (McLean 13). Bryant knew he had literary talent, but he was nervous about entering the literary field full-time and actually became ill with nervousness about writing and presenting the Phi Beta Kappa poem for Harvard (Brown 97–100). Also in this banner year, Bryant married Frances Fairchild, beginning a happy union that lasted until her death in 1866. Their first child, also named *Frances* and known as *Fanny,* was born in 1822.

Bryant's acquaintance with the novelist CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK, with whose brother Charles he had roomed in college, was among the meaningful literary connections Bryant sustained throughout his life. In his 1825 review of Sedgwick's novel *Redwood,* Bryant praised the book for elevating America's "national character" at home and abroad. He called for literary traditions based on native materials, saying that U.S. writers should "show how the infinite diversities of human character are yet further varied by causes that exist in our own country" (250). The previous year, Sedgwick had mentioned Bryant as a man of high reputation who could contribute to the new "native literature" as well, and she in fact had dedicated *Redwood* to Bryant (Brown 112, 118).

Bryant's friendship with Catharine Sedgwick began in 1820, when she asked him to contribute hymns for an anthology. Although he was a member of the Congregationalist Church, Bryant had been raised Calvinist but was no longer strict in his denominational affiliation, so he provided five hymns for the Unitarian songbook (Brown 93). The hymns and Bryant's other poetry suggest that Bryant believed in eternal life and the basic tenets of evangelical Christianity, although he ultimately became a Unitarian (McLean 66). The Sedgwick family encouraged Bryant to relocate to New York and find his fortunes in writing in the metropolis (Brown 120; Peckham 74–79). By 1825 Bryant was in New York to work as junior editor.

In 1825 he was hired as coeditor of a literary gazette, which went through several mergers and name changes before closing in 1827 (Phair 3–5). Bryant then decided to take a more practical course of employment in journalism rather than in literature. In 1826 he joined the editorial staff of the New York *Evening Post.* In 1829 he became the editor in chief, succeeding William Coleman in that role, and he held the editor's position until his death in 1878 (Peckham 219). Bryant invested himself both financially and personally in the *Post,* and he did not avoid the business end of it, demonstrating that a poet can be pragmatic in his professional life. One remark in a private letter is often quoted: "Politics and a belly-full is better than poetry and starvation" (qtd. in Brown 168).

Nevertheless, Bryant did not relinquish poetry or aesthetics. In 1832 he published another volume, called *Poems,* which the *North American Review* described as "the best volume of American poetry that has yet appeared" (qtd. in Phair 170). The poem "To the Fringed Gentian," composed in 1829, is among his important poems from this period. In 1842 he published *The Fountain and Other Poems* and continued publishing poetry

throughout his editorial career. The recent critic Thomas Wortham says of Bryant's poetry that his "reflections on human mortality and the transience of all things are countered by a liberal faith in the sanctity and benevolence of progress" (281).

Appreciation of Bryant's cultural contexts requires understanding Bryant's position as one of the "fireside poets." This is an academic designation also including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and James Russell Lowell. A "Fireside poetics" includes the ideas that poetry played a beneficial role "in the world of human affairs and sympathies" and that creating a national American literature was important (Wortham 286). The name relates to the idea of expressing in verse "ancient, hearthside truths, [and] eternal verities" (Wortham 286). An exemplary text of the fireside poets, Whittier's 1866 poem "Snow-Bound," establishes the fireplace as a symbol of "an intimate community" that "reflected national habits" and common values (Sorby 37). Fireside poets were representative, not rare creative artists, because their works "typified values and desires that in the minds of thoughtful men and women in the nineteenth century were synonymous with culture or civilization" (Wortham 286). The works of the fireside poets comforted the listener or reader, as did the work of Robert Frost in the early 20th century. They are also sometimes called schoolroom poets because their works were often studied in school, memorized, and given as recitations by American schoolchildren (Sorby xiii).

In Bryant's poetry and literary criticism, he promoted nationalism and individualism for American literature. In an 1818 article for the *North American Review,* Bryant criticized the trend toward poetic imitations of European styles. He supported and tried to compose uniquely "American" poetry—for instance, he depicted plants and animals found in America, not Europe—although, because of the difficulty of categorization, critics have differed about how unique, quintessentially American, or brilliant Bryant actually was. His works were considered such American "classics" even in the 1870s that they were chosen to "authorize" the opening of an important new magazine for youth, *St. Nicholas* (Corby 74). Bryant also admired and was a friend of James Fenimore Cooper, famed writer of the Leather-Stocking Tales, including *The Last of the Mohicans,* one of very few early American authors who was close to earning a living through creative literature, and a novelist who built his career on characters and landscapes particular to the United States.

In addition to Bryant's accomplishments and recognition as a poet, most of his time from the 1830s until his death in 1878 was devoted to the practices of editing a daily newspaper. As editor of a major paper like the *Evening Post,* Bryant "wielded enormous influence in regard to the civic and political questions of his many days" (Wortham 280). These diverse issues included slavery, sectionalism, the national bank, currency stabilization, the creation of Central Park, the need for prison reform, labor rights, copyright laws, and freedom of the press (McLean 21–22). Bryant did not seek to enter politics, preferring to stay outside elected office and to be an advocate for the good of the people through journalism, and he even repudiated suggestions in 1872 that he should run for president.

Bryant's editorial participation in the cultural debate about slavery and abolition demands particular attention. While he expressed disapproval of slavery as early as 1820, in the 1830s as an editor, he was not immediately actively calling for the end of all slavery in the nation. As did some other cultural leaders of the time, Bryant erroneously thought that slavery would inevitably expire by itself but should not be extended into newly acquired territories (McLean 89–90). In an 1833 editorial in the *Evening Post,* he supported the Colonization Society, which sought to return slaves to Africa, and he "feared that antislavery agitation would produce violence and divide the Union" (Brown 215). But a series of events made him realize that a free American society was gravely threatened by the existence of slavery within its boundaries. Among the legal issues were the Fugitive Slave Law, the Missouri Compromise of 1850, the move to annex Texas, the martyrdom of the abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, and the censorship of mail. He began writing ardently against slavery.

Bryant's principled stance against slavery hurt the finances of the *Evening Post,* as some advertisers withdrew their business. In 1847 he placed the following slogan above the masthead of the editorials: "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Trade, and Free Speech," the beliefs of the Barnburner wing of the Democratic Party (Brown 330). He supported the Wilmot Proviso, which would forbid extending slavery into new lands (Brown 339). By 1849 Bryant was actually hated in the South because of his editorials against slavery.

However, Bryant had also been giving newspaper space to the Southern perspective, such as by reporting on the speeches of politicians and reprinting proslavery editorials (Brown 344–345). Bryant remained affiliated with the Democratic Party because it still honored several of his basic tenets—"states' rights, free trade, and freedom from government interference in the private affairs of the people" (Brown 359). Despite complaints that the *Evening Post* was erasing its previous stance against slavery, Bryant wrote that the newspaper still opposed slavery but considered that there were multiple issues at stake (Brown 360). By 1854 Bryant had left the Democratic Party finally, and the newly formed Republican Party became the gathering place for antislavery advocates. Furthermore, in 1855 the conflicts between free settlers and slaveholding settlers in Kansas made people realize that party label by itself did not mean as much as actions.

Despite his preferred candidates' not winning the presidential election of 1856, Bryant editorialized on the duty of antislavery advocates to work through their state legislatures, even if the president and the Congress would not help them (Brown 386). In the Supreme Court Dred Scott case, Bryant disagreed strongly and publicly with the decision, arguing that the Constitution was violated. Bryant continued to be an antislavery advocate and in 1860 championed the cause of electing Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of the United States. After Lincoln's election, Southern states began seceding from the union, and Bryan declared "Peacable Secession an Absurdity" (Brown 421). While supporting the Union cause in the Civil War, Bryant and the *Evening Post* also criticized President Lincoln when necessary; for instance, in 1862 Bryant's editorials faulted Lincoln for not pursuing the war more aggressively and for not being strong enough for the cause of abolition. The 1866 poem "The Death of Slavery" is a nationalistic denunciation of slavery with criticism of the people who had defended the immoral institution and might still oppose freedom even after legal emancipation of formerly enslaved persons (McLean 107). The poem "The Death of Lincoln" includes the stanza "Thy task is done; the bond are free / We bear thee to an honored grave / Whose Proudest monument shall be / The broken fetters of the slave."

Although Bryant's editorial rhetoric demonstrates how fiery he could become, some readers of Bryant's poetry, in his own era and today, have characterized him as too calm and self-collected, particularly when contrasted to the exuberance associated with Walt Whitman or Edgar Allan Poe. For instance, James Russell Lowell's satirical poem *A Fable for Critics* in 1848 characterizes Bryant as "a smooth, silent iceberg" because "He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on." Of course, Lowell's including Bryant among the authors lampooned also indicated the importance of Bryant as a poet. After the anonymous publication of *A Fable for Critics,* critics began commenting on the question of whether Bryant was actually an "iceberg" in style and temperament (Phair 176). But even if it is true that Bryant contained his energies and acted rationally, Judith Phair is among those who suggest that "there was a great deal of heat beneath the icy demeanor" (6). For instance, he had a quick temper in his youth, and Bryant's editorials "attest to the editor's ability to write both eloquently and feelingly about the condition of mankind" (Phair 8).

Bryant published few statements about his own work, preferring to let his life speak for itself. In 1851 his "Reminiscences of the *Evening Post*" focused on policies of the paper and identified him with the publication. In 1876 the poem "A Lifetime," written in quatrains, presents his life as a series of orderly vignettes. Family had remained very important for the editor. He enjoyed married life with Frances and told his daughters of how

much her insights had mattered to him: "I never wrote a poem that I did not repeat to her and take her judgment upon it. I found its success with the public precisely in proportion to the impression it made upon her" (qtd. in Bigelow 193). His second daughter, Julia, remained unmarried and accompanied her father on many of his travels abroad. Bryant's elder daughter, Fanny, married in 1842, somewhat against her father's initial wishes; her husband, Parke Godwin, was a well-known writer and became an early biographer of William Cullen Bryant in 1893.

Near the end of his career, Bryant's translations of Homer's *Iliad* (1870) and *Odyssey* (1871) were well received. Critics stated that this English translation was significant for American literary history and was "the most truly poetic," possessing "the noble simplicity of Homer" (Phair 178–179). In the 1870s Bryant was heralded by one critic as forming, along with James Fenimore Cooper and WASHINGTON IRVING, "the early triumvirate of American literature" (Phair 45). His last major poem was "The Flood of Years" (1876), which can be read as more conventionally religious than his early works and as "an answer to the religious doubt expressed in the great poem of his youth, 'Thanatopsis'" (Brown 515). His very last poems, in the year of his death, included one about the birthday of George Washington and one about the Spanish author Cervantes (Brown 515–516).

After Bryant's passing in 1878, other authors appreciated his important qualities and his contributions to American letters. They consistently noted Bryant's "love of nature, loyalty to the democratic way of life, and rugged integrity" (McLean 134). Walt Whitman wrote admiringly of Bryant in *Specimen Days* as "pulsing the first interior verse—throbs of a mighty world—bard of the river and wood, ever conveying a taste of the open air, with scents as from hay fields, grapes, birch-borders" (qtd. in McLean 135). It is for William Cullen Bryant's poetry about nature and mortality, as well as for his committed work as an editor of the *New York Evening Post,* that he would be remembered into the next century and beyond.

Amy Cummins

"Thanatopsis" (1814, 1817, 1821)

Some controversy exists over the actual date on which Bryant wrote "Thanatopsis," with some critics placing the date as 1811 and William Cullen Bryant II arguing persuasively for 1813, the same year as an epidemic in Massachusetts, the death of his young friend's bride, and his disappointment upon learning that his father's financial standing prohibited him from entering Yale College. In either case, Bryant was rather young at the time, either 18 or 20. What critics all agree upon is the means by which the poem came into print: his father, discovering it, recopied it and submitted it to the *North American Review,* where it was published. The critic Robert Ferguson agrees with other scholars who recognize in Peter Bryant's actions the father's desire to put into practice the very principle he himself lived by: a balance between vocation and literature (442).

As the poem opens, Bryant introduces the reciprocal dynamic between humans and nature available "to him who in the love of nature holds / communion" (1–2). Such a sympathetic understanding permits Nature to "glide / Into his darker musings, with a mild / And healing sympathy, that steals away / Their sharpness, ere he is aware" (5–8). Bryant's notion here renders Nature as a knowing friend who has the ability to dull one's depressive or morbid thoughts, even without one's being conscious of the friend's effort. Such a power renders humans at the mercy of Nature, who exercises unknown and unseen influence. Given Nature's gift for soothing troubled minds, the narrator next suggests that readers given over to thoughts of death should "go forth, under the open sky, and list / To Nature's teachings" (14–15). They should avail themselves of the lessons that Nature makes available of how the dead become one with the earth and are indistinguishable from the elements.

Lest the reader fear a lone return to the earth after death, Bryant's narrator assures him or her that he or she will exist in "one might sepulcher" with "the powerful of the earth—the wise, the good" (37, 35). Its breadth, spanning from the "Barcan desert" to the Oregon, demonstrates the expansiveness of

this communal tomb. Critic John Scholl explains that Bryant uses *Barcan* because of the heralded trek of his neighbor, General Eaton, through 600 miles of desert in Barca to meet with Hamet Pasha, the sovereign of Tripoli (248). "Oregon," Scholl believes, appears because it was the original name of the Columbia River, which became famous in 1807 when tales of Lewis and Clark were published (248). The whole world functions as a tomb, as "all that breathe / will share thy destiny" (60–61). Bryant's treatise on death is to consider it a common fate of all humanity, and to recognize that the world is filled with those "that slumber in its bosom" (50).

Cognizant of the common fate of all, including "the speechless babe and the gray-headed man," the narrator encourages his readers to "live" so that when death arrives, it will seem to be a final sleep: "like one who wraps the drapery of his couch / about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams" (80–81).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider why critics, and Bryant himself, might concern themselves with the actual date when "Thanatopsis" was written. Why might it matter?
2. Bryant's poem looks to nature to soothe his concerns about an impending death. How does it compare to the lessons PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU offers in "The House of Night"?

"The Yellow Violet" (1814, 1821)

Numbered among Bryant's most honored poems, "The Yellow Violet" likewise appears during the period when the poet unhappily followed the career of a lawyer. In the personal tensions Bryant experienced as a lawyer between 1811 and 1830, critics locate the material and emotional depths that formed his creative voice as a poet. Robert Ferguson is so bold as to declare all poems written by Bryant after 1830 lesser, as they mark the period in which the poet exhibits a "growing serenity of tone and mood that robbed the later poetry of urgency and strength by removing all possibility of conflict" (435). Agitated by a successful but unsatisfying position as a lawyer, Bryant, according to Ferguson, writes poetry that reveals those anxieties, harnessing them in the service of emotionally resonant verse. Such a poem, Ferguson states, is "The Yellow Violet," which appeared in 1814.

As with most of Bryant's nature poems, this one begins with a description of the natural setting, and the object of the poem within it. At the beginning of spring, "when beechen buds begin to swell," Bryant witnesses the "sweet flower" "alone in the virgin air" (6, 8). The violet distinguishes itself for its early bloom, which occurs in the "sunless" month of April and precedes the more colorful and audacious flowers that appear the following month. Unlike the "loftier flowers [that] are flaunting nigh," the yellow violet "peeps from the last year's leaves below" (20, 4). Despite its demure nature, Bryant, ever the observant traveler in the woods, notices this flower, which "stayed my walk" (22).

However, Bryant admits that despite his notice and celebration of the yellow violet, "midst the gorgeous blooms of May / I passed thee on thy humble stalk" (23–24). The appearance of these other colorful but unnamed blossoms creates a marked contrast in Bryant's treatment of the yellow violet; originally "bathed . . . in [the sun's] own bright hue," it is soon after lessened in the poet's esteem: "slight thy form, and low thy seat" (15, 17). While the flower undoubtedly remains the same, the change in the environment in which Bryant sees it drastically shifts his valuing of it. He recognizes the moral lesson contained in his own capriciousness by comparing it to the abandonment of early friendships by those fired by worldly ambitions: "So they, who climb to wealth forget / The friends in darker fortunes tried" (25–26). Countless biographers and critics alike remark on these lines as emblematic of the shift in Bryant's life from a desire to continue his education as a "man of letters" to his pragmatic choice of law and later journalism as his career paths.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Trace the Calvinist sentiments expressed in the poem.

2. The poem concludes with the resolution to remain attentive to the violet despite the distractions of other more showy and visible flowers. What larger message does Bryant convey with this conviction?
3. Philip Morin Freneau's "The Wild Honey Suckle" also singles out a particular flower and creates a moral or lesson around it. Compare the two poems and their lessons. Are they particularly American? Why or why not?

"To a Waterfowl" (1815, 1818, 1821)

Because "To a Waterfowl," one of Bryant's most celebrated poems, appeared with an article written about his friend the landscape painter Robert F. Weir's painting *An Autumnal Evening,* critic William Cullen Bryant II believes other critics have been confused regarding the circumstances surrounding the poem's genesis (183). When the article on Weir appeared in the *New York Mirror,* it was accompanied by Bryant's poem, quoted in full (184). As Bryant II remarks, it would be incongruous for a wild goose to scan the landscape for a summer home while in the middle of a Massachusetts winter (183). This brief controversy or misunderstanding aside, Bryant's poem was immediately celebrated by the famous British poet and literary critic Mathew Arnold as "the best short poem in the English language" (reported in Bryant 181).

In the poem, Bryant opens by wondering about the destination of a solitary bird he spies in flight. By beginning the poem with such a question, he sets for himself and the reader the same mood of inquiry and uncertainty. Thus, from the first stanza through the final one, in which the narrator has discovered "the lesson thou hast given," the narrator is looking to Nature to provide guidance and insight (27). Certainty arrives in the fourth stanza when the narrator declares, "There is a Power whose care / Teaches thy way along that pathless coast" (13–14). By capitalizing *power,* the narrator gives the impression of a source outside but controlling nature. Whether this power is God or Fate, it has the ability to "teach" along a "pathless coast," meaning that it instructs even when there seems to be no evidence of its presence or its influence. And yet, the wild goose's flight itself serves as proof or evidence of this higher "Power."

Bryant's description of the landscape for this lone bird's flight bears discussion, as his attention to American territory is a hallmark of his poetry. The sky itself appears as a hopeful but also awe-inspiring element that is "illimitable" (15). The infiniteness of the very element that the bird travels in calls to mind the need for a "power whose care" guides it (13). The bird's own tireless flight is another source of inspiration in the poem as the narrator remarks, "all day thy wings have fanned . . . yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land" (17, 19). The bird's quest seems to drive it onward in the "cold, thin atmosphere" as the promises of "a summer home, and rest" constitute its just reward (18, 22). Having witnessed the bird's flight until it is no longer visible, the narrator retains the image and its meaning "on my heart" (26).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Briefly explain Bryant's line "lone wandering, but not lost" (16). What is its meaning? How does it contribute to the poem's tone?
2. Given the confusion about the poem's inception, what role might the seasons play in the poem's meaning? Does it matter that the goose is searching for a "summer home" "midst falling dew" in "the last steps of day"?
3. What is the lesson learned from observing the bird in flight? How does this lesson compare with that in "Thanatopsis"?
4. Consider Freneau's "On the Religion of Nature" and compare the two poets' conclusions about the relationship between nature and religion.

"To Cole, the Painter, Departing for Europe" (1829)

Thomas Cole, a close friend of Bryant, wrote in "Essay on American Scenery" of the American landscape's being "destitute of many of those circumstances that give value to the European"

(reported in Ferguson 433). As a member of the Hudson River school of painters, Cole was committed to the preservation and depiction of those aspects of nature characteristic of an American landscape. Cole's value for the American character of the natural setting was also embraced by Bryant, who wrote to his brother John, advising him about the need to write from experience and observation: "Let me counsel you to draw your images, in describing Nature, from what you observe around you. . . . The skylark is an English bird, and an American who has never visited Europe has no right to be in raptures about it" (reported in Ferguson 433). Thus, Bryant considers the flora and fauna of America to be a central and commanding difference between the new nation and its European ancestors. He lauds Cole's "glorious canvas" as a testimony to the beauties of America's natural world: "lone lakes—savannas where the bison roves — / Rocks rich with summer garlands—solemn streams— / Skies, where the desert eagle wheels and screams—" (5–7). In cataloging these particular images of America, most especially the desert eagle and bison, Bryant follows his own advice to his brother and celebrates those very animals inherent to the native landscape. Notice also that aside from an occasional animal, the landscapes are solitary.

He admits that "fair scenes shall greet thee where thou goest" but undermines the beauty he imagines Cole to encounter in Europe with his use of adjectives to describe the two lands. America is "our own bright land," but in Europe the scenes are "different" not only because of traces of humankind throughout, but also because "life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air" (3, 10, 12). Rather than offer a list of the natural beauties to be found in Europe, Bryant instead remarks on the evidence of continual human occupation: "everywhere the trace of men / paths, homes, graves, ruins" (10–11).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Bryant emphasizes the "wildness" inherent in an American landscape that contrasts it sharply with European scapes. How does this notion of wilderness compare to Freneau's "The Wild Honey Suckle"?
2. In what ways is the poem specifically addressed to his friend Cole or to fellow painters? How does the poem address the visual element that is the purview of painters?
3. Cole's landscapes, as detailed by Bryant, are void of a human presence. The observer in paintings is, naturally, outside the frame, viewing from a museum wall or some other man-made space. How does this dynamic of unpeopled space and human observer relate to Bryant's casting of his narrative presence in "Thanatopsis," "The Prairies," and "To a Waterfowl"?

"The Prairies" (1832, 1833)

In his initial description of the prairies as "the gardens of the Desert," Bryant imagines them an oasis, a place set apart from its surroundings. The sense of isolation and exceptionalism continues as he pictures "the encircling vastness": "Lo! they stretch / In airy undulations, far away" (6–7). Their sheer expanse is reminiscent of an "ocean," especially with the motion of "surface rolls" brought on by the wind.

When Bryant contemplates the source of this wind, however, the poem begins to shift from a timeless and geographically vague locale to a landscape rich with history. Bryant imagines the "breezes of the south," and their origins: "ye have played / Among the palms of Mexico and vines / Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks / That from the fountains of Sonora glide" (18–21). Thus, Bryant imagines a ripple effect of the common winds that blow south of the United States' border, to include Texas, which was still a territory of Mexico although it would become a republic in just four years. The geographical remoteness of these southern climes is all but erased as he witnesses the breezes' effect on the prairies.

The sense of a historic past, however, becomes more immediate as he "think[s] of those / Upon whose rest [his horse] tramples" (38–39). As in "Thanatopsis," Bryant imagines the landscape to

be a common grave, but rather than its holding the people of his generation, he considers the bones of "the dead of other days" interred in the ground beneath his horse's hooves (40). These people, who predate the American Indians, are described as "mound-builders," who were coterminous with the Greeks and their erection of the Parthenon (60, 50). In imagining their lives upon the landscape, before the "red man came," Bryant gives to America a hoary past to rival Europe's (58).

The conflict between white men and red men is also chronicled in the poem with the tale of a captive man who marries a native woman, "yet ne'er forgot—the wife / Of his first love, and their sweet little ones / butchered" (83–85). Thus, the landscape is witness to scenes of brutality and events that prove the fleeting and helpless nature of humankind. Just after this tale, Bryant mentions the removal of the American Indians to a place "nearer to the Rocky Mountains," "a wilder hunting ground" (92–93). Also absent from the prairies are the bison and the beaver. All seem to have abandoned this landscape for remoter climes in response to "the sound of advancing multitude" (116).

Despite his awareness and chronicling of the various animals and peoples who have inhabited and will inhabit the prairies, Bryant is able to return to the solitary contemplations originating in the poem's initial lines. With the appearance of a "fresher wind," "I am in the wilderness alone" (123–124).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Ferguson believes that "Prairies" "begins as a description of that setting but becomes an imaginary political history of the region" (448). Reread the poem for evidence in support of Ferguson's interpretation.
2. How does the expansiveness of Bryant's "Prairies" compare to the democratic sweep characteristic of Walt Whitman's poetry? What are the political feelings animating the two poets?
3. What might be the source of the wind that "breaks my dream" and places the poet "in the wilderness alone"?

"To the Fringed Gentian" (1847)

Bryant dedicates his poem to a rare but beautiful flower located primarily on the eastern seaboard. The fringed gentian was not only the subject for Bryant's poem, but also has been celebrated in verse by Emily Dickinson and Henry David Thoreau. Its rarity stems from its deep blue color and its appearance in November, a time at odds with nature, which is then in the throes of winter. Bryant recognizes the flower's bloom as an incongruous source of life in surroundings that portend winter and death: "when woods are bare and birds are flown / and frost and shortening days portend / the aged year is near his end" (10–12). The flower's appearance in autumn serves as a reminder and an assurance that there can be hope in the most dismal of circumstances, such as those represented by the surrounding woods.

In isolation, and amid harsh and uninviting conditions, the fringed gentian "doth thy sweet and quiet eye / look through its fringes to the sky" (13–14). In this anthropomorphizing of the flower, it appears coquettish, as though its "fringes" were eyelashes or the ends of a veil concealing a young woman. Its demure nature is also inconsistent with the supposed heartiness of a plant that must sustain itself in the rigors of late fall and early winter. And in this image, the incongruent life amid death and decay, the beautiful source of inspiration and hope in wintry climes, and the singular flower unaccompanied by violets or columbines, Bryant finds sympathy with his own condition. The flower, in its almost unearthly blue tint, seems in sympathetic relation to the sky from which it receives its name. Bryant describes the shocking blue of this flower with the term *cerulean,* a reference both to a pigment first introduced in 1821 and to the Latin root word *caeruleum,* meaning "sky" or "heavens."

In the final stanza, Bryant opines that the flower's bravery will inspire him when "the hour of death draw near to me / Hope, blossoming within my heart" (18–19). As with the image of the solitary flower, blooming in nearly impossible conditions, Bryant aspires to find hope within his heart as he approaches his own death.

For Discussion or Writing

1. As "Thanatopsis" does, Bryant's "To the Fringed Gentian" links observations in nature to thoughts on mortality. How is death represented in the two poems? Does it matter that one poem narrows its subject to a particular species of flower while the other writes of nature in general?
2. Read Dickinson's "God made a little gentian" and compare its treatment of the bloom to Bryant's. What larger theme does each poet tether to the fringed gentian?
3. Bryant's two famous poems occasioned by particular flowers, "To a Fringed Gentian" and "The Yellow Violet," both expand out from the individual blossoms, which function as symbols of larger issues impacting the narrator and humankind in general. To what extent, however, do the poems offer a different approach to nature, or to the position humans hold in nature?

"Abraham Lincoln" (1865)

Written in iambic tetrameter, Bryant's elegy for President Lincoln expresses a national voice, mourning in chorus, for the fallen leader. Unlike the sweeping line length employed in "The Prairies," "To a Waterfowl," and "Thanatopsis," Bryant's adherence to this poetic form renders short, compact lines to mirror the poem's brief sketch of Lincoln. The opening stanza celebrates Lincoln for his even-tempered nature during a time of war: "slow to smite and swift to spare" (1). Bryant places Lincoln as a calm and just presence juxtaposed against the unmentioned, but nevertheless present, chaos that was the Civil War. Rather than bearing a weapon of war, Bryant renders Lincoln's a "sword of power," wielded by one "in the fear of God" (4, 3). Thus, Lincoln's participation as president during internecine war seems less as a military leader involved in the violence and more as a religious-minded figure who exercises his power judiciously.

The second stanza expressly takes on the collective voice of a nation in mourning, describing how "we" witness the president's coffin and "speak the anguish of the land" (7). The chorus of mourners "shook with horror at thy fall" (8). But Bryant does not dwell so much on the nation's loss as on the gift of freedom Lincoln gave in proclaiming the freedom of the nation's enslaved. This is the topic of the poem's third stanza, which imagines the Emancipation Proclamation as having been the president's crowning glory, and now "the proudest monument [which] shall be / The broken fetters of the slave" (11–12). Critics mention how Bryant, in his role as editor of the *New York Evening Post,* encouraged Lincoln to free the slaves. His voice was influential with the president, as these same critics note his position as adviser to Lincoln on matters of cabinet appointments (Ferguson 432; Spivey 99–103).

The critic Robert Ferguson argues that Bryant's "insistence upon a direct link between poetry and the welfare of the Republic also meant far more was at stake than Wordsworth's desire to give immediate pleasure. The private poet was a public teacher for the nation's good—and, inevitably, answerable to it" (445). In the poem's final stanza, Bryant seems to accomplish the poet's civic duty by valorizing Lincoln and the values he died in protecting. He concludes the poem by placing the fallen leader "among the noble host of those / Who perished in the cause of Right" (15–16).

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Bryant's elegy for the fallen president compare with Whitman's? How do the two poets imagine Lincoln's role in the nation and its future without him?
2. Where do you locate the emotional resonance of the poem? Is it national pride or mourning? What effect does the form of the poem have on its content?
3. How does Bryant treat Lincoln's death in this poem versus his contemplations of death in "Thanatopsis"?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON BRYANT AND HIS WORK

1. One of the most notable quotations from Bryant is "Politics and a belly-full is better than poetry

and starvation." In it, Bryant seems to pit politics against poetry as if the two were adversarial or mutually exclusive. Keeping this quotation in mind, write an essay in which you examine two or three of Bryant's poems about nature. Where or how might you identify Bryant's politics in the poems?

2. Bryant is often known as one of the fireside poets. Using the definition of this group provided in the biography section of this entry, explain why Bryant does or does not belong to this group. Be sure to reference lines and concepts from his poetry specifically in your response.

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Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca
(1490–1556)

> Speaking among themselves, they said that the Christians were lying, because we had come from the East and they had come from the West; that we healed the sick and they killed the healthy; . . . that we coveted nothing but instead gave away everything that was given to us and kept none of it, while the sole purpose of the others was to steal everything they found, never giving anything to anybody.
>
> (*Relación*)

Born in 1490 in Jerez de la Frontera, an Andalusian town, to Francisco de Vera and Teresa Cabeza de Vaca, Álvar was the family's fourth son (*The Account* 11). Both parents had ancestors who had distinguished themselves by their participation in colonial or Reconquest events. His paternal grandfather, Pedro de Vera Mendoza, was involved in the conquest of the Canary Islands, while a relative on his maternal side had received the honor of grand master of the Order of Santiago for his part in the Reconquest, a 600-year-old conflict with the Moors for control over the Iberian Peninsula (11–12). Cabeza de Vaca's surname originates from an ancestor on his mother's side who was granted the unusual honorific for loyal service rendered to the Spanish Crown during the Reconquest. Martín Alhaja provided King Sancho of Navarre with a secret passage up to the Sierra Morena, which he marked with a cow's skull. By using this unguarded trail, King Sancho and his soldiers were able to summit the mountain without detection and gain a necessary advantage over their enemies, the Moors (12). In fact, the battle, known as Las Navas de Tolosa, was "the most decisive battle in the Reconquest." In acknowledgment of his loyal service, Martín Alhaja and his descendants received the noble title Cabeza de Vaca, which translates literally as "cow's head." The fame associated with the appellation was ample reason for his parents to bestow such a weighty surname on him. His deeds would more than demonstrate his worthiness of the distinguished family name.

At the age of 21, Cabeza de Vaca joined the military and was sent to Italy, where he fought in the Battle of Ravenna the following year on April 11, 1512. His bravery on the battlefield of a conflict that resulted in French withdrawal from Italy was rewarded with his promotion to lieutenant (*alférez*) in the city of Gaeta (12). His military service continued the following year (1513) in the city of Seville. While serving as aide to the duke of Medina-Sidonia, Cabeza de Vaca was instrumental in defeating the Comunero Revolt against the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (who, as Charles I, was King of Spain) (12). What biographers know next in the military man's life occurs seven years after his involvement in overthrowing the Comunero Revolt. On February 15, 1527, he received the appointment of king's treasurer by Charles V and was assigned to Pánfilo de Narráez's expedition (12). What followed was a nine-year ordeal in present-day Florida, Texas, and northern Mexico (Sinaloa) in which the conquistadors diminished in numbers because of a hurricane, rough seas, desertion, and warfare with the native population. Cabeza de Vaca documented the events of the failed expedition, together with his seven-year captivity, in his *Relación,* which also bears the title *Naufragios* (shipwrecks).

Contemporary critics regard Cabeza de Vaca as one of the earliest proto-Chicano writers in North

America. Juan Bruce-Novoa, for example, notes his success at cultural syncretism, or the blending of two seemingly incongruous cultures: the European and the indigenous (14). Because this is the nature of the Chicano, who is shaped by the intersection of these very same cultures, Bruce-Novoa imagines Cabeza de Vaca as initiating a history of literature for Chicanos that predates the English colonization of the eastern seaboard (4). Cabeza de Vaca, in his multiple roles as explorer, captive, Christian, healer, and trader, functions as an intermediary between the two cultures, an interpreter, and a figure who attempts to bring about peaceful coexistence and cultural exchange (14). Critics are quick to point out how this explorer differentiates himself from all the others because of his intimate familiarity with the tribes, their customs and languages, and, based on this knowledge, his estrangement from his own people, fellow conquistadors, who do not share his view of Amerindians. In remaking himself, "as neither native nor foreigner, but a mixture of the two," Cabeza de Vaca predates such quintessentially American figures as BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (Bruce-Novoa 17).

When Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain in 1537, after recuperating in Mexico City, where he was welcomed by Hernán Cortés, he was one of four survivors of the Narváez expedition, which originally included 500 men. His hope was that Charles V would reward his service by granting him command of a second Florida expedition, but, as the history books tell us, this honor went to Hernando de Soto. Although de Soto offered to include Cabeza de Vaca in his voyage to Florida, the latter demurred, probably because of ideological differences. De Soto was a soldier, with a famed military history, and it is supposed that Cabeza de Vaca feared that he would face constant opposition from the conquistador in the humane treatment of Amerindians. The recently returned explorer also refused Charles V's offer of an expedition to explore the northeastern part of North America. Instead, Cabeza de Vaca received a patent from the king in March 1540, which bestowed upon the conquistador the title of *adelantado* (a title reserved for conquerors and discoverers) and the governorship of the South American province of Río de la Plata (a region extending from Peru to the Straits of Magellan). He embarked on a five-month voyage in November of the same year for Santa Catarina in Brazil, as expedition leader of a crew of four ships. Rather than follow the sea route to arrive at Asunción, Paraguay, Cabeza de Vaca set out on foot for a 1,000-mile trek. With 250 men and 26 horses, he traveled from November 2, 1541, to March 11, 1542, and only suffered a few casualties during the overland trek. Historians also remember Cabeza de Vaca for his distinction as being the first European to view the famous Iguazú Falls (Morrison 572–574).

Once he had settled in Asunción, Cabeza de Vaca began to put into practice the very theories of the indigenous/conquistador dynamic that he had developed during his 10-year ordeal in Florida, Texas, and northern Mexico. Because he had experienced firsthand the humanity of Amerindians, as well as their signs of civility in contrast to the barbarous Spaniards, who resorted on two occasions to the taboo act of cannibalism, Cabeza de Vaca instituted and enforced strict laws on the treatment of the Guaraní. If any Spaniard mistreated a member of the Guaraní, the tribal member would immediately be removed to the household of a kinder master. He also instituted an equitable form of taxation in which those taxes paid by the poor were reduced, and officials of the Spanish Crown, traditionally exempt from taxation in colonial settings, were expected to pay their share. Even more radically, Cabeza de Vaca forbade the enslavement of captives taken during the Guaraní warfare with other tribes, and thus put an end to what was a lucrative slave trade for some. In accord with the abolition of the slave trade, Cabeza de Vaca also included in his edict of April 1542 the end of concubinage, a practice in which native women were given to chiefs and influential Spaniards in order to cement agreements. Just as Cabeza de Vaca believed that Spaniards should be subject to taxation as their native converts were, he also believed that the conquistadors needed to set a moral

example for the newly converted Christians. Since canon law prohibited polygamy, it appeared sacrilegious and hypocritical for Spaniards to amass harems of native women. Because the concubines had borne the mestizo children of the Spaniards, there was considerable uproar against the dissolution of these bonds. Cabeza de Vaca, however, remained resolute in his edict, reasoning that because many of the women taken into concubinage were closely related to one another (mothers and sisters, for example), the men were violating another church taboo, against incest.

In July 1542, Cabeza de Vaca led a punitive expedition against the Guaycurúes, a tribe antagonistic to both the Spaniards and the Guaraní. His intent seems to have been not only to broker peace, which he was unable to do, but to awe the natives with a display of the Spaniards' military power. He had previously outlawed the trade of metal or any object that could be converted into a weapon with the native population for fear of undermining Spain's stronghold in the region. Indeed, Cabeza de Vaca knew of the region's volatility since the colony of Río de Plata, the original destination of his expedition, had been abandoned after attacks by the native population. He would not know, however, that despite his military victory over the Guaycurú, he would face more dangerous foes back at Asunción.

Because of his reforms, Cabeza de Vaca created enemies within the administration of Asunción, especially that of the interim governor, Domingo Martínez de Irala (Bishop 212–213). While Cabeza de Vaca was traveling to find a path to the Paraguay River, and the mythic El Dorado, Martínez de Irala was fomenting an attack against him, gaining alliances with wealthy inhabitants and soldiers. Cabeza de Vaca and his soldiers returned to Asunción because of a lack of adequate provisions and heavy death tolls brought on by diseases. Further, a chief related to the Guaraní named Aracaré sabotaged the group of 90 Spaniards and Guaraní during their journey by setting fires in the jungle that alerted the neighboring tribes of their presence. In December 1542, Cabeza de Vaca captured Aracaré, who had launched a second attack on the Spaniards, and he was hanged. In retaliation for his brother's execution, Tabaré led an attack against the colonizers, which Irala was ordered to quell and end as peacefully as possible. The fighting ended in March 1543 with a new peace treaty.

The events of April and June 1543 led to the uncovering of a plot against Cabeza de Vaca. The first was his edict eradicating the taxation plan, called the *quinto* because it exacted one-fifth of the inhabitants' income. This edict adversely affected the wealthy conquistadors. Cabeza de Vaca also made enemies of two friars, Bernardo de Armenta and Alonso Lebroaacute, who had fled into the surrounding wilderness with a number of female converts, in protest against the governor's law making their relationships with the females unlawful. In response to the pleadings of the women's parents, Cabeza de Vaca sought out the friars and had the natives' daughters returned home to them. In a short span of time, Cabeza de Vaca had outraged two central bodies in the colony: the aristocratic element, led by Irala, and the religious element, represented by the two Franciscan friars.

In June and July 1543 Cabeza de Vaca uncovered the plot to oust him and put several key members of the Spanish colony on trial. Although historians surmise that the governor knew Irala was the mastermind of the plot, Cabeza de Vaca did not prosecute him in the hope that he would become an ally. On April 8, 1544, the tension within the colony was palpable. Just 17 days later, on April 25, 1544, Cabeza de Vaca was placed in chains and under arrest. He returned to Seville in disgrace in September of the following year. Bruce-Novoa beautifully summarizes the explorer's fate: "They exiled the governor back to Spain, a chained prisoner, shipwrecked on the rocks of his own culture" (16). He was briefly imprisoned in Madrid and then released a few months later under house arrest. In 1551, the Council of the Indies ended its six years of deliberations and sentenced Cabeza de Vaca. He was to be exiled to Oran, in present-day Algeria, and permanently banned from the Americas. On the basis of his appeal, his sentence was changed, and his ban was limited only to the Río de la Plata region, where he had formerly served as governor.

In 1555 Cabeza de Vaca wrote *Comentarios,* his account of the five years he had spent in South America, and he issued a second edition to his *Relación*. It appears that these texts were intended both to vindicate his actions and to create some revenue. The six-year trial at the Council of the Indies had depleted the family's landholdings, as his wife is reported to have sold all of her property in his defense.

He died in 1559, destitute, in Valladolid. As Samuel Eliot Morison writes, "Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca stands out as a truly noble and humane character. Nowhere in the lurid history of the Conquest does one find such integrity and devotion to Christian principles in the face of envy, malice, treachery, cruelty, lechery and plain greed" (2:580).

"The Account: Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación*" (1542)

In their introduction to his text, the editors Martín A. Favata and José B. Fernández name Cabeza de Vaca "the first Spaniard to traverse—on foot—a larger portion of the recently discovered territory of North America" (11). His account of the journey he made would inspire two subsequent expeditions, including Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's trek through the southwestern United States (11). Because of its thick description of the land and its inhabitants, as well as the early date of authorship and publication (it first appeared in print in 1542), Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* has distinguished itself as an invaluable document for scholars interested in a host of subjects ranging from ethnography to literature, from adventure to anthropology. Further, Bartolomé de Las Casas folded Cabeza de Vaca's tales of peaceful colonization and his detailed descriptions of native customs into his own *Apologética sumaria historia,* which argued for the humane treatment of indigenous populations predicated on their innate capacity for religious faith (222). This latter point would be the central controversy debated in Valladolid in 1550 and 1551: If the purpose of conquest was to convert the native populations to Catholicism, the argument went, then the natives must necessarily have souls; therefore, the torture and inhumane treatment of them by the conquistadores could not be justified. If, on the other hand, the natives were soulless, then the conquest did not have a religious justification, for the natives were incapable of conversion. Because of Cabeza de Vaca's documented account of civilized natives who adopted him and cared for him, his *Relación* was used as evidence in favor of Las Casas's argument for the humanity of natives, and the need to treat them in a peaceful manner.

Cabeza de Vaca's *Account* appeared in print two times during the reign of Charles V: once in 1542 and again in 1555. The critic Rolena Adorno characterizes these two publication dates: "before royal attempts to control publications of the Indies, and again during the time when the rights to the rewards of conquests became a heated controversy" (220). That Cabeza de Vaca's tale was republished twice in Charles V's reign is all the more remarkable given its divergence from the politics of conquest. Rather than capitulate to conquest doctrine that dehumanizes the Amerindians, Cabeza de Vaca's nine years in captivity and his knowledge of the tribes of the current United States rendered him incapable of telling the conventional conquest tale. Mary Gaylord interprets Cabeza de Vaca's cultural ambiguity in the following manner: "Separated from his ship, from his men, from his authority, from his entire culture, Cabeza de Vaca returns able to say only that he cannot retell the Official Story. As he reports the failure of the accepted model, as he unwrites an old story that literally unravels—like his clothing—in his hands, he ends up writing a new one" (134). Such an inability to echo conquest doctrine stems from moments of cognitive dissonance, such as when other conquistadors first spy Cabeza de Vaca, dressed as the natives and in their company, after several years in captivity. The silence that accompanies this moment of reencounter is quite loud and speaks to the uneasiness of viewing one of your own (a fellow conquistador) transformed (gone native). Lisa Rabin interprets this silence as "allied in the text with the author's own adjustment of himself as protagonist in the

master narrative of conquest" (42). In other words, Cabeza de Vaca is silent as well during this reencounter, and his silence derives from his need to reimagine himself through the lens of his fellow conquistadors.

The actual journey chronicled began in 1528 when he embarked as the king's treasurer on an expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez to conquer Florida. As an official loyal to Charles V, Cabeza de Vaca was positioned immediately in an awkward struggle between two authority figures, the king and the expedition leader, who represented the symbolic and immediate powers, respectively, influencing his tale and his actions. Although the expedition began with 500 men, it met with such disasters that only Cabeza de Vaca and three other men survived and returned to Spain with tales of their harrowing experiences.

In the proem, which is addressed to Charles V, Cabeza de Vaca flatters the king by referring to the "diligence and desire" exhibited by his loyal servants who, in their earnest efforts to honor his majesty, find themselves performing "more distinguished deeds than he expected" (28). Thus, Cabeza de Vaca avoids appearing as a braggart when he recounts his amazing tale of survival to the king because he attributes all of his actions to his desire to please the sovereign. Despite his efforts to gain fame and distinction for his service, Cabeza de Vaca notes that their sins brought about "such great dangers" and "such a miserable and disastrous outcome" (28). The only service that he can provide to the king, therefore, lies in his tale, which he hopes will benefit "those who go to conquer those lands" (28). Critic Walter Mignolo notes the absence of the conventional language of modesty and a list of sources or personal qualities that qualify Cabeza de Vaca for his role as historian. From the very beginning of the narrative, then, Cabeza de Vaca defies convention in carving out for himself a position from which to speak an unconventional tale of shipwreck, desertion, separation from Narváez, captivity among Amerindians, and eventual reunion with conquistadors.

Early on, the *Relación* adheres to colonial tales of navigating lands, reporting on the presence or absence of riches and attributing all acts of kindness to God and providence rather than to the native peoples themselves. He writes, for example, of the conquistador's "finding" corn rather than stealing it from the natives who had cultivated it (36, 38, 41, 44). The only divergences from convention are the hum of discord between him and Narváez, which will soon result in their permanent separation from each other, and Cabeza de Vaca's uncharacteristically complimentary description of Amerindians. When a tribe attacks the conquistadors, wounding Cabeza de Vaca and "two other Christians," the chronicler frames them as worthy opponents and unparalleled human specimens: "Since they are so tall and they are naked, from a distance they look like giants. They are quite handsome, very lean, very strong and light-footed. . . . They shoot their arrows from a distance of two hundred paces with such accuracy that they never miss their target" (44). It is understandable that one would create the image of a worthy opponent, especially in light of wounds received by that opponent, but Cabeza de Vaca's description of the Amerindians transcends their prowess as warriors. He refers to them as "handsome," for example, an attribute that has nothing to do with their position as worthy adversaries but is rather a compliment to them as fellow humans rather than ugly savages. It is not the only instance in which he compliments the natives, for a few pages later he refers to a tribe as "large, handsome people," and to another group as "the handsomest people . . . who appeared very attractive" (50, 52).

The second moment of narrative departure from the conventional conquest tale occurs soon after the expedition leader orders the construction of five boats to sail away from Florida's coast. When Cabeza de Vaca requests that Narváez throw him a line to help him follow him and keep the five boats together, the leader replies in a manner that negates his position of authority and the purpose of the expedition in general: "He told me that it was no longer necessary for any of us to give orders, that each of us should do what seemed best to save his life, since that is what he intended to do" (53). Critics point to this moment of crisis as a point when

Cabeza de Vaca must deal with the abandonment of one authority and replace it with another. For a time, he proves himself a worthy leader, noting that although many of the men had fainted, he had remained well and alert, anxious over the sick and dying soldiers (54). He attempts unsuccessfully to relaunch the boat and set out to sea, but their boat cannot survive the rough surf and they return to the same shore in worse circumstances: "Those of us who survived were as naked as the day we were born and had lost everything we had" (56). This description of a return to infancy functions rhetorically to give the men a rebirth. It is at this time that Cabeza de Vaca begins to refer to his fellow conquistadors not as Spaniards but as Christians (57). With the loss of Narváez, the survivors take up a new authority, God, and shed their identities as subjects of the king for their newfound positions as servants of God.

God becomes the central authority for the narrative, so much so that some critics read Cabeza de Vaca's account less as a colonial tale of conquest and more as hagiography, recording the life of a saint (Bruce-Novoa 16). Bruce-Novoa recognizes the expediency of such a shift in the narrative's predominant genre: Having failed to "achieve the goal most highly prized by the Christians—the conquest of wealth—he made a virtue of his failure, of his talent for alterability, of his ability to relate different terms, and even of his resemblance to a saint" (16). He reconfigures his failure into a victory of the spiritual or religious over the banality of earthly possessions such as gold, which the conquistadors sought but never found. Thus, the tale turns more to detailing the beliefs and practices of the native populations, an aspect of the narrative that would prove invaluable to de las Casas in Cabeza de Vaca's own time and to historians and ethnographers in the present.

Cabeza de Vaca details various customs and beliefs, ranging from marriage ceremonies to rites of mourning. As testament to his declaration that "these people love their children more and treat them better than any other people on earth," he details the village's engagement in a yearlong period of mourning for any child who perishes (60). They honor the sanctity of marriage by practicing monogamy, with the exception of the medicine men, who are given two or three wives. The wives function as intermediaries between the two families united in wedlock: Each wife carries food gathered or hunted by her husband to her father's hut, and the in-laws in turn take food to their son-in-law (60). Because the two families are not permitted to converse or even look at each other, it is the women who must carry messages from the one family to the other. This practice of shuttling between families or tribes is strictly associated with women, and for this reason the folklorist Mariah Wade collapses Cabeza de Vaca's role as interpreter and trader among tribes with indigenous women's role as go-between (333).

Cabeza de Vaca's own progress toward his role as cultural go-between is charted out in his estrangement from Spaniards, whom he differentiates from "Christians," and in his cultural and linguistic affiliation with the native peoples of North America. In a reversal of the traditional colonial worldview of self and other, the Spaniards become the "other," as Cabeza de Vaca includes tales of "five Christians" who, to the horror of the Amerindians who discover them, resort to cannibalism in order to survive (59). He reports their reactions: "The Indians were quite upset by this happening and were so shocked that they would have killed the men had they seen them begin to do this" (59). Just prior to this tale, Cabeza de Vaca relates how he feasted on raw corn rather than eat the slaughtered horses (56). Later in his tale, he tells of cannibalism practiced by Hernando de Esquivel, whom he ironically refers to as a Christian, and others: "As the men died, the survivors cut and dried their flesh. The last one to die was Sotomayor, and Esquivel cut and dried his flesh, surviving by eating it until the first of March, when an Indian who had fled there came to see if they had died and took Esquivel away with him" (69). Food and what one will and will not consume are culturally specific markers that help to identify a person, and to register a shift or change in his or her cultural affiliation. The parents who are in mourning, for example, enact their sorrow over the death of a child or sibling by refusing to

forage or hunt for food. They rely solely on their fellow villagers or extended family members to give them food; further, they only consume "very bad water" for three months (62). Among the Yguazes, for example, Cabeza de Vaca mentions how their hunger drives them to eat unusual items such as ant eggs, worms, dirt, wood, and deer excrement, but, as he implies, they never stoop as low as the Spaniards to consume another human's flesh (71).

Cabeza de Vaca's introduction into his role as healer comes about by the natives' intent to "make us physicians, without testing us or asking for any degrees, because they cure illnesses by blowing on the sick person and cast out the illness with their breath and their hands" (62). The notion that they were destined to be healers was attributed to their greatness. He demurs, and the group find themselves without food until they agree to function as healers. What follows is a brief account of the manner in which medicine men cure (making an incision and sucking out the area and then cauterizing the incision with fire) and the manner in which Catholic rituals are integrated into Cabeza de Vaca's own brand of healing: "We did our healing by making the sign of the cross on the sick persons, breathing on them, saying the Lord's Prayer and a Hail Mary over them, and asking God our Lord, as best we could, to heal them and inspire them to treat us well" (62). Even though he is treated well and given food and other provisions for his inexplicable ability to heal, Cabeza de Vaca, in invoking God and the Virgin Mary during his healing performances, is careful not to overstep his bounds and create the illusion that he has acquired godlike status among the Amerindians. The very possibility that the Amerindians would elevate his status because of his healing is quickly obliterated when he recounts being made a captive for a year to a tribe who worked him hard and abused him so that he sought to escape and went to live with the Charruco (64). Thus, Cabeza de Vaca reinvents himself, for a time, as an interpreter and trader.

When Cabeza de Vaca gets lost and is alone in this strange new world, his narrative begins to resemble that of a saint's life as more and more Christian symbology appears in his account. Cabeza de Vaca, as did Jesus, who witnessed a burning bush while alone during his solitary trial in the desert, spies a symbol of God's intervention: "It pleased God that I should find a burning tree, by the fire of which I endured that cold night" (77). His second abandonment by his fellow Spaniards likewise resembles Jesus's betrayal by Peter and Judas (78). As did Jesus, Cabeza de Vaca survives his struggles alone in a brutal environment and emerges transformed. His healing rituals are more infused with prayer and elements of Catholic ritual, such as making the sign of the cross over those in need of healing. Cabeza de Vaca also begins to rely on God rather than on himself or his fellow conquistadors for deliverance from captivity (79). His healing powers are so great that he revives a dead man, much as Jesus did when raising Lazarus from the dead (80). Along with Castillo, the two men garner almost deitylike status among the Amerindians who arrive from far away in the hopes of being healed.

In his role as saint, Cabeza de Vaca converts native populations to Christian faith and saves himself and others in his reluctant role of healer. Soon after his capture, Cabeza de Vaca was considered to be a folk healer and gained a modicum of cultural authority. His tales of healing are a hybrid of medicines and Catholic prayers. Bruce-Novoa views his role as folk healer as reflecting negatively and in a parodic manner on the king's own position: "As a healer, Cabeza de Vaca situated himself at the center of an imperial parody: surrounding him were hundreds of Indians who lived off his activities; he in turn was elevated to power by divine intervention. The difference between Charles V's Imperial Court and this imperial parody is that Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca now occupied the center" (8). Thus, for Bruce-Novoa, the conquistador's new identity as healer gave him an authority over the native populations that rivaled the king's own authority over his dominion, and thus diminished or belittled the king.

Ultimately, however, Cabeza de Vaca must reconcile himself to the Spanish Crown, as well as to his fellow conquistadors, whom he refers to as Spaniards even as he refers to himself and Castillo as

Christians. Critics argue that he never fully returns to the status of conquistador because of his seven-year captivity, because of his linguistic and cultural affiliations with the Amerindians, and because of his profound belief in the innate humanity of those he encountered in his *Account*.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Cabeza de Vaca's narrative of conquest is also a tale of captivity. How do these two genres coexist? How do they create alternative identities for the author?
2. How does Cabeza de Vaca's survival technique as a trader between tribes compare to JOHN SMITH's position as the Cape Merchant? How does each colonist negotiate a place for himself between the two worlds—European and indigenous?
3. What might account for Cabeza de Vaca's different interpretation of Amerindians from those chronicled in other conquest narratives, specifically that of John Smith, whose capture by Powhatan and rescue by Pocahontas have become the stuff of legend?
4. What role does food play in the tales of captivity by Cabeza de Vaca and MARY WHITE ROWLANDSON? How do their diets reflect their cultural identities?
5. Compare Cabeza de Vaca's treatment of the indigenous populations he encountered with CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS's. How are the two explorers different in their views of the role that the indigenous populations should play in relation to the Spanish Crown? What larger views about politics, race, and or religion are central to the differences in their views?

◆

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON CABEZA DE VACA AND HIS WORK

1. Later in his life, Cabeza de Vaca not only espoused ideas, but instituted policies that radically departed from the conventional treatment Spanish conquistadors meted out to the people they had conquered and colonized. Write an essay in which you argue for the influence of Cabeza de Vaca's experiences in Texas and Florida, documented in *The Account,* in shaping the later views he championed while in South America.
2. Critics have struggled with categorizing Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* in terms of a single genre: autobiography, ethnography, hagiography, captivity, or conquest narrative. Having read *Relación* carefully, make an argument for the categorization of Cabeza de Vaca's most famous work, making sure that you provide support for your view with examples from the text.

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Samuel de Champlain (1570–1635)

As for me, I labor always to prepare a way for those willing to follow.

(Champlain's journal)

Samuel de Champlain was born in Brouage, a small seaport in Saintoge, France, on the Bay of Biscay sometime in 1570. His biographer Samuel Eliot Morison writes that Brouage was an important and bustling seaport at the time of Champlain's birth, as it was the center of the salt industry. Prior to refrigeration for meats and fish, salt was widely used as a preservative so merchants would find their way to the city of Champlain's birth in order to pickle their meats in brine. Not much is known about his parents except their names, which appear in Samuel de Champlain's own marriage contract. His father, Antoine de Complain, was a captain in the merchant marine, and his mother was Marguerite Le Roy.

Because his father was a seaman, Champlain received his education at sea. On the basis of a letter that Champlain wrote later in life to Marie de Medici, queen regent of France, we know that he must have spent much of his childhood fishing along the coast: "The art of navigation from childhood has stimulated me to expose almost all my life to the impetuous waves of the ocean, and has made me navigate and coast along a part of the lands of America, especially of New France" (reported in Morison 17). The first documented activity Champlain engaged in was a battle at Fort Crozat near Brest against Spanish invaders in winter 1594. Four years later, when the war ended, Champlain sailed on the *Saint-Julian,* a ship commanded by his uncle, Guillaume Hellaine. Together, they made a tour of the West Indies that included the Lesser Antilles, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The year was 1599, and Champlain was 29 years old. His journey took him as far inland as Mexico City, whose fertile soil he admired even as he expressed disdain for the Spaniards' cruel treatment of the indigenous population (20). His biographer Morison attributes Champlain's humane treatment of the indigenous populations he encountered in New France to his early exposure to the cruelty of colonialism. "No early European explorer was anywhere near so successful as Champlain in making friends of the natives, or so humane in protecting them" (20). From his series of West Indies voyages, Champlain returned home to France and began composition of a *Brief Discourse of the Most Remarkable Things Which Samuel Champlain of Brouage Has Observed in the West Indies during the Voyages He Made Thither in the Year 1599 and the Year 1601, as Follows.* In it, Champlain provides sketches as well as labored, extensive descriptions of the various flora and fauna he encounters in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. He includes pictures and detailed descriptions of such exotic items as avocadoes, rattlesnakes, and agave cactus.

"After having spoken of the trees, plants, and animals, I must give a short account of the Indians, their nature, manners, and belief" (37). He mentions the ceremonies of the indigenous population,

"who are not under the domination of the Spaniards" and who "adore the moon as their Deity." When he addresses those converted to Christianity, Champlain's tone seems to shift rather dramatically and he writes sympathetically:

> At the commencement of his conquests, he had established the Inquisition among them, and made slaves of or caused them to die cruelly in such great numbers, that the sole recital would cause pity. This evil treatment was the reason that the poor Indians, for very apprehension, fled to the mountains in desperation, and as many Spaniards as they caught they ate them; and on that account the said Spaniards were constrained to take away the Inquisition, and allow them personal liberty, granting them a more mild and tolerable rule of life, to bring them to the knowledge of God and the belief of the holy church; for if they had continued still to chastise them according to the rigor of the said Inquisition, they would have caused them all to die by fire. (38)

Champlain cites the horrors that both the Spaniards and the native Mexicans are capable of performing: cannibalism and auto-da-fé. Tellingly, he does not seem to condemn the practice of consuming fellow human beings, a taboo in most societies, but instead chastises the Spanish for the methods undertaken in the Inquisition for gaining religious converts. As a fellow Catholic, Champlain is not averse to religious conversion; indeed, the quotation speaks to a desire to include the native population in the dominion of the Catholic Church. Rather, Champlain pointedly disapproves of the methods employed in the Inquisition. Further, he accepts a priori the humanity of Mexico's indigenous population by referring to personal liberty and even by expressing a desire for their "knowledge of God and the belief of the holy church." That he sees the natives as humans is striking when compared to the early colonial accounts along the eastern seaboard, or even of Spanish conquistadors like Hernán Cortés just two centuries prior. Champlain writes more feelingly of the native inhabitants of Mexico: "All these Indians are of a very melancholy humor, but have nonetheless very quick intelligence, and understanding in a short time, whatever may be shown to them, and do not become irritated, whatever action or abuse may be done or said to them" (40). Champlain's note of sympathy, even admiration, will appear in his subsequent voyages to North America, but they will not appear consistently.

When he returned to France in 1602, Champlain presented the manuscript of his voyage to the West Indies to King Henry IV; the following March, Champlain made his first voyage to Canada at the age of 33. The route, even the navigation routes taken once they arrived in North America, followed the voyages made previously by Jacques Cartier and Jean-François de la Roque de Roberval in 1541. The areas along the St. Lawrence River near Quebec had been founded as summer colonies, meaning that they were all but abandoned during the winter months but flooded with fur traders and fishermen during the summer months. Champlain's purpose for this voyage in 1603 was to establish permanent colonies in Canada in exchange for monopolies on fur trade granted by King Henry IV. At the king's request, Champlain joined the voyage commanded by François Pont-Gravé, under the auspices of recording their expedition. He did so in his first publication, *Des Sauvages, ou, Voyage de Samuel Champlain, de Broulage, fait en la France nouvelle, l'an mil six cens troi.* This 36-page document was published in Paris near the end of 1603, and it contained factual accounts of the waters, coastline, potential trade products, and customs of the native populations. Aside from this rather dry recitation of facts, Champlain included one interesting bit of lore gathered from the Micmac tribe, the tale of Gougou:

> There is an island where a terrible monster resides, which the savages call Gougou, and which they told me had the form of a woman, though very frightful, and of such a size that they told me the tops of the masts of our vessel would not reach to his middle, so great do they picture him; and they say that he has often devoured and still con-

> tinues to devour many savages; these he puts, when he can catch them, into a great pocket, and afterwards eats them; and those who had escaped the jaws of this wretched creature said that its pocket was so great that it could have put our vessel into it. (165)

Champlain's inclusion of this tale within a document that is primarily factual bears further comment. Morison believes that Champlain might well have noted the dry nature of his book and wished to offer readers something enticing in the form of native lore. The concept behind the Gougou is also quite interesting first and foremost because the horrible creature is in the form of a female.

> It is all the more interesting that Champlain would include the tale of the Gougou since he makes a concerted effort for veracity and exactitude in his entries. He gives maps of the shoreline which continue to amaze contemporary cartographers for their accuracy and details given the rudimentary tools available to mapmakers in Champlain's age. He offers detailed descriptions of the waterways that he encounters, and he even consults with local natives on numerous occasions to ascertain the locations of their settlements as well as the presence of additional rivers and lakes. At one point in the narrative, Champlain makes a crude map on the ground, drawn with sticks, to which the natives conversing with him add six pebbles signifying the locations of their tribes. At another point in the narrative, Champlain when he discovers what he believes to be the Norumbegue River, "It is related also that there is a large, thickly settled town of savages, who are adroit and skillful, and who have cotton yarn. I am confident that most of those who mention it have not seen it, and speak of it because they have heard persons say so, who knew no more about it than they themselves" (46). In contrast to those who will simply relate untruths in their narratives, Champlain avows, "I will accordingly relate truly what I explored and saw, from the beginning as far as I went" (46).

He dedicated the rest of his life to documenting and mapping his excursions into Canada and North America, producing a series of detailed maps that continue to amaze contemporary cartographers for their accuracy. He was responsible for gaining alliances with the Huron, Algonquin, and Montagnais, an agreement solidified through trade and mutual warfare waged against the Iroquois. His time in New France was punctuated by warfare not only with the native population, but also within his own settlement. Champlain successfully thwarted a mutiny caused by those who would sell their territory, and its rights to fur trading, to the highest bidder, whether English or Spanish. The mastermind behind the mutiny was strangled and decapitated and his head placed on a pike so that all could see the consequences of such schemes. Champlain also faced constant battles in France against people vying for his monopoly, and members of the royal family who would not contribute the kind of money, colonists, and Catholic missionaries needed to make New France a large, expansive territory as Champlain envisioned it. Much of his time was spent alone, or in the company of his native allies, but this changed in late 1610.

On December 30, 1610, Champlain, then 40 years old, married Hélène Boullé, in Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. She was the daughter of Nicolas Boullé, secretary of the king's chamber. What made the union unusual, however, was Hélène's age. She was only 12 years old. "In consideration of the tender age" of the bride, Champlain signed a marriage contract containing a provision that the groom would wait two years before consummating the marriage. Just a few months later, on March 1, 1611, Champlain set sail for Tadoussac and Quebec once again. He left his child bride behind in l'Auxerrois, having hired a maidservant to tend to Hélène and their new home. Morison reports, "Of all his twenty-three voyages across the North Atlantic, [the 1611 trip] was much the worst, and the longest—over ten weeks" (124–125). They encountered both ice floes and icebergs. Once they arrived, Pont-Gravé remained at Tadoussac to engage in fur trading while Champlain took the pinnace to La Chine rapids, where he established

a new trading post and solicited native guides to assist in his exploration of the Ottawa River. He founded the site for Montreal, which would not have year-round settlement until 1642. In terms of his plans for northwestern exploration, Champlain received approval from the council of Huron, Algonquin, and Montagnais to continue establishing fur trading posts in the Ottawa region during his next trip. Unlike his long and dangerous voyage to Canada, Champlain had a rather quick return trip to France. His return to his wife, however, was significantly delayed until late in 1611 because of injuries sustained when a horse fell on him.

After his convalescence, Champlain took the next 18 months to write and publish *Les Voyages du Sieur de Champlain Xaintongeois, capitaine ordinaire pour le roy en la marine*. French colonizer Pierre Dugua de Monts and Champlain were able to convince Henri de Bourbon, prince de Condé, to serve as the titular head of their Canadian enterprise, serving as viceroy of New France. Although securing Condé to help promote their voyages was helpful, it also introduced new partners, merchants who launched a rather scathing attack against Champlain. They called him nothing more than a painter and characterized his multiple journeys to New France as mere attempts to puff up his ego and gain public notoriety. Despite their insults, Champlain sailed to New France again, this time as the deputy to the viceroy. Champlain's anxieties about the English appeared in the form of a tale of a wrecked English ship and a young survivor who had joined the natives. Champlain heard this tale from Nicolas de Vignau, a sailor whom Champlain had exchanged with the Algonquin for a boy of the same tribe whom Champlain had baptized as Savignon. Vignau's story seemed plausible, especially since there had been stories about Henry Hudson, who was in James Bay during the previous winter. When Champlain arrived at Muskrat Lake and met Chief Nibachis, he soon learned that Vignau had never left their village during the previous winter and thus could never have reached Hudson Bay and seen John Hudson, the explorer's son. That Champlain traveled so far on the word of Vignau speaks to the pressure Champlain must have faced to claim the region before it could be declared the territory of the ever-encroaching English. Indeed, he planted a white cedar cross on the Lower Allumette River to leave some sign of his presence and then returned to France. He had realized that he would not achieve his goal of reaching Hudson Bay.

Just as before, his time in France was largely spent in garnering support for his venture in New France. To that end, he wrote and published *La Quatrième voyage de sr. de Champlain* in Paris in 1614. A new society, called La Compagnie de Canada, was created in November 1613 to ensure the continued success of Champlain's efforts; members promised to pay de Condé a horse valued at 1,000 écus each year, and to finance Champlain. In exchange, they would enjoy an 11-year monopoly on fur trade along the St. Lawrence River, and six families would settle there to establish a permanent claim on the territory. Another tactic Champlain undertook to ensure France's stronghold in the region was to return in 1615 with a group of Franciscan monks intent upon converting the native population. A third element of colonization was maintaining good relations with the Huron, Algonquin, and Montagnais through engaged warfare against the Iroquois. When they reached Iroquois territory by Lake Oneida, their attack was not as successful as their previous one. Champlain was wounded in the knee and leg. The tribe they thought were going to assist them in their attack, their new allies the Andaste, never appeared.

Champlain spent the next four months recuperating from his injury among the Huron. He writes of their use of sweat lodges for medicinal purposes and of the sexual promiscuity prior to marriage he witnessed among the younger population. It is quite likely that Champlain focused on these particular aspects of Huron culture because, in his estimation, the absence of civilization that these practices indicated necessitated the presence of additional missionaries. In the memoir he drew up and presented to Louis XIII and to the Paris Chamber of Commerce, Champlain warns against the English and Dutch efforts to colonize North America; he

also reminds his readers of the labors he has dedicated to the cause of New France over the past 16 years. He makes various promises about the wealth to be gained in further exploration and specifically argues for the permanent settlement of at least 300 families and 15 friars. The court, however, was not interested in religious converts nor in permanent settlement. During his year and a half in France, Champlain penned and published his third book, *Voyages et descouvertures faites en la nouvelle france* . . . accounting for his explorations in the interior as well as his military failure against the Iroquois at Onondaga. He missed the annual voyage to Canada in 1619 because he became embroiled in a dispute over his authority and position in New France after de Condé sold his viceroyalty to his brother-in-law.

In spring 1620, Champlain sailed back to Canada with his wife, Hélène, who would remain with him for four years in Quebec. Their return to France in 1624 was due in no small part to further disputes and questions over Champlain's role and authority in New France. The new viceroy dissolved the Campaigne de Canada and gave a fur trading monopoly to Guillaume de Caen. The duke, however, confirmed Champlain's position as lieutenant and increased his salary twofold. When Montmorency sold the viceroyalty to his zealous nephew, Henri de Lévis, who was intent on securing Native converts, Champlain was issued a new commission that gave him complete authority. He sailed with the new viceregal edict back to Quebec in 1626 without Hélène.

When France was at war with England, Champlain experienced the conflict in the very real terms that he had feared and warned the French against: seizure of French territory by the English. Champlain first heard of the presence of English ships on Cape Tourmente from some native guides. Soon enough, word arrived from David Kirke, who commandeered an English fleet off Quebec, that they had blockaded the St. Lawrence River to cut them off from any supplies or aid from France. After consulting Pont-Gravé, Champlain decided to hold out: They would neither surrender nor engage in battle. When their only hope, a French fleet containing supplies, was soundly defeated by Kirke, Champlain and the other settlers faced certain starvation. He had no alternative but to raise the white flag and broker a surrender agreement that included the repatriation of all French settlers. The peace treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye concluded the war between England and France in March 1632. Canada and Acadia were returned to France.

In March of the following year, Champlain made his final voyage to Canada. He returned to Quebec and saw it once again as French territory; he had the role of diplomat to play in order to run the English out of Quebec. He restored the seigneurial system, a feudal land settlement that allowed people to gain property in New France. In October 1635, he suffered a stroke from which he never recovered. He died on Christmas Day, December 25, in Quebec.

The Voyages of Samuel de Champlain (1604–1635)

Although he is known as the father of New France, Samuel de Champlain was first to explore Plymouth Bay and Boston Harbor, years before the settlements of the British. His biographer Samuel Eliot Morison speculates "as to the course of history if the French had settled at the site of Boston and had received enough support from home to defend it against the English Puritans . . . a town on the Rivière de Gua (Charles River) would have become the capital of New France extending from Cape Cod or Long Island to the North Pole" (63). Champlain did sail a pinnace into Boston Harbor, but he decided that it did not rival Penobscot, or Annapolis Basin, Nova Scotia.

Champlain opens his book of voyages from 1604 to 1607 with a wide lens—human motivations—that narrows to the topics of colonization and trade routes, and then stretches across time to document various voyages undertaken in the hope of discovering a northerly route to China: "The inclinations of men differ according to their varied dispositions; and each one in his calling has his particular end in view. Some aim at gain, some at glory, some at the public

weal" (21). He compares the desire for sovereigns to amass "objects of beauty and rarity obtained from foreign nations." For this reason, Champlain states, "many princes have striven to find a northerly route to China, in order to facilitate commerce" (22). His narrative then offers a brief history of nautical endeavors to discover such a trade route, beginning in 1496 with the king of England's commissioning John Cabot and continuing with the works of Spain and France. Into this history, Champlain does not assert himself directly, but speaks instead of the arduous labors of Sieur de Monts to "attempt what had been given up in despair" (24). Having convinced the king of the fertility of the soil, and of his own conviction to establish a permanent settlement, Sieur de Monts set forth to found a new place in the interior where it would be geographically advantageous to "plant the Christian faith and establish such order as is necessary for the protection of a country" (25). It is thus in the service of the king, Sieur de Monts, and the spread of the Christian faith that Champlain sets forth his book of travels. Although he does not directly establish himself as the inheritor of the fame and glory attributed to ocean voyagers in the past, by invoking them in his introductory statements, Champlain certainly does imagine himself within this glorious history.

Throughout his travels, Champlain meets with members and sachems of various tribes along the eastern seaboard. Quite a few encounters follow an almost formulaic trend: Either they meet with the chiefs and exchange goods, or else Champlain and his men see smoke or other telltale signs that the natives had recently been in a particular spot but had deserted it in advance of the French. It is perhaps in compensation for the absence of a more profitable or hoped-for exchange that Champlain offers readers a more detailed description of the natives. When Champlain and his men discover that "they had nothing but their robes to give in exchange, for they preserve only such furs as they need for their garments," Champlain launches into his first full description of the Almouchiquois:

> These savages shave off the hair far up on the head, and wear what remains very long, which they comb and twist behind in various ways very neatly, intertwined with feathers which they attach to the head. They paint their faces black and red, like the other savages which we have seen. They are an agile people, with well-formed bodies. Their weapons are pikes, clubs, bows and arrows, at the end of which some attach the tail of a fish called the signoc, others bones, while the arrows of others are entirely of wood. (61–62)

Champlain has mentioned several other encounters, but the only details given are the goods that were exchanged, usually biscuits and knives for furs and other food. As Champlain himself states, they had encountered other "savages" who have also painted their faces in this manner, but he has never thought to include such a description in his narration.

His narrative of riverways, shoreline, and islands that he encounters is also interrupted during his first winter when he mentions, in graphic detail, the pains associated with scurvy, and its exacting toll on the settlers. Indeed, by Champlain's count, 35 of 79 settlers succumbed over the brutal winter to scurvy, caused by the absence of vitamin C. In the winter, it is difficult to obtain this vitamin, which is mostly found in citrus fruits. The Natives offer Champlain and others the "plant called Aneda, which Jacques Cartier said was so powerful against the malady called scurvy. . . . The savages have no knowledge at all of this plant, and are not aware of its existence, although the above-mentioned savages has the same name" (60). The quotation is a bit difficult to understand, but it seems as though Champlain is stating that the Oneida (perhaps the name *Aneda*) are named after this very plant (what he identifies as the white pine, but others call the eastern white cedar) but are unaware of its medicinal properties. How Champlain could know that they were unaware of its properties in curing scurvy is rather uncertain.

In terms of how the Natives fare during the winter months on the island of St. Croix, Champlain tells of equal amounts of suffering and endurance that parallel those of the French, but without the added misery of scurvy. While the French subsist on

salted meat and vegetables and drink "bad water" as well as melted snow, the Natives "hunt elks and other animals, on which they live most of the time" (54, 55). Champlain almost seems to marvel at the abilities of the Natives, especially the women and children, who wear snow shoes and follow the men as they track animals. Once they have made a kill, "the women and children come up, erect a hut, and they give themselves to feasting" (55). During the winter months, Champlain writes, "they clothe themselves with good furs of beaver and elk. The women make all the garments, but not so exactly but that you can see the flesh under the arm-pits, because they have not ingenuity enough to fit them better" (55). The language is worth comment because Champlain seems at once to marvel at the ability of entire families, people of various ages, to endure a difficult climate. He even states that winter lasts for six months, noting that although the French have only survived one winter in this new environment, the natives have done so for lifetimes. Even so, however, Champlain finds fault with the sewing techniques of the native women, who leave the skin under the armpits exposed because of lack of "ingenuity." The only item that Champlain documents with any degree of approval are the furs themselves, described as "good."

Because the winter was so extreme, Sieur de Monts sought out a new settlement, which they named Port Royal. They quickly began work constructing houses and felling trees so that they would have the majority of their buildings erected prior to their return to France, where Sieur de Monts would petition for additional resources from the king. Because Champlain wishes to explore Florida, he remains behind, along with Pont-Gravé, whose illness they hope will be cured by a warmer climate and a "change of air" (82).

In winter 1603, Champlain was the subject of a mutiny organized by Antoine Natel, a locksmith who survived a previous attack on the coast of Massachusetts. Champlain learns of the plan from his pilot, Captain Testu, to whom Natel confesses. He writes, "Nothing had impelled them except that they had imagined that, by giving up the place into the hands of the Basques or Spaniards, they might all become rich and that they did not want to go back to France" (134). Champlain, together with Pont-Gravé, decides to put the head of the conspiracy, Jean Duval, to death. In a rather matter-of-fact manner, Champlain relates the grisly details of Duval's death: "who was strangled and hung at Quebec, and his head was put on the end of a pike, to be set up in the most conspicuous place on our fort" (136). The other three main conspirators were arrested, deposed, and returned to France under Pont-Gravé's authority.

Throughout much of his voyages, Champlain expresses a wish for the natives to accompany him in further exploration. He asks for a party to help him explore whether there is a sea to the north because "it is maintained that the English have gone in these latter years to find a way to China" (129). The place Champlain had heard of through tales of migratory tribes with whom they had traded furs is actually Hudson Bay, discovered by Henry Hudson in 1610. Not until late in his voyages, after he has established good relationships with the native tribes, solidified through trade and military alliances, is he given permission by local chiefs to travel farther into the interior of North America. Whenever he spies new territory, Champlain offers meticulous descriptions of the waterways, exact locations of the new territory with respect to previous locations, detailed maps, and inventories of the local flora and fauna.

Champlain also spends a considerable amount of his writings discussing the habits and culture of the Native tribes with whom he has become acquainted through trade and exploration. Although Champlain himself never learned any of the Native languages, he was always able to effect some level of communication through signs and interpreters. Early on in his narratives, Champlain comments upon a subject that would become increasingly important to him and his endeavors in Canada: the conversion of North America's native population. He notes how the natives encamped near them engage in fishing and hunting, first of eel and then of beaver, in preparation for winter. In contemplating the hardships they endure, Champlain states, "I am of the opinion that if one were to show them how to live, and teach them the cultivation of the

soil and other things, they would learn very aptly" (141). Champlain continues by specifying "other things," to mean not only agriculture, but also conversion to Catholicism. He describes the natives as people who "observe no law at all" and are "full of superstition" (141). Champlain attributes their lawlessness to their ignorance of worship and prayer to God. As proof of his claim that they live "like brute beasts," he includes his observations about soothsayers and marriage rites "such as they are." Sandwiched between these two descriptions intended to mark the absence of civilized living is an odd comment about skin adornment in women: "The women, also, are well-formed, plump, and of a swarthy color, in consequence of certain pigments with which they rub themselves, and which give them a permanent olive color" (142). This single sentence speaks volumes. It addresses Champlain's claim that natives can change if they are "shown how to live" by imagining one of the physical markers of difference, skin color, to be artificial and thus easily reversed. Further, as a prefatory note to a description of marriage rites, particularly to the perceived promiscuity of native women, this sentence about dyed skin imagines native women as possible wives to French colonists. As can the skin dyes, Native marriage and courtship rituals can be undone, or reversed. Indeed, the prospect of proper Catholic marriages would preserve the virginity and sanctity of Native women, improving their current position: "When a girl is fourteen or fifteen years old, and has several suitors, she may keep company with all she likes. At the end of five or six years, she takes the one that pleases her for her husband, and they live together to the end of their lives" (142). Although Champlain does not expressly project how conversion will change marriage rites or the sexual activities of women before wedlock, it can be inferred that readers would know how Catholicism would dictate social behavior in these realms.

Regarding the position of soothsayers, Champlain offers a very interesting account that directly includes him. After having observed the shaman and the tales surrounding him, Champlain peels back the curtain to reveal the truth behind the Pilotois, as they are called. When the people report that the devil makes the Pilotois's cabin shake or makes fire erupt from its top, Champlain blithely responds, "I could see [to] the contrary" that the man inside the cabin "took one of the supports of the cabin, and made it move in this manner" (159). He continues in a remonstrative tone, "these rogues counterfeit also their voice, so that it is heavy and clear, and speak in a language unknown to the other savages." "I often remonstrated with the people, telling them that all they ought not to put confidence in them" (160). These soothsayers, however, exercise such control over the members of the tribe that they take their military orders for engaging in battle from the "charlatans" and "scapegraces." Despite Champlain's brief diatribe against the superstitious beliefs of the Algonquin, he participates in them. Several nights pass dreamless for Champlain, and yet the natives never fail to inquire of him whether he has dreamed of the Iroquois, their enemy. One night, however, Champlain reports that he has indeed dreamed of the Iroquois. In his dream, the Iroquois were drowning in a lake near a mountain, and when he asked his allies whether they should all save their enemies, the reply was to let them drown because they are of no importance. The next morning, when the Algonquin ask Champlain whether he has had a dream, he relates it and reveals, "it gave them so much confidence that they did not doubt any longer that good was to happen to them" (168). Champlain seems to take on some of the visionary qualities associated with the soothsayer he has most recently criticized. Indeed, Champlain seems to compensate early on for the lack of visionary dreams, writing, "Yet I did not cease to encourage them, and inspire in them hope" (162).

Likewise, Champlain rouses loud cries from the Algonquin when they initially engage in battle with the Iroquois. The men create a passageway for Champlain, who advances 20 paces in front of the rest of the army, with only 30 paces separating him from the Iroquois. Aiming his musket, he discharges a shot that fells all three Iroquois chiefs, killing two of them immediately. Just as his dream aroused confidence in the Algonquin, so too does his prowess with his musket. The Iroquois, under-

standably, are also affected by this display. Champlain reports that they were "greatly astonished" at the sudden death of two of their chiefs. The additional report of another musket is enough to send them retreating into the woods, where the Algonquin, Huron, and Montagnais follow in order to capture prisoners. Champlain concludes this tale of military victory by naming the lake near the battle: "The spot where this attack took place is in latitude 43 and some minutes, and the lake was called Lake Champlain" (166–167).

Later, in 1623, Champlain would broker peace with the Iroquois, but his ability to create alliances with the Huron and other tribes is of most importance. Because Champlain lived, traded, and fought alongside the natives before the arrival of the English, he established a precedent for native and European relations. His actions dictated how the neighboring tribes would deal with JOHN SMITH and other early English settlers. Further, the statements he makes about native customs, beliefs, and rituals have provided ethnographers and historians with invaluable information.

Much of the rest of his voyages address his annual trips from France to Canada and back. Each return to France is marked by a constant search for additional funding and resources that he believes are necessary for the preservation and future of New France. His narratives are published in order to arouse support and interest in the region, as well as to continue to ensure his own position and authority.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Champlain's express desires for the conversion of Huron and other tribes to Catholicism with ÁLVAR NÚÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA's views on Christianizing the native peoples he encounters in Florida and Texas. How do the two explorers imagine religion's role in colonization?
2. Champlain faced considerable criticism at home concerning his motivations for sailing annually to North America. Locate passages in his *Voyages* in which he seems to be directly or indirectly responding to such accusations. How does he justify his multiple trips to what would become Canada?

◆

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON CHAMPLAIN AND HIS WORK

1. As the only representative of French colonization in North America, Champlain writes of his country's aims for its fledgling colony. How does the colonial enterprise from France differ from that of Spain, represented by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS or Cabeza de Vaca, or England, represented by early settlers like JOHN WINTHROP and Smith?
2. Champlain's narrative of his multiple voyages to Canada and North America paint him as both a military leader and a religious crusader. How, if at all, are these two roles reconciled?

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Christopher Columbus
(ca. 1451–1506)

Thus the eternal God, Our Lord, grants to all those who walk in his way victory over apparent impossibilities, and this voyage was pre-eminently a victory of this kind.

(letter to Luis de Santángel)

I am ruined, as I have said; till now I have wept for others. May Heaven now have pity on me and earth weep for me. Weep for me whoever has charity, truth and justice!

(letter to Ferdinand and Isabel)

Christoforo Colombo, as he would have been called in his native Genoese dialect, was above all else a man of destiny. His fervent belief in what historians have referred to as a "supernatural sense of mission" led to his discovery of a New World for Europeans, an event that would have immeasurable consequences on both sides of the Atlantic for centuries (Cohen 20). Historians have lauded Columbus's courage and skill as a mariner just as they have derided his ability to govern the Spanish settlements in the Caribbean. Many hold him responsible for initiating the slave trade in the Western Hemisphere while others praise his tenacity in realizing his dream.

A serious analysis of his life, however, must take into account the vast amount of information that is not known as well as the embellishments, misconceptions, propaganda, and legends surrounding the few confirmed facts. In his quintessential work on Columbus, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus,* Samuel Eliot Morison highlights the fact that an "authentic portrait" of Columbus does not exist (xviii). Columbus himself was notoriously secretive and "could be vague, contradictory, and self-serving in what he did write" (Wilford x). Everything about his life, from his origins to his motives in crossing the Atlantic to his death, has been debated. Precious few questions have been definitively answered. On this alone there seems to be consensus among historians.

One of the greatest controversies surrounding Christopher Columbus concerns his nationality. Though it was accepted during his lifetime that he was Italian, as his historical importance became more apparent, a series of articles and books appeared over the years attempting to demonstrate that his origin was French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Greek, or English. These claims reached their apogee during the 400th anniversary of Columbus's first transatlantic voyage (Phillips and Phillips 6). While Columbus himself claimed Italian as his native tongue, he wrote in Castilian and often mixed in Portuguese and Catalan words. But as J. M. Cohen notes, this was not uncommon for men who spent most of their time at sea (20).

Columbus himself played a principal role in creating confusion regarding his origins, rarely writing about them or his family. The biographers William and Carla Phillips suggest that this is probably due to the fact that his humble background did not match

his fierce ambition for wealth and status during a time when rising from modest beginnings to great affluence and position was not necessarily appreciated (87). Another factor that may have led Columbus to play down his family origins was that in the volatile political situation of 15th-century Genoa, Columbus's family was linked with an anti-Spanish faction, which would not have boded well with his patron, the Spanish Crown (Phillips and Phillips 90). In any case, "every verifiable historical document clearly indicates that Columbus was born in the independent Italian republic of Genoa, in the late summer or early fall of 1451" (Phillips and Phillips 85).

Columbus's father, Domenico Colombo, worked as a wool weaver and was also a resourceful businessman, having spent time as a tavern keeper and in buying and selling land. Domenico married Columbus's mother, Susanna Fontarossa, the daughter of a weaver, around 1445. Columbus had three younger brothers—Bartolomelo (better known as Bartolomé or Bartholomew), Giovanni-Pellegrino, and Giancomo (better known as Diego or James)—and a younger sister, Bianchineta. Despite his reticence regarding his background, family ties were extremely important to Columbus. The significance of family to Columbus is evident when we consider that two of his brothers, Diego and Bartolomé, would later accompany him to Spain and on several of his voyages across the Atlantic. Bartolomé was Columbus's most ardent supporter and advocated his cause in Portugal, England, and France. Columbus would thank him later by bestowing on him important titles to the land he had discovered after his first voyage. The critic J. M. Cohen emphasizes the strength of fraternal bonds by stating that throughout his life, Columbus "confided in no one except his brothers" (19).

Columbus is thought to have tried his hand at several professions, including as a wool worker, a mariner, a merchant, and a bookseller. This shift in careers was not at all uncommon in late 15th-century Genoa, where "no one occupied a narrowly-defined profession" and conditions led many, including members of Columbus's own family, to use "their labor and capital for whatever they could" (Heers in Phillips and Phillips 92). His son Hernando's claims in his greatly embellished *The Life of the Admiral by His Son, Hernando Colón* that his father attended the University of Pavia are unfounded. Hernando's declarations probably exaggerate the elementary education Columbus may have received from a school for the children of Genoese clothiers' guild members (Phillips and Phillips 91). There is little doubt that the religious instruction Columbus received was Roman Catholic. The fact that his father and grandfather were landowners and engaged in politics—privileges limited to people of the Catholic faith—supports this idea (Phillips and Phillips 91).

In any case, Columbus took to the sea as a sailor from a young age, initially on short trading voyages from the Genoese coast. He later traveled as far as the island of Chios in the Aegean Sea and would know the Mediterranean well and reach Atlantic waters by his early twenties. Columbus eventually arrived in Portugal in the mid-1470s amid circumstances that have never been fully clarified, though Hernando's account has him miraculously surviving a naval battle off the coast of Lisbon, clinging to an oar after his ship had been sunk. Regardless of how he arrived, Columbus would live in Portugal for a decade, earning a living from maritime and commercial activities. Here he became integrated in the lively mercantile culture of Portugal and Spain, made important personal contacts, and began to speak and write the Portuguese and Castilian languages.

While in Portugal in the late 1470s, Columbus married Felipa Perestrello e Moniz, a woman of noble Italian descent with connections to the Portuguese court and its possessions in the Atlantic. The marriage would produce a son, Diego, who would later find work under the Catholic sovereigns of Spain. By way of this marriage, Columbus gained possession not only of some degree of wealth, but more importantly of the maps and papers of his late father-in-law, a seaman, which contained pertinent information about the seas and winds surrounding Portuguese territories in the Atlantic. These newfound connections, along

with the experience and knowledge he now had with regard to commanding a ship and engaging in commerce, laid the groundwork for his idea to sail westward toward India and Asia and open up a direct trade route to the West.

Wilford suggests that "in arriving at his grand scheme, he had not come into possession of a singular idea that had eluded others" (74). Columbus did not, in fact, originate the idea that the world is round, as common lore suggests, though he knew the world was a sphere, as did many others of his era. Through books new and old, now readily available as a result of new typesetting techniques, Columbus had access to a variety of scholarly opinions about the makeup of the known world and its inhabitants. Cohen suggests that Columbus's idea that his intended destination would be "lands flowing with gold and spices and eager to be awakened to the true faith" arose from his readings of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville (13). Columbus read, or at least consulted, Ptolemy and Marinus of Tyre for geographical measurements of the world and the works of Aristotle and Seneca about the possibility of sailing west. In the opinion of John Wilford, however, Columbus read not to learn, but rather "to gain support for what he already thought to be true" (66). He was therefore consulting these documents and others in order to confirm and document his plan rather than to conceive it.

Historians agree that while inventing his "grand scheme" and pertinent supporting evidence, Columbus made massive miscalculations about the circumference of the world. These miscalculations led to the rejection of his plan by the royal experts of the court of John II of Portugal in late 1483 or early 1484 and played a role in his plan's being initially rejected in Spain in 1486. These early critics were in fact correct regarding Columbus's errors in calculation of the distance from Europe to Asia, but Columbus persisted stubbornly, if not blindly, in defense of his ideas. It is rather ironic, as Wilford suggests, that had he been correct in his calculations or listened to these learned men, he might never have attempted to put his grand scheme into practice (80).

Full of ambition and unwilling to accept what he had heard in Portugal, Columbus left Lisbon for the Spanish port of Palos de la Frontera with his son Diego. In Spain, Columbus met numerous influential people who helped him form his ideas and eventually gain an audience with the Catholic sovereigns. He did not go at his enterprise alone, as the romantic accounts of his son Hernando and Washington Irving suggest. His influential backers included important figures from all sectors of society. Among them were Fray Antonio de Marchena; Enrique de Gúzman, duke of Medina-Sidonia; Luis de la Cerda, count of Medinaceli; Alonso de Quintanilla, the court treasurer; and Juan de Pérez, a former confessor to the queen.

After his initial inconclusive audience with the Catholic sovereigns, Columbus befriended Diego de Arana and eventually fell in love with his cousin, Beatriz Enríquez de Arana, who, though she was an orphaned peasant, had been adopted by a relatively well-off family, which would offer some financial assistance to Columbus. Columbus had a son, Ferdinand (better known as Hernando), with her, but they never married, perhaps because her social status would be unsuitable for a man of his fierce ambition. And after his first successful voyage, "it would have been unthinkable for an admiral to take a wife who could not be presented at court" (Wilford 89).

During the period following his first audience with the Catholic sovereigns, Columbus's brother Bartholomew worked on his behalf, appealing once again to John II of Portugal and later pleading his brother's case in England and France. Though these attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, through his influential friends in Spain, Columbus was granted another appearance before the monarchs. His plan was submitted to review once again and ultimately rejected, though this time the reason appeared to be Columbus's excessive demands and conditions, which stunned the court. Amazingly, Columbus never relented on these terms. A last-minute intervention with Queen Isabella on his behalf by her financial secretary, Luis de Santángel, apparently led to a reversal of what had been yet another, apparently final, rejection by the court. Columbus was able to retain many of his conditions as laid out in the Capitulations of Santa Fé, the agreement that was

finally reached between the monarchs and Columbus, after months of hard bargaining, on April 17, 1492. Columbus set sail from Palos de la Frontera on August 3, 1492, finding land on the morning of October 12, some 2,400 miles into the Atlantic.

Columbus would make four voyages in all to what he always maintained were the Indies. Historians generally concur in attributing his allusion to having arrived in the Indies to what Cohen describes as "his need to provide successes or victories in order to get renewed backing for his explorations" (16–17). He would face many physical and mental hardships, chief among which was returning to Spain from his third voyage in chains, having been arrested by the overseer of the Indies appointed by the monarchs. What seemed to hurt him most, however, was the loss of the rights set out in the terms of the Santa Fé agreement. He was denied the supposed amount of wealth he was to receive and lost his powers over the new territories because of his poor handling of the position of colonial administrator and the Catholic sovereigns' own designs on complete and undisputed power over the territories.

Columbus died on May 20, 1506, in Valladolid, no more than 55 years old, "but much older in body and tormented mind" (Wilford 237). There has been wild speculation about his cause of death, attributed to, among others, diabetes, syphilis, complications of gout, and, most recently, Reiter's syndrome. He was neither alone nor destitute as in legend, but was surrounded by his two sons and two companions from his last voyage, one of whom was his great friend Diego de Méndez. He had battled until the bitter end for the wealth and titles due to him, but those hopes all but died on November 26, 1504, along with Queen Isabella, who had always been the more sympathetic of the monarchs toward his cause.

Journal of the First Voyage to America (1492)

Columbus's *Journal* is not the work of a gifted writer. It employs a fairly limited vocabulary and occasionally obtuse syntactical structures. Its descriptive passages are laden with cliché and hyperbole and are repetitive and stereotyped. In considering this document, one must not forget that Columbus was not even a native speaker of Spanish, which in fact was the third language he learned, after his native Genoese vernacular and later, Portuguese. Columbus himself notes that he is incapable of doing justice in words to the marvels he observes upon landing in the New World, writing that he hopes

> some other may see this land and write about it. When he sees the extreme beauties of this coast he will then be able to prove himself more fortunate than I in the use and choice of words with which to describe it. (Cohen 84)

Despite the fact that Columbus may have been an "artless" narrator, Van Wyck Brooks notes in his introduction to the *Journal,* "It has the charm of all primitive narratives and it narrates one of the great adventures of history, advantages that few books possess" (viii). Indeed, the journal's lack of brilliantly written prose should not in any way diminish its importance. Columbus and his men would go on to make contact with the native inhabitants of the Americas for the first time since the Vikings had done so some five centuries before (Phillips and Phillips 155). In his introduction to his recent translation of the journal, B. W. Ife states that Columbus's diary of this first voyage to America, though incomplete and condensed in its surviving form, "gives an unrivalled insight into the events of the voyage." Ife notes that within its pages we have Columbus's first impressions of the inhabitants and culture of what he mistakenly assumed to be Asia and that the *Journal* has also played a critical role "in the creation of many of the myths surrounding the New World which have coloured its view of itself down to the present day" (iv).

Ife underlines the fact that keeping a journal was not at all common during Columbus's era and would not become necessary by law for the captains of Spanish vessels until 1575 (v). A strong argument can be made to suggest that Columbus's principal

motives for keeping the journal were "the need to be accountable and the need to communicate effectively with the powerful people back in Spain" (Ife xv). Ife emphasizes the tension between these two elements in the journal:

> At times one feels a strong sense of the writer looking over his shoulder, fending off criticism and justifying his actions and decisions. At others he is desperately trying to get the people who hold the keys to reward and recognition to understand and re-live the problems he faces. (xv)

Ever ambitious to secure his legacy and acutely aware of the historical significance of his mission, Columbus also may have seen the journal as a guarantee he would be given his due credit in history. His preoccupation regarding his place in history is evident in the measures he takes to secure this credit when his ship is rocked by a terrible storm on the return voyage:

> So that Their Highnesses would know how Our Lord had given him in triumph everything he desired from the Indies . . . if he were to perish in the storm, he took a piece of parchment and wrote on it everything he could about everything he had found, beseeching whomsoever [*sic*] might find it to take it to the Monarchs. He wrapped the parchment tightly in a waxed cloth and called for a large wooden barrel and put it in the barrel without anyone knowing what it was . . . and then ordered it be thrown into the sea. (Ife 219)

Despite Columbus's exhaustive efforts to document his greatest triumph, his original journal disappeared around the time of the death of the queen Isabel in 1504. The queen had made a copy, which she gave to Columbus before his second voyage in 1493. The copy was inherited by his son Diego after Columbus's death in 1506 and was passed on to Diego's son Luis in 1526. Though Luis apparently gained permission to have the *Journal* published in 1554, it never appeared in print. This has led to speculation that Luis sold the *Journal* in order to finance his decadent lifestyle. In any case, Columbus's original *Journal* and its only confirmed copy have vanished (Ife vi).

Were it not for the historian Bartolomé de Las Casas, the contents of Columbus's *Journal* probably would have been lost forever. Las Casas, whose father and uncle had traveled alongside Columbus on his first voyage, made extensive use of Columbus's *Journal* in his epic *Historia de las Indias.* It is thought that he consulted a copy of the *Journal* rather than the original as he noted "scribal errors and confusions" in his monumental book on the Indies (Ife vi). Apparently because he had limited access to the document, Las Casas created an abstract of the *Journal* for his own use, paraphrasing the majority of the text, but transcribing Columbus's own wording in especially noteworthy or interesting entries. Entire entries from when Columbus arrives in the New World, for example, are written in the first person, where it is assumed Las Casas is using the admiral's own words. In all, approximately 20 percent of the digest is written in first person (Ife x).

There is considerable doubt among historians, however, about Las Casas's working methods and whether or not a dedicated native apologist could have accurately and impartially summarized Columbus's work. Evidence suggests that Las Casas's version is far from perfect and "at best, two removes from the original" (Ife vi). Some of Las Casas's own notations in the text reflect his preoccupation with the accuracy of the text, noting "bad transcription of the text" or commenting, "if the text is to be believed" (Ife vii). Historians generally agree, however, that despite inevitable imperfections, "the use of quotations from the admiral makes (the *Journal*) the prime authority for the voyage itself" (Cohen 37).

One of the many curiosities of the *Journal* illustrates potential problems regarding the summarizing of Columbus's words. According to Las Casas's digest of the *Journal,* Columbus had a tendency to make two sets of calculations in his log book

about the distance the expedition had traveled. It seems that Columbus knew one of the calculations was true, yet he repeatedly gave his crew the other, supposedly incorrect, calculation. This oddity first appears in Columbus's entry for September 10, four days after the three ships had parted from Gomera of the Canary Islands. Las Casas writes: "That day and night he went sixty leagues at ten miles (2 ½ leagues) an hour. But he reckoned only forty-eight leagues so as not to alarm the crew" (Cohen 41). According to Las Casas's summary, Columbus consistently reckons less than what he knows to be the correct distance. It is apparent that Las Casas feels this practice is intended to prevent discontent among his men, who were worried about traveling too far out to sea:

> That night they went seventeen leagues southwest, a total of twenty-one. The Admiral, according to his custom, told the men they had gone thirteen leagues, for he was still afraid they would consider the voyage too long. Thus throughout the voyage he kept two reckonings, one false and the other true. (Cohen 46–47)

Las Casas later notes that the admiral always kept the "true calculation" to himself (Cohen 48). Columbus's decision to keep two reckonings could very well be due to what many historians have referred to as his obsessive secrecy, almost to the point of paranoia. It was also true that the unrest and near mutiny that later occurred on the first voyage were largely due to the crew's fears that they would not reach land or be able to sail back to the Spanish mainland.

Phillips and Phillips, on the other hand, feel that what they refer to as "the false log theory" is illogical. They note that Columbus would have had to deceive numerous experienced navigators, including the men on his ship as well as the captains, masters, and pilots of the other two ships. Columbus regularly compared notes with the pilots of the other two vessels, and there is no evidence that he had to convince them to accept his calculations. A more likely scenario is that Las Casas, far from an expert navigator, simply misunderstood this portion of the diary. This theory holds that Columbus would have first calculated the distance using a method he learned as a young mariner and then found the equivalent in terms his crew would have understood, much as present-day travelers first calculate a distance in miles or kilometers, beginning with the system they are more familiar with, before converting the distance into the measurement of the other system. Though this is an interesting theory to explain one of the greatest mysteries of the *Journal,* Phillips and Phillips concede, "We cannot know for sure until and unless the original version of the diary is found" (147–148).

On August 3, 1492, Columbus and his men set sail from Palos de la Frontera in the south of Spain toward the Canary Islands. The expedition consisted of three well-equipped ships, the flagship *Santa María,* with Columbus as captain, and two somewhat smaller caravels, the *Pinta,* captained by Martín Alonso Pinzón, and the *Niña,* captained by Pinzón's brother, Vicente Yáñez Pinzón. Choosing to cross the Atlantic from the Canary Islands "was either his greatest stroke of luck or the proof of his genius as a mariner" as the islands are considered to this day to be a perfect starting point for transatlantic sailing (Phillips and Phillips 145). While some historians argue that the genius of Columbus was at work in selecting the Canaries, others point to the fact that he may have left from the Canaries simply because they were under Spanish control, while other possible starting points, such as the Madeiras or the Azores, were Portuguese possessions. Arguing in favor of his nautical knowledge, Phillips and Phillips note that he was familiar with the winds and currents of the eastern Atlantic and had heard of frustrated expeditions that left from the Azores and had to return because of strong headwinds (146). Columbus also believed that Japan was due west of the Canary Islands.

The expedition left from Gomera on September 6 and took just 33 days. Columbus's account of the voyage as summarized by Las Casas details "good weather, mainly calm seas and remarkably little dissension" (Phillips and Phillips 148). Columbus's log

book for the voyage is mainly filled with observations of birds, seaweed, and other signs that Columbus felt meant they were approaching land.

According to Las Casas's digest of the logbook, "a sailor named Rodrigo from Triana," whom historians have recognized as Juan Rodríguez Bermejo, first sighted land on October 11 (Cohen 52; Phillips and Phillips 153). He is careful to note, however, that "the Admiral had seen a light at ten in the evening on the poop deck, but it was so indistinct he would not swear it was land" (Ife 27). Columbus had his sighting of the light confirmed by Pedro Gutiérrez, the royal steward. In his summary of the journal, Las Casas continues:

> After the Admiral had spoken, the light was spotted a couple of times, and it was like a small wax candle being raised and lowered, which struck very few people as being a sign of land, but the Admiral was certain he was near land. (Ife 29)

Las Casas may have gone to lengths to give some credit to Columbus because Columbus would later claim the prize offered by the sovereigns of an annual payment of 10,000 maravedis as his own. Columbus also kept the silk jacket he had later promised to give to the first man who spotted land. Perhaps regretting his behavior down the line, he assigned the annuity to Beatriz Enríquez de Arana, his mistress and mother of his youngest son (Phillips and Phillips 153).

Columbus and his men reached the island the natives referred to as Guanahaní at around two o'clock on the morning of October 12. By finding land and claiming it for the Catholic sovereigns, Columbus had also fulfilled the requisites for claiming the title he so desired: Admiral of the Ocean Sea.

The first impressions of the land where Columbus initially landed undoubtedly confused him as well as his men, as historians have suggested, "Where he expected to find the sophisticated subjects of the Great Kahn and the bustling ports of the Orient, he found naked innocents and little else" (Ife xix). Phillips and Phillips concur that "nothing about the island matched their mental image of Asia as described by Marco Polo and Toscanelli" (157). Columbus convinces himself, or perhaps wisely chooses not to admit otherwise in his writing, that he has landed in the Orient. Despite apparent evidence to the contrary, recognizing that he had not landed in Asia would have been admitting failure. He instead chooses to acknowledge that he has not yet found exactly what he is looking for, as he will do throughout the *Journal*. Ife notes that this is a very effective strategy in terms of "keeping spirits up, keeping the expedition going and giving it a sense of purpose" (xix). This objective is normally gold, which always seems to be just out of reach, usually on the next island. It must be remembered that Columbus had promised his patron, the Catholic sovereigns, that he would vastly increase their wealth, for which reason the search for gold and its apparent proximity appear so prominently in the *Journal*. For this reason, he also spent little time in surveying the smaller islands he sighted: "As beautiful as they were, (they) had little gold or other trade goods that would be attractive to Europeans" (Phllips and Phillips 163).

A primary feature of the *Journal* once Columbus and his men reach land is its use of what Ife describes as "repetitive and formulaic description" (xi). Columbus's descriptions of the sea and later the land and climate he encounters frequently hearken back to Spain, particularly Andalusia:

> (The trees) were green as Andalusia in the month of May. (Cohen 66)

> Here and throughout the island, the trees and plants are as green as in Andalusia in April. (Cohen 70)

> There were also holm oaks and strawberry trees and others like those of Castile. (Cohen 83)

This repetition may result from a desire to make this new world seem familiar—even predictable—since Columbus was understandably struggling to describe a reality he could not understand. It was especially important for him to make this new

world understandable to people of distinction in Castile. When seen in this light, using Castile as a reference point seems natural and practical.

Columbus's later departure from the familiar is also seen by Ife as strategic. Columbus repeatedly states with each successive "discovery" of a new island that "it is the most beautiful that I have seen up to now" (Cohen 83) or "the most beautiful that eyes have ever seen" (Cohen 76), though he chides himself for having done so when he arrives at the harbor he names "Puerto Santo":

> I was so astonished at the sight of so much beauty that I can find no words to describe it. For in writing of other regions . . . I have wrongly used the most exalted language I knew, so that everyone has said that there could not possibly be another region even more beautiful. (Cohen 83–84)

Columbus, admittedly lacking the vocabulary to describe what he is seeing, describes "not so much what he saw, as the sense of wonder with which he saw it" (Ife xxi). His hyperbole can be understood as tactical, for although "beautiful views cannot be turned into cash. . . , where there are such wonderful things, who can doubt that there are many more things of value yet to be discovered?" (Ife xxi).

In considering his limited written expression, one must also keep in mind the fact that Spanish was not his native tongue. According to Ife, however, one should not underestimate Columbus's linguistic prowess, for he "was not naïve where language was concerned," but rather understood "the power of language to constitute reality" (xii). Ife backs up this claim by citing Columbus's numerous allusions to the difficulty of communicating with the native inhabitants of the island and the importance he attached to this linguistic roadblock. Phillips and Phillips note that Columbus was well aware that "language was the key to cultural understanding and the only sure route to conversion" and "The problem of language loomed large among Columbus's preoccupations" (166, 169). Columbus writes of plans to take some natives back to Castile, where they will be taught the language, and emphasizes the idea that language is one of the principal barriers to converting the otherwise compliant inhabitants of the islands to Christianity.

According to Ife, Columbus's affinity to name (rather than "rename") the islands and other geographic landmarks with Christian names (though he knows the name the inhabitants have given them) demonstrates that he had a deep understanding of "the power of naming" as well (xiii). Ife calls this "an attempt at linguistic and cultural colonisation through language." He also notes the irony that in "suppressing the Indian name" of the island on which he made his first landfall (the island Guanahaní, which he renamed *San Salvador*), Columbus effectively "erased the site of his greatest triumph" (xxv).

Columbus's entries on the whole are also overly optimistic. Phillips and Phillips suggest "his will to succeed led him to color reality in the rosiest possible hues" (167). Whether in describing his futile hunt for gold or the possibility of converting the native population to Christianity, his journal entries constantly hearken back to his promises to the Catholic sovereigns. His early entries regarding the natives describe them as perfect prospects for conversion to Christianity, "in part because they had no bad habits to overcome" (166). According to Ife, it was not easy for Columbus to present "the best of the reality which presented itself to him" in relation to the native inhabitants of the islands (xxii). Unlike the extravagantly dressed Indians of the tales of Marco Polo, these Indians were "naked as their mothers bore them" (Cohen 55).

Columbus does his best, however, describing his meeting with a local chieftain on the island he named Española (Hispaniola) as if it were an elaborate ceremony among men of high status in a sophisticated society, involving the exchange of gifts and pleasantries. Columbus even goes as far as to invent a speech the young king supposedly made praising the king and queen of Spain. He obviously could not have made such a speech, or at least Columbus could not have known he made such a speech, since Columbus himself notes they had great difficulty understanding one another (Phillips and Phillips 172). Ife sees in Columbus's

description of an "awesome, well-mannered, softly-spoken and above all *generous* Indian a not too distant reflection of the Great Kahn himself" (xxiii). It should be noted that among the many documents Columbus took along with him on the voyage were letters to the "princes" of the Indies from the Catholic sovereigns.

Throughout the diary, he also exaggerates the potential financial gains of the islands, speaking often of the "very great quantity" of gold to be found. When he does not find the great gold fields he expected to find or even the pearl fields that had been described to him by the natives, he turns to other potentially useful commodities of the islands, such as timber, cotton, and aloe. Phillips and Phillips point out that in his actions throughout the first voyage, Columbus "followed Portuguese precedents, contacting local inhabitants and their leaders, trying to gain their confidence and learn the locations of trading centers" (158).

He soon has the realization, however, that he has not found the hub of Asian trade he was seeking. His frustration is increasingly evident, as when he describes the natives as "people poor in everything" (Phillips and Phillips 159). It is interesting to note, however, that it is precisely when this realization sets in that Columbus's descriptions of the physical settings he encounters become progressively more elaborate and hyperbolic and he often directly addresses the Catholic sovereigns:

> This country, Most Serene Highness, is so enchantingly beautiful that it surpasses all others in charm and beauty as much as the light of day surpasses the night. (Cohen 83)

Once again, he is probably interested in alleviating his disappointment while also drawing attention away from it for his audience in Spain.

On November 21, en route from Cuba to Hispaniola, the *Pinta* became separated from the other two ships. Las Casas, speaking for Columbus, claims that the captain of the *Pinta,* Martín Alonso Pinzón, had left Columbus "deliberately," for he was "impelled by greed" after hearing from some Indians he held captive aboard his ship that "there was much gold in the Island of Bohio" (Cohen 82). Phillips and Phillips note that the main reason Pinzón indeed may have left Columbus was to trade for gold, since "Columbus had prohibited any trading outside his auspices" (168). Columbus's principal worry regarding Pinzón's departure was probably that he might return to Spain without Columbus and his men and "seize the glory for the discoveries" (169). With this in mind, after his abandonment by Pinzón, Columbus seems "anxious to cover himself," taking great care in his entries to note his "thoroughness" in all that he does. This attention to detail "would make up for any lack of speed" in the case that his fears of Pinzón's arriving first in Spain should be warranted (Phillips and Phillips 169).

Soon after Pinzón's departure, Phillips and Phillips detect a change of tone in the diary as Columbus realizes that "European enterprise, and not trade alone, would be necessary to produce wealth from the islands" (168–169). The observations and comments he would make from then on follow accordingly. Columbus had begun to consider the idea of settling the island in order to establish trade in Europe with the products found on the island. Christian missionaries would also have an easy task in converting the locals to Christianity once they had learned their language.

Though Columbus never gives up hope of finding gold, his designs on making profit from the island eventually turn to colonizing it. On December 16, he lays out what he feels would be an adequate policy for colonizing the land, borrowing heavily once again from the Portuguese model in Africa (Phillips and Phillips 171). As previously mentioned, Columbus sought to take a number of "Indians" with him on his return trip to Castile to teach them the language so that he could take interpreters back with him on his next expedition. Phillips and Phillips suggest that although Columbus never explicitly says as much, "the captured islanders would also serve as proof of his reaching a distant land with exotic peoples" (162).

In any case, his designs on colonizing the islands and making use of their inhabitants are clear. Ife notes that Columbus's entries offer clear foreshadowing of what was to come:

> Columbus anticipates in the Journal many of the forms of exploitation of both human and natural resources which will lead in a very short time to the total destruction of a whole way of life in the Caribbean. (xxii)

Though praising their humanity and other qualities at certain points in the *Journal,* he at other times describes the islanders as if they were simply another commodity for the Crown, saying they "should be good servants" (Cohen 56). According to Ife, Columbus saw the islanders as "nothing, a tabula rasa on which the Catholic faith and European civilisation had still to be inscribed" (xxv). Columbus repeatedly mentions their lack of weapons and knowledge of warfare and claims that "with fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we wish" (Cohen 59). As always, Columbus appears to be scrambling for something "to justify the faith the sovereigns had shown in him" (Phillips and Phillips 167). Whatever his motives may have been, history has not pardoned him, assigning him what Phillips and Phillips call "the dubious distinction of being the first European slaver in the Western Hemisphere" (162).

Phillips and Phillips point out that the sinking of the flagship, the *Santa María,* on Christmas Day, "the moment of greatest drama in the trip," was reported "laconically in the diary," undoubtedly to diminish the impact of what was clearly a devastating loss for the expedition (172). Las Casas's summary shows that Columbus also was clearly eager to "deflect blame from himself" in the matter (Phillips and Phillips 174). For the devoutly religious—or opportunistic—Columbus, the shipwreck had been God's will.

Despite the circumstances—his flagship has been sunk and he has been abandoned by Pinzón—his next journal entry is especially optimistic. He describes the inhabitants of the island and their king, who were of great help to Columbus and his men after the sinking of the *Santa María,* in an extremely favorable manner and once again expresses optimism about their conversion to Christianity. Left only with the *Niña* to make the trip home, it is also now a reality that some of the crew will have to stay on the island of Española. It is possible that Columbus has their protection in mind when he shows off the power of their European weapons in a demonstration before the natives, firing a shot from a small cannon into the *Santa María,* leaving the king "both horrified and amazed" (Cohen 94–95). Phillips and Phillips note that in his journal entries, he seems to be trying to convince the Catholic sovereigns and himself that a profit could still be made and that the settlers would be safe (174). Columbus also orders his men to start building a fort. Columbus would leave 39 men behind on Española, naming the settlement there *La Navidad,* or "Christmas," in commemoration of the sinking of his flagship on Christmas Day.

With only one ship left and fearing that Pinzón might reach Spain first and reap the awards he deserved, Columbus was ready to depart for Spain. On January 4, he began sailing along the northern coast of Española, where he is sure Cipango (Japan) is located, where "there is much gold and spices and mastic and rhubarb" (179). Not two days later, he found the *Pinta* and Pinzón. It what must have been an awkward meeting, Columbus manages not to let his anger show in order to prevent risking the voyage home:

> Martín Alonso Pinzón came to the caravel Niña where the Admiral was and made his excuses, saying that he had become separated from him against his will, giving reasons; but the Admiral says that they were untrue and that he had acted out of great pride and greed on the night that he had gone off and left him. . . . The Admiral decided to turn a blind eye, so as not to give Satan a chance to do his evil deeds by hindering the voyage as he had done up till then. (Ife 181)

Despite what he may have felt about Pinzón, his insinuations about gold on the island led to some further exploration along the east coast of Española, where they encountered hostile islanders for the first time. Las Casas notes that Columbus

thought he had finally encountered the infamous Carib, "a daring people for they roam these islands eating anyone they can capture" (Ife 193). Columbus does seem to have seen the battle they engaged in with the warlike islanders as a bad turn of events, particularly with regard to the effect winning the battle may have had on the safety of the men he had left behind at Navidad. The entry of December 13 describes Columbus's attitude about the confrontation:

> When the Admiral learned what had happened he said that in one sense he was sorry but in another not; *because they will fear the Christians, because without doubt* (he says) *those people are,* he says, *evildoers.* (Ife 195)

After a brief attempt to sail toward the supposed island of the Carib, Columbus caught favorable winds to return directly home. Considering his options, he decided to set sail for Spain. The return trip was wracked by bad weather, unfavorable wind conditions, and shortages of provisions. Phillips and Phillips note that though he was familiar with the easterly patterns before he left Spain, "he found the westerlies only by trial and error" (176). When a horrible storm hit on February 14, Pinzón and the *Pinta* once again became separated from the *Niña*. The storm was so terrible, the admiral resorted to divine intervention, ordering several pilgrimages be made. It was during this terrifying storm that the fear of death and of leaving his two sons orphaned led Columbus to "reveal a bit more of himself in the diary as he had done before" (177). His fear of failure, however, probably overcame even that of death, for "if he died and Martín Alonso Pinzón survived and reached Spain, Pinzón would steal the glory for the discoveries" (177). It was this fear that led Columbus to write a letter on parchment to the Catholic sovereigns, attach it to a wooden barrel, and throw it into the sea in the hope that it would be found should the ship sink. He also reprimands himself in the entry for having lacked faith during the ordeal, considering all that God had allowed him to accomplish up to that point of the expedition.

Columbus and his men amazingly escaped the storm and sighted what Columbus was sure was the Azores. Once the men reached one of the islands, Las Casas's summary of Columbus's entry takes on an oddly self-congratulating and defiant tone:

> The Admiral says that his course had been very accurate and that he had plotted it well, thanks be to God. . . . And he says that he pretended to have sailed further to mislead the pilots and sailors who were plotting the course so that he would remain master of that route to the Indies, as he in fact remains, because none of the others was certain of the course and none can be sure of his route to the Indies. (Ife 223)

Phillips and Phillips note this passage "may be yet another incidence of Las Casas's failure to understand nautical matters" (178).

Though Columbus and his men were initially well received on the island, the following day the men he had sent to the island were arrested by its captain. Columbus claimed he was the admiral of the Ocean Sea under the authority of the Spanish monarchs and that he would send word to the sovereigns of the outrageous treatment he and his men were receiving, to which the captain replied that in Portuguese territory, papers from the Spanish monarchs meant nothing. The standoff that ensued lasted some three days until the captain finally agreed to release Columbus's men after examining his papers.

Phillips and Phillips note that while he was beset by bad weather during this period, "Columbus drew on religious speculation to explain the real world." For Columbus, the temperate weather conditions of the part of the Indies the expedition had arrived at explained why theologians and philosophers had long situated the terrestrial paradise there. Columbus seemingly had no problem weaving together the prophesies of the Bible with what he directly observed. Phillips and Phillips conclude on the matter that "despite his long experience as a merchant and mariner, his religious mysticism would often lead him to see what his religious beliefs prepared him to see" (179).

The *Journal* notes that the expedition continued to be rocked by storms once it left Santa María and that Columbus appealed to God through promises of pilgrimages to carry the ship through to land. He would eventually land and anchor at the harbor of Restelo near the Portuguese capital, and shortly thereafter he was received by the Portuguese king, John II, who offered him numerous favors. The king apparently had designs on Columbus's discoveries, which he felt could have been his, based on treaties he had signed with Castile. For his part Columbus was rather reluctant to meet with the king, who had initially rejected him. He did so "to avoid suspicion," as he notes in the *Journal* (Ife 237).

On March 13, 1493, the *Niña* left for Andalusia. In his last entry on March 15, Columbus once again pays his respects to the Divine Majesty who has allowed him such great and miraculous success on his voyage despite the doubters of the royal court, *"all of whom were against me saying this undertaking was a jest"* (241). God had allowed the admiral to accomplish his mission and silence his detractors, at least for the time being.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare and contrast Columbus's descriptions of his encounters with native inhabitants of the Caribbean with those of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in North America. How are they similar? In what ways do they differ? What do you think accounts for these differences?
2. Describe some of the apparent contradictions in Columbus's description of the native inhabitants of the island in his *Journal*. Why do you think these contradictions appear in the *Journal*?
3. In what ways does the *Journal* foreshadow what was to happen in the Americas? Cite specific examples from the text.

Letter to Luis de Santángel (1493)

Columbus's letter to Luis de Santángel, the man who had played such an important role in convincing Isabella to finance the expedition, was "a formal exclamation of discovery." According to Columbus, the letter, dated February 15, 1493, was written "in the caravel off the Canary Islands," though in his *Journal,* Columbus writes that he was off Santa Maria in the Azores (Cohen 123). Upon arriving in Portugal, Columbus immediately dispatched the letter to Santángel, though he also sent copies to others in the court, fearing that a single letter might not reach its destination. Couriers arranged through friends from Columbus's youth in Lisbon delivered the letter some 700 miles overland to Barcelona (Wilford 18).

The letter is largely a summary of what appears in Columbus's *Journal* of the first voyage and maintains the same optimistic and, at times, exaggerated tone. Phillips and Phillips note that in his letter to Santángel, Columbus "emphasized and exaggerated the positive features, minimized or omitted the negative features and exuded energy and optimism" (186). There were of course many embellishments and errors, chief among them Columbus's claims of having gold mines, which amount to a boldfaced lie.

Columbus was acutely aware of the importance of making it sound as though his discoveries were going to generate a great deal of profit. As was his custom, Columbus carefully selects evidence to serve his purpose. With this in mind, he extols the innumerable virtues of the islands: the plethora of birds and fruits, the fertile soil, the existence of mines and rivers containing gold, and the multitude of native inhabitants. The hyperbole rampant in Columbus's *Journal* is also prevalent here. The island of Hispaniola "has many fine harbors finer than any I know in Christian lands . . . and mountains incomparably finer than Tenerife" (Cohen 116). The island of Hispaniola is, simply put, a "wonder" (Cohen 117). On the other hand, Columbus's characteristic use of familiar metaphor also appears, as when he mentions the trees are "as green and lovely as they are in Spain" (Cohen 116).

The picture he paints of the islands is one of "new lands of boundless wealth and numerous people apt for Christian conversion" (Phillips and Phillips 186). Despite countless references to the possibility of their

conversion, Columbus clearly sees the native inhabitants as a profitable commodity as well. They are described as naked and docile people without knowledge of weapons, who are likely to convert willingly to Christianity, though Columbus had heard of the existence of warlike Indians and cannibals who would have to be conquered. He hopes that the former may be protected against enslavement and that the latter will be conquered and enslaved for profit (Phillips and Phillips 183).

Columbus is also quick to remind his sponsors that he has recognized and honored them in the naming of the islands. Ever devout, in naming his discoveries in a "descending hierarchical order," Columbus puts his "divine sponsors" before the royal family (Phillips and Phillips 183).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Historians have noted echoes of the religious and secular legends of his era in Columbus's description of the islands (Phillips and Phillips 183). How does Columbus reconcile the potential religious and secular benefits of the islands? Cite examples from the text.
2. How does Columbus's description of the lands and their inhabitants differ from those represented in JOHN SMITH's writings? Can these differences be attributed to cultural and religious beliefs? If so, how?

Narrative of the Third Voyage (1498)

In his *Historias de las Indias,* Bartolomé de las Casas titled Columbus's emotional account of his third voyage "Narrative of the Third Voyage of Christopher Columbus to the Indies, in Which He Dispatched to the Sovereigns from the Island of Hispaniola." This narrative contains several key elements that are prominent throughout Columbus's logbook and letters regarding his voyages, all of which are related to what was at the time an urgent need to better his reputation and refute criticism in Spain. First, he speaks at length about the hardships he has had to endure as well as the unfairness and cruelty of his detractors. Second, his descriptions of the natives and the land he encounters are characteristically extravagant, for, as always, he is eager to maintain the interest of his audience, the Catholic sovereigns. Finally, he intertwines religious mysticism and scientific theories, this time in order to create his own theory about the shape of the Earth and the location of the earthly paradise.

An expedition of six ships left Sanlúcar de Barrameda, near Cádiz, on May 30, 1498. On this voyage, Columbus and his crew would first land at Trinidad before reaching what is today Venezuela. Columbus had been ordered by the Catholic sovereigns to take a group of colonists along with supplies to the island of Hispaniola, though he apparently had his own agenda as well, mainly to carry out further exploration (Symcox and Sullivan 24).

The third voyage as described in his narrative was by no means without its difficulties. He claims he "had hoped for some rest on this new voyage to the Indies, but my distresses were doubled" (Cohen 206). Columbus describes a harrowing beginning to the voyage in which he first had to avoid attack from a French fleet (France and Spain were now at war). At sea, he endured eight days of terrible heat in which, he writes, "I was afraid my ships and crew would be burnt" (Cohen 207). Columbus later details a horrendous eye infection, in which his eyes bled and caused him great pain.

Throughout the narrative, Columbus addresses what he feels is unmerited criticism from Castile. He notes at the beginning of the narrative that his inability to send back ships "laden with gold" immediately had led to "abuse" and "disparagement" from his critics in Castile (Cohen 206). Toward the end of the narrative, Columbus asks God "to forgive the persons who have libeled and do libel this noble enterprise" (Cohen 225). He then counters the arguments of his critics, discussing the short amount of time that has passed, the unforeseen difficulties that have arisen, the innovation of the enterprise, and the precedent of success with the Portuguese colonization of Guinea. He concludes his narrative by appealing once again directly to the sovereigns, reminding them of the purpose of the expedition, its accomplishments, and how

they have always supported him. Columbus seems almost as if he is trying to convince himself that the monarchs are still on his side as he reminds them that they had previously assuaged his fears:

> Your Highnesses answered me with that magnanimity for which you are famous throughout the world, telling me to take no account of these fears because it was your will to prosecute and maintain this enterprise, even if it should produce nothing but rocks and stones. (Cohen 226)

Columbus's characteristic hyperbole, which he had already employed in his letters regarding his other voyages as well as in his journal, can be found throughout the narrative. Under heavy criticism back home regarding the lack of tangible results and increasing costs of his enterprise, he seems almost desperate to justify the sovereigns' continued faith in him. With this in mind, it becomes clear why Columbus, "ever optimistic," paints a picture of "rich and promising" lands (Symcox and Sullivan 25). Arriving at Trinidad, as his customs dictates, he begins by likening this unfamiliar territory to Castile, "fine cultivated land, as green and lovely as the orchards of Valencia in March" (Cohen 209). Again staying true to form, he goes from using familiar metaphors to claiming he has come upon land more beautiful than anything he has seen before: "I found some of the most beautiful country in the world" (Cohen 212–213). The native inhabitants receive similarly flattering treatment in the narrative. They are "all very well built, tall and with finely proportioned limbs . . . fairer than any others I have seen in the Indies," as well as "quicker, more intelligent and less cowardly" (Cohen 214, 219).

A large portion of the narrative is dedicated to Columbus's theorizing about the shape of the world and the location of the earthly paradise, which he "fervently believes" lies within the land he has discovered (Cohen 226). Columbus describes the shape of the Earth as that of a pear in which the land and the sea slope gradually upward to a point. His ships were now sailing in the direction of this point, which was the mountain of paradise. He backed up his arguments with quotes from the book of Genesis, concluding, "I am firmly convinced that the Earthly paradise truly lies here, and I rely on the authorities and arguments I have cited" (224). Symcox and Sullivan see in Columbus's speculations "evidence that Columbus's mystical religiosity deepened in his later years" and that he "had convinced himself that his voyages were part of God's plan to spread the Gospel to the ends of the Earth" (25), while Phillips and Phillips feel they reveal "some of his more eccentric geographical notions" (220). They also note that "to Columbus and his contemporaries, Holy Scripture was not just a religious text, but a valid source of knowledge about the world" and that, as a result, "his blending of the Bible, Ptolemy, and his own experience would not have seemed as odd to his intended audience as they seem to us" (221).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Columbus's characterization of the native inhabitants in the narrative of the third voyage to that of the *Journal* of his first voyage. In what way are his descriptions similar? In what ways are they different? How may the differences in the characterization of the natives have served Columbus's interests better at the time?
2. It has been argued that Columbus's religious fervor increased over the course of his voyages. Compare the influence that Columbus's Catholicism has upon his view of earthly paradise with Puritanism's impact on the views of JOHN WINTHROP and his idea of a "city upon a hill."

Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella (1503)

In June 1503, during his fourth and final transatlantic voyage, Columbus was marooned on the northern coast of Jamaica and suffering from what may have been gout or Reiter's syndrome. Columbus asked Diego Méndez, along with several natives, to make a 105-mile crossing in canoe to Hispaniola to seek aid. He also entrusted his friend with a letter to the Catholic sovereigns

that "betrays the depths of the suffering admiral's despair" (Wilford 239). The letter, known as *Lettera Rarissima,* was largely "rambling and incoherent, filled with the stories of religious visions and grandiose plans for the reconquest of Jerusalem" (Phillips and Phillips 237).

As he had numerous times before in his writing, Columbus bitterly protested the injustice of the criticisms being leveled against him while pleading for the restoration of the honors and estates of which he had been stripped. Unfortunately for Columbus, the disturbed and rambling nature of the letter probably achieved just the opposite (Phillips and Phillips 239). In the letter, he despairs about his extreme state of poverty, claiming he has won "little profit in twenty years of toilful and dangerous service" and that he no longer has a place to live in Castile nor is able to afford a bed or a meal in an inn or a tavern (Cohen 286–287). He is particularly fearful for his "orphaned son," Don Diego, whom he has left in Spain, and implores the sovereigns to "restore everything to him with increase" (Cohen 287).

One of the letter's most commented-on features is an odd dream vision Columbus describes during an incident that occurred at Belén River. Columbus was stranded at sea without a ship's boat and was helplessly observing his brother's attempt to fend off a native attack on shore. Columbus notes that he had a high fever and was in a state of exhaustion and thought that all hope had been lost. At that point, a voice speaks to him, extolling his accomplishments, comparing him to the great heroes of the Bible, and encouraging him by assuring him that his old age will not prevent him from receiving reward for his efforts.

The omnipresent theme of possible gold fields is also discussed at length in the letter. As always, Columbus's claims are exaggerated. On this occasion, however, Columbus's hunt for gold takes on divine implications. Citing biblical verses, Columbus claims David left gold from the mines at Veragua, Panama, to Solomon in his will so that he could build the Temple of Jerusalem. Columbus clamors that the time has come to rebuild the temple and that he will play an integral role. Phillips and Phillips see in this letter evidence that Columbus "had come to see himself as an instrument in God's hands, as the Christ-bearer" (238). They also note that this letter "would not inspire Ferdinand and Isabel to place its writer in charge of an empire" (239).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Columbus's letter to the Catholic sovereigns during his fourth voyage clearly takes on a different tone than that of his letter to Luis de Santángel following his first voyage. Cite examples from the text that illustrate this change with regard to Columbus's position with the Catholic sovereigns.
2. Some critics have viewed Cabeza de Vaca's *Relacion* as hagiography, or the telling of a saint's life. In this letter, Columbus makes many more biblical references than he has prior, and seems to view himself and his duties in religious terms. Compare the two texts and argue for the influence that their roles not as men but as religious figures shapes the way in which they view the colonial enterprise. How do they justify their religious roles? Do these roles interfere with their work for the Spanish Crown?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON COLUMBUS AND HIS WORK

1. Compare the writings of Columbus that we have, both direct and reported by Las Casas, to the legends that abound about this most famous explorer. Write an essay in which you consider points of intersection between fact and legend with Columbus, and argue for which version of the explorer is more influential in America and why.
2. Because Columbus was seeking out a trade route to China, his voyages to the Americas can be viewed as failures. How, then, did Columbus define his own success? Trace Columbus's definition and examples of success in two of his works.

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Matthew Zealand

James Fenimore Cooper
(1789–1851)

Few men exhibit greater diversity, or, if we may so express it, greater antithesis of character than the native warrior of North America. In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste.

(*The Last of the Mohicans*)

James Fenimore Cooper was born into two wealthy families: His mother, Elizabeth Fenimore, was an heiress, and his father, William Cooper, succeeded in land speculation after the Revolutionary War. Some of the land, the 40,000 acres known as the Croghan Patent, would become central to Cooper's identity and his writing. The family mansion, named Otsego Hall for the lake adjoining the land grant, would become the model for Judge Marmaduke Temple's estate in *The Pioneers*.

From all accounts of his family members and his instructors, Cooper was "extravagantly fond of reading novels and amusing tales" (Long 15). His precociousness—he matriculated at the age of 13 at Yale—was tempered by his desire to be outdoors, engaged in physical sport, or else playing a practical joke on fellow students or professors. Because of his propensity for pranks and literature above all other subjects, Cooper was expelled from Yale in his junior year. His subsequent year at sea as "a common sailor-before-the-mast" was, in the opinion of his biographer Robert Emmet Long, "one of the most formative experiences of his life" (15). After his marriage, James acceded to his wife's request that he forgo a life at sea. His fondness for sea life appeared, however, in some of his fiction and is seen by critics as a precursor to Herman Melville's nautical novels such as *Moby-Dick*. It is certainly true that the wilderness of his childhood surroundings significantly shaped Cooper's imagination and would appear time and again as the backdrop for his fiction.

In December 1809, Cooper's father "was struck from behind by a political opponent . . . and died as a result of the blow" (16). Copper received a significant inheritance from his father: $50,000 and an interest in the father's estate estimated at $750,000 (16). Cooper was only 19 years old. Soon after his father's death, James married Susan Delancey, the granddaughter of the former governor of New York (16). In marrying into such a wealthy and powerful family, Cooper was following in his father's footsteps. For a time, the couple lived at Angevine Farm, where Cooper fulfilled the role of a "gentleman farmer" (17). The two had five daughters, but only four survived to adulthood. Their first daughter, Elizabeth, died two years after her birth.

The events that led up to his literary career range from the tragic to the comic. Despite Cooper's significant inheritance, the economic depression after the War of 1812 and the careless speculations of his four elder brothers depleted the family estate to the extent that the family home, Otsego Hall, was sold (18). Thus, Cooper was economically motivated to fulfill the boast his daughter Sarah recorded after her father read a contemporary English novel. As Sarah recounts in her "Small Family Memories," Cooper, disgusted by the lack of quality in the English novel, declared that he could write a better novel himself (reported in Long 18). His first

novel, *Precaution,* appeared in November 1820 and was followed shortly by the next, *The Spy* (18). The family moved from their farm in Scarsdale to New York City in order for Cooper to be closer to editors and others in the publishing world, and to ensure that his daughters receive a proper education. This second work garnered Cooper international attention as *The Spy* was translated into numerous languages, and thus was available to a multilingual readership (19).

Because of the success of *The Spy,* readers eagerly awaited the arrival of his third novel, *The Pioneers,* which appeared in print in 1823. *The Pioneers* was the first in the Leatherstocking Tales series, which included *The Last of the Mohicans, The Prairie, The Deerslayer,* and *The Pathfinder*. Cooper's early fame was solidified by the publication of *The Last of the Mohicans,* and because of its popularity, he took his family on a grand tour of the Continent, which kept him away from North America for seven years (20). Critic Robert Emmet Long suggests that one of the reasons for the family's long stint in Europe was economic: Cooper wanted "to make the foreign publication of his works yield more significant income. In the absence of international copyright laws, his novels had been pirated freely; but Cooper now planned and while in Europe secured arrangements to have the books published in authorized editions" (20). While in Paris, Cooper met and befriended Sir Walter Scott and Samuel F. B. Morse (who invented the telegraph). He wrote and published *The Prairie, The Red Rover, The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, The Bravo, The Heidenmauer,* and *The Headsman* during his seven-year stay abroad.

Upon his return to the United States in 1833, Cooper fell into a deep despair over the vast changes that he witnessed in the land of his birth. The country's rapid growth and its obsession with material wealth were disheartening to Cooper. His response took the form of a pamphlet entitled "A Letter to His Countrymen," in which he critiqued the nation's isolationism, defended the policies of President Andrew Jackson, and announced his retirement as a novelist (Long 24–25). It is fortunate that his retirement was short lived, as he needed a vehicle for his nervous energies and returned to the page, publishing a satire of America, *The Monikins,* in 1835. The following year, he repurchased his family home of Otsego Hall and became embroiled in a controversy over the public use of his lands, Three Mile Point (25). The public outcry was substantial, and Whig editors who were already unhappy with Cooper because of ideas expressed in his pamphlet attacked him and his novels in their newspapers (25). The public controversy seems to have spurred Cooper to a heightened degree of literary productivity as he published an astonishing 20 works in the 1840s, two of them the "dark" contributions to the Leatherstocking series.

Cooper's chronic liver illness was responsible for his rapid decline, beginning when he turned 60. "He wrote until he could no longer hold a pen, and then dictated chapters [for a history book called *The Towns of Manhattan*] to his daughter Susan" (28). He died at his family home on September 14, 1851, just hours shy of his 62d birthday. His wife died a few months later, and their daughter Susan, who never married, was buried with Cooper's journal when she died in the 1880s (28).

The Pioneers (1823)

Published in 1823, *The Pioneers* inaugurated the Leatherstocking Tales series and introduced readers to the hero, Natty Bumppo, a frontiersman whose symbiotic relationship with the wilderness, thinly disguised from Cooper's own childhood, is set in marked contrast to the rapacious plunder of recent settlers to the area, embodied by the figure of Judge Marmaduke Temple. As the famed frontier critic Richard Slotkin argues in his reading of *The Pioneers,* the novel has two central plotlines that address separate, but at times intertwining, conflicts. The first plotline follows the romantic convention of a novel of manners that Cooper inherited from his reading of the novels of Sir Walter Scott. In Scott's novels, national conflicts such as the Revolutionary War are resolved on the level of the family; in this case, the marriage plot of

Oliver Effingham and Elizabeth Temple reconciles the two families' differences fomented by the Revolution. The second conflict, expressed in a separate plotline, involves the clash of what Slotkin terms different "modes of perception" and "mythologies between Indians and Europeans" (486). Although Judge Temple participates in both plotlines, they are distinct and separated in the novel. Slotkin suggests that Cooper's reliance on two separate cultural mythologies accounts for the separation in plotlines. The tale of families reconciling through the marriage of their children adheres to European mythology expressed by Scott; the manner in which both cultures view the land stems from indigenous cultures that Cooper, ironically, gleaned from a European historian, John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder (Slotkin 485).

The novel opens on a cold Christmas Eve as the widowed Judge Temple returns to the family manor with his daughter, Elizabeth, who has been away for four years while attending school. The family's somewhat pastoral journey home is disturbed by the sound of hunting dogs and the judge's own rifle, which he aims at a buck bounding frantically across their path. Although the judge is in relative proximity to the buck, his numerous shots do not fell the hunted deer, who leaps into the air in its final death move from a well-aimed bullet shot from the novel's hero, Natty Bumppo. As the old hunter and the judge debate who is responsible for the buck's fatal shot, it is revealed that the judge's aim was so bad that he wounded Natty's young companion, a hunter who remains nameless until the judge demands his name and he falsely identifies himself as Oliver Edwards (80). A physically awkward and not terribly educated "doctor" named Dr. Elnathan Todd is called to attend to this young hunter, who the reader later discovers is none other than Oliver Effingham, the son of the judge's former business partner. The true physician responsible for young Oliver's recovery from the judge's bullet is Indian John, companion to Natty Bumppo and a sad and broken version of his former warrior self, Chingachgook.

When Cooper introduces readers to the figure of Chingachgook, he expounds for several pages on the history of his tribe and the existence of the Six Nations, who "amalgamated" in the face of dire adversity brought on by "the Europeans, or, to use a more significant term, the Christians" (70). Cooper places the weight of this cultural legacy onto the sturdy but old figure of Indian John, as he is known to the settlers after his conversion to Christianity. His very description of Chingachgook figures him as the final survivor: "But war, time, disease, and want had conspired to thin their number; and the sole representative of this once renowned family now stood" (72). This notion of a "sole representative" is pervasive in Cooper's fictional accounts of American Indians and culminates in one of the Leatherstocking Tales series' titles, *The Last of the Mohicans.* Cooper balances his apocalyptic treatment of American Indians, as embodied in the character of Indian John, with his similar sense of the first generation of settlers, personified by Indian John's faithful companion, Natty Bumppo.

Natty Bumppo, who takes on the name *Hawkeye* when aligned with Chingachgook against the overcivilized settlers such as Judge Temple, is "an old man on the verge of decrepitude, the representative of an admirable but vanishing breed of man, the Indian-like hunters of the first frontier" (Slotkin 484). In the figure of Natty, Cooper invests the philosophy of symbiosis between humans and the wilderness: "Hawkeye's law ordains, not the conversion of the land, but the adjustment of man to the land; not the breaking of the forest to man's will, but the submission of human will to the laws inherent in nature" (Slotkin 488–489). Thus, Natty's conflict with Judge Temple over the hunting law that prohibits the killing of any deer during an artificially established period has broader implications as a debate between natural law and human, or civil, law.

The climax of the tension embodied by Judge Temple and Natty Bumppo involves Natty's successful and ritualistic hunt of a deer during the season in which the judge has banned all hunting. The critic Robert Long writes, "Ironically, Natty is prosecuted for killing a deer by the very men whose response to nature and its wildlife has been plun-

dering and rapacious" (40). Prior to the conviction and incarceration of Natty, the old hunter stands in shock as he witnesses the wholesale carnage by pioneers against a sky filled with passenger pigeons. The men in the village all shoot indiscriminately into the air, and two men fire off a cannon, greatly increasing the ratio of dead pigeons to fired ammunition. As the historians Robert Hine and John Faragher attest in their study of the novel, "Cooper's depiction of the war waged upon the passenger pigeon . . . was no fiction. . . . A local newspaper editor vouched for the accuracy of Cooper's depiction of the pigeon shoot" (435). The slaughter of pigeons is not the only scene in the novel in which the pioneers' plunder of the land is juxtaposed to Natty's and Indian John's ritualized, almost sacred, hunting of wildlife.

During a debate over Judge Temple's newly imposed ban on hunting deer, Cooper likens the conflict over law and order in the village to the law and form of government being debated in France during their revolution. The judge fears the Jacobins (147) and quickly follows his characterization of them as "bloodthirsty" with a justification of the recent laws passed by the country that he believes are "much required" (147). Taken in the context of a discussion about the French Revolution, Natty's response, "I think one old law is worth two new ones," ironically paints the hunter as a loyalist (148). Natty's point, however, refers instead to the "old law" obeyed by American Indians for the last "forty years": "Game is game, and he who finds may kill" (148). This "old law" is flexible to account for the hunter's circumstances, excusing the death of a doe and fawn when the hunter's "moccasins are getting old, or his leggings ragged" (148). The philosophy of hunting presented by Natty Bumppo is selective, respectful, and motivated by necessity. It is the pioneers like Richard Jones who aim cannons into the sky to slaughter pigeons who appear "bloodthirsty." Cooper clearly indicates that the two codes of conduct regulating the behavior of Anglo Europeans and American Indians are radically different and incompatible.

This difference across cultural lines imbues the reading and misreading of Natty's hunt for the deer during Judge Temple's imposed off-season. Although Long recognizes "the hunting rites of an earlier time" echoed in Natty's slaying of the deer, it is Slotkin who uncovers the actual myth, and its possible source for Cooper, in the study published by Heckewelder on American Indian culture, history, and mythology. In Heckewelder's account of Delaware creation myth, the people "lived under a lake until one of their hunters discovered a hole through which he saw a deer. He hunted the deer, killed and ate it, tasted in its flesh the sweetness of earth and the goodness of the goddess of nature, and brought his tribe out to people the earth" (reported in Slotkin 490). Viewed from this vantage point, Natty's action participates in the ritual of creation. Slitting the deer's throat in the lake paradoxically invokes life at the same time its signals death. The natural law by which Natty and Chingachgook abide would view their ritual as law abiding, but the civil law that Judge Temple governs and is governed by only sees the hunt as illegal and grounds for a 30-day jail sentence. What appears to be a triumph of civil over natural law, with the incarceration of Natty Bumppo, turns instead into another occasion in which the need to balance these two systems of belief becomes readily apparent. Natty replies to the judge's sentence in the following manner: "You may make your laws, Judge, but who will you find to watch the mountains through the long summer days, or the lakes at night? Game is game, and he who finds may kill; that has been the law in these mountains . . . and I think one old law is worth two new ones."

Natty breaks out of jail just as fire begins ravaging the wilderness. Not surprisingly, Jotham Riddel, the same character responsible for goading Natty to hunt out of season by cutting the thong restraining Natty's hunting dog, is also to blame for igniting the fire while he was searching for a nonexistent silver mine. The fire threatens the lives of Elizabeth, Oliver Edwards, Chingachgook, and Natty himself. Had Natty not escaped from custody, the judge's own daughter might not have survived the engulfing flames. Although Natty's rescue of the two lovers demonstrates the preeminence of natural law, the death of Indian John and

the self-exile of Natty both testify poignantly to the inevitable demise of the "old law."

Richard Slotkin interprets the death of Chingachgook as following "archetypal myth: when the king of the woods becomes impotent through age or disease, his land suffers with him. Only if the king surrenders his blood to the soil in sacrifice and passes his power to a successor can the homeopathic relationship between the people and their land be profitably maintained" (491). Thus, Chingachgook's death takes on symbolic portent as he is first emasculated when the powder horn he is carrying explodes between his legs. This leaves him as an impotent leader, incapable of extending his bloodline into the next generation. Cooper's description of the dying chief "looking into the womb of futurity" bears out Slotkin's assessment of the link between the forest fire and the fatally wounded Delaware. His death is reflected in the forest damage suffered from the fire; the aftermath of this fire is a promise of rebirth, but such a promise has been foreclosed for Chingachgook, and thus for other American Indians by extrapolation. "It serves as symbolic confirmation of the termination of Chingachgook's kingly powers and the passing of the power of the soil to a new and better lord, Oliver Edwards/Effingham" (Slotkin 492). When he replies with an indigenous death song to the minister's request for his last confession, Chingachgook expels the version of himself as "Indian John" and closes off the circle of his life to return to a time before the white men arrived, to a time before he himself was converted to Christianity. All that is left by the novel's conclusion are the figures representing civil law. Chingachgook's death has paved the way for their lives, for their future.

For Discussion or Writing

1. In the clash between the two sets of laws, natural and civil, Cooper also presents his readers with two different myths, native and Christian. Explore the connection between natural law and Delaware myth as well as the link between civil law and Christian mythology.
2. Compare Cooper's treatment of the relationship between American Indians and Anglo Americans in this book to that of his other Leatherstocking Tales. Is there a consistent pattern? If so, what is it? If not, how does the dynamic change?
3. How does Cooper's view of the connection between humans and nature compare to the poetry of WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT such as "Thanatopsis"?

The Pilot (1824)

Published in January 1824, *The Pilot* was Cooper's fourth novel and his first attempt at writing about the sea. Readers should recall that Cooper reluctantly resigned his position in the navy at the behest of his wife and would continue for nearly 20 years to write both fictional and nonfictional accounts of sea life, and the nation's need for an expanded navy (Nelson 129). It became a "conspicuously popular success and initiated a long series of Cooper's sea novels" (Long 19–20). In his preface to the novel, Cooper identifies a conversation with his publisher, Charles Wilkes, over Scott's *The Pirate,* which Wilkes praised and Cooper critiqued, arguing that it would not appeal to nautical readers more experienced with life at sea. As Cooper states, this conversation provided the germ for his first sea novel, whose plot he had sketched out that very evening (46). The novel's realism, or historical accuracy, not only applied to its genre, but also to its portrayal of the historical figure John Paul Jones (thinly disguised as Mr. Gray) as its protagonist. Long notes that no biography existed at the time of Cooper's novel and suggests that he might have been "influenced by dark rumors and legends and quite probably by the libels in Nathaniel Fanning's *Narrative of the Adventures of an American Navy Officer*" (46).

Regarding the realistic portrayal of life at sea, critics credit the assessment of Cooper's old messmate, Commander William Shubrick, with establishing a pattern for celebrating the novel's accurate depiction of ship life. His only critique leveled at Cooper is reported to have been rather small and minute: "It's all very well, but you let your jib stand

too long, my fine fellow!" (reported in Anderson 389). The critic Charles Anderson, however, uncovered a dissenting opinion of Cooper's authenticity from "an audience of ordinary seamen on board the frigate *United States* during a cruise in 1823–1828" (390). Nathaniel Ames, who was aboard the ship, recalls how his shipmates reacted to a reading of Cooper's first incursion into sea novel writing: "I recollect once being desired by a dozen or twenty of my top-mates, to read a few passages of *The Pilot*. Every thing seemed to please them well enough, till I came to one of the rope-yarn dialogues, when 'Pshaw! heave the d——d thing overboard,' broke out from the lips of half a dozen men of war's men at once. They appeared to think that such ridiculous language 'did discredit to our mystery'" (reported in Anderson 390). Regarding the novel's other main character, [Long] Tom Coffin, Ames considers him "a caricature (and not a very good one) of an 'old salt,' but terribly strained and stiff" (390). Cooper's daughter Susan reports her father's agreement with this assessment of the character, writing that in later years, Cooper recognized Coffin to be nothing more than "a sketch, and would gladly have wrought up the portrait of the old salt, a man after his own heart, to a finished picture, as he had done with Natty Bumppo" (xxiii).

The Pilot's plot combines a raid on Britain (off whose coast Coffin harpoons a whale) with a series of captivities and escapes that are further complicated by the twin romance plots of Colonel Howard's niece, Cecilia Howard, and his ward, Katherine Plowden, with two young officers: Lieutenant Edward Griffith and Lieutenant Richard Barnstable, respectively. Mr. Gray and the two officers are charged with capturing prisoners to be used in exchange for those held by the British government, and coincidentally their target is the very abode where Colonel Howard is keeping them. Long considers the plot devices of captures and romance that *The Pilot* revolves around to be staple features of Cooper's Indian romances as well as his novel *The Spy*. Also reminiscent of other novels are the stereotypical portrayals of the hero, here Jones, who exhibits uncommon bravery at moments of crisis, and of the asexual sidekick, a role fulfilled by Coffin, who exists outside the romance plots sweeping through the novel.

The critic James Schramer views the main conflict of the novel as revolving around the tension between public deeds and private desires, which are best embodied in the figure of Jones, who fights for the Revolution but does not claim either America or Britain as his nation. Further, his former fiancée, Alice Dunscombe, accuses him of being animated by a desire for glory and public notoriety rather than by a pure passion for the principles behind the Revolution. Because of Jones's self-aggrandizing motivations, Schramer believes that Cooper reserves the figure of Edward Griffith, who quits his naval career once the war has ended and returns home to live as husband and father with Cecilia, as the novel's true hero.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Cooper's depiction of life at sea square with his descriptions of the wilderness in the Leatherstocking Series? Is the sea another frontier?
2. Compare the thinly veiled figure of John Paul Jones (Mr. Gray in the novel) to Cooper's Natty Bumppo. How are the heroes similar or dissimilar?
3. Compare Cooper's fictional treatment of life at sea to the real-life descriptions in Olaudah Equiano's and Christopher Columbus's travel narratives. How do they imagine the sea?

The Last of the Mohicans (1826)

The biographer Robert Long identifies both indirect and direct influences on Cooper's creation of *The Last of the Mohicans*: the presence of an Indian graveyard in his childhood home of Cooperstown and his interviews in 1821 and 1822 with Ongpatonga and Petalesaro, members of the Omaha and Pawnee tribes, respectively. Long reports that Cooper informed the duchess of Brogile during his stay in Europe, "Ongpatonga had been his model for Chingachgook, and Petalesaro for Hard-Heart

in *The Prarie,*" but Long finds it more likely that the latter "inspired Cooper's conception of Uncas" (52). In addition to Cooper's interviews with these two members of an Indian delegation whom he followed to Washington, D.C., "his immediate source for [the novel] was a trip Cooper took to Glen Falls and Lake George in early August 1824 in the company of four young Englishmen, including Edward Stanley, later prime minister of England" (Long 52).

Cooper opens the novel with a brief retelling of George Washington's gaining military fame for his performance in the French and Indian Wars. This history is united with the creation of the Six Nations, tribes of the eastern seaboard. From this broad historical scope, Cooper narrows in on a party traveling in the woods in the hope of reaching Fort William Henry and their father, Colonel Munro, on the other side of the lake. The party, made up of two beautiful half sisters named Cora and Alice Munro, are led by Captain Duncan Heyward and an Indian runner named Magua, Huron by birth but adopted by the Mohawk, whose mere presence alongside Cora is enough to unsettle her and solicit an unguarded look mixed with pity and horror. William Starna has pointed out Cooper's historical inaccuracy in casting Magua as a Huron: "Huron Indians, as described so vividly by Cooper had ceased to exist almost a century before the time-frame of his Leatherstocking tales," having been killed by the Iroquois in the mid-1600s (727). The party is soon joined with a song master, David Gamut, who unintentionally amuses the two sisters and Heyward with his awkward style of dress and lack of horsemanship. By employing two different riding styles simultaneously, David Gamut forces his horse to travel, on each side, at separate paces. He might very well represent the Yankee whom Cooper, as did WASHINGTON IRVING, detested, for the song master's pride in his voice is responsible for alerting the Iroquois in the woods of their presence and location, and he holds a high opinion of himself despite his inability to aid in the party's travels or escapes.

From the scene of the traveling party, Cooper exerts his authorial presence to relocate the readers to the west, where they encounter a conversation between Chingachgook and Hawkeye over such weighty topics as truth, oral versus written history, and the comparative worth and skill of white versus red skin. When Chingachgook recalls his own tribal history, he laments that although the blood of chiefs is in his veins, and that his bloodline is unmixed, his son Uncas is the "last of the Mohicans." The history of the Mohican chasing off and defeating the Iroquois still resonates in the present as Uncas reports to his father that 10 Iroquois are currently hiding in the very forest where they are. At this moment, the two sets of characters meet because Heyward suspects that his Indian runner, Magua, has betrayed them for an ambush by the Iroquois. These misgivings are only voiced when Hawkeye gives a clear and deliberate reading of Magua, stating, "Once a Mingo, always a Mingo." Heyward disapproves of Hawkeye's two plans to punish the deceptive runner, and when he attempts to trust his own manhood to take on Magua, the runner quickly escapes, having received a wound from Hawkeye's rifle. Left without a guide and lost in the woods, the traveling party solicits the pity of Uncas, Chingachgook, and Hawkeye, who feel responsible for the safety of the two daughters, whom they describe as "such flowers, which though so sweet, were never made for the wilderness." Rather than accept Duncan Heyward's offer of a monetary reward for their service as guides, the trio ask instead that the party keep secret the location where they will take them to safety. Uncas slaughters the foal attached to David Gamut's colt in a swift action that the narrator characterizes as a seemingly cruel yet necessary death to allow them to proceed through the river and into safety in a cavern behind the waterfall.

The Iroquois soon discover the safe haven and engage in gunfire and hand-to-hand combat on steep precipices with the party. Uncas saves Heyward's life, and the two men clasp hands in a sign of respect and camaraderie that will later be echoed in the novel's final scene, when Chingachgook and Hawkeye join hands in their mutual mourning over Uncas and their vow to remain in each other's com-

pany, and to keep the fallen warrior's memory alive. Although Cooper allows for this momentary crossing of the racial line, it is critical to note that it is a homosocial bond, and not one that would actually result in racial crossing, as the romance between Uncas and Cora Munro might.

The protectors and guides soon exhaust their supply of ammunition, and in their absence to retrieve more gunpowder, Magua and the Huron take Alice, Cora, and Gamut captive. In exchange for Alice's release, Magua reveals his desire to make Cora his wife, less out of an attraction to her and more as an act of revenge against her father, Colonel Munro. Long believes that readers should not view Magua's expressed wish to marry Cora as sexual at all. Magua, Long believes, views Cora as "an extension of her father. . . . By making her one of his wives, by reducing her to subjection and degradation (to a condition where he may kill her at any time he wishes), he will be humiliating and torturing her anguished father, his old enemy Colonel Munro" (58).

The Mohican and Hawkeye quickly arrive at the scene and rescue the captives, thus delaying Magua's attempts to marry Cora. A second captivity happens soon after the fall of the fort, and this time, Uncas acknowledges that Cora belongs to Magua and only secures the release of Alice, who is being held by the Huron. In their pursuit of the Huron, however, Uncas witnesses Cora's murder by a member of the Huron tribe. His attempts to avenge her death are scuttled when Magua stabs him in the back. Hawkeye then shoots Magua with his rifle, and the villain plummets to his death. The novel concludes with the burials of Cora and Uncas, and the unbreakable bond between Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook.

The romantic tendency of the novel is therefore dashed. The interracial romance between Cora and Uncas, who are mutually attracted, is destroyed by their deaths, and their reunion in the afterlife is precluded by the belief that the two worship different deities. Some critics believe Cooper was willing to unite Cora to Uncas only because of Cora's racial identity. She is described early on as having dark tresses, and later readers learn from Colonel Munro that her mother was from the West Indies, meaning that Cora's identity includes African blood. It is at this moment that Heyward reveals his revulsion at the knowledge of Cora's "Negro blood" and expresses his desire to wed her white, blonde half sister, Alice. Thus, only by making Cora racially ambiguous, critics argue, is Cooper capable of nodding to a cross of racial lines. The rigorous policing of the racial line appears time and time again in Cooper's description of Natty Bumppo, the very white man whose association with Mohican society and its members makes him a candidate for racial mixing or racial ambiguity, as "a man without a cross," meaning a man with racially pure white blood. Long counts 15 instances of this phrase (59). D. H. Lawrence believes that Cooper "kills [Cora and Uncas] off" in order to assure that only "the white lily," represented by Cora's half sister, Alice, who marries Major Heyward, survives to propagate the race (55). Leslie Fiedler argues that the interracial romance of Cora and Uncas constitutes Cooper's "secret theme" in the novel. Another critic, Donald Davie, believes that Cooper briefly considers miscegenation only to "repress it hysterically" (109).

Stephanie Wardrop extends the critique of Cooper's treatment of Cora a step further, arguing that "in terms of the nationalistic project integral to Cooper's writing, to allow Cora to live and marry would call into question not only the right to slaveholding still safeguarded by the Constitution, but the Colonialist expansion across the West that was displacing millions of other people of color—Native Americans" (62–63). Not only must Cora's union with Uncas be prevented, but her life itself must also be extinguished as she represents an anathema to the project of western expansion that Cooper champions. Further, Cora's display of bravery in the face of the Huron, compared to the nearly constant swooning fits of her sister, Alice, threatens the masculinity of those men around her who, in the shuttling of capture and rescue, look to her to function less as a figure capable of defending herself and more as a helpless victim whose inability to

act on her own behalf helps to shore up the masculinity of those around her. Nina Baym extends the feminist aspect of Wardrop's argument by declaring that "outspoken bravery, firmness, intelligence, self-possession and eloquence in a woman" are not celebrated or rewarded attributes in male-authored 19th-century fiction (44).

The critic Donald Darnell imagines the novel divided up spatially, with the first half occurring in the "white man's world" represented by Fort William Henry and presided over by Colonel Munro, and the second half, following the massacre and destruction of the fort, transpiring in the "Indian's stronghold" where "the white man is the intruder who must constantly look over his shoulder" (261–262). Uncas's very name in the gauntlet scene, when the Huron have captured him through the deceitfulness of Magua, causes a stir among the tribe, which is only surpassed by their awe at the sight of his totem sign, a tortoise tattooed on his chest. Darnell contrasts these emotional reactions, coupled with the mythology surrounding the son of Chingachgook, to the satanic figure of Magua, who forecloses the myth of Uncas and the Mohigan tribe when he murders him. The Delaware prophet Tamenund who delivers Uncas's eulogy clearly recognizes the connection between the tribe's fate and that of its fallen warrior: "In the morning I saw the son of Unamis happy and strong and yet, before the night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans" (433).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the fate of the romance between Cora and Uncas to the happy conclusion of Faith Leslie and Oneco in CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK's *Hope Leslie*. Consider the racial politics that allow the one marriage and prohibit the second. How do the two authors imagine relations between American Indians and Anglo Americans?
2. Compare the death scenes of father (Chingachgook) in *The Pioneers* and son (Uncas) in *The Last of the Mohicans*. What end or purpose does each death serve?

The Deerslayer (1841)

Cooper's final novel in the Leatherstocking Tales series covers the early years of its protagonist, Natty Bumppo. D. H. Lawrence, in his assessment of the series from its beginnings with *The Pioneers* to its conclusion with *The Deerslayer*, remarked: "The Leatherstocking novels . . . go backwards from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth of America. She starts old, old, wrinkled and writing in an old skin. And there is a gradual sloughing off of the old skin, towards a new youth. It is the myth of America." Professor R. W. B. Lewis, author of *The American Adam,* agrees with Lawrence's assessment and sees that the nation's myth of "a fictional Adamic hero" is the Deerslayer, "a self-reliant young man who does seem to have sprung from nowhere and whose characteristic pose . . . was the solitary stance in the presence of nature and God." Clearly, both critics envision the mythic and moral qualities of Cooper's last Natty Bumppo novel: Whether they imagine it as a tension between the material and spiritual or between Christian and pagan mythologies, they nonetheless recognize that this novel is devoted to Natty's ability to wrestle with a series of exacting challenges.

The novel opens on an isolated and pristine spot inhabited by Lake Glimmerglass, the sublime image of nature that Cooper writes "such as a poet, or an artist, would have delighted in." Yet, nestled within this confined idyllic space, dwells the Hutter family, whose very presence in a "castle" and "ark" that they have constructed in the very heart of the lake symbolically reminds readers of the "fragmentation of the world and spirit" (Long 122). In Tom Hutter's cabin, "greed, violence, and brutal self-assertion" dwell and emanate, especially since the patriarch has infected one of his two daughters, Judith, with a desire for worldliness at the expense of her reputation (Long 122). Further, Hutter associates himself with Hurry Harry, who was once a formidable rival to Natty, but whose lack of moral standing makes him prey to Hutter's devices. Not surprisingly, Hutter poses a threat to

the Deerslayer through the figure of his daughter, Judith, who attempts to seduce the young hunter to cause his moral undoing. When Natty is given a day's furlough from captivity under condition that he return, Judith attempts unsuccessfully to persuade him to escape with her. His return to captivity is proof of his unswaying honor and honesty, as he had pledged his word.

The most trying test of all for the Deerslayer does not occur in the form of Judith, however, but in his warfare with a fellow American Indian. Despite his efforts to abide by the white laws of combat, Natty is forced, under duress of a second ambush, to shoot through the foliage and hit his enemy. As le Loup Cervier (the Lynx) dies in Natty's arms, he offers the young hunter a new sobriquet, and thus acknowledges his initiation into manhood: "Eye sartain—finger lightening—aim, death—great warrior soon. No Deerslayer—Hawkeye—Hawkeye—Hawkeye. Shake hand" (211). As his ordeals will be judged by the Delaware code, in which he is given a name for the thing he killed (and thus his name as *Deerslayer* for a deer killed), Hawkeye has successfully been indoctrinated into his role as a white man living according to a red man's code. This characterization will abide through all of the books in the series, with the exception of Natty's insistence on his racial purity. In this novel, however, Cooper is more focused on Natty's moral purity, on his steadfastness that lamentably denies him the happiness of marriage. "His way of life and his moral values make even white women unsuitable as mates; their natures are either too high for his manner of life or too low (as in Judith's case) for his respect" (Slotkin 505).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Critics point to the fact that when *The Deerslayer* was in press, Cooper invited his boyhood friends to visit him for a week at Otsego Hall, as testament to the novel's eliciting in the author strong feelings of nostalgia for his childhood. How does this reading of the novel square with its position as the last of the Leatherstocking series?
2. How does Cooper's rendition of Lake Glimmerglass, a thinly veiled treatment of his own Lake Otsego, compare to Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON COOPER AND HIS WORK

1. The natural world figures prominently in all of Cooper's novels. It is a refuge from the corrupting influences of civilization, especially for Natty Bumppo. Selecting two of Cooper's novels, consider the role that nature plays in them. Who else occupies the natural world, and what kind of moral, racial, or spiritual qualities or limitations are placed upon those in the natural world? In a similar vein, consider the corrupting characters who dwell in civilized areas. What qualities do they possess, and why are these qualities specifically mapped onto the town or developed space?
2. Both Natty Bumppo and his companion, Chingachgook, are liminal figures who live precariously on the outskirts of society and time, victims to industrialized progress, religious conversion, and the social expectations of marriage and domesticity. Why are Cooper's heroes doomed? What arguments is Cooper making about 19th-century American society through Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook? Are these social comments the same across racial lines? Why or why not?

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J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735–1813)

I wish I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled.

(*Letters from an American Farmer*)

Born Michel-Guillaume-St-Jean de Crèvecoeur on January 31, 1735, Crèvecoeur is best known by his anglicized name—J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur—and for his seminal work, *Letters from an American Farmer*. His shifting name mirrors the tensions of his sociopolitical loyalties. He was a Frenchman by birth who spent much of his life in British territories, and yet he developed an American identity and is credited with the American immigration concept of the melting pot.

Crèvecoeur was born near Caen, Normandy, France, to parents whose families held some influence in the region. His mother, Dame Marie-Thérèse Blouet, was the niece of Michel-Jacques Blouet, Lord and Master of Cahagnolles and treasurer-general of Caen, also godfather to Crèvecoeur. Crèvecoeur's father, Guillaume-Jean de Crèvecoeur, was a squire whose predecessors had lived in Normandy since at least the 12th century. Crèvecoeur's father owned an estate at Pierrepont, approximately 10 miles northwest of Caen, and though he lived at the estate for much of the year, he wintered in Caen.

At the age of 12, Crèvecoeur attended school at the Jesuit Collège Royal de Bourbon, a boarding school that was "the Catholic equivalent of an English public school" (Allen 5). The Jesuits were known for their rigorous education, and students were encouraged to debate and discover through reason. Daily writing—"nulla dies sine aliqua scriptione"—was encouraged, and Crèvecoeur seems to have maintained this practice throughout his life (Allen 6). He left the *collège* in July 1750.

While at the *collège*, Crèvecoeur probably experienced the typical Jesuit education, which was a writing-intensive experience focusing on Latin, French, and rhetoric. Probably his education included the study of mathematics, which at this *collège* emphasized the practical application of math and science. This included classes in surveying and cartography. Though there is no record that Crèvecoeur learned these skills here, his American biographers Gay Wilson Allen and Roger Asselineau write, "[Students] learned to use such necessary instruments as alidades, plate levels, and verniers. So Crèvecoeur did not improvise his professions of land surveyor and cartographer in America. He had learned these trades at the Collège Royal de Bourbon."

After he left school, Crèvecoeur's parents sent him to England to stay with distant relatives in Salisbury—to give him a chance to improve his English by constant practice or possibly to give the young man an opportunity to pursue an occupation that might not have aligned with his father's wishes. At any rate, he may have arrived at Salisbury as early as 1751. Little is known of Crèvecoeur's time in England, but he was engaged to marry the only daughter of a Salisbury merchant, who died before the marriage took place. Rather than return to France, he "left for America shortly after her death" (Allen 16).

His exact activities in the New World between 1755 and 1759 are not completely clear. His father "thought he was a merchant's partner in Philadelphia" (Allen 17). However, he ended up in New France, now Canada, and may have arrived there as early as 1755–56. In New France, records indicate that he enlisted in the French army. Though both his date and place of birth were incorrect (listed as January 6, 1738, and Paris, respectively) on his enlistment record, his sponsors were recorded as Baron Breteuil and Marquis d'Houdetot, who were old Crèvecoeur family friends (Allen 19).

For much of his military service, Crèvecoeur worked as a mapmaker. He mapped the regions around the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries. He also traveled up the Ottawa River guided by Indians and traveling by canoe and, once in the forest, by foot. He mapped Fort George and the surrounding area, helping the marquis de Montcalm win a ferocious battle with the British.

However, neither Montcalm's success nor Crèvecoeur's would last. On September 13, 1759, Crèvecoeur was wounded in the battle on the Plains of Abraham. The French lost control of Quebec, though they maintained control of Montreal for almost a year after Crèvecoeur left Canada. French officers were treated well, however, and Crèvecoeur surrendered his commission that autumn for £240. Quite possibly, resentment against Crèvecoeur grew as a result of his fondness for British culture. He arrived in New York on December 16, 1759, on a British ship that stopped there before continuing on to London with French officers who wished to return home.

The next record of Crèvecoeur's life is from his application for naturalization as a British citizen. He applied under the name Hector St. John, an anglicized name perhaps to disguise his French origins, and his request was granted in New York City on December 23, 1765, by act of the provincial legislature.

During the 1760s, Crèvecoeur worked as a surveyor and traveled from Vermont to Virginia in pursuit of that line of work. While in Vermont, he was adopted by the Oneida Indians, "and he was so proud of the honor that in 1801 he listed himself on the title page of *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie et dans l'état de New-York* as 'un Membre adoptif de la Nation Onéida'" (an adopted member of the Oneida Nation).

In 1767, Crèvecoeur joined a small group of hunters, guides, and surveyors on a trip into interior regions of North America. His group traveled across Pennsylvania, then down the Ohio River toward the St. Louis region. He mentioned spending two months in that area, and he estimated that he traveled 3,190 miles in 161 ½ days round trip, beginning and ending in New York.

Crèvecoeur married Mehetable Tippet on September 20, 1769. The marriage certificate lists her home as Dutchess County, though most records indicate that she was from Yonkers in Westchester County. Tippet was a Protestant, and they were married by a French Huguenot minister, Jean Pierre Tétard. Interestingly, Crèvecoeur married under his French, rather than his English, name despite the fact that he knew that Catholic France did not recognize the legality of marriage to a Protestant, and this would be a formidable obstacle if he ever wished to claim his inheritance to the Crèvecoeur estate in Normandy.

A few months after his marriage, on December 12, 1769, he bought 250 acres of land from James and Phoebe Nesbit for £350. He built a house on the property and called it Pine Hill. Crèvecoeur cultivated his land, raised his children, and wrote most of his *Letters from an American Farmer*. His three children, his daughter América-Francés ("Fanny" born December 14, 1770), son Guillaume-Alexandre ("Ally" born August 5, 1772), and son Philippe-Louis (born October 22, 1774), were baptized by Jean Pierre Tétard on December 27, 1776. The usual practice was for children to be baptized shortly after birth. Crèvecoeur had arranged for the baptism of his daughter the winter of her birth, but because of weather and the relative inaccessibility of Pine Hill during the winter months, Tétard was unable to travel there as originally planned (Allen 38).

Earlier in 1776, events of the American Revolution were encroaching on Crèvecoeur's New York.

He sympathized with the Tories, those who supported King George III, and who became known as the Loyalists. Perhaps as a result of the increasing difficulty of disguising his political loyalties, Crèvecoeur sought to leave Orange County. He decided to return to France in order to solidify his children's inheritance, and so he took his son Guillame-Alexandre with him. Though Crèvecoeur was legally Catholic, his children were not. Indeed, under French law, his children were considered illegitimate because of his wife's Protestantism.

He arrived in New York City in mid-February 1779 to find conditions there difficult at best. Because of the war, he had requested permission to enter New York so had written to General George Washington. On July 8, 1779, Crèvecoeur was arrested "on the basis of an anonymous letter sent to Sir Henry Clinton" that accused Crèvecoeur of corresponding with General Washington and of possessing maps of the harbor (he had briefly worked as a cartographer for Antoine Van Dam, the master of the port of New York). Though Crèvecoeur was soon cleared because of his Loyalist leanings, he remained jailed for three months. Friends, meanwhile, took care of Ally, who worried that he would never see his father again.

The winter after his release from prison (1779–80) was a difficult one. Father and son had so little money that a British soldier paid for a flannel outfit to be made for Ally. Crèvecoeur became gravely ill with a fever that swept the city. He grew quite weak, suffered from delirium, and was seized with a violent trembling Crèvecoeur himself called epilepsy.

Finally, on September 1, 1780, Crèvecoeur and his firstborn son left for England. Their ship was one of a fleet of 80. The ships were separated by a violent storm and they were shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland. Father, son, and a trunk full of manuscripts survived (Allen 68). They made their way in 1781 to London, where Crèvecoeur sold the manuscript of *Letters from an American Farmer* to the publishers Thomas Davies and Lockyer Davis for 30 guineas. The book was published in 1782, and it was such a success in Europe that a second edition was published the following year.

Crèvecoeur returned to his parents' home in Normandy on August 2, 1781, nearly 27 years after leaving for Salisbury. Once in Pierrepont, he discussed new plants and agricultural techniques with gentleman farmers of the region. One of these men was Étienne-François Turgot, the elder brother of Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, Louis XVI's former finance minister and distant relative of Crèvecoeur. With Turgot's encouragement, Crèvecoeur wrote a 72-page treatise, "Traité de la culture des pommes de terre et des différents usages qu'en font les habitants des États-Unis de l'Amérique," on the culture of potatoes (Allen 77).

Sometime before the end of 1781, Turgot took Crèvecoeur to Paris. There he was introduced to the salon culture of Paris—the literary gatherings generally hosted by women—through Mme d'Houdetot, whose husband owned an estate near Pierrepont. Mme d'Houdetot herself was a friend of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Through the salons, Crèvecoeur met the count de Buffon and became acquainted, through correspondence, with Benjamin Franklin.

In 1783 Crèvecoeur returned to New York as consul appointed by Louis XVI to New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. He was also "elected correspondent of the Academy of Science for his work as an agronomist" (Allen 99). His son, Ally, remained in France. Crèvecoeur returned to New York on the *Courier de l'Europe,* the same ship that carried the final draft of a treaty that negotiated the British withdrawal of troops from New York. It was November 19, 1783. Upon landing, he learned that his wife was dead, Pine Hill had burned to the ground, and his daughter and younger son had been taken to an unknown location. As a result of the strain of a transatlantic voyage that had encountered violent storms and had taken longer than usual, and the news of his family's troubles, Crèvecoeur fell ill with the same nervous symptoms he had earlier described as being like epilepsy.

Two years earlier, while still in France, Crèvecoeur went to the aid of five American marines who were in need of an interpreter. One of the men, Lieutenant George Little, had agreed to carry

letters back to Crèvecoeur's wife and children. He knew that upon their return he would probably be redeployed elsewhere, so he would make arrangements for Lieutenant George Fellowes of Boston to receive the letters. Fellowes left in search of Crèvecoeur's family. Mrs. Crèvecoeur had died, but Fellowes found the children and persuaded their caretakers to let him take them to Boston. He wrote a letter to Crèvecoeur on December 11, 1781. The letter had gone to London but had returned to New York. Crèvecoeur was reunited with his daughter and younger son in Boston in spring 1784.

In New York Crèvecoeur established a packet line running from France to New York. He also encouraged trade between France and America in order to solidify relations between the two countries. Additionally, Crèvecoeur sought to exchange medical information and was instrumental in establishing botanical societies in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey.

In June 1785 Crèvecoeur began a furlough that was to have lasted six months but stretched to two years. He was reunited with both his sons (he had sent his younger son to France) at Pierrepont before continuing on to Paris. He remained in Paris, then Pierrepont, for two years. Crèvecoeur finally returned to New York, and his role as consul, in June 1787. In 1789, he was elected to the Société Royale d'Agriculture and the American Philosophical Society.

In May 1790 one month after his daughter's marriage, Crèvecoeur returned to France. He had been increasingly worried about the unrest in France and the welfare of his sons. He returned to a changed France. The Reign of Terror, a brutal period in the early 1790s near the end of the French Revolution, had radically transformed the nation. Normandy seemed to be immune to these changes, however.

Crèvecoeur returned to Pierrepont in 1796 to take care of the family estate. His father, nearly 90, needed the help of his eldest son. With the exception of brief visits to his daughter and son-in-law, Fanny and Otto, who had settled in France, Crèvecoeur remained at Pierrepont until his father's death in 1799.

He began writing *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie et dans l'état de New-York* in 1800. It was published in France the following year, but its reception was disappointing despite favorable reviews. Except for brief trips to Munich and Hamburg, Crèvecoeur remained in relative anonymity until his death on November 12, 1813, at the age of 78.

Letters from an American Farmer (1782)

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's influence on American literature primarily rests on his *Letters from an American Farmer*. While readers may be more familiar with other literary works of this period, the well-known idea of America as a melting pot is taken from this novel. Written primarily during his years at Pine Hill (1769–78), the book is an epistolary novel in which an American farmer, Farmer James, writes 12 letters to an imaginary European recipient. The subject of each letter ranges from a celebration of the American farmer as a heroic figure, to the culture of Nantucket, to Charleston and slavery, and to the very definition of an American. As in many writings during this period, the influences of the Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals shape the novel even as they shaped the author and his readers, whether European or American. Susan Manning writes that *Letters from an American Farmer* melds "the thinking of French Enlightenment writing translated into fiction in an American context" (xv).

The philosophy and intellectual environment of the Enlightenment differ from those of the 17th century in part in their view on reason. In the 17th century, reason could be found in authority, tradition, and the metaphysical. In the 18th century, however, reason becomes a tool to gain authority and for some philosophers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a move to a more practical, physical world.

Crèvecoeur's choice of central character, a farmer, signals his own attention to personages in a

practical world. Furthermore, the American farmer differs from the European one of the period: "Even the term 'farmer'—as Crèvecoeur's narrator is at pains to point out—['farmer'] meant something rather specific in America in the late eighteenth century. He was not, as in Europe, a tenant owing taxes and paying tithes, but a freeholder, a man without a master" (Manning xviii). Thus, for Crèvecoeur, farmers in 18th-century America can be seen as liberatory figures in charge of their own destinies.

As might be expected of someone trained in European schools, Crèvecoeur draws upon European literary traditions and is influenced by his own experiences in North America to create a work that can be deservedly known as the first work of American literature. The epistolary novel, generally written as a series of letters or documents, is a form that was popular in both England and France during the 18th century. Notable epistolary novels of this period include Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1749) written in English, while French examples include Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and Pierre Chodorlos de Laclos's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses,* which was published in 1782, the same year as *Letters from an American Farmer.*

The first letter introduces the book and sets up the conceit of Farmer James's writing to a European acquaintance at the urging of his minister and his wife. The minister, as for many colonists, must also farm, but he finds this conducive to his religious and intellectual pursuits: "After all, why should not a farmer be allowed to make use of his mental faculties as well as others. . . . I have composed many a good sermon as I followed my plough. The eyes, not being then engaged on any particular object, leaves the mind free for the introduction of many useful ideas" (19).

Furthermore, Jean F. Beranger argues that "the introductory letter is no mere declaration of intention, a one way message from the narrator. Rather, it contains a four voice exchange which expresses and makes comments about a desire and launches the correspondence, a multiple communication. It houses a debate between farmer James, his wife, a minister, and the mysterious Mr. F. B., the English correspondent" (74). For Beranger, then, *Letters from an American Farmer* is a dynamic text that engages in a debate between Americans and Europeans, farmers and clergy, men and women.

Beranger also suggests that the farmer's wife believes that her husband's writing activities are scandalous:

> To her a "scribbling farmer" is a ridiculous person and somehow scandalous too. So, if James starts writing, the improper and sinful act must remain a well-kept secret between her, her husband, and the minister. Local secrecy is supposed to ensure protections against the dangers she imagines. It will also protect the family from public scandal and other discomforts. Writing generates an ambiguous status for the farmer; it may involve a change of status and material losses. She perceives it as a completely negative activity. (77)

The farmer's wife, having internalized English class distinctions, seems to favor manual labor. She remains suspicious of any other type of work or activity. The wife, Beranger writes, has "inbred respect for class distinctions and the scale of European values," so, in turn, "she incarnates criticism and alienation" (Beranger 75).

In the second letter, "On the Situation, Feelings, and Pleasures of an American Farmer," Farmer James describes his farm. He further details how a farmer captures bees and sets up a hive, among other agricultural practices. This is a celebration of doing work on your own land and for your own benefit. The 10th letter and the 11th letter also focus strongly on observations of the natural world.

The most famous letter is the third one, "What Is an American?" In it, Farmer James seeks to define his fellow Americans. There exists a decidedly democratic strain in this letter:

> Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one, no great manufactures employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe. (Crèvecoeur 40–41)

In other words, class distinctions disappear in this new land. This description is at once a critique of Europe and a celebration of America. Indeed, "names of honour" are rare, and the "only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country" are "lawyer or merchant" (41).

This democratic and decidedly classless trend continues as the farmer continues the definition: "Whence came all these people? They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race, now called Americans, have arisen" (Crèvecoeur 42). This letter introduces the idea of the American melting pot to the world, for this is where immigrants, noting of course that Crèvecoeur writes of those from Europe, arrive and meld, mixing with each other despite different countries of origin to become something new.

Letters four through eight, sometimes referred to as the Nantucket letters, describe areas of the Massachusetts Bay. Though he discusses Nantucket at the greatest length, he also describes Martha's Vineyard. Crèvecoeur's past as a cartographer appears in the form of maps of both locations. These Nantucket letters receive the least critical attention though they are of great interest to some critics, such as Anna Carew-Miller, who notes that "here Crèvecoeur presents a picture of the ideal Enlightenment community. Yet this picture is puzzling, full of contradictions and tensions. A careful examination of these Nantucket letters clarifies Crèvecoeur's definition of Americanness." One of these contradictions is that he "forc[es] . . . an equation between whaling and farming" so "reveals, perhaps unconsciously, a need for violence within man's relationship to the landscape; this violence is couched in a morality of masculine work. By both praising and undercutting his admiration for the progressive domestic structure of Nantucket family life, Crèvecoeur reveals his uneasiness with the changing roles of men" (242).

Letters nine and 12 are markedly different from the idyllic first three letters, and even quite different from the travel letters. Though letter nine deals with a traveler's observation, its primary focus is on the inequities and atrocities encountered within the slave economy of Carolina. Unlike the idealized lack of class differences mentioned in the third letter, this letter, as implied by its title, "Description of Charles-Town; Thoughts on Slavery; On Physical Evil; A Melancholy Scene," reveals a stark contrast between slaveholders and the slaves. Crèvecoeur notes that "the inhabitants are the gayest in America" (151), yet he then writes:

> While all is joy, festivity, and happiness, in Charles-Town, would you imagine that scenes of misery overspread in the country? Their ears, by habit, are become deaf, their hearts are hardened; they neither see, hear, nor feel for, the woes of their poor slaves, from whose painful labours all their wealth proceeds. Here the horrors of slavery, the hardship of incessant toils, are unseen; and no one thinks with the compassion of those showers of sweat and of tears which from the bodies of Africans daily drop, and moisten the ground they till. (153)

Crèvecoeur, despite depicting idealized scenes of other aspects of American life, now delves into the less than ideal situation of slaves around the Charleston area. The letter ends with the horrific encounter our farmer has with a slave who was caged and left to die of exposure for the crime of killing an overseer.

The final chapter, "Distresses of a Frontier-Man," addresses changes wrought by the American Revolution. The fear of the immigrant, expressed in this letter, is the fear of starting over. Farmer James, facing a similar dilemma, chooses to move west with the Indians: "By the close of the Letters Farmer

James has become every private man whose life has been caught up and swept into public events with whose magnitude he is neither able nor willing to engage" (Manning xv). The real-life Crèvecoeur fled east to France. The individual, whether Crèvecoeur himself or his protagonist, must flee when he or she finds himself or herself unable to achieve agency in tumultuous times. As Susan Manning writes: "The Letters are at once a celebration of America, and its tragedy; Crèvecoeur writes the requiem for the new nation as it comes into being, and his book is deservedly known as the *first work of American literature*" (Introduction, viii).

Critics frequently note the fragmented nature of this work. In part, such fragmentation can be expected of an epistolary novel in which the reader really only reads one side of the conversation (that is, after the first letter) and in which the subject matter jumps from one region to another. Furthermore, aspects of the author's own biography with his fragmented sense of self and citizenship may be seen as creeping into the text.

Susan Manning suggests that Crèvecoeur's own life during the Indian wars of the 1750s play into the textual fragmentation because he "s[ees] himself as a Frenchman in Canada; subsequently he trie[s] to write himself (as J. Hector St. John) into an Englishman in the American colonies. . . . These multiple voices bec[o]me too much for the idiom of his book to bear, and its diction fragments under the burden of multiplicity" (xxxiii).

For Carew-Miller, the tensions and unevenness in the text provide insight into interactions between men and women, husbands and wives. As Manning does, she connects the text of the novel with the author's own life: "A well-educated Frenchman, Crèvecoeur found himself married to the daughter of a wealthy farmer after a serious of adventures on this side of the Atlantic. Hardly the simple American farmer, Crèvecoeur was the intellectual adventurer romancing the New World" (243).

For Discussion or Writing

1. *Letters from an American Farmer* was largely written before the American Revolution. Has America lived up to its promise? Do today's immigrants have the same optimism that Crèvecoeur's European did? Do today's immigrants face the same fears of starting over?
2. Locate and summarize Crèvecoeur's definition of an American.
3. What were Crèvecoeur's beliefs regarding slavery? Summarize and be prepared to provide textual evidence. What critique does he draw about slavery in Carolina?
4. Crèvecoeur's symbol of an American is a farmer. Consider how his notion of an individual's connection to the land relates to Thomas Jefferson's in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.
5. Contrast the epistolary form in *Letters from an American Farmer* to that in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*.

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON CRÈVECOEUR AND HIS WORK

1. The critic Susan Manning asks: "Whose voice speaks through Farmer James? Are these 'real' observations, or are they fictions? Whose are the queries which structure the text?" (xxi). Discuss the questions and be ready to provide support.
2. Susan Manning also writes that "if there is a problem [with the book's fragmenting under the burden of multiplicity], it is that Crèvecoeur's art is not duplicitous enough to smooth over the theoretical contradictions which conditioned and then splintered his experience. The book is the richer for it" (xxxiii). Do you agree or disagree? Why?

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Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire: he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire.

("Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God")

Jonathan Edwards, who has continued to haunt the imaginings of modern poets, received just homage from Robert Lowell, who wrote the following lines:

> I love you faded,
> old, exiled and afraid
> to leave your last flock, a dozen
> Houssatonic Indian children

The image is certainly not the one critics and readers commonly associate with the Puritan minister who gained fame during the Great Awakening, but this is indeed a true and sympathetic portrait of Edwards later in life.

Jonathan Edwards was born to a minister, the Reverend Timothy Edwards, and his wife, Esther, who hailed from East Windsor, Connecticut. He was the middle child (fifth) and only son in a family of 11. His maternal grandfather was Solomon Stoddard, "the most powerful New England clergyman of his time" (Griffin 6). For the only male child, and the son and grandson of ministers, it seemed inevitable that Jonathan would pursue a career in the ministry. Griffin considers the undue pressure the young Edwards must have felt as the "likely heir to Stoddard" and the child of "a highly intelligent, willful mother and a demanding father" (6–7). Further, the period in which he was born, which witnessed the backsliding of Puritans from the apex of the first generation and launched a revival in the form of the Great Awakening, also exerted pressure on all ministers who were charged with an exacting task. Edwards's childhood motto, "To live with all my might, while I do live," is perhaps the young man's reaction to such high expectations. He is reported to have experienced his first conversion at the age of 10 while attending one of his father's revivals. In response, he built a "prayer booth" behind the family home and would retreat there to pray in solitude.

Primarily educated by his father, Edwards entered the Collegiate School at New Haven, now known as Yale University, when he was just shy of his 13th birthday. Four years later, in 1720, Edwards graduated, but he remained in New Haven to complete his graduate study in theology. During his two years in graduate school, 1720–22, Edwards underwent a personal spiritual struggle, the sum of which appeared in his *Personal Narrative.* He returned to New Haven as a tutor after a brief eight-month stint as a candidate for the ministry serving a Presbyterian church in New York. For the years 1724 and 1725, Edwards taught courses at Yale. His curriculum included learning not only about the theology of his Puritan predecessors, but of the "liberal" movements that threatened it: deism, Socinianism, Arianism, and Anglican Arminianism, as well as the most current thought in Europe, such as British empiricism and continental rationalism. His study

and writings on natural philosophy and metaphysics while at Yale occasioned the critic Perry Miller to name him the "first and greatest homegrown American philosopher." The following year, he was ordained a minister, and "to the surprise of no one," as Griffin writes, he was invited to assist his prominent grandfather, Mr. Stoddard, at his church in Northampton. He was only 23.

In the following year, 1727, he married Sarah Pierrepont, who was 17. The two would create a large family of 11 who would relocate in 1751 to the wilderness of Stockbridge. In December 1729, Edwards's sister Jerusha died of a fever; the following April, in honor of his sister, the Edwardses named their daughter *Jerusha*. They would follow this same tradition in 1736 when his sister Lucy's death on August 21 was honored 10 days later by naming their daughter, born August 31, after her. Jerusha's birth was followed by those of Sarah (1728), Ester (1732), Mary (1734), Lucy (1736), Timothy (1738), Susannah (1740), Eunice (1743), Jonathan (1745), Elizabeth (1747), and Pierpont (1750).

In *Personal Narrative,* Edwards confesses, "From my childhood up, my mind has been wont to be full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me." Here, Edwards encapsulates his doubts about the Puritan doctrine of the elect who alone were predestined to enjoy heaven in the hereafter while countless others, not among the elect, would suffer for eternity in hell. Although he would ultimately embrace the notion of God's sovereignty, he "never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced." In writing of his own personal struggles, and the emotional or intuitive means by which he experienced his own conversion, Edwards displayed a belief in many of the primary doctrines espoused in the Great Awakening.

Chief among those beliefs was the notion of "holy affections," the profound spiritual feelings that attend an individual who has been awakened. In *Religious Affections,* Edwards developed this theory more fully. He argued in part that "a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent love of God" was the foundation for all other religious affections, which might include "an intense hatred and abhorrence of sin, fear of sin, and a dread of God's displeasure, gratitude to God for his goodness, complacence and joy in God when God is graciously and sensibly present, and grief when he is absent, and a joyful hope when a future enjoyment of God is expected, and fervent zeal for the glory of God." In reviewing this theory, readers can recognize key emotional reactions imagined and created during "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The intense emotional response also marked Edwards's own conversion, which he recounted in his *Personal Narrative*: While outdoors, walking in his father's fields, Edwards felt "a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God." This feeling intensified as the days passed leaving him with the realization that his former joys and delights paled in comparison and thus never really penetrated his heart as at this moment of conversion.

Edwards became the sole pastor at Northampton after Stoddard's death, and he maintained the prominence of both the family reputation as well as that of their church. As his biographer Griffin reports, "Two of the most important religious revivals took place during [Edwards's] pastorate there, and Edwards was a key figure in both of them" (8). The first, referred to as "surprising conversions," occurred in 1734 and 1735; the second was the Great Awakening itself, which took place in the 1740s and was launched by George Whitefield. Edwards recorded the events of the "surprising conversions" in *A Faithful Narrative,* which appeared in print the following year, 1736. As Griffin reveals, the tragic event of a suicide in his wife's family promptly put an end to his widespread influence over Northampton's youth. Sarah's uncle, Joseph Hawley, slit his throat in 1735 in despair over "the unhappy state of his soul during a time of widespread conversions" (Griffin 8). With regard to the Great Awakening itself, Edwards welcomed Whitefield to Northampton, but his dislike for the

overly emotive and impulsive aspects of Whitefield's sermons drew strong words of criticism from the former toward the latter. Others besides Edwards had become skeptical of the authenticity of conversions that were signaled by physical signs, actions, and excessive displays of emotion (9). Nevertheless, Edwards himself contributed sermons to the movement, most notably "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and "The Future Punishment of the Wicked."

Perry Miller writes that in 1741 Edwards was "at the height of his career and influence." This was due not only to Edwards's own participation as a minister in the Great Awakening, but also to his role in publicly defending the movement against charges from Charles Chauncy, who wrote "Enthusiasm Defined and Cautioned Against" in 1642. The central disagreement between the two ministers involves their notions of whether the mind or the heart should be the central organ through which an individual experiences and expresses the Spirit of God. Chauncy, who was educated at Harvard and the pastor of the First Church of Boston, a Congregational church, adhered to traditional theories of the soul as a tripartite being in which reason, residing in the mind, should always dominate. "The plain truth is an enlightened mind, and not raised affections, ought always to be the guide of those who call themselves men; and this, in affairs of religion, as well as other things" (Marsden, 281). In 1643, he published another pamphlet in opposition to the Great Awakening, entitled *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England*.

Critics believe that Edwards was attempting a new theory of understanding how one experienced faith, and how this experience translated into a sense of the human psyche. Part of his project in developing this new theory appeared in his 1746 publication *A Treatise on the Concerning Affectations*. Griffin believes that Edwards relied greatly on the theories of Thomas Shepard and John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in formulating his own notions of the psychology of conversion (23). A central component of Edwards's theory was a defiance of the traditional belief in a divided and hierarchical soul that culminated in the mind, the organ of reason. Edwards looked instead at the unity of these faculties in the soul, thus dismissing the notion of hierarchy and separation (Griffin 24).

Ironically, although Edwards appeared as the defender of the Great Awakening, his own skepticism regarding the sincerity of the conversions occasioned by this phenomenon led him to write critiques and psychological analyses of the Awakening that would lead, by 1750, to his dismissal as pastor of the Northampton church (Griffin 10). Edwards instituted a strict policy for admission to the church that revived a practice held by early Puritans. Full membership in the church depended upon true Christian practice and a profession of faith that included evidence of a conversion. Not surprisingly, between 1744 and 1748, there was not a single applicant for full membership in Edwards's church (Griffin 11).

Other disputes, including those in Edwards's personal life, would also contribute to his public downfall and disgrace. One of these events was Edwards's mismanagement in 1744 of the punishment of several youth accused of tittering over a handbook for midwives. In New England style, justice involved the creation of a committee of inquiry who would preside over the questioning, confession, and admonishment of the guilty parties. While Edwards set this form of justice in motion by calling on his congregation to form a committee of inquiry, he also defied the tradition by publicly announcing the names of the accused as well as those of witnesses. Unfortunately, many of the youths named by Edwards were members of prominent Northampton families, and they were outraged that their pastor would besmirch their families' reputations in such a public forum (Griffin 12). As Griffin notes, the ill will generated by his mishandling of the book incident remained among members of the congregation for the next four years, constituting "an easy reference point for his enemies" (12).

In the same year, Edwards's salary was withheld by the church over disputes about his wife, Sarah's,

wardrobe. She was accused of purchasing jewelry and extravagant dress material, thus revealing her vanity, a characteristic to be shunned by a minister's wife. Sarah Pierpont Edwards would address issues of her reputation, her position as the minister's wife, at the time of his imminent break from the church through her own conversion. As she wrote, and Edwards later retold her tale, she experienced moments of divine light that caused her to become a religious source in her own right. In his "Apostrophe to Sarah Pierpont," Edwards defies the image of her as worldly and vain, suggesting instead that she values her profound relationship with God over such truck: "Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction."

When in December 1748 someone actually applied for full membership in the church but refused to offer the profession of faith that Edwards had made mandatory four years earlier, the minister found himself embroiled with congregation members. Edwards himself instigated the formal declaration of these tensions by calling a state of controversy between himself and the people. During the subsequent proceedings that lasted for nearly two years, Edwards held steadfast to his theological convictions and attempted to limit the congregation's opposition to his religious beliefs rather than to larger issues of personal disfavor. In accordance with his desire to frame the debate over theological rather than personal issues, Edwards issued *An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Compleat Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church.* As Griffin reports, "The people did not read his book" (13). Nor, he states, did they attend a series of five public lectures that Edwards held in the Connecticut Valley during March 1750 (13). Just three months later, on June 22, 1750, the council voted to remove Edwards as their pastor. Edwards recalled, "Nothing would quiet 'em till they could see the Town clear of Root & Branch, Name and Remnant."

Edwards's dismissal did not end the controversies surrounding him, however, as his own kinsman, Ephraim Williams, Jr., balked at the mention of Edwards's taking over the mission at Stockbridge. In 1750, after his ousting from his ministerial duties at Northampton, he became a missionary at Stockbridge, serving the Housatonic Indians. Samuel Hopkins, Edwards's friend, sponsored him for this position, and a formal invitation was issued in December 1750 (Griffin 14). Critics wonder at Edwards's choice in becoming the missionary preacher in Stockbridge over other offers extended to him in Canaan, Connecticut, and Lunenburg, Virginia (Griffin 13). Edwards's cousin, Ephraim Williams, Jr., objected when Edwards's name was proposed as a possible successor to the recently deceased John Sergeant. Williams believed Edwards was unsocial, impolitic, and too old to learn the Indians' language. Williams lamented what a shame it was that "a head so full of divinity should be so empty of politics."

Griffin believes that the minister's seven years in Stockbridge "was no bower of bliss" (14). In addition to an environment made hostile by his own kinsmen, the Williams family, the town suffered from inadequate schools and untrained schoolmasters. Further, the outbreak of war in 1754 made Edwards's time there extremely difficult. As evidenced by manuscript sermons in excess of 200, Edwards preached regularly to his Indian pastorate. He employed an interpreter, John Wauwaumpequunaunt, to aid him in communicating with his Housatonic congregation. In response to criticisms from his own cousin, Solomon Williams, regarding his policy for church membership, Edwards wrote *Misrepresentations Corrected, and Truth Vindicated*. His years in Stockbridge were surprisingly prolific, as he also wrote *The Freedom of the Will, Original Sin, The Nature of True Virtue, and The End for Which God Created the World.*

In part for these publications, as well as a family connection, Edwards was offered the presidency of the College of New Jersey (present-day Princeton University). At first, Edwards demurred, for fear that the heavy teaching load at the college would hamper any time he had available for additional research and writing. In a letter to the board of

trustees, Edwards wrote that his studies "have long engaged, and swallowed up my mind, and been the chief entertainment and delight of my life." He also worried that his health would not endure the stress, and that his 11 children could not be easily removed from their home in Stockbridge (Griffin 14). However, the college would not accept his refusal and instead offered a compromise: a reduced teaching load that only involved courses in theology and Hebrew (Griffin 16). In contrast, Aaron Burr, Edwards's son-in-law and former president of the college, had taught all courses to one of the classes, and all the languages to the college in its entirety (Griffin 15–16).

Edwards accepted the offer and arrived at Princeton in February 1758. There had been an outbreak of smallpox in the town, and Edwards was vaccinated. Unfortunately, the vaccination proved fatal for the 54-year-old when "a secondary fever set in; and by reason of a number of pustules in his throat, the obstruction was such, that the medicines necessary to stanch the fever could not be administered." Edwards died a month later on March 22, 1758. Edwards recognized that the strength of his talent lay in his writings. When he accepted the position at Yale, he told the trustees: "So far as I myself am able to judge of what talents I have, for benefiting my fellow creatures by word, I think I can write better than I can speak."

"A Divine and Supernatural Light" (1734)

This sermon was delivered in Northampton in 1733 and appeared in print the following year at the request of Edwards's congregation. As the full title of the sermon suggests, Edwards's goal was to offer proof through "scriptural and rational doctrine" that the Spirit of God touches true Christians. As evidence, he opens with a passage from the New Testament in which Peter Simon is praised for his recognition of Christ's divinity. Most crucially to Edwards's purpose, Peter's declaration stems not from witnessing physical or visible proof of Christ's identity, but rather from God directly through his love's being set on the disciple. Using the phrase "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," Edwards mounts the argument that "God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever," and that the knowledge imparted is not always received through the brain, or the site of reason and rationality. Reason requires physical proof, described in the Scripture as "flesh and blood." But, as Edwards argues, because God is the original source of all knowledge, and that knowledge arrives in more mysterious ways than rational thinking can account for, God does not always "make use of intermediate natural causes, as He does with other knowledge."

Edwards's point here is twofold: first, that knowledge can be imparted in more than one manner, and, second, that regardless of the medium, God is always the messenger and the source. He seems to be deliberately addressing the rise of empiricism and continental rationalism, two trends deriving from England that posed a threat to the kind of profound experiences Edwards himself had in his personal conversions, and that his congregation would experience during the Great Awakening. According to rationalism, all knowledge is acquired through experience and observation. Peter is commended for recognizing Christ as the Son of God without the aid of any revelation through flesh and blood, or without any empirical evidence. This type of evidence, which is derived from observations in the physical world, Edwards refers to as "natural means" and relegates it to humans, who use it as a method for imparting God's knowledge to others. Thus, Edwards does not deny the importance of empirical evidence but rather relegates it to the realm of the physical world inhabited by humans rather than the ethereal world of God.

As Edwards reasons, how else could one explain that illiterate fishermen like Peter would gain an understanding of Christ while learned men like the scribes and Pharisees, "men of vastly higher advantages, and great knowledge and sagacity, in other matters, remained in ignorance?" If knowledge were only acquired through empirical means, these

learned men would have recognized Christ as the Son of God rather than the "persons of low education," such as Simon Peter, who distinguished themselves for their knowledge of Christ.

To clarify the type of knowledge imparted to Simon Peter, Edwards explains, "there is such a thing as a spiritual and divine light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means." The emphasis on "immediate" is key as God does not utilize any "natural means" in making faithful Christians understand. In other words, God bypasses the more indirect route for imparting knowledge and instead touches their souls with a knowledge that transcends the flesh and blood. Edwards systematically approaches the various aspects of his argument, first in rendering a definition of divine light and its varying influences on people depending upon their spiritual status. Because all are touched by the Spirit of God but have different religious states (ranging from the unregenerate to the saint), it manifests itself differently. For the unregenerate person, or the unsaved person, Edwards states that the divine light acts upon him as "an extrinsic occasional agent." The Spirit of God remains extrinsic, or outside, the unregenerate man because he is filled with unrepented sins. For the saint, or one who is fully committed to his or her faith, divine light unites with him and "actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action."

Edwards further explains and defines the spiritual and divine light as "a true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion." This is to be contrasted, Edwards warns, with a rational belief in God's glory. Rather, those touched by a divine and spiritual light have a "sense of the gloriousness of God in [their] heart[s]." Reason appears as an obstacle to faith that spiritual and divine light can help remove because it "engages the attention of the mind, with more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of object." Divine light enables those whose reason has created an enmity toward Scriptures and Christ's divinity to lose this disadvantage and see more clearly. Edwards likens this phenomenon to a person's recognizing an object's true form in sunlight versus a vague notion of it from viewing it in "dim twilight."

Edwards concludes by offering various biblical passages proving the scriptural precedent for his sense of divine and spiritual light. He also argues that it is rational that only the faithful, those who are not blinded by spiritual pollution, will be able to see and recognize the divine; the unregenerate, who may be discerning in temporal matters, will remain blind to divinity.

For Discussion or Writing

1. In the final section of the sermon, Edwards states, "This doctrine may well put us upon examining ourselves, whether we have ever had this divine light let into our souls." How does this invitation to self-examination anticipate the principles of the Great Awakening?
2. How does Edwards's sermon address opposing theories of rationalism and empiricism? Consider his definition of knowledge in your answer.
3. Unlike the usual characterization of Edwards as a minister of hellfire and brimstone, this sermon presents a different sense of the man. How might you reconcile the messages behind this sermon and his more famous "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"?

"The Images of Divine Things"

***("Images or Shadows of Divine Things")* (1737–1741)**

Written within a hand-stitched journal Edwards titled alternately "The Language and Lessons of Nature" and "The Images of Divine Things" are more than 200 entries demonstrating the means by which "the works of nature are intended and contrived of God to signify . . . spiritual things." The spiritual doctrine underlying "The Images of Divine Things" is known as typology, which was a practice of discovering types in the Old Testament and recognizing them as prefiguring correlative types in the New Testament. The mass exodus of the Jews, recorded in the book of Exodus, is

considered, according to typology, to prefigure the time that Jesus spent wandering in the wilderness, which is recorded in the New Testament. Besides biblical applications, however, Edwards viewed typology, as he detailed it in "Notebook on the Types," as a "certain sort of Language, as it were, in which God is wont to speak to us" (cited in Knight 532). By opening up the realm of typology beyond the Bible, Edwards was taking a less conservative approach to the doctrine. His justification for doing so, however, was his belief that God's communications with humans extended beyond the Scriptures to imbue objects and events in everyday life. As Knight expresses it, these signs in nature were, for Edwards, "part of a divinely instituted system of symbols that continuously prefigure and communicate the divine presence in nature and in history" (532). History's role in typology is especially significant in its context of the coming of the Second Kingdom of God, which will be accompanied by the apocalypse. Prophecies, according to this theory, would become more frequent and more exact as the second coming of Christ draws nearer (Knight 533). Knight acknowledges that Edwards's belief that divine communications will increase in number and in significance as the end of the world approaches was less than conventional (533).

Entry number 7 cites biblical Scripture for the doctrine of typology: "That the things of the world are ordered and designed to shadow forth spiritual things, appears by the Apostle's arguing spiritual things from them. 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.'" Edwards compares this doctrine, which he views as a reference to Christ's resurrection, as being founded in the Old Testament book of Hebrews, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is a force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (9:16–17).

Despite his reference to the conventional use of typology, comparing Old Testament types with their New Testament antitypes, Edwards's subsequent entry, number 8, delves immediately into his argument for the observation of divine communication in nature and the "visible world." Edwards argues, "Again, it is apparent and allowed that there is a great and remarkable analogy in God's works. There is a wonderful resemblance in the effects which God produces, and consentaneity in his manner of working in one thing and another, throughout all nature. It is very observable in the visible world. Therefore 'tis allowed that God does purposely make and order one thing to be in an agreeableness and harmony with another. And if so, why should not we suppose that he makes the inferior in imitation of the superior, the material of the spiritual, on purpose to have a resemblance and shadow of them?" In referencing "God's works," Edwards is essentially assuming rather than proving his argument because "God's works," for Edwards, include not only the Holy Scriptures, but also the forms of communication made apparent in nature. He views the two worlds, material and spiritual, or inferior and superior, respectively, as analogous to one another as well, and this image of the natural world as "a shadow of the spiritual world" is essential to his doctrine of typology.

In entries number 50 and 54, Edwards views the sun as a type occurring in nature whose rising and setting represent the death and resurrection of Christ. Scholars have identified these two entries in particular because they are indicative of Edwards's interpenetration of categories—biblical types and types that appear in nature (Knight 541). Entry number 50 simply states, "The rising and setting of the sun is a type of the death and resurrection of Christ." The critic William Madsen disagrees with Edwards's use of types, stating, "a type is a historical person or event, not a mythical person or a recurrent event like the rising and setting of the sun" (99). For Madsen, then, the difficulty with this use of typology has to do with the unevenness of the two types being compared. Christ only dies and is resurrected one time, while the sun, to which Edwards compares Christ, rises and sets every day. Edwards himself seems to have anticipated this argument and

offered the following explanation in *Images of Divine Things,* "it is no sign that it is not a type of the resurrection of Christ that is but once, for it is fit that the type should be repeated often but that the antitype should be but once" (59). Edwards continues his argument by pointing out that there are repetitions of types in the Bible and that this repetition, like the daily rising and setting of the sun, is deliberate because it "signifie[s] the great importance of the antitype" (95).

One of the most well known entries, number 63, tells of the temptations of the devil, as viewed in nature by the deaths of birds and squirrels who are charmed and destroyed by the serpent. The image of the serpent as a symbol of the devil is taken from the Old Testament book of Genesis and recurs in the works of early American Puritan writers as a symbol of the earthly temptations generally or the American Indians specifically, who were seen as a threat to the colonists. For Edwards, the serpent's charm is of primary interest because it compels its prey, though displaying fear and distress, to be rendered incapable of running away entirely and thus saving themselves. He tells of the animal that "runs or flies back again a little way, but yet don't flee quite away." This image of partial retreat reminds Edwards of "sinners under the gospel," who "have considerable fears of destruction and remorse of conscience that makes 'em hang back . . . but yet they don't flee away." The temptation for the sinners, Edwards believes, is lust. The sinner, like the charmed animal, is helpless and will eventually become the serpent's prey. The remedy, Edwards insists, is for someone to kill the serpent: "Christ's coming and bruising the serpent's head" is the means by which moral men, prone to the temptations of the serpent, are able to escape destruction and eternal damnation.

Rather than the image of the rodent powerless against the serpent's charms, devout Christians appear in this entry as "the things we use [that] are serviceable to us." Another famous entry, number 158, discusses the roles that "true and sincere saints" play as "God's instruments." As examples, Edwards notes that the "utensils of life, an ax, a saw, a flail, a rope, a chain" are only useful if they are "being strained, or hard-pressed, or violently agitated." A bow will not shoot an arrow, Edwards observes, unless it is strained hard to do so. So, too, does Edwards liken these images of everyday life, the staff that a man walks with, the bow strained to shoot the arrow, with the hard work asked of Christians: "enduring temptation, going through hard labor, suffering, or self-denial." Only through such difficult work can "true and sincere saints" "answer God's end and serve and glorify him." Edwards condemns hypocrites, those incapable of the long and enduring tasks God puts before them, by likening them unto "a broken tooth, a foot out of joint, a broken staff, a deceitful bow, which fail when pressed or strained."

The critic Janice Knight argues that the origins of Edwards's use of typology in *Images of Divine Things,* whether this use be deemed conventional or radical, stems from his sense of God. In *Dissertation I Concerning the End for Which God Created the World,* Edwards characterizes the Almighty as having a "disposition to communicate himself, or diffuse his own fullness" so that "there might be a glorious and abundant emanation of his infinite fullness of good ad extra, or without himself" (cited in Knight 545). From this characterization of God as disposed to communicate himself, it logically follows for Edwards that those forms of communication would not be restricted only to the Bible, but would be visible to the devout believer in nature.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Edwards's use of typology to EDWARD TAYLOR's as expressed in *Meditations.*
2. How does Edwards's perception of spiritual communication in nature compare with PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU's or that of the transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau?
3. Create your own entry by observing something in nature, and then extrapolating a moral lesson from it.

A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversions of Many Hundred Souls (1737)

Jonathan Edwards originally drafted *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* as a letter to the Reverend Benjamin Coleman of Boston in 1736, but the text proved to be of such great interest that it was circulated and eventually published in 1737. In it, Edwards provides an account of the "little Awakening" that had begun in his church in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1735 and had spread through the surrounding region in the following months. This text is significant not only because it records the events themselves, but also because it represents one of Edwards's first efforts at organizing a theological response to the dramatic events of religious revival. Within five years of the publication of his *Faithful Narrative,* Edwards would find himself catapulted into the same role on a larger stage, constructing the theological framework that would give shape to the emotional events of the Great Awakening.

Edwards begins this early narrative with a description of the people of Northampton, writing that they are "as sober, and orderly, and good sort of people, as in any part of New England; and I believe they have been preserved the freest by far, of any part of the country, from error and variety of sects and opinions" (57). In other words, Edwards reports, the events he is about to describe result from the unusual work of the Holy Spirit, not from any peculiarities among his parishioners. Edwards mentions what many New Englanders would have considered a typical "declension" from the faith of earlier Calvinists but notes that in the period immediately preceding the revival, many young people experienced a change of heart, marked in "a disposition to hearken to counsel" and a leaving off of "frolicking" that culminated in "a very unusual flexibleness, and yielding to advice" (59). This seriousness of mind combined with the sudden deaths of two young people in a neighboring community to prompt spiritual seeking and even conversions. Soon, "the minds of the people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated amongst us as a thing of very little consequence" (62). Edwards's somber delight in these events emerges in his discussion: "The town seemed to be full of the presence of God. . . . Our public assemblies were then beautiful, the congregation was alive in God's service, everyone earnestly intent on the public worship" (63). Worshippers rejoiced in God's love and wept with "pity and concern" for their loved ones.

Recalling that it "was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons' minds were intent upon was to . . . fly from the wrath to come" (62), Edwards sketches imagery that will make a far more fearsome tableau in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." And yet, the *Faithful Narrative* is composed lovingly and warmly, reminding the reader that Edwards's focus in preaching "Sinners" was to lead the listener away from the dangers described and toward the joys of repentance. Indeed, he writes that while some congregants experienced anxiety over salvation, "there has been far less of this mixture in this time of extraordinary blessing, than there was wont to be in persons under awakenings at other times; . . . for it is evident that many that before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties, seemed now strangely to be set at liberty" (69). Ultimately, the resolution of anxiety, not the production of it, demonstrated the authenticity of the revival.

In his discussion, Edwards carefully avoids taking credit for the revival, writing in a curiously indirect passive voice, "There were then some things said publicly on that occasion concerning justification by faith alone" (61). He explains the revival as a work of God, not of man: "This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of Providence: God has in many respects gone out of, and much beyond his usual and ordinary way" (64). He provides evidence of the sincerity of the conversions experienced during this period: their number (about 300), their variety (occurring in equal numbers of men and women, rather than in greater numbers of women as his grandfather, the former minister, had experienced previously in the

church), their diversity (occurring in the elderly as well as in the young, and in "Negroes" as well as white colonists), their immediacy (resulting in rapid changes in the lives of converts), and their breadth (spreading beyond the town into the region). This careful consideration of the quality of the conversions presages Edwards's tests for genuine revival in "Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God" (1741) and "A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections" (1746), two later texts in which he proposed systematic evaluation of the distinctions between true conversion and mindless enthusiasm.

In nurturing individual converts, Edwards advises that the first awakenings often involved "something of a terrifying sense of God's anger" and an intent to live a more righteous life (71). Because God provides many early encouragements, new converts may hope that their sanctification will soon be complete, but they must learn to stand in their faith through the extended periods of difficulty that are part of every believer's life. Edwards writes that they often have "more distressing apprehensions of the anger of God" toward them as they become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, but he reminds his readers to treat them kindly. Such new converts, in his experience, "plainly stood in need of being encouraged, by being told of the infinite and all-sufficient mercy of God in Christ" (72–73). While these sinners experience some "legal distress" as they realize that God would be justified in punishing them, they begin to know true grace: "The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear after legal humiliation, is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ, to know God, to love him, to be humbled before him, to have communion with Christ in his benefits" (75). In his intimate awareness of the concerns of these new believers—and how to allay those concerns—Edwards reveals his devotion to pastoral care.

Further illustrating his interest in gentle edification, Edwards includes in the narrative an extended case study of a young woman named Abigail Hutchinson who became converted and experienced such great sweetness in God that she no longer desired to avoid death. Rather, she became joyously resigned either to live or to die. As her attention shifted to the realm of heaven and away from the earthly realm, she found that she no longer could eat, and she eventually died of an ecstatic anorexia, submitted either to life or death as God might will. Her pious life and death resulted in further conversions, including that of her own sister.

By the late spring of the following year, however, the conversions had slowed. Then, in a terrible incident, Edwards's uncle took his own life, cutting his throat, and several other faithful people also recalled a strong impression that they too were being instructed to slit their throats, so that they needed to draw upon all their will to withstand the temptation. Edwards writes that these spiritual afflictions may have been the rather ordinary tactics of Satan, but that the devil had been restrained during the awakening. This tragic event, along with two strange experiences of enthusiastic delusions (as do his contemporaries, Edwards uses the term *enthusiasm* pejoratively), signaled to Edwards that God had determined to withdraw his Spirit as sovereignly as he had decided to visit it upon the people of Northampton. Edwards ends the text with a plea to the reader to heed this truthful account of the events and not to be swayed by misrepresentations of this gracious work of God.

For Discussion or Writing

1. What emotions seem to be associated with God's presence in this text?
2. How does the experience of God depicted here contrast with the religious experience described in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"?
3. How does Edwards's tale of Abigail Hutchinson compare to ANNE BRADSTREET's "Deliverance from a Fever"?
4. How does this text reflect the same concerns that drive Edwards's later works "Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God" and "A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections"? How do both of these texts illuminate Edwards's role in the Great Awakening?

Tara Robbins

"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741)

On July 8, 1741, Jonathan Edwards delivered this most famous of his sermons to a crowd at Enfield, Connecticut. From the attendant the Reverend Stephen Williams, we have learned that it was a well-received sermon that prompted "such a breathing of distress, and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence, that he might be heard" (reported in Trumbull 48). Partly because of this contemporary account, and partly because of selected editions of the sermon appearing in textbooks, most readers are only familiar with this sermon's frightening images of hell and damnation. E. H. Cady asked, "Why has it become the classic of hell-fire-and-brimstone preaching which so long shut out our view of the tender minded and philosophic Edwards?" (61). Stuart attempts an answer to this rhetorical question in investigating the Reverend Stephen Williams's reaction to the uplifting aspects of Edwards's sermon: "And several souls were hopefully wrought upon that night. And oh the cheerfulness and pleasantness of their countenances that received comfort" (reported in Stuart 46). In addition to the very pervasive and effective images and depictions of hell that Edwards includes in the sermon, Stuart argues, there are moments of hope and comfort for those who repent their sins (46).

The use of fear was a tactic that Edwards had strategically deployed, as he reveals in "Preparatory Walk," for a particular class of audience members. "In the more unthinking people, such as husbandmen and the common sort of people who are less used to reasoning, God commonly works this conviction by begetting their minds a dreadful idea and notion of the punishment: in the more knowing and thinking men, the Holy Spirit makes more use of rational deduction, to convince them that 'tis worth their while to seek earnestly for salvation."

In his opening reference to Deuteronomy, "their foot shall slide in due time," Edwards establishes a prevailing image and tone for his sermon. As he provides explication for the biblical citation, he not only makes the text understandable, but also renders it applicable to his contemporary audience. Although the text originally applies to the "wicked Israelites," Edwards shifts from the vague pronoun *they* to a more direct reference to his audience members, "wicked men" and "we." The commonplace experience of falling, occasioned by treading in slippery places, which Edwards uses to illustrate the susceptibility of sinners to lives of eternal damnation, makes this peril seem both comprehensible and imminent. "As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning." By linking the physical act of falling with the spiritual act, Edwards lets the body be the receptacle of sin. The very weight of this sin burdens the body and makes it more susceptible to fall: "Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight."

Man's precarious position, his likelihood of falling at any moment and without warning, is further demonstrated by an analysis of God as the only agent who "keeps wicked men at any moment out of hell." The figure of God portrayed in this section of the sermon is an all-powerful and just figure, but one who exercises an untold degree of strength over humans. Edwards gives numerous examples of the fruitless nature of humans' endeavor to resist God: "There is no fortress that is any defense from the power of God." As a metaphor for God's power, Edwards offers the dynamic between a human and a worm: Just as easy as it is for a human to "tread on and crush a worm," so it is for God to "cast his enemies down to hell." "Nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy and God's will" prevents people from being cast into hell. Edwards proclaims the justness of sinners' fates, and God's action in allowing them to fall as they are prone to do, as a means of awakening the fallen members of his audience to their imminent fates.

And in this tension between God's divine justice and man's inherent proclivity to mortal fall Edwards echoes the Puritan view of religion. The individual is at God's mercy to be saved from

eternal damnation. Edwards constantly creates images of an open pit, or hell's open mouth, which is ready and desirous of sinners. And yet humans are not utterly powerless, despite the horrific image Edwards conjures of standing in limbo with God's sword of divine justice over their heads and a fiery pit just below them. True, Edwards depicts "corrupt principles" in the "souls of wicked men" that would reign unrestrained were it not for the hand of God, but his main purpose in creating such horrifying scenes of death and endless torture is to prompt his audience members to pray to God and repent their sins. He warns that these prayers of repentance must be sincere to be heard and heeded: "Till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction." For those who are not true believers in Christ, however, Edwards offers no hope: "They have no refuge, nothing to take hold of all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God."

It is for these people, whom Edwards calls "unconverted persons," that he details this "awful subject." His desire is to make them aware and sensible to the precarious position of their souls: "There is nothing," Edwards proclaims, "between you and hell but the air." For those who do not recognize God's hand in their current situation, Edwards offers evidence: "the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your life, and the means you use for your own preservation." These sources of an individual's strength are useless when faced with God's justice, and the withdrawal of his hand from them.

All of the elements, including the earth and the sun, are only sustaining the lives of sinners at God's "sovereign pleasure"; thus, being out of harmony with God places the unrepentant sinners or unbelievers out of harmony with their place in the world. Edwards writes: "The sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies." This image of a begrudging rather than nurturing domain drastically contrasts with the dynamic of man and nature presented in Genesis, in which man is given dominion over all the living things in the various elements. For the evil, sinning human, Edwards states, even the elements are antagonistic. In the first book of Genesis, "God said 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (Genesis 1:26). Edwards notes the difference between this dynamic with nature and the one outlined in Genesis by stating that "God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with." Another indirect reference to Genesis immediately follows when Edwards uses a simile to compare God's wrath to "great waters that are damned for the present." The impending flood, threatening with "constantly rising" waters, evokes the enormous deluge described in Genesis when God floods the world in his anger at man's fall from grace.

Perhaps the most famous of all images that Edwards conjures in his sermon, the one that prompted the biographer Elisabeth D. Dodds to name it the "spider sermon," is that of man hanging precariously, as if on a spider's thread, over a fire. To convey the powerless state of a sinner, whose fate relies solely on the mercy of God, Edwards writes, "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked." More examples of God's omnipotence follow in subsequent paragraphs in which Edwards compares the wrath of God to that of a king or absolute monarch. Just as Edwards discounted man's power of resistance to God's will, so, too, does he diminish the power exercised by kings or "the greatest earthly potentates" in comparison to "the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth." He quotes from Luke, in which mankind is advised not to fear the person who can

kill the body, but the power that can kill the spirit by casting one into hell.

Edwards attempts a definition of eternal damnation in the following paragraph. Up until this point, hell has been an immediate, but not necessarily an infinite threat. His shift in the depiction of hell, less as a fiery pit and more as an inconceivable eternity spent in turmoil, occurs on the brink of his final plea to his listeners to repent their sins and sincerely commit themselves to their religious faith. In imagining hell as "a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul," Edwards shifts from the physical aspects of eternal damnation to its emotional and psychological effects. To make the concept of eternal damnation more understandable and accessible, Edwards points to those "in this congregation now hearing this discourse that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity."

Despite his employment of numerous images to emphasize man's helpless state as an unrepentant sinner, Edwards also claims man's agency, or ability to change these dire circumstances, when he writes in the application section of the sermon, "The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation." Stuart identifies the "logical inconsistency" in the sermon: Edwards "went on to use the poles of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility to maintain an effective tension in everyday religious life. To some, this tension is suspect, because of its logical inconsistency. But to others, it appears singularly effective in keeping man from falling into either despair, on the one hand, or complacency, on the other" (56). He calls on members of the congregation to recognize and act upon the "extraordinary opportunity" to convert and commit themselves to Christ. If they will but listen to Christ "calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners," their "hearts [will be] filled with love to Him who has loved them." Here, Edwards shifts from a characterization of God that has prevailed in the sermon as an angry and vengeful God, to one more in keeping with New Testament readings, a God of love and acceptance.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Read Robert Lowell's poem "Mr. Edwards and the Spider" and consider his interpretation of the sermon.
2. Edwards's sermon is visually rich, freighted with provocative images depicting the tenuous state of an unrepentant sinner. Select what you believe to be the most effective or powerful of these images and explain how they work, and how they fashion a dynamic between God and humans.
3. How does Edwards reconcile the image of God as angry, powerful, and mighty with the image of him near the sermon's end as loving and forgiving? Are the images mutually exclusive? If not, how does Edwards reconcile them?

A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections (1746)

Edwards's preface to *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* illustrates the critical importance of his work: "There is no question of greater importance to every individual of mankind than this; —What is the nature of true religion?" Although Edwards believes that there are ample means to answer this question, he notes that it is a divisive one: "There is no question upon which professing Christians are more divided." In this time of revival, Edwards mourns the existence of "counterfeit" mixing with "true religion," which he recognizes as a tactic undertaken by the devil to "gain the greatest advantage against the cause of Christ." Edwards traces this phenomenon throughout time, arguing that it is particularly during moments of revival when this very division occurs. It will continue occurring, Edwards states, "till we have learned to distinguish between saving experience and affections, and those numerous fair shows, and specious appearances, by which they are counterfeited."

Part 1 of the *Treatise* addresses the nature of the affections and their importance in religion. Examining a verse from Peter, Edwards proposes the

doctrine that "true religion consists in holy affections." He defines the affections by differentiating them from the other faculty of the soul, which is perception and speculation. For Edwards, the "lively and powerful exercises" of one's inclination are synonymous with one's affections (15). His emphasis on "lively and powerful exercises" stems from the Bible, specifically Deuteronomy, in which God insists that his followers be "fervent in spirit" (17). These affections are "the springs which set us to work in all the affairs of life" (19). Without being affected, specifically by the emotions of love, joy, fear, hatred, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal, Edwards argues, there can be no true belief or practice of faith (20–26). Through a series of biblical references to these very affections, Edwards concludes that "those persons who deny that much of the true religion resides in the affections . . . must reject what we have become accustomed to esteem as the Bible" (26).

Edwards centralizes "a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent love to God" as the basis for all subsequent religious affections (28). He demonstrates further biblical proof of the centrality of religious affections through an examination of three prophets: David, Paul, and John (29–32). In daily exercises of faith, such as prayer, Edwards believes that the necessity for religious affections is abundantly clear. People do not pray to "inform God or to incline his heart to show mercy, but suitably to affect our own hearts as we prepare ourselves for the reception of the blessings we ask" (34). It is for this very same purpose that Christians attend sermons so that their affections are raised in their appreciation of the biblical text (35). Finally, Edwards notes how sinfulness is described repeatedly in the Bible as "hardness of heart," thus displaying that a "tenderness of heart" is prerequisite to a true faith.

The second part is entitled "On Those Things Which Afford No Decisive Evidence, Either That Our Affections Are Truly Gracious, or That They Are Not." As the title suggests, Edwards's purpose in this section is to "discriminate between true and false religious affections" (44). Part of the impetus for the pamphlet, which was amassed from a series of sermons that Edwards delivered, was to combat the belief promulgated in the Great Awakening that "bodily effects" were the true sign of conversion. Edwards addresses the fervent nature of affections, noting that it corresponds that those with excitable passions are naturally inclined to heightened expressions of their religious affections (47–48). That said, Edwards does not conscience a wholesale acceptance of all great expressions of affections necessarily stemming from "a spiritual and gracious nature" (49). More specifically, Edwards argues that though these affections "produce strong effects upon the body, [there] is no proof either that these affections are truly gracious, or that they are not" (50). He bases his statement about the enigmatic nature of bodily effects by arguing that they might stem from strong emotions that might themselves be based on spirituality or on earthly things (50–51). Edwards admits that "there is certainly great power in spiritual affections," and thus he cannot state definitively that bodily effects, such as fainting, are not prompted by religious affections (51). As proof, Edwards provides scriptural examples of prophets whose bodies are overwhelmed by the sight and the glory of God (51–54). Edwards defends most ardently those people who express the belief that their bodies are affected by the Holy Spirit, arguing that it is in keeping with the miraculous works God has performed and that have been recorded in the Bible and that such descriptions of conversions, particularly in the New Testament, are public, wonderful, and sudden (58).

For every example of true religious conversion, such as "preparatory and convictions and humiliation" followed by "alarm and terror" and then converted into "comfort and joy," Edwards offers counterarguments that these affections, even that of love, might arise from the devil or from expressions that are not based on true conviction but are merely counterfeit. He concludes the section by deferring to the Scriptures, "this notion of ascertaining the state of others by our love being excited toward them is antiscriptural. The sacred writings say nothing of any such mode of judging respecting the state of others, but direct us to

form our opinion of them chiefly from the fruits they produce" (102).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Edwards's treatise was occasioned by the Great Awakening, one of the most famous and influential revivals of the time. Why might this moment necessitate a defense of the "true religion"?
2. How does Edwards's treatment of religious affections compare to his account of them in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*?
3. How might you compare Edwards's treatise on bodily and emotional affectation with COTTON MATHER's *Wonders of the Invisible World*?

Tara Robbins

The Freedom of the Will (1754)

Jonathan Edwards published his treatise on the freedom of the will in 1754, under the title "A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of That Freedom of Will, Which Is Supposed to Be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue, and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame." Edwards had conceived of this exploration in the years following the first Great Awakening, writing to his fellow theologian John Erskine in Scotland in 1747 that he hoped to draft "something particularly and largely on the Arminian controversy, in distinct discourses on the various points in dispute, to be published successively, beginning first with a discourse concerning the Freedom of the Will, and Moral Agency; endeavouring fully and thoroughly to state and discuss those points of Liberty and Necessity, Moral and Physical Inability, Efficacious Grace, and the ground of virtue and vice, reward and punishment, blame and praise, with regard to the dispositions and actions of reasonable creatures" (quoted in Ramsey 2). Edwards thus intended this treatise as the first installment in a series of works that would entirely disassemble what he perceived as the specious foundation of the Arminian complaint against Calvinism.

Here, Edwards entered into the century-old conflict between the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace (the idea that a person elected by God to receive salvation could not resist divine grace, in spite of human sinfulness) and the Arminian doctrine of conditionalism (the idea that salvation required some element of faith generated by the human person). By the mid-18th century, the influence of Scottish commonsense philosophy had led some to question whether Calvinism's notion of irresistibility undermined Enlightenment doctrines of moral responsibility by implying that man was incapable of—and therefore could not be held accountable for—upholding moral standards. Arminianism, with its insistence that man could either accept or reject God's grace, seemed to offer a solution for this problem. Thus, as the historian Paul Ramsey writes in the introduction to the authoritative edition of Edwards's text, in choosing to begin with a treatise on the freedom of the will, Edwards "planned to join argument with Arminianism precisely on the ground of its greatest strength, i.e. the importance of the ethical and the human for understanding the relation between God and man" (2). Edwards commences his assault on Arminianism on the very doctrinal point most attractive to its own followers, striking what he intended as a death blow to its heart.

While he did not permanently resuscitate the entire Calvinist orthodoxy, Edwards did achieve a monumental revival of many of Calvinism's doctrines for an audience of professional theologians and lay readers alike. After his *Life of David Brainerd,* "Edwards on the will" was the most reprinted of his texts through the middle of the 19th century (Conforti 109), and 20th- and 21st-century biographers of Edwards often point to it as his greatest achievement. Indeed, the Yale University Press edition of Edwards's complete *Works* begins with this text as the first volume. The series editor Perry Miller writes in his preface that "although it is not the first in the Edwards chronology, it is the work through which his fame has been most widely spread abroad, even to the multitudes who have known the book only by hearsay" (Miller vii).

Edwards's influence was both critical and popular, domestic and transatlantic, immediate and long lasting.

The text itself is divided into four parts: a first part setting out Edwards's terms and three others refuting the Arminian position that free will and liberty were necessary for the imputation of moral responsibility. Edwards's argument proceeds with painstaking logical precision, and much of the groundwork is established through the definitions in the first part. In this section, Edwards equates the will and the act of volition, arguing that a man cannot truly will to do something and refrain from doing it; a man who claims to have done so has actually willed not to do the act. Further, the will "is *determined* by the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable" (144). Actions derive directly and necessarily from what the mind perceives as most desirable, and a man's disposition determines his actions (Gura 192). Edwards also differentiates between moral and natural necessity. Natural necessity means that a man's actions are determined by certain physical realities; moral necessity means that his actions are determined by his disposition, in the face of God's worthiness. While sinful man may be morally incapable of loving God because his disposition has been corrupted, he possesses the freedom to do so. He is free to do whatever he wills, but without God's grace, he wills only to sin. Thus, Edwards counters Arminianism and insists that man's will is free, but that man can only sin—and that God is therefore justified in condemning the sinner for failing to exercise his freedom to will to do good.

For Discussion or Writing

1. When did Edwards originally conceive of his text, and what did he hope to achieve with it? What doctrinal system did Edwards oppose in *Freedom of the Will*?
2. What are Edwards's central arguments in the text? How do they relate to your own ideas about moral responsibility? Are people responsible for actions that they feel too weak to avoid if those actions cause harm to them or others?
3. Edwards was very interested in science, especially as it illuminated truths about the human condition. How would he have responded to modern debates that suggest that people's actions are determined by their biological characteristics.

Tara Robbins

The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended (1758)

Edwards died before this document could be published, although the advertisement mentions that he had reviewed most of it before his untimely demise. He begins by identifying Dr. Taylor's *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin Proposed to Free and Candid Examination* and *Key to Apostolic Writings* as the two key books written in opposition to the concept of original sin. Dr. Turnbull is also identified, and quoted throughout the book. Not believing that "any thing which has the appearance of an argument, in opposition to this doctrine, should be left unanswered," Edwards insists that this doctrine's great importance casts light on interpretations of the gospel and the doctrine of salvation.

In the first section, Edwards addresses the "true tendencies of the innate disposition of man's heart," whether we are innately evil or innately good. He cites Turnbull's argument that the number of wicked or evil acts in the world occupies a small percentage when compared to the good and virtuous acts. Similarly, Turnbull dismisses the source of information on this important question, stating that a prison does not represent the vast majority of law-abiding citizens; nor does a bout of illness in an otherwise healthy life accurately represent the health of a person. In response, Edwards argues for man's moral tendency for evil or wickedness without the interposition of divine grace. He writes, "It would be very strange if any should argue, that there is no evil tendency in the case, because the mere favor and compassion of the Most High may step in and oppose the tendency, and prevent the sad effect." Thus, Edwards argues, the absence of

a criminal or evil act by a person does not prove the innate goodness of the person, but rather the divine intervention of God to prevent the person from acting on his or her natural disposition toward evil.

Before tackling the subject of man's innate tendency to moral ruin, Edwards addresses the subject that all humans who are "capable of acting as moral agents" are guilty of sin. He provides numerous scriptural passages to document the representations of man as a sinful being in need of confession and repentance. Edwards states that Dr. Taylor himself asserts and affirms "these things" but differentiates between holy law and sinfulness so that man can "transgress the law, and yet not be guilty of sin." Taylor writes alarmingly of how one transgression against the law subjects the individual to everlasting death. Edwards defends God's law as "holy, just, and good" and maintains his belief that humans are "the subjects of guilt and sinfulness, which is, in effect, their utter and eternal ruin."

In support of his use of the term *tendency,* Edwards clarifies it through rational explanation. A single event, he states, does not qualify as a tendency, but observations of events in the natural world hundreds and millions of times do qualify. He provides readers with an example of throwing a die one time or thousands of times. After observing a die thrown thousands of times, Edwards states, one can draw conclusions from the preponderance of evidence that the die has a tendency to land on one side over others. For humans, he concludes, to observe the history in a family to murder themselves or die of consumption would indicate a tendency in that family or race. Edwards uses Taylor's own language against him in expanding this point, incorporating Taylor's phrase "We are very apt, in a world full of temptation, to be deceived, and drawn into sin by bodily appetites." Edwards agrees, focusing on Taylor's use of the term *apt* to imply a "tendency." In opposition to Taylor's sense that sin is an external source, Edwards notes that it occurs in both sexes and has been "observed in mankind in general, through all countries, nations, and ages, and in all conditions." Further, Edwards again employs Taylor's own words and logic against him by stating that if God made the world and pronounced it good, then there is no room in such a habitation for sin. Thus, Edwards concludes, sin must originate in man himself and not in the world about him.

In the third section, Edwards tackles the implications behind Taylor's complaint that humans are disproportionately punished to eternal damnation for committing one sin. Given the truthfulness of this statement, Edwards writes, it must follow that the numerous good deeds of a person do not compensate for a single act of sin. The answer to this quandary, Edwards insists, lies in man's "infallibly effectual propensity to moral evil, which infinitely outweighs the value of all the good that can be in them." Thus, what appeared to Dr. Taylor to be an excessive punishment that was not equivalent to the crime is, to Edwards, a just punishment for humankind's "immense guilt." Against those who would talk of the "prevailing innocence [and] good nature" of man's nature, Edwards counters with the absurd example of a wife who, though she committed adultery with the slaves and other scoundrels, performed her wifely duties more often than her acts of adultery and thus should be deemed a good wife.

Edwards employs a passage from the Gospel of John as further proof that all humans are born into a fallen state: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." If there were ever a time with people born without sin, Edwards reasons, it must have been during John's time during the "primitive Christian church," and those people must have been the children of Christian parents. However, he immediately dismantles this possibility by rhetorically questioning why John would write such a passage as that quoted previously if his own environment, that of the primitive Christian Church, were not itself without sin. The reason Edwards offers for sin's immediacy is its great disposition that "will not suffer any considerable time to pass without sin." Edwards imagines this disposition to have a cumulative and self-perpetuating effect: Because humans are prone to sin, the tendency to increase

wicked habits and practices likewise increases over time, so long as the motion is not arrested. This notion accounts for why adults are more prone to sin than children.

Edwards counters Dr. Turnbull's sense of human's well-proportioned affections by remarking on the absence of a justly proportional love and gratitude to God for his goodness. Instead, he witnesses a stronger inclination "to anger towards men for their injuries." Even among those men who are Christian and who love God, their love for him may not be enough, and thus "there is more sin, consisting in defect of required holiness." The presence of sin among good men, Edwards concludes, is further proof of the natural tendency to sin. The following section includes humankind's propensity toward worshipping idols, such as the paganism practiced by indigenous populations of North and South America, and mankind's "great disregard of their own eternal interest" as additional evidence of an innate fallen status.

Beginning with Adam; continuing through his son Cain, who committed fratricide; and on to Abraham after the flood, Edwards cites numerous scriptural passages that provide a continuous and unremitting history of humankind's wickedness. He further adds that Dr. Taylor himself "owns" to these very passages in his own book. "Thus," Edwards remarks, "a view of the several successive periods of the past duration of the world, from the beginning to this day, shows, that wickedness has ever been exceedingly prevalent, and has had vastly the superiority in the world." Further, Edwards writes in the next section, mankind was given ample warning against continuing their wickedness by Noah, and yet the people took no heed. Edwards observes, despite the "new and extraordinary means" God took with the Flood they "were so far from proving sufficient, that the new world degenerated, and became corrupt." The continued wickedness of men, however, continued even afterward with the destruction of Babylon. He provides additional examples from Scriptures of man's "extreme degree of corruption," culminating in the Jews' rejecting Christ and his Gospel. In Edwards's own time, he sees the "corruption of the Church of Rome" as another manifestation of mankind's wickedness.

Given the preponderance of evidence Edwards offers in this book in support of the doctrine of original sin, he nevertheless believes that humans have hope in God's grace.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the dynamic of humans and God that Edwards conveys in this book with that of his sermons. To what extent does the period or the genre (a book rather than a sermon) contribute to the difference?
2. In this book, Edwards directly addresses figures holding opposing views from him, Dr. Taylor and Dr. Turnbull. What of his other opponents, those who contributed to his ousting from the Northampton church? How does he position himself with respect to them?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON EDWARDS AND HIS WORK

1. Jonathan Edwards is primarily associated with the "hellfire and brimstone" aspects of the Puritan faith rather than regarded as a holy man endeavoring to convert followers during the Great Awakening. Examine his texts carefully and make an argument for Edwards as a compassionate man, intent upon preventing the backsliding of Puritans and reinstating their position as God's chosen people.
2. Conduct additional research into the Great Awakening, which was such a pivotal event in early American history, and argue for the position that Jonathan Edwards occupies in this critical historical moment.
3. Consider how Edwards's examinations of nature relate to his understanding of mankind's relationship with God, and compare these ideas to those of Cotton Mather and then to those of the transcendentalists Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Is there a point of commonality?

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Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797)

hitherto I had thought only slavery dreadful; but the state of a free negro appeared to me now equally so at least; and in some respects even worse, for they live in constant alarm for their liberty.

(*The Interesting Narrative*)

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself (1789)

What scholars know of Olaudah Equiano's life is derived mainly from his autobiography, whose full title is *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself.* We have therefore chosen to address Equiano's life and major work in a single section.

In his introduction to the 1989 bicentennial edition of Olaudah Equiano's narrative, critic Wilfred D. Samuels connects Equiano's text to the burgeoning genres of autobiography and slave narratives. As a predecessor to the works of Booker T. Washington, Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, and Hannah Crafts, Equiano's account tells of his enslavement in Africa, his experience of the middle passage to America, and his struggles to liberate himself both physically and spiritually. Samuels attributes the book's popularity to this last characteristic, the book's "spiritual elements" (iv–v). As a conversion tale, Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* gives itself to "lengthy discourse on his conversion to Methodism" (v). In this particular theme, Equiano creates a narrative arc that traces his movement from slave to freeman, from spiritually empty to enriched. This development informs other aspects of the book, namely, its autobiographical movement. By focusing on the life of an individual in the 18th century, when readers were looking for moral guidance or "admonitory and historical values," Equiano necessarily included his spiritual development as an aspect of his tale that more than satisfied readers' expectations.

A distinguishing feature of Equiano's narrative lies in its early chapters' focus on his childhood and his tribe's cultural practices and beliefs in Africa. Equiano orients his reader, after dispensing with the traditional declarations of humility and lack of literary talent, to "that part of Africa, known by the name of Guinea, to which the trade of slaves is carried on" (4). Deep within a wealthy kingdom that touches the coast, into "the interior part of Africa to a distance hitherto . . . unexplored by any traveler," Equiano was born. His description of the tribe's lands as "unexplored" or unmapped, as it were, immediately renders him an expert, or at least an individual with privileged information. A member of the Eboe (modern-day spelling of *Ibo*) tribe, Equiano writes that his isolation within the interior of Africa accounted for his having "never heard of white men or Europeans" (5). Historians have located more exact coordinates for Equiano's home. Samuels writes, "Equiano was an Ibo born in the Essaka region, northeast of the Niger River, in the interior of Nigeria" (v). More recent developments, brought about by additional research into his early childhood, reveal that this past might be

fictional. The biographer Vincent Carrera argues in his biography of Equiano that this famous figure was actually born into slavery in present-day South Carolina and manufactured the story of his childhood spent in Africa.

Equiano tells of his father's prominent position in the Ibo tribe as an "embrence; a term, as I remember, importing the highest distinction, and signifying in our language a mark of grandeur" (5–6). He proceeds to provide readers with the means of creating this physical marker of distinction and, in such a rhetorical strategy, invites his readers into the private cultural practices of the Ibo. He continues in this vein of making the unknown or foreign knowable and familiar by comparing aspects and practices of the Ibo with those of the Jews (30, 32). The Ibo practiced polygamy but abhorred adultery so much that it was a crime punishable by death (7–8). The marriage ceremony resembles modern common law marriages in which all that is required for a couple to be deemed husband and wife is the public declaration of both bride and bridegroom "in the midst of all their friends" (8). The bride wears "round her waist a cotton string of the thickness of a goose quill, which none but married women are permitted to wear" (9). Equiano's attention to the ritual and symbols of marriage among the Ibo has the rhetorical function of refuting 18th-century European beliefs regarding the sexual licentiousness of both African men and women. This racially informed conviction helped to further the cause of slavery because, as proslavery advocates argued, the absence of any markers of civility—such as marriages—made the inhumane practice of slavery seem not only justified, but a civilizing practice.

As further testament to Ibo civility, Equiano details the division of labor based on sex and the customary diet, which is lacking "those refinements in cookery which debauch the taste" (13). Thus, the simplicity of the Ibo diet is favorably contrasted to the supposedly more sophisticated, yet more "debauched" tastes of European cuisine. For example, Equiano emphasizes the Ibo's proclivity for cleanliness before eating: "Our cleanliness on all occasions is extreme" (13). Again, one sees that Equiano's careful documentation of the Ibo's markers of civility are detailed, various, and made readily apparent. Just as they are simple in their gastronomic tastes, so is their architecture reflective of a "study [of] convenience rather than ornament" (15). Lest readers or observers mistake simplicity for baseness or rudimentary starts into civility, one need only consider the Puritan lifestyle burgeoning in America at the same time as Equiano writes. The Puritans' desire to move away from the debauching features of a life overtaken with sophistication, earthly pleasures, and luxuries caused them to strive instead for simple pleasures and for unadorned lives. The practical purpose behind simple architectural style of housing of the Ibo is easily explained: "Houses so constructed and furnished require but little skill to erect them. Every man is sufficient architect for the purpose" (17). Thus, the basic nature of the houses has a clear, utilitarian purpose because people have all the skill necessary for the construction of their own dwellings.

In describing their economic system of trade with neighboring tribes, Equiano first brokers the book's initial foray into its difficult subject of slavery. "Sometimes indeed we sold slaves to them, but they were only prisoners of war, or such among us as had been convicted of kidnapping, or adultery, and some other crimes, which we esteemed heinous" (19). In his reckoning of slavery, Equiano criminalizes the practice through its associations with those committing trespasses deemed "heinous." He also foreshadows his own subjugation to the slave trade by mentioning his suspicion that neighboring tribes entered the Ibo's marketplace not only for the purpose of trade, but with large, empty sacks intended to capture individuals for future sale as slaves.

Equiano blames the introduction of European goods as the controlling temptation that lures traders to "accept the price of his fellow creatures' liberty with as little reluctance as the enlightened merchant" (24). To satisfy his greed for European wares, the trader "falls on his neighbor, and a desperate battle ensues" in order to take prisoners of war, who can then be sold into slavery (24). To

make sure that readers can distinguish between the practice of slavery among the Ibo and that in the West Indies, Equiano details the salient points: "With us [slaves] do no more work than other members of the community, even their masters; their food, clothing, and lodging were nearly the same as theirs (except that they were not permitted to eat with those who were free-born); and there was scarce any other difference between them, than a superior degree of importance which the authority which, as such, he exercises over every part of his household" (26–27). With the exception of their absence from the table of freeborn people when dining, nothing distinguishes slaves from masters. Most notably, the system of slavery as practiced in Africa by the Ibo is not a race-based institution.

As mentioned before, Equiano makes numerous comparisons between Ibo practices and beliefs and those of the Jews. He mentions the significance of hand washing, libations, and general hygiene, as well as the practice of circumcision, as two central practices the cultures share in common (30, 32). Equiano has been struck "very forcibly" by the "strong analogy . . . in the manners and customs of my countrymen and those of the Jews, before they reached the Land of Promise . . . an analogy, which alone would induce me to think that the one people had strung from the other" (38). To corroborate this theory further, Equiano refers to "a Dr. Gill, who, in this commentary on Genesis, very ably deduces the pedigree of the Africans . . . [and] the descendants of Abraham" (38).

As the biographer Carrera has noted, no section of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* contains so many references to other sources, such as Dr. Mitchel, Mr. T. Clarkson, and Dr. John Clarke (39, 40, 41). Within these sources Equiano finds additional authority for his claims against the institution of slavery based on documented proof and testimony regarding the civility of Africans. The central argument Equiano references for proof of Africans' humanity involves the correlation between pigmentation and geography. As the argument goes, "the difference of color between the Eboan Africans and modern Jews" can be attributed to their geographical proximity to "the torrid zone" (40–41). If, as Equiano argues, a Spaniard can change complexion and yet remain the same mind, then there is no basis for the "apparent inferiority of an African" (42). Indeed, he carries the argument a step further, insisting "that understanding is not confined to feature or colour" (42).

Chapter 2 opens with the swift termination of Equiano's blissful childhood with the abduction of both him and his sister. Snatched together, the two are able to comfort each other by "being in one another's arms all night, and bathing each other with our tears" (50). Even this small relief is stolen from them as the two siblings are ripped from each other's arms and forced to endure the pains and anguish of their mutual enslavement alone. Equiano soon attempts to return to his family home and takes advantage of the freedom allotted him by his master to orient himself to the geography of his new home in the hope of a future escape. The opportunity for escape occurs unexpectedly when Equiano kills one of the master's chickens and runs off to hide for fear of receiving a beating as punishment. The thickness of the bushes, along with the searchers' general consensus that he has fled for home, prevent those of his master's household from discovering him. But upon overhearing his searchers speak of the futility of his return home, given the significant distance, Equiano emerges from his hiding place at dusk and drags himself, filled with despair, into his master's kitchen in search of food and drink (57).

After the death of the master's daughter, Equiano finds himself sold to yet another family. He does not specify how long he is with this new master nor mention how many other times he is sold. The singular event that marks his captivity while still in Africa is the unexpected but brief reunion with his sister (59). In rhapsodizing on the particular dangers slavery imposes on women, Equiano hopes for the protection of his sister's innocence and virtues (62). Equiano wonders about his sister's fate, and, in so doing, narrates the fate common to many female slaves: "fallen victim to the violence of the African trader, the pestilential stench of a

Guinea ship, the seasoning in the European colonies, or the lash and lust of a brutal and unrelenting overseer" (62).

Equiano's experience of slavery in Africa seems to be polarized by extremes. While residing with one family, for example, he is bathed, clothed, perfumed, and treated as a member of the family. He notes his initial astonishment when he finds himself seated at the same table as his masters for dinner (64). These luxuries and the homelike environment are juxtaposed with the household of his next master, among "a people who did not circumcise and ate without washing their hands" (67). Further, the women are not modest and do not follow the practices of the women from the Ibo tribe. The people offer no sacrifices or libations before eating, the men and women swim together in the water, and the women sleep with the men (66, 67, 68). In this cataloging of ill manners and lack of civility, Equiano shows the disparity between master and servant. Having been born to a tribe practicing all of these gestures that mark their civility, Equiano occupies a position of moral authority.

From this position of moral and cultural estrangement, Equiano finds himself on the seacoast and face to face with a slave ship. The mistrust, fear, and bewilderment that characterized his experiences among his most recent slave owners gain intensity and emphasis when he is forced aboard the ship. He narrates his innate distrust and fear on seeing the Europeans, whom he rightly took to be "bad spirits," and details how "their complexions too differing so much from our, their long hair, and the language they spoke, (which was very different from any I had ever heard) united to confirm me in this belief" (70–71). His vantage point reverses the cultural authority on the issue of slavery.

Equiano's next description provides even more information on the subject of slavery than was previously known. His narrative, in addition to its attention to life in Africa, is most notable for its detailed description of the middle passage, or the sea voyage African slaves endured chained together in the hull of a ship as they made their way to European colonies: "I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything" (73). Conditions below deck worsen for Equiano and his fellow captives when another ship moves alongside theirs and unloads additional cargo:

> It became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died. . . . This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable, and the filth of the necessary tubs into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. (79)

In opposition to his previous description of the importance of cleanliness, hand washing, and general hygiene among the Ibo, and even among the various owners he had in Africa, the deadly conditions suffered during the middle passage are "pestilential" and cause the deaths of several slaves. Equiano attributes his survival to his ability to dwell on deck without "fetters." Both kindnesses he believes are purchased by his "extreme youth" (80). At the height of the disparity between civilized and barbaric, Equiano twice mentions his and other shackled slaves' shared fear that the European captors were cannibals who would cook and eat them.

In direct opposition to his moments of fear and despair are moments of wonder and curiosity. Having never tasted certain foods during his 11 years among the Ibo, Equiano expresses his delight, while a slave in other parts of Africa, in being introduced

to coconuts and pumpkins. When aboard the slave ship, Equiano wonders at the magic spell that the Europeans must have cast onto the ship in order to make it sail. When he asks the other shipmates about its properties, their ignorance of naval mechanics only further affirms this belief in magic. When the shipmates note Equiano's natural curiosity about the quadrant, "they at last took notice of my surprise; and one of them, willing to increase it, as well as to gratify my curiosity, made me one day to look through it" (83). He is also surprised by flying fish and "seeing people on horseback" (83, 85). In gathering these moments together, the reader recognizes how Equiano returns to his own childhood and the naturally inquisitive mind that all children have.

Soon after his arrival in Virginia, Equiano maintains his sense of wonder and amazement at some of the natural and man-made sights. He marvels at snow, which he had never witnessed before. He wonders at a clock, a picture, and an iron muzzle when he is called into the big house to fan his ill master (92–93). The wonder quickly turns to fright when he examines the metal contraption a black female slave had "on her head, which locked her mouth so fast that she could scarcely speak; and could not eat nor drink" (91). The inventions, then, span from the novel (a clock, a picture) to the insidious, the iron muzzle, and this spectrum might easily be used to describe Equiano's understanding of European slave owners, who seem capable of both innocuous behavior as well as extreme cruelty.

The naming, or rather the presumption of slave owners that they may name their slaves, is one instance of slavery's occupying the spectrum between innocuous and cruel, where the two seem to blend into each other. Equiano notes in passing that he was renamed Jacob and thereafter referred to as Michael (93). His latest owner, Michael Henry Pascal, changes Equiano's name yet again, this time to Gustavus Vassa (96). When Equiano demurs and insists that his name is Jacob, he is "cuffed" (96). A simple and yet significant matter of naming oneself begins innocuously enough but very quickly turns cruel as Pascal uses physical violence to force Equiano to submit to a new name.

Similarly, those on board the ship bound for England, including Equiano's master, Pascal, take advantage of his youth and easily convince him that their threats to kill and eat him are quite real (97, 99, 100, 101, 102–103). Having learned before of the cruelty of Europeans by witnessing the fatal flogging of a sailor and the unceremonious dispatch of dead slaves overboard, the reader cannot help but sympathize with the 11-year-old Equiano, who takes quite seriously the cruel jests and threats of his master and fellow sailors.

The natural wonder that Equiano expresses about new foods, flying fish, and snow quickly translates into an appreciation for God, the Creator, and for church (105). Thus does Equiano remove the racial or cultural slant of his wonder and awe. Rather than attributing these items, and his sense of wonder about them, to the Europeans who introduce him to them, Equiano very wisely connects them to God, and thus acquiesces to a power greater than he and the Europeans (105). It is because of his desire to understand more about "God, who made us and all things" that Equiano "soon got into an endless field of inquiries, as well as [being] able to speak and ask about things" (105). Thus, Equiano's linguistic forays into English, his desire to communicate, stems from a spiritual hunger for more complete knowledge of God.

He attempts to converse with a book and remarks how he "ha[s] often taken up a book, and ha[s] talked to it, and then put [his] ears to it, when alone, in hopes it would answer [him]" (107). Religion soon becomes a means of cultural and moral authority, which Equiano can wield as a socially sanctioned judgment over others. Immediately after his accounts of his own ailments, chilblains, which might have led to the amputation of his left leg but did not, for which he thanks God (116), Equiano begs his reader's leave to relate a tale of a sailor who lost his eye in a circumstance that Equiano considers "as a judgment of God" (117). The sailor damns his eyes and nearly immediately after receives "some small particles of dirt" in his left eye that caused an inflammation and, within a week, the loss of his eye (117). Although Equiano

does not expressly compare his miraculous recovery to the loss of the blasphemous sailor, it is relatively impossible for the reader not to draw such a conclusion given that the two events immediately follow one another.

As Equiano gains more knowledge of and familiarity with seafaring and its vessels, not to mention its naval officers' rank and reputations, he takes on yet another cultural structure that affords him a modicum of authority. Having left the sea and lived in England for roughly two or three years, Equiano describes himself as being "happily situated; for my master treated me always extremely well; and my attachment and gratitude to him were very great" (131). He credits his time aboard ship, where he experienced warfare and witnessed some of the wonders of the open water, for his self-identification as "almost an Englishman" (132). This declaration is followed, not surprisingly, with a statement of his proficiency with the English language, his desire for literacy, and his "anxiety" to be baptized, as he was in February 1759 at St. Margaret's Church in Westminster (132). Soon after, Equiano and his master returned to the sea aboard the *Namur,* destined for the Mediterranean (137). While at Gibraltar, he learns of the death of his beloved companion, Dick, and he makes a failed attempt to reunite with his long-lost sister. Equiano remarks that the young woman resembled his sister on first glance but then was revealed to have been born in another nation by her speech and manners (138).

Additional battles at sea, all waged against the French, result in further recognition and promotion for both Equiano and his master. Both men hazard their lives for the British Crown, and both receive commendation. The master is appointed captain of a new ship, the *Aetna,* and Equiano is named the captain's steward (151). As another tale of divine Providence, and further solidifying Equiano's ties with Christianity, he recounts the bizarre story of Mr. Mondle, "a man of very indifferent morals" (154). Waking from a horrific nightmare in which St. Peter warns him to repent his ways because his time is short, John Mondle gives away his liquor, begins reading the Scriptures, but cannot relieve his mind's "state of agony" (156). On hearing people cry out for God's mercy, Equiano and others hurry on deck, only to see a 40-gun ship named the *Lynne* strike their own ship "with her cutwater right in the middle of [Mondle's] bed and cabin . . . in a minute there was not a bit of wood to be seen where Mr. Mondle's cabin stood" (157). Equiano considers this bizarre accident "as a singular act of providence" and takes leave with his reader to relate "another instance or two which strongly raised my belief of the particular interposition of heaven" (159). One tale is of a mother and her child, who miraculously survive a fall from the ship's upper deck down to the hold, and another is Equiano's own survival of a headlong fall from the same location, the upper deck, to the afterhold without receiving "the least injury" (160). These three singular events strengthen Equiano's faith in God and transfer his fear from fellow humans to God alone (160).

Their return to Portsmouth is soon followed by "great talk about peace," which is mirrored by Equiano's own opportunity for peace as a freed slave. "I too was not without my share of the general joy on this occasion. I thought now of nothing but being freed, and working for myself, and thereby getting money to enable me to get a good education" (171). Equiano's forays into literacy, arithmetic, and the Scriptures are all assisted, while he is aboard the *Aetna,* by a well-educated 40-year-old named Daniel Queen. A father figure to Equiano, the latter would use whatever money he received to purchase sugar or tobacco for this kind man who promised to apprentice Equiano in his own business once the two departed from the *Aetna* and Equiano obtained his freedom (173). Similar to the kindness that Queen showed Equiano, his master's treatment of him and concern for his moral character are linked in Equiano's mind to his inevitable emancipation. "From all this tenderness, I had never once supposed, in all my dreams of freedom, that he would think of detaining me any longer than I wished" (174).

Equiano's hopes for freedom are soon dashed when his master attempts to place him on another

vessel, threatening to cut Equiano's throat if he "moved out of his sight" (175). Once he is placed aboard Captain James Doran's ship, the *Charming Sally,* Equiano's ownership is immediately transferred. Equiano "plucked up courage" and informed Doran of the various reasons why his assumption of the claim to be master to Equiano was both specious and legally impossible. Equiano references his numerous years of loyal service to his previous master, which were unpaid. More importantly, in terms of "the laws of the land," he informs Doran that he has been baptized and thus cannot be purchased or sold (177). The two men, former and future slave owners, attempt to dismiss the veracity of Equiano's knowledge of the legal status he has as a baptized person and suggest instead that Equiano should not have placed his trust in people who only pretended to befriend him by providing him with false knowledge and false hope. Tellingly, the new master chastises Equiano for talking "too much English" and makes physical threats to reassert his position as Equiano's new master. As the transaction over Equiano is complete and Equiano's former master departs the ship, Equiano "threw [himself] on the deck, while [his] heart was ready to burst with sorrow and anguish" (179).

To maintain his previous employment of Christian belief to supersede the hierarchy imposed on him by slavery, Equiano attributes his current situation as Doran's slave to his personal sins and transgressions against God. He "considered [his] present situation as a judgment of heaven," and he pours out from a contrite heart "unfeigned repentance" (181–182). Equiano soon finds some comfort in his current circumstance by professing that "God might perhaps have permitted this in order to teach me wisdom and resignation" (182). Several failed attempts to escape from the ship while it lay in port do not register as painfully with Equiano as the loss of a guinea to a man who promised to procure a boat for him to use in making his escape from the *Charming Sally.* This concern with money is further reminiscent of Equiano's attempts to hide what little currency he has for fear that his former master will rob him of it. It further foreshadows the means by which Equiano will purchase his own freedom. It is thus telling that Equiano's arrival at Montserrat, "this land of bondage," which causes "a fresh horror [to run] through all [his] frame," should be inaugurated by two sailors' robbing him of all his money (190).

Doran sells Equiano to Mr. King, a Quaker who sets sail for Philadelphia (191, 193). Equiano expresses gratitude to both Captain Doran and his former master for providing him with a strong character reference that would be appealing to a "charitable and humane" master. King seems to be a merchant involved in the triangle trade, however, as Equiano soon learns that he "collect[s] rum, sugar, and other goods" (196). Most scholars interpret this last phrase, "other goods," as slaves. For his labor, Equiano receives monetary compensation that "was considerably more than was allowed to other slaves that used to work with [him]" (196). King provides both pay and food to the slaves of other masters who perform services for him (197). To strengthen further the bond between freedom and economic power through the possession of money or other goods, Equiano tells the tale of "a countryman of mine" whose frugality and industry aided him in purchasing a boat, which was then seized by the governor solely because he knew the owner to be a "negro-man" (199). The only satisfaction this man receives in compensation for the theft of his boat is the news that the governor "died in the King's Bench in England . . . in great poverty" (200). The man escapes his "Christian master" and makes his way to England (200).

Equiano speaks openly of his own participation in the slave trade when he refer to the "different cargoes of new negroes in [his] care for sale" (205). He speaks of witnessing cruelties to slaves as well as the "constant practice to commit violent depredations on the chastity of female slaves" (205). Equiano expresses his own anguish at his inability to stop these acts. From a rhetorical standpoint, it appears that he wishes to inform readers of these "abominations" but at the same time remove himself from any responsibility or culpability in con-

tinuing these practices (206). Equiano distances himself even further from his own hand in the slave trade by discussing at length the punishments and inhumane conditions suffered under slavery. He mentions the sexual double standard that permits the lynching of a slave involved with a white prostitute but condones the satisfaction of a white man's wanton lust upon a 10-year-old slave child.

In a passage that might seem counter to his larger goal of advocating the abolition of slavery, Equiano lavishes praise on certain slave owners, besides his own master, who "to the honor of humanity," are "benevolent" and "most worthy and humane gentlemen" in their treatment of their own slaves. Equiano not only provides the readers with the names of these exemplary slave owners, but also launches into an economic treatise on the money to be reaped from the humane treatment of slaves. Healthy and happy slaves are more productive and perform "more work by half than by the common mode of treatment they usually do" (210). Equiano attributes the annual requirement of 1,000 new slaves to the West Indies to maintain the land's "original stock" of 80,000 to the mistreatment and early deaths of these slaves (211).

Equiano quickly abandons the economic arm of his argument for the humane treatment of slaves and continues to provide specific examples and painful details of the abuses, attempted suicides, and punishment of slaves. He arrives at a general point of law and cites an act passed by the Assembly of Barbados (217–218). Slave owners are not legally responsible for the mistreatment of their slaves except when such cruelty results in the slave's death, at which time the slave owner is obliged to pay the "public treasury fifteen pounds sterling" (218). In this act's refusal to punish murder as a crime but rather as an act resulting in the loss of property (thus the fine paid to the public treasury), Equiano believes lawmakers "deserve the appellation of savages and brutes rather than of Christians and men" (218). In references to the tale of a slave owner who has fathered the slaves laboring as "beasts of burden" in the fields, Equiano exposes how this act condones the social taboo of filicide and opposes the natural relationship that a father should have with his own children (219). In this manner, Equiano argues that "the slave trade [is] entirely a war with the heart of man" (220).

He makes the charge against slavery that most abolitionists do: "It is the fatality of this mistaken avarice, that it corrupts the milk of human kindness and turns it into gall" (223). Equiano wonders how slave owners can reduce both themselves and their slaves to the status of brutes and yet show no concern for a possible insurrection (226). "By treating your slaves as men, every cause of fear would be banished" (226). He makes such bold statements because he writes from a position of authority, having witnessed "many instances of oppression, extortion, and cruelty" in the West Indies (227).

Equiano "endeavored to try [his] luck and commerce merchant"; during visits where he sails with Captain Thomas Farmer, he begins to make small purchases and then resell the merchandise for a small profit. His first exchange is a glass tumbler bought at St. Eustacia and then sold upon his return to Montserrat at a profit of fourpence (233–234). His foray into the business of merchant proves successful, and he increases from his initial investment of two pence to a dollar in six weeks (235). His experiences, however, include moments like the one mentioned earlier in the narrative when the governor seized a man's boat for no other reason except that the man was a Negro. Along with another African, Equiano departs at Santa Cruz in the hope of selling three bags of citrus fruits. When two white men take the bags, Equiano and his companion "could not at first guess what they meant to do" (236). When the men threaten to flog them if they do not depart, Equiano and the other man show them their vessel and explain that they have sailed from Montserrat. Their combined disadvantage of being "strangers as well as slaves" is quickly revealed when the two try to make the thieves understand that they just departed from a ship and were intending to sell their wares. As these three bags of fruit constituted their entire fortunes, the two appealed to the fort's commanding officer for redress. They were answered by a horsewhip (238).

Distraught but still hopeful, they arrived at the house of the men who had carried off their bags. Others in the house strike a bargain with Equiano and his companion, offering to return two of the three bags of fruit to them. Out of pity for his companion, whose bag was not returned, Equiano gave over a third of his produce and the two returned to the marketplace and received "favorable" payment from "providence" (240, 239).

The horrific conditions of the West Indies, which frequent ship travel allow Equiano to place in a larger context and draw unfavorable comparisons, contribute significantly to "a mind like [his]" and cause his desire for freedom to become even more powerful (242). Being a Christian, Equiano places his faith in God for gaining his liberty "by honest and honorable means" (242). Indirectly, Equiano provides the reader with the prevalent reason why he did not simply attempt to run away as a means of escaping bondage. Montserrat's surf, coupled with his inability to swim, make the idea of escape seem less liberating and more suicidal. Equiano provides nearly three pages worth of examples of near drownings, overturned boats, and the "howling rage and devouring fury" of the West Indies' surf (244).

Equiano adds to the treacherous conditions that made escape impossible the "cruel thing . . . which filled him with horror": The tale of a free mulatto named Joseph Clipson who was arrested and taken forcibly aboard a ship to be returned to his master in Bermuda. Although Clipson "showed a certificate of his being born free in St. Kitt's," he was forced aboard ship. His request to be taken ashore before the secretary of magistrates only results in his transfer to another ship and his forced departure from a life as a free man, as well as his loss of his wife and their child (248). In contemplating the fate of Joseph Clipson, Equiano concludes: "Hitherto I had thought only slavery dreadful; but the state of a free negro appeared to me now equally so at least; and in some respects even worse, for they live in constant alarm for their liberty" (249). Because a freed slave cannot enter evidence of his free state in a court of law in the West Indies, and because the conditions of slavery are so much more horrific in the West Indies, and because the treacherous surf makes his escape an impossibility, Equiano "determined to make every exertion to obtain [his] freedom, and to return to Old England" (250). Equiano pays the shipmate to teach him about navigation in the event that if he is "ill used," he might find a sloop and make his way back to England (251). Equiano turns down an opportunity to board a ship sailing for France, stating that he had determined that he would only escape if he were ill treated and that his show of fidelity would prove advantageous to him in the future (253). In the short term, his refusal to escape on the France-bound ship is rewarded by lessons in navigation from his master himself, much to the consternation of their fellow passengers, who believed it "a very dangerous thing to let a Negro know navigation" (253). Now aboard the *Providence,* a 70- or 80-ton vessel that his master commanded, Equiano left the West Indies and set sail for Charles Town and Georgia (253). This was his route for 1764. On the eve of their departure for Philadelphia in 1765, Equiano's master calls him into his office and tells him of the rumors he has heard of Equiano's plans to run off. He also informs him that he is much valued: Having paid 40 pounds sterling for him, the master threatens him with the possibility of being sold to Captain Doran's brother-in-law, "a severe master," or to someone in Carolina for a 100 guineas (256). The conversation improves, however, as Equiano offers numerous accounts of opportunities for escape that he did not take. His master's recognition and confirmation of "every syllable that [he] said" strengthen the two men's desires to respect each other's wishes within reason (258). In a speech that "was like life to the dead of [him]," Equiano and his master arrive at an agreement: The captain will sail to places that allow Equiano to continue his trade as a merchant (even crediting him some wares), and Equiano, once he has accumulated 40 pounds sterling, will purchase his freedom (260). The prospect of imminent liberty, purchased by his own labor, "gladdens [his] poor heart beyond measure" (260–261). This future as a free man is corroborated by a "wise woman, a Mrs. Davis" who

appears to him in a dream the night before he meets her (262). "Finally [she] told [him he] should not be long a slave: this was the more agreeable news, as [he] believed it more readily from her having faithfully related the past incidents of [his] life" (263–264). This psychic also foreshadows future events in Equiano's life, warning him that within the next year and a half he would face two life-threatening dangers (264). The first of these dangers occurs during a trip to Georgia from Montserrat in which Equiano, weakened by overexertion, struggles with a fever and ague for over a week (264–265). In his prayers to God, Equiano promises to be good in exchange for the restoration of his health, but as the ship nears Montserrat, "[his] resolutions more and more declined, as if the very air of that country or climate seemed fatal to piety" (265).

Equiano does not suffer ill fortune in Montserrat, however; rather, he is paid reluctantly by a white man in Charles Town with bad copper coins and risks flogging (268). His fate in Georgia is much worse as he is unable to escape the physical threat of violence as he was in Charles Town. Doctor Perkins, "a very severe and cruel man," enters in intoxicated and proceeds to "beat and mangle [him] in a shameful manner, leaving [him] near dead" (269). The loss of blood and trauma cause temporary paralysis and a debilitating weakness that prevent Equiano from struggling against the authorities who jail him. His master's horror and sadness upon finding Equiano "so cut and mangled" reduce the master to tears. He sends for the best doctors and consults his lawyers in the hope of seeking redress against Dr. Perkins, but no avail as "they could do nothing for [Equiano] as [he] was a Negro" (270). Even the master's attempt to seek revenge by challenging Perkins to a duel is refused (271). Equiano concludes the first volume of his "interesting narrative" with his recovery after nearly a month and their ship's safe return to Montserrat.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare elements of Equiano's slave narrative with those of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs. What elements do they share in common? What distinguishes Equiano's narrative from those of the 19th century? What roles do gender, nationality, and occupation play in distinguishing the narratives from each other?
2. As a form of autobiography, compare Equiano's account of his life with Benjamin Franklin's. What larger structures help them to define themselves? Religion? Politics? Nationality?
3. Some critics have labeled Equiano's narrative as a form of hagiography, which is writing about a saint's life. How might you agree or disagree with this assessment?
4. How do Equiano's 18th-century comments on slavery compare with those of his contemporary, Phillis Wheatley?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON EQUIANO AND HIS WORK

1. Even early after the publication of his autobiography, critics and readers cast doubt on the actual identity of Equiano. Some wonder whether he was in fact Ibo while others wonder about his ability to have written a narrative without an amanuensis. How do you imagine Equiano's identity? Is he British? Ibo? Christian? What passages would you cite as proof of your view of him?
2. Throughout Equiano's narrative, he seems to be seeking signs, or reading significance into everyday events. How do you interpret this element of the narrative? Is it indicative of his enslavement and his lack of agency over his own life, or is it a sign of his acculturation into Christianity?

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Hannah Webster Foster
(1758–1840)

That time is very greatly misspent, which is bestowed in reading what can yield no instruction.

(*The Boarding School*)

The eldest daughter of Hannah Wainwright and a wealthy merchant, Grant Webster, Hannah Webster was born in Salisbury, Massachusetts, in the years before the American Revolution. Because of her family's economic status, young Hannah received a fine education, much of it at a boarding school that would become the basis for her second novel, *The Boarding School*. Growing up in a life of privilege, Hannah Webster would be enrolled in an all-female academy at the time of a traumatic event in her life, the death of her mother. This tragic event happened in 1762, when young Hannah was only four years old.

Five years before the American Revolution, Webster was writing and publishing newspaper articles on the subject of politics. Her literary talent would later be passed on to two of her daughters. At the time, Webster's articles drew the attention and admiration of her future husband, John Foster, who was then in graduate school studying to become a minister. The two married in 1785 on April 7 and began their family in Brighton, Massachusetts, where John was employed as the town's only minister for the First Parish Church. After the birth of her sixth and final child, Foster penned her first novel, *The Coquette,* in 1797. It became a best seller. In his introduction to the 1939 republication of *The Coquette,* Herbert Ross Brown of Bowdoin College notes that the sensational novel "enjoyed its greatest vogue between 1824 and 1828, when the novel was reprinted eight times" (xiii).

Literary historians have discovered that the fictional character of Eliza Wharton was based on the real-life story of John Foster's distant cousin, a woman named Elizabeth Whitman. Foster's cousin, the wife of Deacon John Whitman, was the first cousin of Elizabeth Whitman's father (Bolton 51). This young woman rejected two marriage proposals from ministers (just as the fictional Eliza Wharton, whose fiancé, Mr. Haly, dies, subsequently rejects the suit of J. Boyer) and later found herself pregnant by a lover who abandoned her. Herbert Ross Brown considers Jane Locke's 1855 edition of *The Coquette,* which includes a brief memoir of Foster's life as well as her declaration that Pierpont Edwards (grandson of Jonathan Edwards) was the model for Peter Sanford, to provide "an ample amount of information, mainly mistaken" (viii–ix). Still, Brown notes that Foster's fallen heroine and the historical figure of Elizabeth Whitman share several connections: Whitman was related to John Foster, the women coquetted two ministers, and J. Boyer of Foster's novel shares the initials of Whitman's minister, the Reverend Joseph Buckminster (xi). The scandalous tale of Elizabeth Whitman's seduction and ruin was passed on orally in the form of community gossip, and it was also spread through written form in local newspapers.

The desire to tie the historical figure of Elizabeth Whitman to the fictional one of Eliza Wharton unmistakably compelled an 1855 edition to include a historic preface in which "the real names of the principal actors in this most affecting and lamentable Drama are for the first time given to the public by the daughter of the author who possesses peculiar means to ascertain the FACTS" (reprinted in Bolton 153). Jane E. Locke writes a memoir of Foster in the 1866 edition, which is the first version of the novel to carry Foster's name as the novelist (Bolton 154). There is also mention of a three-act play, *The New England Coquette,* made of Foster's novel by J. Horatius Nichols in 1802 (Bolton 154–155).

Charles Bolton writes sympathetically of Elizabeth Whitman, stating that hers was a tale "of an era when there was less of variety in a girl's daily round, and few opportunities for the expression of her individuality. These pages tell also of one who chafed under these conditions" (xi). Bolton cites another source who believes that Elizabeth Whitman may have been the figure who inspired Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (10). Bolton reproduces a poem penned by Elizabeth Whitman, which appeared in the *Centinel* on September 20, 1788, entitled "Disappointment" (16–22). Whitman died, probably of puerperal fever (a common cause of many women's deaths after childbirth due to infection of the uterus), on July 25, 1788 (Bolton 30). Notice of her death, and the death of her child, appeared in the Salem *Mercury* on July 29 and was soon reprinted and circulated in the Massachusetts *Centinel* (Bolton 33–37). The notice was intended to alert family and friends of the demise of the "strange woman." Interestingly, the language employed in the description of Elizabeth Whitman seems very much in keeping with Foster's fictional Eliza: "Her manners bespoke the advantage of a respectable family and good education. Her person was agreeable; her deportment, amiable and engaging; and though in a state of anxiety and suspense, she preserved a cheerfulness which seemed to be not the effect of insensibility, but of a firm and patient temper" (Bolton 36). Aspects of this language are echoed at the novel's conclusion on the tombstone erected by Eliza's friends (260).

Following this moral line, it would be quite easy (and ultimately simplistic) to read Foster's novel as a tale intended to warn young female readers. Boston's *Independent Chronicle* printed an article of September 11, 1788, that drew upon Elizabeth Whitman's personal tragedy as a source for a communal morality lesson: Both this aforementioned article as well as one published in the same newspaper just nine days later credit Whitman's reading habits with her demise (xi–xii). The September 11 and September 20 letters refer to Whitman as a "great reader of romances" with the latter pursuing the logic that this genre was culpable for her downfall by insisting that "she had formed her notions of happiness from that corrupt source" (xii). Because the newspaper accounts of the historical figure who many see as the basis for Eliza Wharton all point to her seduction as a moral tale intended to warn young ladies against following the same path, it seems quite logical to imagine that readers of Foster's novel would consider the fictional figure as a subject of moral instruction.

Unlike her fallen heroine, Hannah herself appears to have led a conventionally moral and upstanding life. In their first 10 years of marriage, she bore six children: three sons and three daughters. Until his retirement in 1827, John served as a minister in the local church. Two years later, John Foster died. After her husband's death, Hannah Webster Foster left Massachusetts to live in Montreal, closer to two of her daughters, Harriet Vaughan Cheney and Eliza Lanesford Cushing. Hannah Foster Webster died in Montreal in 1840 at the age of 81.

The Coquette; or, the History of Eliza Wharton (1797)

When it was first advertised in Boston's *Columbian Centinel* on August 5, 1797, the author appeared under the nearly anonymous descriptor of "a lady of Massachusetts" (v–vi). It was not until 1866,

nearly 70 years after the first edition of her novel, that Foster was identified by name as the author of *The Coquette*. This tale of the seduction and tragic fall of Eliza Wharton draws from the epistolary form made popular for seduction tales by Samuel Richardson with the publications of *Clarissa* and *Pamela,* among others. Foster begins the life of her protagonist after the death of her fiancé. Released back into society, a young and vibrant Eliza finds her temperament revitalized. She enjoys the pleasures of a public life filled with social gatherings, parties, dances, and retreats at the homes of her friends. However, her foray into social life is quickly checked by the introduction of another potential suitor, a minister named Boyer who is enamored of her and hopes to make her his wife as he settles into a new community. Eliza's rejection of his suit, to the complete shock and dismay of her female companions and fellow members of society, is seen by many critics to mark the beginning of her downward spiral into sin and eventual death. The critic Sharon Harris disagrees with this reading and argues instead that Eliza's fall occurs at the very beginning of the novel when Eliza recognizes that "there is no place in late-eighteenth-century American society for her opinions" (5). Unlike Harris, most critics see her impregnation by Sanford as the natural end of her innocence. Eliza soon succumbs to the flattery of a silvery-tongued rake named Peter Sanford, who, seeing her as nothing more than a coquette, feels justified in bedding and then abandoning her. Without the safety of marriage, a pregnant Eliza sequesters herself from the judging eye of the society she once enjoyed and dies alone soon after giving birth to her illegitimate child.

Foster opens her novel with Eliza Wharton's first letter to her friend Miss Lucy Freeman, while the former visits General and Mrs. Richman. The visit not only takes young Eliza away from the recent death of her fiancé, an elderly man of the cloth, but provides her with a second opportunity to be launched into society and thus into the pool of eligible bachelors. Rather than move in social step from engagement to engagement, Eliza confesses to her friend and correspondent Lucy Freeman the liberating and invigorating qualities of being unattached in society. She identifies pleasure as the "unusual sensation possess[ing] [her] breast" on the occasion of her departure from her "paternal roof" (5). This declaration of independence, the reader learns as the novel progresses, comes at a dear price.

In her early descriptions of her fiancé, Mr. Haly, Eliza displays a mixture of regret and thinly veiled anger toward her parents, who encouraged her betrothal to the point of arranging their intended nuptials. Although she rightly mourns the dead, Eliza immediately notes "the disparity of our tempers and dispositions, our views and designs" and wonders how anyone could "suppose [her] heart much engaged in the alliance" (6). Indeed, her anger seems most naked and apparent when she names the social institutions that have encouraged such filial obedience in the manner of daughters' acquiescing to their parents' will in selecting their future husbands. In retreat from her own parents' will, which forced her into a potentially unhappy union with Mr. Haly, Eliza places her reputation and her future in jeopardy by leaving home.

The reader catches early glimpses of Eliza's potential peril when the young letter writer expresses joy after leaving her family house. Her brief description of her own mother as a "poor woman," ignorant of Eliza's feelings (actually lack thereof) for Mr. Haly, furthers the 18th-century reader's anxiety over Eliza's fate. Even Eliza's correspondent, Miss Freeman, finds her sage and conservative advice offhandedly dismissed by the "coquette." Inherent in the notion of republican motherhood is the belief that mothers are the primary inculcators of the correct morals and values in their children, especially their daughters. In accordance with 18th-century notions of republican motherhood, Eliza's pleasure at leaving her mother and her happiness at escaping a marriage register as alarms that foreshadow her impending downfall. In her second letter, Eliza delights at the lifting of her melancholic feelings. Without the moral guidance of her mother and surrounded by people who are the "picture of

conjugal felicity," Eliza "finds [her] natural propensity for mixing in the busy scenes and active pleasures of life returning" (8, 9).

By her third letter, Eliza has met J. Boyer, a minister, who quickly befriends her, almost immediately after she divests herself of her mourning weeds. When a fellow visitor, Mrs. Laiton, interrupts Eliza's pleasant walk outside Colonel Farington's home to express sympathy regarding Mr. Haly's death, Foster reminds her readers of how the customs of society can be at odds with the emotions and dispositions of its members, such as Eliza. With the exception of this one moment, Eliza finds real pleasure and enjoyment in the social setting of Colonel Farington's home, where she enjoys tea, dinner, and an evening's entertainment. She closes her third letter by taking stock of her life thus far and states assuredly, "a few juvenile follies excepted, which I trust the recording angel has blotted out with the tear of charity, find an approving conscience, and a heart at ease" (12).

In his first letter to his friend Mr. Selby, the latest minister pursuing Eliza (J. Boyer) writes cautiously yet enthusiastically of her. He praises her "elegant person, accomplished mind, and polished manners," and in his judicious portrait of her, one can easily discern the attributes suitable to a minister's wife (13). Noticeably absent from Boyer's letter is any mention of Eliza's physical features. He appreciates her "naturally gay disposition" but then appears to undermine this particular quality by stating, "It is an agreeable quality, where there is discretion sufficient for its regulation" (14). Mr. Boyer wants to temper or control Eliza's characteristic happiness and gaiety, just as others have, either through endorsing marriage to Mr. Haly, expressing sympathy for his death, or cautioning against Eliza's unguarded desire to enjoy her time in society as an eligible young woman. Because we as readers have already been privy to her unwanted engagement, we may not look favorably on Mr. Boyer's sentiments.

In contrast to Boyer's characterization of Eliza, and the apologetic excuses of Mrs. Richman, who attributes Eliza's disposition to "juvenile indiscretion" rather than "design," Peter Sanford, the rogue who will ruin her, imagines Eliza to be "exactly calculated to please [his] fancy" (23, 25). For Sanford, Eliza is easily dismissed as a figure "apparently thoughtless of every thing but present enjoyment" (25). In labeling Eliza as a coquette, Sanford justifies his mistreatment of her. He writes to his friend Charles Deighton that he "shall avenge his sex, by retaliating the mischiefs, she meditates against us" (26). His language militarizes romance, stating that he will "only play off her own artillery, by using a little unmeaning gallantry" (26). It is thus fitting that the consummation of their affair should likewise be couched in military terms as Sanford boasts to his friend of having succeeded at his goal of "the full possession of [his] adorable Eliza!" (211). Further, Sanford paints Eliza's initial rebuffs of his assault upon her virtue in similar terms: "in reliance upon her own strength, endeavoring to combat, and counteract my designs" (212).

Eliza's declaration of independence is echoed soon after in her relaying of Boyer's marriage proposal to her friend Lucy and her thoughtful response. In accordance with her view that marriage amounts to a prison sentence (a belief shared by Peter Sanford, who writes of the institution as shackling), Eliza's "sanguine imagination paints, in alluring colors, the charms of youth and freedom" (41). She begs Mr. Boyer to "leave [her] to the exercise of her free will" (41). In response, Mr. Boyer describes his future prospects: "I expect soon to settle among a generous and *enlightened* people" (42, emphasis mine). Despite the appearance that Eliza has enjoyed and can fully enjoy the freedom of society as well as exert her will in selecting her own marriage partner, the novel exposes the significant social forces at work outside the nuclear family to see Eliza, and all eligible young women, for that matter, safely settled into good unions through Eliza's chafing against Mrs. Richman and her friends, as well as the weighty disapproval of her correspondent. With little if no regard for Eliza's own feelings, all the female characters rally behind Mr. Boyer's suit, referencing his reputation and his class position as just reasons for their stance.

The unrealistic class aspirations of Elizabeth Wharton appear in the Boston *Centinel* as partial cause for her downfall. Had she not imagined herself above marriage to a minister, the anonymous writer argues, her fate might have been different. Foster echoes this sentiment by having the fictional scoundrel write to his friend regarding his own connection of marriage and class position: "Whenever I do submit to be shackled, it must be from a necessity of mending my fortune" (33). Lucy writes quite frankly to Eliza on the subject of class ascension: "I know your ambition is to make a distinguished figure in the first class of polished society," but Mr. Boyer's "situation in life is, perhaps, as elevated as you have a right to claim" (38). Sanford soon after writes of the prospect of marrying an heiress because he "know[s] of no other way to mend his circumstances" (49). "If my fortune, or [Eliza's] were better," Sanford opines, "I would risk a union" (50). In these discussions of marriage and status, Foster exposes 18th-century disapproval of loveless unions based solely on class aspirations.

Having summarily dispatched Mr. Boyer and his socially sanctioned marriage proposal, Eliza mistakenly believes herself to be free again to enjoy the pleasures of society as a single female. But without the guidance of parents or the shelter of an engagement, Eliza too easily and tragically falls victim to the calculating schemes of Peter Sanford. When he catches her alone in the garden, Sanford's "zeal, his pathos alarmed" Eliza (72).

The critic C. Leiren Mower is particularly attentive to the manner in which the novel ends, stating that Eliza's attempts to have control over her own life and her own body are quickly undermined in her death when friends and family take the opportunity to speak for her and to impose their own readings onto her particular fate. In the letters, old friends write to each other of how "happy [they] would have been, had [Eliza] exerted an equal degree of fortitude in repelling the first attacks upon her virtue!" (257). In such statements, Foster seems to echo 18th-century sentiments that would place all the blame for pregnancy outside wedlock squarely on the shoulders of the woman. Mower believes that the public nature of society's reading of her is best exemplified not in the correspondence among friends and family, but in the message inscribed upon her tombstone "by her weeping friends," who hope that "candor [will] throw a veil over her frailties" (260). In death, Eliza can no longer exercise control over the public readings of her body. Throughout the novel, Mower argues, her sole purpose is to "manage the publicness of her body's performance" (316). In ever-decreasing spaces, Eliza attempts visibly to register control over her own body. She does this first by appearing on the public scene soon after the death of her fiancé. However, she flouts the social rules that allow her access to this public realm because she refuses to fulfill her part of the social contract by accepting Boyer's marriage proposal. "To the extent that Eliza remains engaged in the 'externals of enjoyment' . . . without committing herself to the status of feme covert (a married woman), she violates what might be thought of as the reciprocity of the market" (331). As she circulates in the public sphere of parties, picnics, and dances, Eliza is perfectly safe and her actions are sanctioned, but once she defers and later rejects Boyer's proposal, she becomes victim of the public's disapproving view of her.

Foster makes reference to her literary predecessors in this genre through the figure of Mrs. Richman. During her conversation with Eliza on the subject of Peter Sanford, Mrs. Richman declares him "a second Lovelace," the name of the famous seducer in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (55). When Eliza replies that she is not an object of seduction, Mrs. Richman equates Eliza's status with that of "Richardson's Clarissa [who] made herself the victim [of seduction] by her own indiscretion" (55). Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Clarissa* was published in 1747 and is argued by many critics to be the basis for Foster's best seller. Where critics tend to disagree is regarding the moral of the novel as well as its ability either to comply with or to thwart the politics governing women's positions in the 18th century.

Mower disagrees with Cathy Davidson's assessment that *The Coquette* "fails to openly challenge

the basic structure of patriarchal society" (316). Rather, Mower argues that Eliza Wharton's desire to possess her own body "for her own pleasure and purposes" presents a different affront to 18th-century notions of property, ownership, and the status of women. Mower cites the influential philosophies of Locke and Rousseau, as well as the pseudoscientists studying physiognomy, to provide a context in which to recognize and understand Eliza's defiance.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider the story of Foster's character Eliza Wharton in terms of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's *Autobiography.* In what ways does gender narrow the field of possibilities for men and women who leave home in search of their own futures?
2. How might you compare Foster's seduction novel with SUSANNA HASWELL ROWSON's *Charlotte Temple,* published in 1794?
3. JOHN ADAMS is reported to have equated democracy in America with Richardson's seduction novel, stating that democracy is Lovelace and the people are Clarissa. How might you read Foster's novel in political terms? How might Eliza stand in for the people and Sanford for democracy?
4. As mentioned earlier, Foster's *The Coquette* enjoyed its greatest popularity in the 1820s. Why would her novel appeal to women 30 years after its initial publication?

The Boarding School: Or, Lessons of a Preceptress to Her Pupils (1798)

Dedicated to "the young ladies of America," Webster's second novel presents itself as the author's careful "collecting and arranging of her ideas on the subject of female deportment." It is considered by critics to be one of the first fictional accounts of education in the United States.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Maria Williams, Foster's fictional preceptress, opens a boarding school with a desire to preserve a patrimony for her two daughters, as well as "a wish to promote their advantage and enlarge their society" (5). During their final week of school, prior to graduation, Mrs. Williams suspends the traditional schedule and subject of study to dispense "a collection of [her] own sentiments, enforced by the pathos of the occasion" (10). She begins with a tale of Clara, a young girl "nursed in the lap of affluence, and accustomed to unbounded expense," to explain the importance of needlework, one of the many subjects taught at the boarding school (11). Because of a "series of unavoidable disasters, such as no human wisdom could foresee or prevent," Clara is reduced to "narrow circumstances" and required to ply her needle to support herself and her four young children after the untimely demise of her husband (11–12). Even for a woman not so burdened as Clara, Mrs. Williams indicates, needlework proves to be a necessary skill. The fictional example of Matilda mends her "cast-clothes" before giving them to "some poor person" (13). Her charity is increased by her use of the needle. Mrs. Williams cites classic examples of needlework from Roman times as further argument for "the honor and utility of this employment" (14).

The second skill, reading, also commands the attention of Mrs. Williams as she reviews its function in her pupils' daily lives and education. In an indirect reference to her first novel, *The Coquette,* and to published admonitions about certain reading subjects (namely, romances), Mrs. Williams warns her pupils of dangerous reading material:

> Romances, the taste of former times, are now so far out of vogue, that it is hardly necessary to warn you against them. They exhibit the spirit of chivalry, knight-errantry, and extravagant folly, which prevailed in the age they depict. But they are not interesting; nor can they be pleasing to the correct taste and refined delicacy of the present day. Novels are the favorite and most dangerous kind of reading, now adopted by the generality of young ladies. . . . Their romantic pictures of love, beauty, and magnificence, fill the imagination with ideas which lead

> to impure desires, a vanity of exterior charms, and a fondness for show and dissipation, by no means consistent with that simplicity, modesty, and chastity, which should be the constant inmates of the female breast. They often pervert the judgment, mislead the affections, and blind the understanding. (16–17)

As a testament to the dangers of unfettered imagination whetted by immoral novels, Mrs. Williams provides the cautionary tale of Julianna, a young daughter to a wealthy widower who overindulges her every whim. The fanciful tales of lovers she has read in circulating libraries directly corrupt Julianna's most critical choice of a husband. After rejecting her father's choice, Julianna finds herself swept up by a military man interested only in pursuing her patrimony. Even a brief scuffle between her father and her paramour that ends with her father's wounding is incapable of alerting Julianna to the rash nature of her choice of husband. Indeed, she becomes more resolved in her relationship with the rogue, and the two marry against her father's wishes. The loss of his daughter to a scoundrel proves too much strain for the aging father, and he soon dies, leaving the daughter a portion of his fortune, which her husband quickly spends. The moral tale of Julianna ends with the woman, abandoned and unsupported by her husband, living with her young children in squalor, clinging to a novel, and proclaiming her imagination to be her sole luxury (21).

For high-quality reading material, Mrs. Williams recommends good poetry that "soothes the jarring cares of life, and, pervades the secret recesses of the soul, serves to rouse and animate its dormant powers" (23). She also mentions "Mrs. Chapone's letters to her niece, which contain a valuable treasure of information and advice" (23). Hester Chapone was the author of two 18th-century books of advice for young women: *A Letter to a New-Married Lady* and *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady.* Mrs. Williams also advises her pupils to seek out history books because their "retrospection of events" offers a "competent acquaintance with human nature in all its modifications" (23). By reading judiciously in a variety of subjects, Mrs. Williams argues, young ladies will not only be "highly ornamental in [their] discourses with the polite and learned world," but will have skills to make them capable instructors of their own children (24, 25).

On the following morning, Mrs. Williams takes up the subject of writing, proclaiming it to be a good method for enlarging one's mental powers (27). Through writing down one's thoughts and sentiments, one is able to review one's own mind, expunge unworthy thoughts, and refine others as a means of learning more about one's self and improving one's expressions. Mrs. Williams celebrates America as a "land of liberty" that affords young women an equal opportunity to write, unshackled by "the restraints of tyrannical custom, which in many other regions confines the exertions of genius to the usurped powers of lordly man!" (28). Foster specifically mentions the epistolary form as a "happy substitute for personal conversation" and a means for writers to exchange sentiments (29). She seems to laud letter writing as an extended field of literature in which women may excel, as seems fitting given her own personal success with *The Coquette.*

Because letters will survive their author's deaths, Mrs. Williams cautions against including improper subjects in the misguided belief that they will remain secret. She provides a tale in the figures of Celia and Cecilia, two companions at a boarding school, to explain the hazards of including private sentiments or indelicate thoughts in correspondence. When Celia's male companion, Silvander, intercepts the two ladies' letters, he is "mortified, disgusted, and chagrined" to read the "illiberal wit, frothy jest, double entendres, and ridiculous love-tales" (31). As just punishment, Silvander copies entire sections of the intercepted letters and circulates them among his friends, shaming and humiliating Celia (32).

Mrs. Williams next speaks to her pupils on the absolute necessity of arithmetic. In their current single state, the girls are allotted budgets of

discretionary funds from their parents and families. Good knowledge of arithmetic, coupled with good sense, should provide the students with the necessary skills for remaining within their budgets. Further, math skills will enable them to set aside a modest amount of money to be donated to charity. In this manner, the application of arithmetic in daily life has sound moral results. In the case of a fictional character named Lucinda, prudent exercise of arithmetic skills helps to save her father's sanity, her family's welfare, and their future status. Lucinda wisely sells the family's "superfluous moveables and purchase[s] a small stock for trade" (35). Lucinda's profitable business restores the family's fallen financial state. Mrs. Williams notes that after marriage, these women will be called upon to impose "order and economy [on their] domestic affairs" (33). Thus, their education in arithmetic will have far-reaching application.

The skills acquired with boarding school extend into the arts to include music and dancing. These two talents of social refinement and accomplishment should be displayed in public gatherings but should never become sources of vanity (36). Neither, Mrs. Williams advises, should a young woman put on the "affectation of uncommon modesty or ignorance" as these are truly "ridiculous" (36–37). "How perfectly absurd," Mrs. Williams states, is the young woman who refuses an invitation to entertain with her musical talents by means of false excuses or elaborate lies (forgetting music, being out of practice, putting on false humility over the lack of one's skills). Because these affectations of modesty are intended to solicit further compliments and encouragement from members of an already solicitous audience, such pretenses do nothing more than degrade the young woman.

Musical talents, if overindulged to the detriment of other aspects of an education, have the dangerous power to "lay the mind open to many temptations, and, by nourishing a frivolous vanity, benumb the nobler powers both of reflection and action" (39). In the ruined figure of Levitia, a young woman who attempts to better her social standing through the cultivation of her musical talents, Mrs. Williams offers a cautionary tale. Employed as a "professed actress," Levitia quickly falls to the position of a "complete courtesan" because she is easily deceived by libertines and votaries who prey upon her vanity (41). Not surprisingly, her fallen status contributes directly to her mother's death and to her father's mental and financial downfall. Even though the prodigal daughter eventually returns to her paternal roof, Levitia's excessive life has ruined any chance for happiness or a return to normalcy. She lives a solitary life, "despised and avoided by all her former acquaintance" (42). In stark contrast, Mrs. Williams offers the brief image of Florella, who "is superior to the vain arts of flattery" and who wisely recognizes her musical talents as "amusements only; and assiduously cultivates the more solid branches of her education" (42). Mrs. Williams sums up her lecture on music and dancing by asking her pupils the rhetorical question, "Who would not rather be a resembler of Florella, than a vain, imprudent, and ruined Levitia?" (43).

Writing is to be a tool for moral instruction and constancy for young women after their graduation from boarding school. Mrs. Williams recommends the practice of retracing "the actions and occurrences of the day, when you retire to rest; to account with your own hearts for the use and improvement of the past hours" (45). Such a practice will lead to self-knowledge and shield women from the empty flattery of "every coxcomb" (45). The preceptress warns of worshipping beauty through the tale of Flirtilla, a beautiful young girl with a superficial and fashionable education whose "empire suddenly overturned" when she contracted smallpox (49). To prevent a horrific future like Flirtilla's, Mrs. Williams advises honest self-scrutiny and self-improvement in those areas where one finds fault (50–51).

On the subject of dress, Mrs. Williams advocates neatness and propriety, meaning that one should wear clothes in keeping with one's age and social position. She displays particular disdain for "people in dependent and narrow circumstances to imi-

tate the expensive mode of dress which might be very decent for those who move in a higher sphere" (57). She cautions against gossip, pleasure seeking that dulls the mind to the harmony of domestic cares, and idleness.

Foster concludes the novel with an ample selection of letters from the former boarding school students to each other and their beloved preceptress. Through the correspondence and critical readings of various poets, novelists, and essayists, Foster makes mention of Alexander Pope, Samuel Richardson, Oliver Goldsmith, James Thomson, and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy.* The historian Jeremy Belknap, who authored a *History of New Hampshire* as well as the first volume of the *American Biography,* and Abbe Millot, famous for *Elements of Ancient and Modern History,* likewise receive praise by Foster's preceptress. James Thomson, whose *Seasons* is repeatedly quoted throughout the novel, is also deemed a worthy poet for young women to read. One of the students, Harriet Henly, requests a recommendation from Mrs. Williams for a conduct book on matrimony and is told to read David West's *The American Spectator, or Matrimonial Preceptor* (146). Although most of the correspondents are following the moral instructions of Mrs. Williams, one figure, Clarinda, falls prey to a libertine named Florimel and soon finds herself pregnant and abandoned (166–170). Julia Greenfield writes of Clarinda's fall to Mrs. Maria Williams and is later informed in a return letter that Clarinda's tale was read aloud to the new batch of students at Harmony-Grove (the name the students affectionately gave to Mrs. Williams's boarding school) (172).

For Discussion or Writing

1. How would you compare the advice Foster offers explicitly for young women to that COTTON MATHER provides in his *Bonifacius*?
2. The young women addressed in *The Boarding School* are expected to have studied a certain number of subjects and to have acquired a certain number of skills. What kind of social expectations does the education outlined in *The Boarding School* imagine for young women in 18th-century America?
3. Compare the authors praised in *The Boarding School* with the kind of education advocated for women in Susanna Haswell Rowson's work.

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON FOSTER AND HER WORK

1. Foster's works provide contemporary readers with insights into the 18th-century American domestic scene. We become privy to the expectations society placed on young girls and women. On the basis of your reading of Foster, provide a detailed description of the ideal woman in 18th-century American society and explain why each of the characteristics or qualities you include is important.
2. *The Coquette* was a best-selling seduction novel, especially 30 years after its publication. In the fall of Eliza Wharton, readers are made patently aware of what not to do in order to preserve their status, respect, and chance for abiding love. Similarly, *The Boarding School* details the moral fall of Clarinda to a diabolical Florimel. By including two tales of seduction and moral ruin in her texts, Foster focuses a significant amount of attention on this subject. Is her point that young women are susceptible to seduction or that young men have a proclivity for it?

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Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

I began to suspect that this Doctrine, tho' it might be true, was not very useful.

(*The Autobiography*)

Benjamin Franklin, in the words of his biographer Carl Van Doren, was a "harmonious human multitude." As Van Doren's assessment suggests, Franklin's life and work are at once difficult and simple to summarize. On the one hand, his multitude of contributions to the worlds of printing, journalism, literature, science, and politics defy brief summary. On the other hand, these many accomplishments were in harmony with one another, sharing a common theme of human progress through human initiative. More than any other American, Franklin personified the age of Enlightenment, a time when humans were growing more aware of their world and inventing ways to control it for their benefit.

His Enlightenment perspective shines through his literature, which includes some of the most important works to appear in America in the 18th century. Over more than six decades, he produced an enormous and varied body of work, including the best-selling *Poor Richard's Almanack,* literary hoaxes such as "A Witch Trial at Mount Holly" and "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker," satires such as "An Edict by the King of Prussia," humorous sketches such as "The Ephemera" and "The Elysian Fields," and informational pieces such as "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America," as well as countless news articles, letters, scientific reports, and proposals related to civic affairs. His masterpiece, *The Autobiography,* is one of the classic books of American literature.

Although he eventually would be strongly associated with Philadelphia, Franklin began his life in Boston, where he was born on January 17, 1706. He entered a large family, which included his father, Josiah Franklin, and his mother, Abiah Folger Franklin, as well as 11 siblings. His father, who made soap and sold candles for a living, hoped that his youngest son would enter a religious profession and sent him to grammar school when he was eight years old. His father changed his mind, however, and moved Benjamin to George Brownell's English school during the 1715–16 academic year. When he was 10 years old, Benjamin left school for good after only two years and went to work in his father's shop. The work, however, did not agree with him, and his father set out to help his son choose a different trade. Finally, at the age of 12, he became an apprentice in his brother James Franklin's print shop, where he would work for several years. When he was not setting type or doing other work in the shop, young Franklin was reading, sometimes deep into the night. He took a special interest in the witty, satirical essays he found in a popular English periodical, the *Spectator.* In an effort to improve his own writing, he sometimes read the essays, noted the basic ideas in the sentences, and then attempted to rewrite them in his own words. In 1722, when he was 16 years old, he wrote a series of satirical essays under the pseudonym *Silence Dogood* and secretly slipped them under the door of his brother's shop.

These essays made their way into his brother's newspaper, the *New-England Courant,* and were among Franklin's first published works.

The two brothers' relationship was a tense one, however, and Benjamin decided to break his indenture. In 1723, when he was 17, he left his job and family in Boston, going by boat first to New York and then to Philadelphia, where he landed with a handful of change and no connections. His entry into Philadelphia would become one of the most famous episodes in his autobiography. "I was in my working Dress, my best Cloaths being to come round by Sea," Franklin wrote. "I was dirty from my Journey; my Pockets were stuff'd out with Shirts & Stockings; I knew no Soul nor where to look for Lodging. I was fatigu'd with Travelling, Rowing, & Want of Rest. I was very hungry, and my whole Stock of Cash consisted of a Dutch Dollar, and about a shilling in Copper."

From such humble origins, Franklin perhaps had little reason to think that he would become famous and wealthy. He was, however, a man of means. Over the next several years, as he worked for various businesses in Philadelphia and England, he studied human nature and mastered the means of achieving success. When, for example, he refused to pay a fee he found unfair—and consequently found his work sabotaged—he changed his mind and paid the fee, "convinc'd of the Folly of being on ill Terms with those one is to live with continually." In short, Franklin was a model of practicality, a theme nicely summed up in his evaluation of deism, a religious philosophy he had adopted as an adolescent: "I began to suspect that this Doctrine tho' it might be true, was not very useful."

In 1728, Franklin and an associate, Hugh Meredith, started a printing house of their own in Philadelphia. Meredith would leave the business within a few years, but Franklin's printing establishment eventually became the most successful in the colonies. Over the next two decades, the firm published 432 broadsides, pamphlets, and books, including *The Psalms of David* (1729), antislavery pamphlets by John Woolman and other Quakers, and JONATHAN EDWARDS's *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1742). In 1744, he reprinted Samuel Richardson's *Pamela,* thus becoming the first printer to publish a novel in the colonies. A translation of Cicero's *Cato Major,* which Franklin published the same year, has been called "the most beautiful example of the colonial printer's art" (Green 270). Franklin also became a force in colonial printing, supporting a number of other printers, influencing others' practices and principles, and making significant improvements in the printing press (Green 271; Tebbel 104). He retired from printing in 1748 when he was 41, but he would long identify himself with the trade. Years later, writing his autobiography, he sometimes slipped into the language of printing, referring to mistakes he made during his life as *errata,* the printer's term for errors in a published document.

Even while he was becoming the leading printer of colonial America, he also was becoming one of its leading journalists. In 1729, a year after he and Meredith went into business, Franklin began publishing a newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette,* which he had bought from his former employer, Samuel Keimer. In an age when more than half of newspapers failed within two years, Franklin's *Gazette* not only survived, but succeeded brilliantly (Emery and Emery 51). Calling it "the best newspaper in the American colonies," journalism historians Edwin and Michael Emery note that the *Pennsylvania Gazette* "had the largest circulation, most pages, highest advertising revenue, most literate columns, and liveliest comment of any paper in the area" (Emery and Emery 44). Much of this success may have grown out of Franklin's own journalistic instincts. As a reporter, he wrote cogent "straight" news stories on crimes, acts of nature, and other subjects. He also had what the journalism historian Frank Luther Mott has called "a lively news sense for the unusual and interesting," and his paper sometimes featured what modern journalists call "brights"—quirky stories intended to entertain readers. On October 16, 1729, he reported: "And sometime last Week, we are informed, that one Piles a Fidler, with his Wife, were overset in a Canoo near Newtown Creek. The good Man, 'tis said, prudently secur'd his Fiddle, and let his Wife go to the Bottom."

Franklin and journalism were a good match. "Journalism," his biographer Esmond Wright explains, "was, in Franklin's day, the career before all others that offered opportunity to enterprise and imagination" (18). Franklin's career as a printer and a journalist provided him with a venue for both his ambitious sense of enterprise and his lively imagination. In the *Gazette*, he published scores of his own essays and sketches on a wide range of topics, including health care, defense, business, drinking, religion, marriage, and virtue, often using a pen name, such as *Anthony Afterwit* or *Obadiah Plainman*. Some of these writings, such as "Apology for Printers" (1731) and "On Protection of Towns from Fires" (1735), were serious discussions of civic affairs. Others—such as "The Art of Saying Little in Much" (1736), which features a parody of legal prose, and "The Drinker's Dictionary" (1737)—were lighter fare. He also published writings, including "Essay on Paper-Currency, Proposing a New Method for Fixing Its Value" (1741), in his *General Magazine*. He occasionally published writings in other periodicals as well. Before acquiring the *Gazette,* he published a string of satirical essays, known as the Busy-Body series, in the *American Mercury.* His most famous sketch from this time, "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker," appeared in a London periodical, the *General Advertiser,* in 1747. From his press issued his greatest commercial success, *Poor Richard's Almanack,* later known as *Poor Richard Improved,* which appeared annually from 1732 until 1758. A compilation of information on astronomy, weather, and other matters, along with clever and amusing aphorisms, this book became one of the period's best sellers.

As Franklin's writings on money and fire prevention suggest, Franklin was heavily involved in the civic life of his community at this time. In 1727, he formed a group of Philadelphia men, many of them also tradesmen, who could benefit themselves and their community through conversations. Members of this group, called the Junto or the Leather Apron Club, gathered on Fridays and discussed matters of business and society. In "Rules for a Club Formerly Established in Philadelphia," written around 1732, Franklin lists some of the questions for discussion, including "4. Have you lately heard of any citizen's thriving well, and by what means?" and "15. Have you lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?" Franklin's Junto nicely demonstrates one of the central tenets of his Enlightenment perspective—that is, that humans can greatly improve themselves and their world through collaboration. "The Junto," his biographer Leo Lemay notes, "served as the incubation chamber for several public projects" (338). One of these projects was the first subscription library in the colonies, the Library Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1731. In these early decades of his life, Franklin also played important roles, partly through his writing, in the formation of a fire department, a night watch, a hospital, and the University of Pennsylvania.

As were many young men, Franklin was carving out his identity as a public person at the same time that he was facing momentous developments in his personal life. In 1730, he entered into a common-law marriage with Deborah Read Rogers, whose first husband had abandoned her. In his autobiography, written years later, Franklin recalled that his future wife had witnessed his humble entry into Philadelphia as a boy of 17 and must have found him a "ridiculous" sight. Together with Franklin's illegitimate son, William, born to another woman around 1729, the couple lived in a house on Market Street in Philadelphia. In 1732, Deborah gave birth to their first child, Francis. They would lose this son to smallpox in 1736. They had one other child, Sarah, or "Sally," born in 1743. Franklin's marriage to Deborah would last until her death in 1774, although they spent many years apart, as she never accompanied him to England, where he lived from 1757 to 1762 and from 1764 to 1775.

In 1748, at the age of 41, Franklin retired from printing. For two decades—from the establishment of his partnership with Meredith in 1728 to his transfer of the business to a new partner, David Hall—his press had provided him with publicity for his writings, a voice in civic affairs, and support for his growing family. Now it was about to give him something else: freedom. Thanks to the success of his printing business, Franklin was now

a wealthy man and did not need to devote time to making a living. As Franklin explained years later in his autobiography, his retirement gave him the leisure to pursue his interest in science.

As Philip Dray notes in *Stealing God's Thunder,* Franklin had a "life-long fascination" with science. Good Enlightenment thinker that he was, he continually observed the workings of nature and, in some cases, developed ways of controlling it. Even before his retirement, he had found time to invent, in 1741, the Pennsylvania fireplace, or Franklin stove, which could heat a room efficiently while restricting smoke from entering it; two years later, he made an important discovery concerning the movement of storms in the Northeast. Around this same time, he became fascinated with the study of electricity, then still a novelty. People knew it existed and observed it, even using it to perform tricks, but no one completely understood it. Franklin, as did Abbe Jean-Antoine Nollet and other contemporaries in France and England, began developing experiments with Leyden jars and other equipment to study this magical phenomenon. He reported on his work in *Experiments and Observations on Electricity,* published in 1751.

In 1752, in what would become the most celebrated incident in his life, he set out to test his hypothesis that lightning was a form of electricity. With the help of his son, William, he flew a kite equipped with a pointed piece of wire in stormy weather and felt a shock when he put his hand in range of a key attached to the string. His hypothesis validated, Franklin continued studying electricity and eventually invented a device that would change the world. Almost comically simple, yet revolutionary in its effects, the lightning rod provided Franklin's contemporaries with a means of preventing the fires often caused by lightning strikes. Perhaps even more significant was the psychological effect of the invention; as Dray points out, Franklin had unveiled one of nature's greatest enigmas and most threatening forces (82). His work in electricity made Franklin, already a mover and shaker in Philadelphia, an international celebrity. He received the Copley Medal from the Royal Society of London in 1753 and became, as the historian Gordon Wood notes, "the most famous American in the world" (66).

Franklin's contributions to science and technology continued long after his triumph in electricity. In 1761, he invented a musical instrument called the armonica, which became a sensation in Europe; both Mozart and Beethoven composed music for it. In 1768, he mapped the Gulf Stream, and, in 1784, he invented bifocals. Believing that inventions should serve one's fellow humans, Franklin refused to secure patents on any of his inventions and thus forfeited untold income from his ideas. In a way that almost seems scripted, Franklin's successes in printing and science contributed to his successes in yet another field, politics, to which he would devote much of his time and energy in the third major phase of his adult life. In 1751, he won election to the Pennsylvania Assembly, where he would serve until 1764. As joint deputy postmaster for the colonies from 1753 until 1774, he introduced important developments in the postal system, including home delivery and improved efficiency (Isaacson 157). In 1754, he proposed the Albany Plan of Union, an early plan for uniting the English colonies in North America.

His greatest political triumphs, however, lay ahead. In the 1760s, Franklin watched the growth of tensions between England and its American colonies. As Gordon Wood has shown in *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin,* Franklin, who loved England, initially played the role of peacemaker, trying to resolve the tensions and prevent a break. Nevertheless, he found fault with England's government of the colonies and, in 1773, aired his grievances in two of his best-known satires, "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" and "Edict by the King of Prussia." These sketches, which were frequently reprinted, helped to create a rift between Franklin and England, which removed him from his office as deputy postmaster in 1774 (Lebaree 390). The onetime peacemaker was now, in Wood's words, "a passionate patriot, more passionate in fact than nearly all the other patriot leaders" (Wood 151). In 1775, he

represented Pennsylvania in the Second Continental Congress; the following year, he collaborated with THOMAS JEFFERSON and others on the Declaration of Independence. Later that year, Congress sent him to France to seek assistance in the war effort. There, the fame Franklin had achieved as a writer and a scientist worked to his advantage. As Wood has noted, Franklin, by helping to secure an alliance with France in 1778, helped the colonies win a war they otherwise might have lost (196). Although he helped the colonies win the war, Franklin suffered a painful loss of his own. In siding with the Loyalists, William Franklin alienated his father, and their once-close relationship dissolved. They would never effect a complete reconciliation.

Before the break, however, Franklin's relationship with his only living son had helped to inspire his greatest literary achievement. In 1771, he began writing his autobiography, which he addressed to William. At separate stages over the next two decades, Franklin continued his life story, which would become a classic of American literature. He died before finishing it, writing the last installment in 1790. In this last stage of his life, he wrote other important works, as well. To entertain some of his French friends, he wrote a series of brief, witty sketches, which he called *bagatelles.* Two of the best known of these works are "The Ephemera" (1778) and "The Elysian Fields" (1778).

In 1785, after nine years in France, Franklin returned to what was now, thanks largely to his efforts, an independent nation, the United States of America. He helped to shape what that nation would become, serving as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Two years later, he wrote the first remonstrance against slavery to be addressed to Congress. By this time, however, he was suffering from poor health, plagued by both gout and kidney stones. Finally, on April 17, 1790, he died at his home in Philadelphia at the age of 84.

He left a legacy of diverse, yet harmonious accomplishments, held together by a common thread. In the aphorisms of Poor Richard and the lessons of his autobiography, in his invention of the Franklin stove and the lightning rod, in his establishment of the Junto and the Library Company, and in other words and actions, we see a commitment to the principles of the Enlightenment. His pragmatism, furthermore, has become a touchstone of American values—for better or worse. Although some have celebrated Franklin and his accomplishments, others have found him opportunistic, materialistic, even simplistic. D. H. Lawrence, for example, complained that Franklin oversimplified human psychology: "Why, the soul of man is a vast forest," Lawrence declares in *Studies in Classic American Literature,* "and all Benjamin intended was a neat back garden" (52). Detractors aside, Franklin remains one of the most successful and diverse men in American history. He was indisputably the country's greatest printer, as well as one of its most successful journalists. In the field of science, he made important contributions to the study of electricity. As a founding father, he was instrumental in the cause of independence. Throughout these various careers, he wrote, producing an astounding number of news articles, essays, satires, sketches, hoaxes, proposals, observations, reports, aphorisms, bagatelles, and letters, as well as an autobiography that has become a classic of world literature. Indeed, Franklin's literature may be his most enduring legacy. More than two centuries after his death, his words continue to enlighten.

Mark Canada

Poor Richard's Almanac (1732–1757)

As a genre, almanacs were popular in America, containing information ranging from the names of rulers in Europe to the dates for fairs and road books with descriptions of locations where travelers could stay along their journeys. When Franklin began writing his own almanac under the pseudonym *Richard Saunders,* he was 26 years old. He was more financially set than he had previously been because he had recently paid off his debts, and he and his wife had opened a shop in Philadelphia near the marketplace. From 1632 to 1657, for 25 years, Franklin wrote and refined his *Almanac.*

Its prominence is gauged by the critic Van Wyck Brooks not only by its presence in one out of every 100 households, but also by its popularity in France, Scotland, England, and Ireland. One of its most prominent articles, "The Way to Wealth," was translated into a significant number of languages: Russian, Chinese, Catalan, Gaelic, Polish, Bohemian, and Welsh (ix).

In its first installation, in 1733, Franklin introduces his readers to the fictional author and his wife, a "good woman" who is "excessive proud" and unable to "bear, she says, to sit spinning in her Shift of Tow, while [Poor Richard] do[es] nothing but gaze at the Stars" (3). Thus, Franklin considers the *Almanac* as a financial necessity that allows him to escape from his wife's admonitions and her threats to "burn all [his] books and rattling-traps (as she calls [his] instruments)" (3). Poor Richard's wife, both her mood and her wardrobe, become indications of the success of the *Almanac*. In 1734, Poor Richard proudly and appreciatively informs his "courteous readers" that his wife now owns her own pot, a pair of shoes, and two petticoats and that he himself is now the owner of a secondhand coat (13).

His first edition also includes an indirect attack upon his competition, a man named Mr. Titan Leeds, who in his 1734 *American Almanac* claims to "have supplied his country with almanacks for *thirty seven* years by past, to general satisfaction" (297). Franklin takes Leeds as a friend to his fictional Poor Richard and claims that at Leeds's request, Poor Richard has calculated that Leeds will die on October 17, 1733, at 3:29 P.M. (3–4). Naturally, his friend disputes this calculation and believes that he will survive until October 26 (4). This thread of the narrative for his fictional author is carried through in the following year, 1734, when Poor Richard states, "I cannot at this present writing positively assure my readers; forasmuch as a disorder in my own family demanded my presence, and would not permit me as I had intended, to be with his in his last moments" (13–14). Despite the lack of eyewitness account of Mr. Leeds's death at either of the predicted times and days, Richard assures readers that he must be dead because "there appears in his name, as I am assured, an almanack for the year 1734, in which I am treated in a very gross and unhandsome manner," and "Mr. Leeds was too well bred to use any man so indecently" (14). Leeds himself clearly felt compelled to respond to Poor Richard's prediction, for in his own 1734 edition of the *American Almanac,* Leeds blasts Poor Richard as a "Fool and a liar," "a conceited scribbler" whose "false prediction" is proven false by the author's ability to survive the predicted date of his demise (297). Leeds signs and dates the time of his writing as further proof of Poor Richard's inaccurate prediction, but more importantly of Leeds's own inability to recognize Franklin's prank.

Indeed, the following year, 1735, Leeds and Poor Richard addressed one another in the introductions of their volumes once again. Poor Richard writes, "There is no harmony among the star-gazers; but they are perpetually growling and snarling at one another like strange curs or like some men at their wives" (25). In essence, Franklin chides Leeds for his inability to take a joke and expresses his own weariness that his prank has been taken so seriously for so long. Accordingly, Poor Richard lampoons the very talent Leeds claims to have—the gift of prognostication. Surely, Poor Richard writes, this ability to predict the future is infallible; thus Leeds must have died at the precise date and time Poor Richard calculated. As further proof of Leeds's death, Poor Richard points readers to the current state of Leeds's *American Almanack*: "The wit is low and flat, the little hints dull and spiritless, nothing smart in them" (26). Poor Richard concludes, "No man living would or could write such stuff as the rest" (26).

When Leeds actually passed away in 1740, Poor Richard felt the need to address the issue, first by reminding readers of the initial mention of Leeds in the 1734 preface, and then by incorporating a series of letters exchanged by the two men. As Poor Richard insists that Leeds actually died in October 1733, as Richard predicted, he accounts for the mysterious appearance of these letters by stating

that they were on his desk when he awoke from a dream while writing the current (1740) preface. In a letter written from the grave, Leeds apologizes to Richard for the "aspersions thrown on you by the malevolence of avaricious publishers of almanacks who envy your success" (76). Leeds confirms Poor Richard's calculation of his death but rectifies the exact time by five minutes and 53 seconds (76). He also explains his ability to write a letter to Poor Richard from beyond the grave, stating, "No separate spirits are under any confinement till after the final settlement of all accounts" (76). Considering the rectifying of Poor Richard's good name an essential duty, Leeds "entered [Poor Richard's] left nostril, ascended to [his] brain, found out where the ends of those nerves were fastened that move [Richard's] right hand and fingers, by the help of which he is writing" (76). Leeds's ghost further pledges Richard additional glimpses of the future and offers as proof of his gift for prediction knowledge that an old friend will remain sober for nine hours, to the astonishment of his friends (76–77).

Franklin did not treat all fellow almanac writers as he did Leeds. In 1747, Franklin paid homage to the passing of Mr. Jacob Taylor, "who for upwards of forty years supplied the good people of this and neighboring colonies with the most complete ephemeris and most accurate calculations that have hitherto appeared in America" (137). Franklin further praises Taylor as "an ingenious mathematician as well as an expert and skillful astronomer" (137). In contrast to Franklin's cavalier and somewhat cruel treatment of Leeds, readers may recognize in his kind words for Taylor an indictment of the kinds of predictions offered by Leeds. Note that Leeds attempts astrological predictions according to the zodiac calendar, similar to today's horoscopes, while Taylor knew the dates of the winter and summer solstice (the shortest and longest days of the year, respectively). As a logician himself, Franklin naturally would frown upon Leeds's form of predictions and applaud Taylor's, which were reckoned through mathematics and astronomy charts.

As for the content of the *Almanack,* the first edition contains many of the elements common to the genre: cycles of the moon and other factual information. The contents that distinguish Franklin's *Almanack* from others include his aphorisms, or witty sayings, that are displayed in terse two-line phrases or else are presented in short, one-stanza poems. Critics have noted that some of these clever proverbs reappear in subsequent years and that others are not originally Franklin's, but are borrowed from the British writers Alexander Pope and John Dryden, the French writers François Rabelais and François de La Rochefoucauld, and classical Latin writers such as Horace (viii). Franklin pokes fun at his own talents as a poet in the preface of his 1747 volume: "If thou hast judgment in poetry, thou wilt easily discern the workman from the bungler. I know as well as thee, that I am no poet born; and it is a trade I never learnt nor indeed could learn" (136). As for his use of other writers' works, Franklin states, "'Tis methinks a poor excuse for the bad entertainment of guests that the food we set before them, though coarse and ordinary, is of one's own raising, off one's own plantation when there is plenty of what is ten times better to be had in the market" (137).

Common topics involve the power struggle between husbands and wives, the need to moderate one's consumption of food and drink, a general dislike and distrust of lawyers, the perpetual struggle between the wealthy and the poor, and the value of friendship. His rhetorical image of Poor Richard's wife, whose carping is the reason he begins the enterprise of the almanac in the first place, becomes a recurring theme in his sayings, such as "I know not which lives more unnatural lives / obeying husbands, or commanding wives" (142). One of his most famous sayings that still circulates is "Fish and visitors stink in three days." Franklin also makes use of a classical form known as *antimetabole,* which is a purposeful inversion of the order of two nouns in a two-line phrase, such as "Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep you" and "A brother may not be a friend, but a friend will always be a brother."

Regarding the almanac's traditional role of offering predictions regarding weather so that

farmers may consult them for their various agricultural cycles, Franklin writes, tongue in cheek, in his address to readers of the 1753 volume that his predictions of "snow, rain, hail, heat, frost, fogs, wind, or thunder, may not be "what comes to pass punctually and precisely on the very day, [but] in some place or other on this little diminutive globe of ours" (213). For those who might wish for weather predictions to be more precise for the British colonies, Franklin demurs, insisting that the "matter of the weather, which is of general concern, I would have it more extensively useful, and therefore take in both hemispheres" (213). In his preface to the 1756 volume, Franklin hastens to inform readers that although he has prepared information on the weather along with "other astronomical curiosities," his hope lies in the belief that readers have recognized his "view to the improvement of thy mind and thy estate," which appears manifest in "moral hints, wise sayings, and maxims of thrift, tending to impress the benefits arising from honesty, sobriety, industry, and frugality" (245).

Franklin's advice and informational columns also run along the lines of the practical and the topical. He draws upon his own expertise in the 1753 volume, namely, with the understanding that lightning is indeed a form of electricity, his famous discovery while flying a kite during a thunderstorm. With his own knowledge of electricity, he offers readers practical advice on fashioning a lightning rod and thus securing their homes from lightning (223–224). He offers a concise history of the reckoning of the calendar from Egyptian times and differentiates between Roman and Julian calendars (202–203). His preface to the 1748 volume contains a detailed account from Captain Middleton of the Royal Society of winters in current-day Canada, including such practical information as how to season beef, pork, mutton, and venison so as to store it for the winter, and how to dress for more brutal winter weather (143–146).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Drawing from one of the topics commonly considered by Poor Richard (friendship, the need for moderation, or the relationships between the rich and the poor), try to write your own sage piece of advice using a few of the formats Franklin employs (antimetabole, aphorism, or one-stanza poem).
2. Examine four or five of Franklin's saying and explain their application in today's society.
3. Compare the aims of Franklin's *Autobiography* with those of *Poor Richard's Almanack*. How does his desire to educate the populace in the right ways of thinking and acting correspond with the objectives of a religious figure such as COTTON MATHER?

"The Way to Wealth" (1757)

Also known as "Poor Richard Improved" and "Father Abraham's Speech," Franklin's essay first appeared in the 25th-anniversary issue of *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Resuming the voice of Father Abraham, Franklin opens with a mock address to the reader in which he boasts of his popularity among the people. Although he does not "find his works respectfully quoted by other learned authors," he has "frequently heard one of other of [his] adages repeated" in daily conversations. By contrasting his reception in the two social circles, Father Abraham is squarely placed as a man with homespun knowledge whose adages are heeded and repeated among the masses.

The setting for this particular essay is a gathering of people "at a Vendue of Merchant Goods," waiting for the hour of sale to arrive. As they wait, the people begin to inquire of Father Abraham, described as a "plain clean old Man, with white locks," about the timely issues of taxes and general advice on financial matters. Once Father Abraham opens his mouth, Poor Richard takes over as all the old gentleman states are adages and pithy quotations from another of Franklin's personae. Taken together, the advice falls into a few categories: frugality, industry, and prudence. Through the double guises of Poor Richard and Father Abraham, Franklin advises the people at the Vendue against

living beyond one's means, such as making extravagant purchases "for the sake of finery."

As the critic Edward Gallagher points out, the impact of the essay results from its unlikely conclusion. Despite the string of approximately 100 proverbs and aphorisms, "the people heard it, and approved the doctrine, and immediately practiced the contrary." The sudden reversal, Gallagher believes, "was designed to shock, surprise, and consequently involve the reader with the thematic issues of the speech" (483). Initially, like Poor Richard, the readers were witnesses to Father Abraham's advice. Once the people act in defiance of the advice and begin their purchases, the recipient of his wisdom falls on Poor Richard, who we learn was at the Vendue to buy material for a new coat. When Richard heeds the sage advice and turns away from the Vendue, the reader recognizes the indirect indictment of the people's foolishness. This, for Gallagher, constitutes the second climax of the essay (484). The real challenge in the essay is in its final line, where the reader is directly addressed: "Reader, if thou wilt do the same, thy profit will be as great as mine." The irony of Richard's being affected by his own words echoes the opening of the essay, where he tells of quoting himself.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How do the tone and structure of Franklin's advice in this essay compare to those of Cotton Mather in "Bonifacius"? How do the two depict their readers?
2. In the final paragraph, Franklin presents a brief homage to Judith Sargent Murray, whom he met and to whose writings, under the pseudonym The Gleaner, he subscribed. In what ways might this essay speak to Murray and her own writings?

"An Edict by the King of Prussia" (1773)

Written in 1773, just prior to the American Revolution, Franklin's clever hoax of the British suffering taxation at the hands of Prussia places the British in the current position occupied by the American colonists. The essay mimics the legalistic language common to edicts and other legislative acts, with phrases like "We do therefore hereby ordain and command" and "We do therefore hereby farther ordain." In enumerating the reasons for this tax on all trade to and from Great Britain, the "King of Prussia" lists Prussia's aid in the war against France, which enabled England to "make conquests from the said power in America."

The edict also includes a ban on all manufacturing of iron in Great Britain, against the presumptuous notion of the island that "they had a natural right to make the best use they could of the natural productions of their country for their own benefit." The extreme nature of this particular ban is demonstrated in the lengthy descriptions Franklin provides: "No mill or other engine for slitting or rolling of iron, or any plating forge to work with a tilt-hammer, or any furnace for making steel, shall be erected or continued in the said island."

An additional ban is placed on wool and all wool products in order that Prussia might dominate in "the raising of wool in our antient dominions." Just as with the ban on iron production, the detailing of the forbidden items adds to the ridiculous nature of such legislation: "worsted-bay, or woolen-yarn, cloth, says, bays, kerseys, serges, frizes, druggets, cloth-serges, shalloons, or any other drapery stuffs, or woolen manufactures whatsoever." In answer to the anticipated question of what the colonists will do with their current supply of wool, the king suggests that "our loving subjects . . . use all their wool as manure for the improvement of their lands."

To further the point made in his commentary on the edict that England "treat[s] its own children in a manner so arbitrary and tyrannical," Franklin includes hats, whose "art and mystery of making" have been perfected in Prussia, as an additional item restrained in Great Britain. Not only will those involved in the transport of such contraband be charged a penalty, but the vehicle employed in the transport, be it a "vessel, cart, carriage, or horse," shall also be forfeited.

Finally, the edict ends with a proclamation that all criminals—and again Franklin follows with a laundry list of the various crimes they may have committed—will be thrown out of their jail cells and sent to the "said Island of Great Britain for the better peopling of that country."

The final word, however, is from Franklin, who removes the mask of the King of Prussia to reveal "these regulations are copied from Acts of the English Parliament respecting their colonies." He declares the notion "impossible" as he cannot conscience that a "people distinguished for their love of liberty" should behave in such a "mean and injudicious" manner.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Just as in "The Way to Wealth," Franklin reserves the real message of his essay until its conclusion. Consider the reason for this rhetorical decision, and its effects in the two essays.
2. Franklin's essay appeared in a London newspaper while the statesman was visiting England. He reports that his host, Lord Le Despencer, at first believed the essay and later attributed it to "your American jokes upon us." Consider how this essay's intended audience shapes its content.

"Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" (1773)

Franklin dedicated this pamphlet, which appeared on the eve of the American Revolution, to Lord Hillsborough, British secretary for colonial affairs. It provides the "ministers who have the management of extensive dominions" with a step-by-step set of instructions on how to decrease this "troublesome" burden, and thus liberate more time for "fiddling," by reducing the empire. The common themes reemerging in the pamphlet involve taxation without representation, the inflated salaries and general dispositions of colonial authorities, and the legal system to which the colonists are subject.

Before helping to secure an alliance with France in 1778, Franklin put his pen to work to express the sentiments of the colonists. In this sketch, published in the *Public Advertiser* in 1773, Franklin provides a list of 20 actions that a large empire, such as England, can take to alienate its colonists, foment a rebellion, and ultimately reduce its size. Number 11 of these actions, for example, reads, "To make your Taxes more odious, and more likely to procure Resistance, send from the Capital a Board of Officers to superintend the Collection, composed of the most *indiscreet, ill-bred* and *insolent* you can find."

"Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" belongs to the genre of satire. A favorite form for 18th-century writers such as Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, satire involves ridicule of someone or something—a person, for example, or an institution. In this case, the target of Franklin's satire is the English government. As does the Declaration of Independence, which Franklin helped to write three years later, this sketch delineates England's transgressions against its colonies. Instead of taking a straightforward approach of simply naming these transgressions, as the Declaration of Independence does, this satire employs irony, a common ingredient of satire. Irony always involves some kind of contrast; in this case, Franklin implies that the English leaders wish to turn their "Great Empire" into a "Small One," when he knows very well that they do not. As is often the case with irony, the effect is humor.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare this satirical sketch with the Declaration of Independence. What do the two works have in common? How are they different? Why do you think that Franklin chose this satirical technique to criticizing England's behavior?
2. Imagine that you are an English authority. Write your own set of "rules" in which you satirize the colonists' behavior.
3. Franklin's pamphlet was preceded by the Stamp Act, which was passed in 1765, and followed by the Intolerable Acts of 1774. Research these

particular acts to see how they are reflected in his 20 steps Britain can take to incite revolution in the American colonies.

"The Ephemera, an Emblem of Human Life" (1778)

While in France under the duty of a commissioner sent by Congress to obtain aid from that country, Franklin stayed in the village of Passy, outside Paris. There, he met the accomplished woman Madame Brillon, with whom he would maintain a lifelong friendship that culminated in a failed attempt to wed her daughter, Cungonde, to his son, William. "The Ephemera" is addressed to Mme Brillon, who is identified in the opening sentence as "my dear friend," and as "the ever amiable Brillante" in the closing one.

Franklin opens the piece with a scene of the two taking part in a walk in which they are introduced to a "kind of little fly, called an ephemera," who "were bred and expired within the day." Staying behind to observe some of these flies upon a leaf, Franklin, who credits himself with proficiency in "all the inferior animal tongues," listens in on their debate regarding the merit of two foreign musicians. He muses that they must live under such a just and mild government to be able to engage in any topic, such as music. He then turns his attention to a solitary fly, "an old grey-headed one" who was speaking to himself, and diverts the rest of the piece to the fly's soliloquy.

This great philosophizing fly, who has outlived generations, a full "four hundred and twenty minutes of time," opines on the future of his "present race of ephemerae" after his inevitable death. Not only will he not live long enough to enjoy the honeydew he has amassed on his leaf, but he wonders about the future of his political struggles and philosophical studies. Mocking the millennial and apocalyptic views held by many, Franklin's elderly fly wonders, "What will become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself even the whole Moulin Joly, shall come to its end, and be buried in universal ruin?" The ironic treatment of such dire predictions and views of the world is best expressed through the viewpoint of an ephemera, who considers Moulin Joly to be the world, and the sun's departure from the sky to signal "universal death and destruction."

Franklin dismisses the elderly fly's proclamations of doom to frame the tale with his own voice: "To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain, but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemerae, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable Brillante."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Historians note Franklin's initial flirtation with Madame Brillon. In what ways does this piece function as a love letter?
2. As a statesman, inventor, and founding father of the United States, Franklin was certainly an accomplished man with a legacy well intact. How might you judge his final statement in the piece regarding his greatest pleasures in life? Does he merely strip one facade in the piece (the fly's perspective) to offer yet another one?
3. In its own way, "Ephemera" offers wisdom through observations in nature, a trait shared by the poetry of William Cullen Bryant and Philip Morin Freneau. Selecting one poem from either poet, compare it to Franklin's "Ephemera." Do the writers reach similar conclusions, despite differences in format? Or do the different forms create different lessons or conclusions?

"Information to Those Who Would Remove to America" (1782)

Franklin's essay reads like an advertisement tract for emigration to America and, in its celebration of industry and frugality in its citizenry, an indirect indictment of the staid aristocratic societies still reigning in Europe. The essay promises to dispel potential emigrants' "mistaken ideas and expectations [of] what is to be obtained" in North

America. Thus, Franklin begins not with the glowing qualities of America, but rather with the criticisms launched against it from Europe, with which Franklin would be all too familiar, having traveled extensively in France and England. Chief among these critiques was a lack of sustained cultural history, which would produce fine works of arts and science, and of an aristocratic class whose ancestors were connected to royalty through marriage and bloodlines. In the supposed absence of any symbols of culture, then, Europe imagines that "strangers of birth must be greatly respected," along with those "possessing talents in the belles-lettres, fine arts, etc." Additional misconceptions arise from the country's colonial past, which paid for transportation to emigrants and provided them with land in the hopes of populating the new world. Franklin chalks all of these notions to products of a "wild imagination."

He begins his characterization of America's positive attributes by mentioning the difference in governments: America has civil offices that are "not so profitable as to make [them] desirable," unlike Europe, which is overburdened with "superfluous ones." In this initial point of comparison, Franklin sets the tone for the rest of the essay: America appears as a spacious nation filled with hearty, industrious workers who value utilitarianism, while Europe seems incapable of caring for its own people in terms of work and land and mistakenly values other instances of superfluousness. Rather than inquiring of a person's heritage, Franklin notes, in America they ask of his usefulness, his skill. Thus, the privilege afforded by heredity in Europe is replaced by a respect and admiration for industriousness. Franklin jokes that emigrants might seek the aid of a genealogist to prove their relation to "ploughmen" rather than to royalty.

After identifying America as "the land of labor," Franklin details the kind of laborers who would thrive on American soil: those who "understand the husbandry of corn and cattle"; those who can build houses, furniture, and utensils; and those willing to apprentice as servants of journeymen. He also argues that morally Americans are more sound and less prone to vice because of their industry and constant employment.

Finally, Franklin recommends that all potential emigrants read the Constitution, adding that it has been published in London and, in a "good translation" into French, in Paris as well.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Franklin's essay to John Smith's promotional tract or the first book of Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*. To what extent do the writers base their depictions of America on negative images of Britain or Europe in general? What values emerge as desirable in an emigrant?
2. Which aspects of North America does Franklin focus on and celebrate and why? What aspects of the nation does he ignore or misrepresent?

"Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" (1784)

Franklin begins this essay by noting the influence of cultural perspective on coloring one's view of another culture: "Savages we call them, because their manners differ from ours, which we think the perfection of civility; they think the same of theirs." As case in point, Franklin points to the differences of opinion regarding what constitutes an education that erupted during the Treaty of Lancaster in 1744. When members of the Six Nations were offered the chance to have a half-dozen of their young men educated at the college in Williamsburg, the tribal members responded with gratitude for the gracious offer but demurred nevertheless, stating "our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours." The unnamed tribal leader responds that those young people who were "brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces" returned unable to speak their native language, withstand the elements, or provide for their tribe through hunting once they were back. In short, the tribal leader concludes, "they were totally good for nothing." He ends his speech by offering to teach "a dozen of their sons" and "make men of them."

Franklin offers another point of comparison between the natives of America and their British counterparts in the way of conducting councils or meetings. Great respect is afforded to the native speaker, whose rising is met with a "profound silence" that lasts for five or six minutes after his speech is concluded, to ensure that he has a moment to reflect on his speech and insert any additional point he neglected to make. This respectful manner of listening to one another is sharply and negatively contrasted to that of the British House of Commons or "polite Companies of Europe," in which speakers are rendered hoarse, speeches are uttered with great rapidity for fear of being interrupted, and many speak at once.

In terms of the extent of native civility, Franklin provides anecdotal tales of the frustration suffered by missionaries who cannot discern whether the natives' signs of approval when hearing the Gospel signify assent or mere civility. After a Swedish missionary preached on the main tenets of Christianity, to include man's fall from grace "by eating an apple," the Susquehanna orator concludes, "What you have told us is all very good. It is indeed bad to eat apples. It is better to make them all into cider." The orator continues by giving the missionary the tale of how they became acquainted with kidney beans, tobacco, and maize, which the missionary immediately renounces as a "fable, fiction, falsehood" in comparison with his stories of "sacred truth." In the orator's reply, Franklin voices his own conclusion on the matter, which is that the missionary should practice the same rules of civility that govern the Susquehanna when hearing a tale.

The final tale of Conrad Weiser, who functions as an interpreter for the Mohawk and British, and his conversation with Canassatego, during which the latter asks the former about the practice of shutting up shops one day a week to attend a meeting and "learn good things," an oblique reference to attending church and hearing the gospel. A deist himself, Franklin must have delighted in recounting Canassatego's interpretation of this cultural practice. The chief wonders why it has taken so long for white men to learn good things, and he remains convinced that the only subject discussed in meetings is "how to cheat an Indian in the price of beaver."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider Franklin's characterization of American Indians as civil and apt critics of the colonists' behavior and practices. How is his moral tale in this essay compared to his adages in the voice of Poor Richard?
2. Compare Franklin's sense of American Indians with Jefferson's in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. How does each treat America's native populations with regard to European standards for civility?

"Speech in the Convention" (1787)

On the final day of the Constitutional Convention, September 17, 1787, Benjamin Franklin had James Wilson, from the Pennsylvania delegation, read the following speech. Speaking from his position as an old man, Franklin confesses that he grows to doubt his own opinion and judgment of others as he ages. With this provision, he also admits that he does not "entirely approve of this Constitution at present," with the understood proviso that he may very well change his opinion, as he has on other "important subjects." He further places his own doubts about the Constitution within the frame of human fallibility that results, ironically, through the belief in infallibility. As an example of this high regard that people hold for the rightness of their own opinions, Franklin quotes an unnamed French lady who tells her sister that the only person she meets who is always right is herself.

In this spirit, Franklin declares his agreement to the Constitution, "with all its faults," and recognizes that "there is no form of government but what may be a blessing to the people, if well administered." In other words, Franklin looks beyond the Constitutional Convention to consider the future of

the United States and the form of democratic government it will practice. His thoughts on America's future cause him a moment of unreserved pride, when he declares his astonishment at finding a "system approaching so near to perfection as it does." The degree of perfection that has been achieved is all the more remarkable, Franklin notes, because it was assembled from a number of men "who carry with them their prejudices, passions, errors of opinion, local interests, and selfish views." And, rather than having such a motley crew dissolve into bloodshed and a Tower of Babel, where they are rendered incapable of communicating with one another, instead they have created a document that "will astonish our enemies."

As for his previous objections to the Constitution, which he does not name specifically, Franklin consigns them to the four walls of the convention. He does so out of a conviction that "much of the strength and efficiency of any government in procuring and securing happiness to the people, depends on opinion." Thus, Franklin will not whisper a word of his own prior doubts about the Constitution, and he expresses a desire that other members, when returning home to their constituency, will likewise remain silent on the detracting aspects of the document. Doing so will cultivate the continued good opinion held by foreign nations, as well as among ourselves.

Franklin ends his brief speech with a call to "every member of the Convention" to consider his own fallibility and "put his name to this Instrument."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Franklin presents two controlling themes in this brief but powerful essay: the fallibility of humans and the exercise of unanimity for the greater good. How are these two notions linked to the concept of democracy?
2. Franklin raises the specter of foreign opinion in his essay. How do his words of cultivating the appearance of unanimity relate to his cultivation of a public persona in his autobiography?

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (1788, 1791)

As the critic William H. Shurr readily admits, Franklin's *Autobiography* "has been judged one of the most important and influential of American books" (435). A central part of the importance of Franklin's self-narrative lies in its identification of a particularly American character, a self-made man. Further, Franklin's own large presence as a founding father would naturally give considerable weight to any telling of his own life and his part in the founding of the nation. Ironically, Shurr writes, Franklin's *Autobiography* is held up as a model for the genre in general and yet the term *autobiography* did not come into existence in English until 1797, seven years after Franklin's death. Even then, the term referred to an "odd, pedantic neologism" (Shurr 435).

The *Autobiography* contains four parts, the first begun in August 1771, five years before the onset of the American Revolution. The second part was penned 13 years after the Revolution. In the first section, Franklin makes express use of the phrase *Dear Son* and seems to have addressed his illegitimate son, William, as the intended reader. He opens in the way that a father might write to a son, by recalling family anecdotes and by striking a kind, familiar tone. Franklin writes, "Now imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the circumstances of my life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with, and expecting a week's uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement, I sit down to write them to you." On the basis of these opening remarks, then, part 1 appears to be a written version of the kind of conversation one had with one's elders. To determine one's place in the world, one needs to have knowledge of one's forebears. For William, this kind of family history might prove painful, however, because he was Benjamin Franklin's illegitimate child. In fact, Shurr believes that the opening references to "some sinister accidents" that Franklin desired to change was in fact a direct attack on his son's illegitimacy" since William's coat of arms would have to bear "the bar sinister—the heraldic mark of illegitimacy" (444–

445). As Franklin himself points out, employing the metaphor of life as a manuscript, there are no possibilities of repetition to eliminate those sins (or errata) that he has committed, such as the siring of a son out of wedlock. Therefore, "the next thing most like living one's life over again seems to be a recollection of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible, the putting it down in writing." Interestingly, it seems as though Franklin considered the telling of his tale, its commitment to paper and thus to posterity, as a means of atonement.

Through notes gathered from an uncle, Franklin becomes acquainted with the family's longer history, including such details as their residence in the same village, Ecton in Northamptonshire, for 300 years. By tracing his own father's birth, as contained in the register at Ecton, Franklin figures out his place in the larger family genealogy: "I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back." In his brief accounts of his paternal grandfather's four sons, Franklin asks William to forgive him for any errors or missing details because of "this distance from my papers." William is encouraged to look for these as a source for "many more particulars." The uncle whom Franklin mentions first is Thomas, a man who "became a considerable man in the county affairs [and] was a chief mover of all public spirited undertakings." It is this uncle who, Franklin reminds William, "struck you as something extraordinary from its similarity to what you knew of [my life]." By reminding William of the connection that he himself made between his father and his uncle, Franklin is able to seem the humble family historian rather than a braggart who sees in himself echoes of a dynamic ancestor.

To account for the family's remove to New England, Franklin offers the family anecdote of a Bible concealed in a joint stool, which was then turned upside down and placed upon the knees of the family patriarch, who read from it. Because "conventicles," religious meetings or gatherings, were forbidden by law, Franklin's father, Josiah, along with his first wife and their three children, left for New England in 1682. Franklin was born to Josiah's second wife, Abiah Folger, in Boston. He describes his mother's family as belonging to "one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather in his Church History." His maternal grandfather, Peter Folger, was also a poet of "homespun verse of that time and people," as well as an outspoken supporter of "liberty of conscience," meaning that he supported the religious sects such as the Quakers who were persecuted and ostracized by the Puritan majority. Having read Peter Folger's poetry, Franklin declares it to contain "a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom."

Given such ancestors, it is no wonder that Franklin would grow to attain such eminence in his life. Anecdotes of his early childhood, such as being promoted three grades within one year or having an "early readiness in learning to read," all fit not only with the image readers have today of this extraordinary figure, but also within the general character of his ancestors, both maternal and paternal. Ironically, Franklin's close resemblance to the defiant and intelligent nature of his ancestors also functioned to remove him from his immediate family, first from his position as an assistant in his father's shop as a "Tallow Chandler and Sope-Boiler," and later in his reluctant and brief role as apprentice to his brother James's press. When he was 12 years old, Franklin was apprenticed to James for a period of nine years, to end when he reached the age of 21. Happily, Franklin writes, the position afforded him access to books and a tradesman named Matthew Adams who gave Franklin access to his library. His father discouraged Franklin from his early inclinations to be a poet, "telling him versemakers were generally beggars," and thus he looked to prose writing as "a principal means of advancement." He began copying editions of the British humorous newspaper the *Spectator,* in order to increase his vocabulary, work on the structure of his arguments, and perfect his use of language in the same way that a poet might. The significance of language in Franklin's life is not to be underestimated since it was an essential part of his personality. It thus is in keeping with his public image of

himself that he would provide a detailed account of honing his linguistic skills, including his anonymous contributions to his brother's newspaper and his victories at verbal sparrings.

Had Franklin's life followed this model, where he remained dutifully in apprenticeship to his brother James, we might not have the fully realized image of the American character that Franklin brings to life in his *Autobiography*. His own quiet rebellion against his family and their limitations on his freedom would resonate years later with the American Revolution, in which the colonies would be cast as the rebellious children of Mother England. Franklin disguised himself and left for New York. Tellingly, the disguise Franklin and his friend John Collins devise for him contains the very mark of moral corruption that would later prove to be true: "my being a young acquaintance of [Collins's] that had got a naughty girl with child, whose friends would compel me to marry her." From New York, Franklin soon made his way to Philadelphia. He notes his account of his travels to William: "I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there." He wishes William to gauge his current success from his poor, unlikely beginnings in Philadelphia. Shurr considers this aspect of part 1—Franklin's "need [for] his son's approval and even admiration"—to have political resonance since William Franklin was then the governor of New Jersey and had such high political standing that he was invited into Westminster Abbey to attend the coronation of George III while the father was forced to stand outdoors in a temporary booth (441). William was a royalist, and in 1771 when Franklin penned this first section of the *Autobiography,* he may have been seeking out insurance in the form of his son against any possible punishment for his own disloyal and rebellious behavior against the Crown (Shurr 441).

Franklin's awareness of how others might perceive him remains a central theme in his autobiography. He explains to William near the close of part 1: "In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal, but to avoid all appearances of the contrary. I dressed plainly; I was seen in no places of idle diversion; I never went out fishing or shooting . . . and to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores through the streets on a wheelbarrow." Although some critics, including Lemay, Shurr, and Looby, like to argue that part 1 is radically different from the subsequent parts, and that the whole does not adhere as a unified book, perhaps the preceding quotation serves as a point of continuity across all four parts. For Looby, "Scholars and critics have labored diligently to process the text into coherence, to produce the requisite unity that is the goal of much literary criticism; but in doing so they have obscured, I would argue, what are among the text's most meaningful features" (85). Looby interprets the fractures and contradictions of Franklin's *Autobiography* as proof of the influence that the revolution held over Franklin, especially because he purposely does not mention it in any of the *Autobiography*'s four parts. Given that part 1 was written in 1771, years before the revolution, it naturally makes sense that Franklin could not have written about an event that had yet to transpire. Instead, the first part follows traditional models by retelling events from family lore and from his own childhood. Franklin was assiduously invested in promoting a public image for himself. Keeping this tendency for self-promotion in mind, the reader can easily make the leap to part 2, which has been described as "an explanation of Franklin's bookkeeping method for attaining perfection through practice of the virtues" (Shurr 437).

Thirteen years after the Revolutionary War, Franklin returned to his *Autobiography* and began writing part 2. Unlike the politically uncertain Franklin of part 1, the Franklin of part 2 had emerged triumphant from the war. Another central distinction between the two parts involves its intended reader. All references to William, whom he had publicly disinherited and disowned by this

time, are noticeably absent (Shurr 437). Instead, the *Autobiography* is opened up to a larger readership, an audience of "American youth," as one of his friends imagined it in a letter included at the end of part 1. To transition from a letter intended for his son to a larger endeavor intended for the edification of the next generation, Franklin includes letters from two of his friends: Abel James and Benjamin Vaughan. James writes quite directly of the singularity of Franklin's character: "I know of no character living nor many of them put together, who has so much in his power as thyself to promote a greater spirit of industry and early attention to business, frugality, and temperance with the American youth." In Vaughan's letter, he describes Franklin's letter as a "noble rule and example of self-education." Vaughan extends this characterization of Franklin's writing to the general population: "Your biography will not merely teach self-education but the education of a wise man." Thus, James imagines Franklin's task as the education of the masses by a wise and sage man, his friend, Franklin.

Part 2 is entitled "Continuation of the Account of My Life Begun at Passy 1784," and yet critics note the difference in tone, intended readership, and subject matter. He briefly recounts the creation of the public library, which was originally called a "subscription library," and notes how it was expedient for him to create the pretense that "a number of friends" had arrived at this idea rather than he alone. Franklin displays his humility by willingly forgoing the opportunity to "raise one's reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's neighbors" and instead granting others a share in authorship. Similarly, it is at his wife's insistence that "her husband deserved a silver spoon and china bowl as well as any of his neighbors" that china and plate made their first appearance in the Franklin household. In both instances, Franklin is the beneficiary of the good opinion of others, even when he must suppress his own role as inventor of the public library in order to solicit subscriptions.

Perhaps one of the most enduring and influential aspects of Franklin's autobiography is the topic that constitutes most of part 2: what Franklin himself described as the "bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection." The topic of self-improvement is, not surprisingly, introduced through Franklin's brief treatment of his own religious beliefs and practices. While he states that he "never doubted . . . the existence of the Deity that made the world and governed it by his providence," he "seldom attended any public worship." He pays his annual subscription for the salary of the "only Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia," but found the sermons "to me very dry, uninteresting, unedifying, since not a single moral principle was inculcated or enforced." Rather, Franklin insists, the aim of the ministers was more "to make us Presbyterians than good citizens." He sees the two goals—religious and secular—as at odds with one another and he would rather follow the latter than the former.

Franklin lists 13 precepts that he has met with in his reading. Not surprisingly, for a figure like Franklin who has dedicated his life to language, he finds moral lessons in his daily reading material. The critic Christopher Looby believes that "because Franklin claims a representative status for himself, presenting his life as an allegory of American national experience, it is also an account of the nation's self-constitution in language" (73). In other words, the way in which Franklin declares and presents himself on the page becomes a model for future Americans to write of their own life stories. The 13 precepts are, in order, temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility. As Franklin reasons, "Temperance first as it tends to produce that coolness and clearness of head, which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction to ancient habits, and the force of perpetual temptations."

It is a methodical, logical manner Franklin devises in which to approach the moral and philosophical issue of self-improvement. To fulfill his third precept for "order," Franklin imposes on himself a "scheme on employment for twenty-four hours of

a natural day." The social aspects of his life, which he attributes to the distinction between a worker or "journey-man printer" and himself, "a master who must mix with the world," cause this rigid schedule to give him "the most trouble." He reconciles the attempts made with the less-than-perfect results by likening the process to a man who finds shining an ax an arduous process and who learns to appreciate a speckled ax. The "speckled ax" symbolizes an awareness of one's own mortality and thus of one's limitations, as well as a celebration of the achievements one can make in a striving for perfection. Franklin states it best: "Though I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was by the endeavor a better and happier man than I otherwise should have been, if I had not attempted it."

When Franklin returns to the *Autobiography,* to begin part 3, it is 1788, two years before his death. (The very brief part 4 was apparently left unfinished.) His attention turns, at it naturally would at such an advanced age, to ensuring that his contributions will be lasting and remembered. He mentions the Franklin stove, which he invented in 1742, and his refusal to accept a patent on it because "we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, [and] we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours." Although it is true that Franklin is technically writing about the benefits his open stove have had for others, it is not unreasonable to assume that his statement about the far-reaching benefits of one's inventions was a hopeful wish for his own long-lasting fame. It certainly has proven true that readers and writers for several hundred years since his death in 1790 continue to marvel at this politician, scientist, and generally dynamic figure of the early American years.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Part 2 of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* contains lists and schedules that remain a central aspect of American life to this day (self-improvement books and New Year's resolutions). Compare the secular tenets espoused by Franklin as a means of achieving perfection to Cotton Mather's advice in *Bonifacius.* Are there points of commonality between the deist and the Puritan?
2. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby,* the titular character has written a similar list of tasks he intends to perform in the name of self-improvement. How do his areas of concern or concentration coincide with Franklin's?
3. Compare Franklin's moral virtues in part 2 with some of the aphorisms and moral instructions he offers in *Poor Richard's Almanac.*

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON FRANKLIN AND HIS WORK

1. Franklin offered advice packaged in witty aphorisms and in a reflective autobiography. How do Franklin's ideas for self-improvement reflect larger American values?
2. Select one or two of Franklin's works and argue for their role and influence in shaping early American letters. How does his writing compare with that of another founding father, Thomas Jefferson?

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Philip Morin Freneau (1752–1832)

O Washington! —thrice glorious name / What due rewards can man decree— / Empires are far below thy aim, / And scepters have no charms for thee / Virtue alone has your regards, / And she must be your great reward.

("Washington's Arrival in Philadelphia")

Philip Morin Freneau was the eldest of five children born to a French father, Pierre Fresneau (note the different spelling of the surname), and a Scottish mother, Agnes Watson. They lived in New York, where Freneau was born on January 2, 1752, but the family soon moved to New Jersey to buy land and start a farm. His father constructed a country house at Mount Pleasant (near modern-day Matawan) and gained some wealth by working in timber. As the firstborn son and a child with a natural propensity for books and writing, Philip was groomed for life as a preacher. His father sent him to school in New York. In 1767, when Philip was 15 years old, his father, Pierre, died, leaving behind a significant amount of land but little money.

The following year, 1768, Freneau entered the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University), and, because of his academic preparation, he was accepted as a sophomore (Marsh 16). The curriculum at Princeton included courses in rhetoric, oratory, and the classics (writings from Homer and Longinus). Before Freneau enrolled at Princeton, the university founded two literary societies: The Cliosophic, who valued legal and religious arguments, and the Whig, who preferred satire. Freneau and his roommate, Hugh Brackenridge, provided the Whigs with their victories against their rivals, the Cliosophes. Among the Whigs were James Madison, who would become the fourth president of the United States; Pierpont and Jonathan Edwards (sons of the famous Calvinist Jonathan Edwards), and Aaron Burr, who would later go on to kill Alexander Hamilton (Marsh 17). Although Freneau roomed with Brackenridge for most of his time at Princeton, it appears that he also shared a room with Madison as the latter wrote home to his father about his new friend and companion.

Much of Freneau's early writing, including his first piece of fiction, *Mr. Bombo's Pilgrimage to Mecca,* exists because Will Bradford, a fellow Princeton student and admirer of both Freneau and Brackenridge, recorded their writings in his journals and notebooks (Marsh 20, 23). This early work of fiction tells of a shipwrecked Bombo, who appears on the shore of Ireland, becomes a teacher, but is expelled by his pupils, who dislike him. Freneau's unfortunate protagonist, after much traveling, arrives in Philadelphia, where he dies. Freneau also dedicated his talent to writing more serious poetry, including "The Power of Fancy," which was penned in 1770 when he was 18 years old. The following year, 1771, Freneau, Brackenridge, and Burr graduated from Princeton in a class of 12.

His mother had remarried after the death of his father with a man named Major James Kearny, who had five children of his own from his previous marriage. The recently graduated Freneau would understandably need to support himself financially. He did so by becoming a teacher, first at a rural

school in Flatbush (currently Brooklyn) and then with his friend Brackenridge in Somerset County, Maryland. He did not seem well suited to the profession, however, as he complained in a letter to James Madison of the "30 students . . . who prey upon me like leeches" (Marsh 28). He also wrote to share the news of his first publication, a small collection of poetry entitled "The American Village," which appeared in print in New York (Marsh 28–29). Perhaps because he was attempting to fulfill his father's dying wish, perhaps because a career in teaching seemed too unappealing, Freneau returned to Princeton for two years (1773 and 1774) to pursue a career as a Presbyterian minister (Marsh 32). His natural proclivity for Newtonian science, however, became too difficult to overcome, and Freneau rejected Presbyterianism to embrace deism. The biographer Philip Marsh attributes Freneau's deism to his admiration for the writings of Addison in the *Spectator* (33).

In February 1776, Freneau accepted the invitation of John Wilkinson Hanson, owner of Prospect Hill plantation, to set sail with him for Santa Cruz (present-day St. Croix). He wrote later to his friend Alexander Anderson of "being averse to enter the Army and be knocked in the head" (50). Marsh argues that the island's remoteness from scenes of the Revolutionary War did not mean that Freneau was ignorant of battles or of the Declaration of Independence. Indeed, the island's economic interest in trade alone would have guaranteed that Santa Cruz would receive news (53). On the basis of Freneau's application for a federal pension, we know that he spent time two years as a privateer (54). It is certain that he sailed to Bermuda and stayed for five weeks (56). On June 5, 1778, Freneau left Santa Cruz and returned to the newly created United States of America (57). On July 15, a mere six days after his arrival at Monmouth, Freneau enlisted in the army as a private and served as a master aboard the *Indian Delaware* in October 1778. While on board this ship bound for St. Eustatius, Freneau penned "American Independence," which made fun of the British for their folly (Marsh 61–62). With the publication of this and "Rising Glory," Freneau "returned to his first love—love of America, its future, and its perfectability" (63). He remained on the army's rolls until May 1, 1780, meaning that he served for two years. When the 20-gun privateer that Freneau was sailing on, the *Aurora,* was hulled, Freneau was arrested and taken aboard a prison ship called the *Scorpion* (69). His time aboard the *Scorpion* was only three weeks as the conditions proved unhealthy and an ill Freneau was transferred to the *Hunter,* a hospital ship, on June 22 and exchanged on July 13. Freneau's hatred for the British now was unmasked and personal. He drew on his own experience as a prisoner of war for his "The British Prison Ship," which was published in 1780. At this time, he began writing his play, *The Spy,* and satirical pieces for the *New-Jersey Gazette* (72).

Freneau began working for Francis Bailey's newspaper, the *Freeman's Journal,* in July 1781. "The next year was his most productive. Reporting news and commenting on it, in the next fourteen months he published forty poems and forty prose pieces. . . . He now did his best satires" (Marsh 77). He began a series of long essays named *The Pilgrim,* which ran for 19 numbers and took its inspiration from Addison and Steele's works in The *Spectator* and the *Tatler* (81). He took on different personae and voices to address a variety of subjects: "Christopher Clodhopper" and "Priscilla Tripstreet" quibbled over ladies' fashions; "Virginius" took on a British perspective to express hopes of reconquering the States (85). Whatever his pseudonym, Freneau seems to have written his last prose for the *Journal* in June 1784, when he sailed for the West Indies aboard the *Dromelly.* A hurricane hit the ship, and they landed in Jamaica (97). Francis Bailey published Freneau's immigration propaganda, "Stanzas on the Emigration to America," in 1785 in *Bailey's Almanac,* and the following year a collection of over 100 of his poems appeared in print, also with Bailey as publisher (99–100).

Freneau began writing more consistently on the issue of American Indians in the latter half of 1790, and all of the essays were published in the *Daily Advertiser,* a newspaper that employed him

in March of that year. On April 15, 1790, Freneau married the daughter of a neighbor, Eleanor Forman. Although Freneau had hopes of marrying her as early as 1783, the wedding could not take place until her brother David withdrew his objection (116, 118). Freneau left his position with the *Advertiser* and accepted a part-time job as a translator. This move would solidify his position in history as a political writer. After all, it was James Madison, his old friend from college, and THOMAS JEFFERSON who secured the position for him. Their motivation was for Freneau to publish a Whig organ, as he did in 1792, and lambaste their common enemy, Alexander Hamilton. Freneau founded the *National Gazette,* which printed its first issue on October 31, 1791. Freneau's position as gadfly with the *Gazette* gained the attention of the president himself, as Washington dubbed him "that rascal Freneau" during a cabinet meeting recorded by Thomas Jefferson (199). Because Jefferson had a hand in appointing Freneau to his first national position as translator, and because the *National Gazette* championed Jefferson and his political party while attacking Hamilton, Freneau found himself facing charges, first in 1792 and later in 1801 (278).

Despite its popularity and widespread readership, Freneau's *National Gazette* published its last issue on October 26, 1793, in part because of an outbreak of yellow fever and a general panic over contagion, as well as the newspaper's practice of billing readers after they had received six months' issues of the paper (206). Freneau returned to the family home in Monmouth and began writing and printing his own newspaper, called the *Monmouth Almanac,* which was his equivalent of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's *Poor Richard's Almanac.* When this venture failed, Freneau joined the *Jersey Chronicle* in 1795 and submitted a series of essays on American Indians. In summer 1796, Freneau quit work in rural New Jersey and returned eagerly to the bustle of New York, writing for Bache's *Aurora* and for the *Time Piece* until the end of 1798. In that year, when he covered the presidential campaigns of Adams and Jefferson, Freneau wrote a series of 24 essays on the character of Richard Slender, which continued until 1801 (266).

Freneau's biographer Marsh notes that when Freneau took to sea in 1801, under the financial support of his brother Peter, his exact whereabouts are unknown (285). He appears to have returned in 1804, when he docked in Charleston in June to visit his brother. Freneau returned to writing for the *Aurora* from 1808 until 1820. When a fire destroyed their family home in 1818, Freneau; his wife, Eleanor; and their two daughters who still resided at home moved temporarily to a nearby house and then to the house of Eleanor's brother. Freneau seems to have fallen into drink to soften his despondency about life in a place where he was no longer a pivotal figure. On December 18, 1832, Freneau was walking home from the local store and pub when a snowstorm hit. Blinded by the snow, and perhaps disoriented from drink, he fell into a hole, broke his hip, and died in his sleep.

"The Power of Fancy" (1770)

Influenced by Max Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination,* which was published in 1744, Freneau offers his own broad and sweeping trek through portions of ancient Greece, sites made famous by Admiral Anson's circumnavigation of the globe, "Britain's fertile land," finally resting on the Pacific Ocean at "California's golden shore" (87, 123). The suggestion Freneau makes by linking images of classical literature and authors (such as Homer, Virgil, and Sappho) with America, specifically California, seems quite obvious: North America will be the source of new authors, poets, and a new inspirational landscape. Fancy appears in the poem alternately as the poet's imagination, the muse's inspiration, the transcendent quality of a beautiful landscape, and the ultimate source of happiness for mortals on earth.

Freneau begins and ends the poem with the morality of humans, which serves as both a source of human limitation and a connection to "the immortal race" (10). It is through the use of fancy

that mortals most closely approach the gods. Freneau explains how fancy can link humans with the gods by describing all aspects of creation: "These suns and stars that round us roll / What are they all, where'er they shine, / But Fancies of the Power Divine" (12–14). In other words, all of creation exists in the mind of the "Almighty," and thus the ideas that Fancy implants or coaxes into the mind of the poet are reflections, however pale, of the kind of real creation brought about by God's ideas.

As mentioned, Fancy is not relegated only to the realm of arts and letters, but also influences people's understandings of the divine: "Leads me to some lonely dome, / Where Religion loves to come, / Where the bride of Jesus dwells" (35–37). The image of a lonely dome might refer to a cupola on a church, and thus the image Freneau creates is of a single follower, perhaps bent in prayer, exalted by Fancy in his or her beliefs and faith. The image of the bride of Jesus is taken from the New Testament, where it serves as a metaphor for the New Jerusalem after the rapture, or the second coming of Christ. From the exalted place of heaven, Fancy also descends "to the prison of fiends / hears the rattling of their chains / feels their never ceasing pains— / But, O never may she tell / Half the frightfulness of hell" (42–46). It is interesting to note the limitation Freneau imagines Fancy to have. Despite its ability to "walk upon the moon" and listen to the music of the spheres, it cannot convey a full sense of the horrors of hell (29).

The poem concludes in America, where the speaker bids, "Fancy, stop, and rove no more" (124). In this final landscape, the poet acknowledges his or her gratitude to Fancy and requests that the two continue their walk "alone" (154).

For Discussion or Writing

1. In his political poems, Freneau makes references to classic Greek and Roman mythology. Compare his use of these symbols in "To Sir Toby" and "The Power of Fancy."
2. Nature serves as a source of inspiration in this poem. Consider how it is described and what qualities are assigned to it in "The Power of Fancy" compared with "The Wild Honey Suckle" or "On the Universality and Other Attributes of the God of Nature."

"A Political Litany" (1775)

In the poem's title and with each stanza beginning with the word *from,* Freneau takes the religious style of a litany, which is a repetitive or incantatory prayer, to plead for America's independence from the evils of Britain. Within the poem readers can discern particular arguments that Freneau would go on to repeat in his political poetry, essays, and thinly disguised opinion pieces published in a number of newspapers. The central argument offered in the poem is for American freedom from a tyrannical government whose rulers are witless, cowardly, and cruel. Freneau makes both direct and indirect references to these leaders as he mentions the royal governor of Virginia, John Murray, who was also known as the earl of Dunmore; the royal governor of New York, William Tryon, who quickly fled when he learned of revolutionary plans in his territory; and King George III, who appears as "royal king Log" (13, 21, 26). The appearance of these political leaders by name or inference was a hallmark of Freneau's particular brand of political writing, which he introduced and honed during his college days at Princeton when he led the writing society known as the Whigs. He would address the arguments or positions of his opponents, members of the rival Cliosophes, by using a rhetorical strategy known as *ad hominem,* meaning that he would attack the person rather than his or her argument.

Freneau devotes more attention to King George III in this poem than to any other leader as he stands as a symbol of Britain and is the ultimate authority over them all. Freneau likens him to the frog king found in Aesop's fable, a tale of a group of frogs whose request for a king is answered with the appearance of a log for their ruler. Through this childhood cultural reference, Freneau chastises King George III as an inept ruler whose position of authority is a kind of cruel joke on the people,

who are desirous of a real ruler. This "tooth-ful of brains / Who dreams, and is certain (when taking a nap) / He has conquered our lands, as they lay on his map" continues to develop the notion of an inept authority who resides in the fantasy of colonization just as the tale of the frogs and their King Log resides in the fantasy of childhood tales (26–28).

The final three lines of the poem return to the religious structure of the poem by "send[ing] up to heave our wishes and prayers" of deliverance from Britain, who he is certain is "damned" (30, 32).

For Discussion or Writing

1. In "A Political Litany," Freneau uses a religious format to launch a political plea, and yet the poem makes no mention of religion or worship. How can you reconcile the poem's clearly religious format with its secular content?
2. Freneau's litany is dominated by a list of British leaders and authorities. How do these figures stand in for different aspects of British colonial rule that Freneau wants abolished?

"The House of Night" (1779)

The biographer Philip M. Marsh attributes the graveyard verse tone of Freneau's "The House of Night" to the popularity that English poets of the "graveyard school" had in America beginning in 1747 with the publication of Robert Blair's "The Grave" (35). Including "Night Thoughts" and "Ode to Evening," but best epitomized with "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," this school of poetry is noted for their themes of death's certainty, the folly of fame, and the ephemeral nature of beauty. William Collins, Edward Young, and Thomas Gray dominated as the influential voices of this literary school.

Freneau's poem, written on the eve of the American Revolution, but not published until 1779, is "a tale of grave, darkness, horror, and the illness, death, and funeral of Death himself" (Marsh 36). It begins with the speaker, still "trembling" from the effects of a dream, recollecting the details of a "fearful vision" (1–2). "Poetic dreams" are differentiated from those dreams "which o'er the sober brain diffused / [that] are but a repetition of some action past" (15–16). By distinguishing the poet's dream from those more common dreams, Freneau establishes the poet as a being of a "finer cast," whose susceptibility to the power of Fancy allows him to be transported to scenes of heaven or hell (20). In this particular dream, the poet is transported "by some sad means" (21). Because *means* can refer to the mode of transportation, the poet's sadness itself could be the poet's conveyance to the House of Night. The lines in stanza 3 bear out this reading, because the speaker leaves to others to "draw from smiling skies their theme. . . . I draw a darker scene, replete with gloom" (9, 11).

When he arrives at the house, a light from the upper room illuminates the garden, revealing in an "autumnal hue," "lately pleasing flowers all drooping" (46–47). Rather than the bright, brilliant colors of May, the month in which this poem takes place, the speaker notes, "No pleasant fruit or blossoms gaily smil'd" (53). It is in the garden that the speaker spies the tombstone amid "laurel shrubs." Inside the house, reclining upon a couch, the speaker is Death himself, and learns from a "portly youth" that "Death [was] upon his dying bed." Despite his current state, Death ends the poem by reflecting on his past power and glory, a "six thousand years . . . sovereign." He mentions having made both Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar die "beneath [his] hand."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the use of gothic imagery in "The House of Night" to that of the late 18th-century author CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN in *Wieland* or of the early 19th-century author and poet Edgar Allan Poe.
2. Consider how nature appears in this poem versus in "On the Religion of Nature" or "On the Universality and Other Attributes of the God of Nature."

3. Compare the personification of Death in Freneau's poem to its appearance in Emily Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for death."

"On the Emigration to America and Peopling the Western Country" (1785)

The poem begins with the imagined journey and encounters of an emigrant recently departed from "Europe's proud, despotic shores" (7). This modern-day Palemon, a young male traveler who appears in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Knight's Tale,* distinguishes himself by departing from the crowd and seeking "where nature's wildest genius reigns" (2, 3). Freneau adheres to conventional—one might even suggest propaganda-fueled—depictions of the American landscape as the phrases "so long concealed, so lately known" echo the language of discovery and entice the reader, as they do the emigrant, to gain familiarity and mastery (20). Freneau does depart somewhat from this traditional view of an American landscape by noting how the democratic form of government has imprinted itself onto the land: "In our new found world" the explorer discovers a "happier soil, a milder sway" (9–10). It is as though the absence of a despotic presence, so recently felt in the Revolutionary War against Britain and King George III, impacts the foundation or core of the land, its soil.

Freneau quickly moves from democracy's influence on the landscape to a celebration of its two central rivers at the time: the Ohio and the Mississippi. Freneau praises the Ohio River, a "savage stream," as an enduring natural work of art that demonstrates nature's authority (13–14). The sheer force and immortal quality of this particular river "outvie / the boldest pattern art can frame," meaning that the river's beauty overwhelms the museum or art gallery attempts to corral or contain the art in a frame. The Mississippi River also receives praise, but not for its natural grandeur. Freneau promises that "no longer through a darksome wood / advance, unnoticed, to the main" (33–34). These lines can be interpreted in two different but compatible ways: The poem itself provides notoriety to this river, whose course to the ocean, "the main," was previously unmarked, or "unnoticed," or, because of the plans to use the Mississippi's waterways for trade and commerce, its course will be navigated by ships whose crews will take note.

The native inhabitants of the New World also appear, albeit briefly, in Freneau's poem, but rather than the noble savage who appears in "The Indian Burying Ground," the "unsocial Indian far retreats / To make some other clime his own" (21–22). Freneau falls into the convention of the "vanishing American" that James Fenimore Cooper would canonize in the next century. The concept here is that the American Indian will simply vanish, or willingly and voluntarily relocate, to make way for the incoming flux of Europeans. Such a notion is at odds with the portrait of African slaves Freneau paints just a mere five stanzas later. He anticipates "the day / when man shall man no longer crush," but this sentiment is only reserved for African slaves and does not apply to the American Indians, who are native to this "happier soil."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Freneau's depictions of an American landscape with those offered in Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*, John Smith's *A General History of Virginia*, or Christopher Columbus's descriptions of the Americas.
2. Drawing on other poems from Freneau that address American Indians and African slaves, write an essay in which you account for the different treatments of the two races.

"Wild Honey Suckle" (1786)

Freneau's lyrical poem first appeared in the *Columbia Herald* in 1786. The biographer Philip M. Marsh believes that "at its most tender, the lyric genius . . . cultivated and elaborated, might have given the author a far greater fame" (105). The

poem's lyric quality seems similar to that of Wordsworth and WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Freneau differentiates this flower from those that are cultivated or receive the doting attention of horticulturists by emphasizing its wildness. Nature personified has cared for and nurtured this particular flower by "plant[ing] [it] here in the guardian shade / and send[ing] soft waters murmuring by" (9, 10). Although the honeysuckle is "untouched" and "unseen," it is protected from "roving feet" and a "busy hand" (5, 6). In writing a poem to this "fair flower," Freneau presents a pastoral image of humans' relationship with nature. The mindful poet records the beauty of the flower for his readers. Rather than employ a "busy hand" to pluck the flower and "provoke a tear," Freneau busies his hand with pen and ink to immortalize the bloom for posterity.

In the third stanza, Freneau links the fate of the wild honeysuckle to the fate of man after his fall from grace, identified with his expulsion from Eden. The poet's use of biblical references might seem surprising to readers more acquainted with his tone of biting satire employed in his political essays and other writings, but one should keep in mind that Freneau was groomed by his father to pursue a life as a clergyman, and to honor his father's wishes, Philip dedicated two years to seminary school. When Freneau writes that "the flowers that did in Eden bloom" were not "more gay" than those witnessed in the postlapsarian world, he seems to deny the Judeo-Christian separation of humans before and after the Fall. If Edenic flowers were not "more gay," meaning that they were not happier or more colorful than those depicted after the Fall, then the distinction seems false or arbitrary. What remains true is their shared fate: They will die (15).

In the final stanza, Freneau extrapolates from the lesson contained in the brief but brilliant life of the honeysuckle to the lives of humans. When he writes, "If nothing once, you nothing lose," Freneau touches upon the risk of attempting greatness in one's life. A figure who is "nothing once" has the opportunity to accomplish something and become someone. This effort could lead to loss, as Freneau admits, but the following line offers consolation by placing the endeavors of an individual into a larger frame. He writes, "For when you die you are the same" (22). One could read this line as evidence of a pessimistic view of the human condition: that one's dreams, struggles, and losses prove irrelevant. This reading would certainly be in keeping with the tradition of the graveyard poetry that Freneau emulates in "The House of Night." In the context of this poem, however, which speaks lovingly of a wild flower hidden but protected from humans and nurtured by Nature itself, one might arrive at a tempered version of the previous interpretation. Although Freneau expresses grief at the certainty of the honeysuckle's "future doom," he has immortalized it in his poem and, in so doing, offered something that endures beyond the "frail duration of a flower" (24).

For Discussion or Writing

1. As in "On Observing a Large Red-Streak Apple," Freneau creates the image of a singular entity in nature in order to contemplate the human condition. Explain why the singularity of the item addressed in the poems, whether honeysuckle or apple, matters in imagining the fate of humans.
2. Freneau seems to advocate the expression of the self by writing "if nothing once, you nothing lose." Compare this sentiment to Emily Dickinson's expressed in the poem "I'm Nobody! Who are you?"

"The Indian Burying Ground" (1787)

Originally entitled "Lines Occasioned by a Visit to an Old Indian Burying Ground," the poem was published in November 1787 in *American Museum* and appeared again the following year in Freneau's *Miscellaneous Works,* which also contained "The Wild Honey Suckle." Freneau's biographer Philip Marsh attributes Freneau's interest in the subject of American Indians to the appearance of members of

the Creek tribe in New York to broker a treaty with the fledgling republic (128–129).

The poem opens with a contrast between the burial rites and beliefs of the hereafter held by the culture referred to simply as "we" and those rites and beliefs held by "the Ancients of these lands" (5). Freneau establishes a binary of "us" and "them" from the poem's first two stanzas, but the structure for this comparison of cultures does not end there. Rather, Freneau imagines both groups of people in large, sweeping terms. The American Indians are referred to as *Ancients,* and all Anglo Europeans are addressed as *we*. By naming the American Indians Ancients, however, Freneau casts them as members of North America's past.

Freneau begins with the premise that in examining burial rites, one can deduce how a culture imagines life after death: "The posture that we give the dead / points out the soul's eternal sleep" (3–4). In these lines, Freneau suggests that the burial of the dead, according to Western custom, reveals that culture's belief that the afterlife is characterized by rest and repose. For the American Indians, who, according to Freneau, bury their dead in a sitting position, the afterlife must be a continuation of the activities one engages in while alive: "activity, that knows no rest" (12). Despite Freneau's brief dip into a culture not his own, he maintains his old opinion. Indeed, when he considers the clashing views of life after death—"can only mean that life is spent / and not the old ideas gone"—Freneau forecloses on all other possible conclusions (15–16). In other words, rather than consider amending his belief or respecting the American Indians' belief, Freneau definitively states that his culture's "old ideas" prevail.

Despite his insistence that his culture's rites and beliefs remain inchoate, Freneau requests that his readers, referred to as "stranger[s]," respect "the swelling turf" (19). He trains the reader's eye to the symbols and signs of American Indians' burial rites rather than the headstone; readers should be mindful of a "lofty rock" containing vestiges of a "ruder race" (21, 24). Freneau projects past images of children playing and a "pale Shebah" to animate the landscape to consign American Indians to a hoary past as no living relative of these buried men appears in the poem.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Freneau's romantic treatment of American Indians, exemplified in this poem, changed drastically in his later years when he published "The Musical Savage" in 1814. Read this other poem and compare its tone and treatment of American Indians to those in "The Indian Burying Ground."
2. Thomas Jefferson writes of Indian burial mounds in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Compare the two authors' views on American Indians. How do they characterize them?
3. How might Freneau's depictions of American Indians coincide with James Fenimore Cooper's?

"Part 2: The News" (1790)

"Part 2: The News" appeared in a four-part series that Freneau wrote in December 1791 and early January 1792 while working on the *National Gazette,* a newspaper that focused on political and congressional affairs in New York, which was then the headquarters of the federal government. "The Country Printer" appeared in four installments and offered praise for the noble profession of printer. "Part 2: The News" is a blend of Freneau's political prose and his poetry.

Freneau heaps praise on the figure of the printer, a particular one cleverly named *Type* in this poem, who allows the rural village to remain connected to and informed of "whate'er is done on madam Terra's stage" (21). Freneau suggests the "farrago" might include tales of "monarchs run away," a reference to America's gaining independence from monarchical rule under England's King George, or of "witches drown'd in Buzzard's Bay," a reference to the witch trials and executions that took place in Massachusetts (23–24). In juxtaposing these two events, Freneau spans the nation's most celebrated

and most scandalous moments and implies that the newspaper will be wide in its scope and impartial in its treatment of any given subject.

This avowal of journalistic impartiality is immediately undermined, however, in the following stanza, when Freneau admits jokingly, "Much, very much, in wonderment he deals" (27). As a patriotic voice shouting out the "wonders" of the newly formed republic, the newspaper writer acts as an everyday deity: "Some miracles he makes, and some he steals" (25). Those "miracles" are not of a religious sort, but they do aid in the creation of a national myth or character. The general nature of these "miracles," stolen or made, involves the often-touted fecundity of the New World. Freneau uses hyperbole to express this point, employing the farmer's generous descriptions of the size of his produce as an example: "apples grown to pumpkins size" (28). The hyperbole extends to "pumpkins almost as large as country inns" and ends with the most exaggerated of claims, "ladies bearing each, —three lovely twins!" (30). Freneau shifts from the abundance and fertility of America's landscape, which can house people in its pumpkins, to the reproductive proclivity of America's women, who bear "three lovely twins." Clearly, three babies born at one time would be referred to as triplets, and Freneau plays with the idea that in their inherently fertile state, American women produce three children while others only produce two.

The villagers' deaths and births, the journalist "with cold indifference views" (31). Freneau once again dismantles the disclaimer of objectivity by ending the poem with the following lines: "All that was good, minutely brought to light, / All that was ill, —concealed from vulgar sight" (35–36).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Freneau's description of a printer with Benjamin Franklin's. How are the two men similar in their views of the duties and responsibilities of a printer?
2. Consider Freneau's treatment of America's fertile landscape. How does it compare with that of travel writers and explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Thomas Morton, or Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca? How do these other writers connect the fertility of the land with the fertility of its female inhabitants?
3. How do Freneau's notions of a journalist compare with contemporary notions?

"On Mr. Paine's Rights of Man" (1791)

Written in the same style as all of Freneau's politically driven poetry, in iambic pentameter with rhyming couplets, "On Mr. Paine's Rights of Man" also follows the poet's form by focusing on a specific issue (the overthrow of monarchy) and tethering this idea to a specific figure, in this case, Thomas Paine, the author of the 1791–92 *Rights of Man*. Further, as did most of Freneau's poetry, it bore another title: "To a Republican with Mr. Paine's Rights of Man." Although it is commonly thought to have been written in 1791, in the same year as Paine's influential text, it was not published until three years later in 1795. Readers familiar with Freneau's poetry and his political arguments against the British Crown will recognize strains to appear in subsequent works. These recurring themes include the enslavement of men through forced labor in mines or impressments into military service. As he will in later poems like "On the Causes of Political Degeneracy," Freneau dismantles the very symbols of monarchical rule, referring to "that base, childish bauble called a crown" (6). He likens a monarch to a "quack that kills . . . while it seems to cure," meaning that the assumed authority of a monarch, which is imagined to be sanctioned by God and/or the pope, does more harm than good because people trust its wisdom and authority and lose their lives (presumably in wars or through "slavish" conditions) (10, 8).

In contrast to the "miseries men endure" at the hands of monarchs, Freneau celebrates the liberating properties of Paine's "bold reform" (13). In a reversal of fortunes, Freneau writes, "In raising up mankind, he pulls down kings" (14). He accomplishes this double-purposed goal by employing

reason as he "sketched the sacred right of man," meaning that Paine utilized the very authority central to a monarch's claim for authority—God—and "sketched" out its application to democratic rule. Freneau imagines the shared reactions of his fellow readers, who "glow . . . with kindling rage" at every instance of "the rights of men aspersed, / freedom restrained, and nature's law reversed" (27–28). Monarchy and any government not respectful of innate rights appear as unnatural, or against the order of things.

Freneau offers up Columbia, symbol of the American republic, as a shining example, "famed through every clime," of how democracy can thrive (49). He opens four lines with the phrase "without a king" to mark the fortunate present of America as well as the hopeful future for Britain's current colonies (36, 37, 41, 50). This phrase concludes the poem with a never-ending future "to see the end of time" (50).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Read Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. How does Freneau's celebration of the text reflect the content of Paine's book? How does it differ? What might account for these differences?
2. How does the promise of 1776, depicted in Freneau's "A Political Litany," compare with the reality of an American republic, as captured in this poem?

"To Sir Toby" (1792)

Freneau wrote about the conditions of island slaves beginning in 1790 with a piece that looked specifically at the condition of West Indian creoles. He based this poem, often entitled "The Island Field Negro," on his own eyewitness accounts of life in Jamaica in the early 1800s while he was employed aboard the *Dromelly* (Marsh 97). He opens the poem with a seemingly unlikely quotation from William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* that follows a conversation between two young lovers, Jessica and Lorenzo. The passage fits the general structure of Freneau's poem, however, as he continually refers to the jarring dissonance between what is (slavocracy) and what should be (the abolition of slavery). In the passage from Shakespeare, the lovers are transported by the music they hear and wonder at the figure incapable of being moved or having his finer emotions heightened. Their conclusion is that such a character's "affections [are] as dark as Erebus." Thus, by casting the white man who is insensitive to music and any sympathetic connections it should foster as "dark" and "black," Freneau reverses the common associations of race and morality to rage against slave owners.

He continues this reversal of white and black by cataloging the atrocities slave owners mete out against fellow human beings. Rather than refer to the slave's sufferings, he cleverly turns his attention to those inflicting the violence with lines like "one to the windmill nails him by the ears" (26). Lest the readers miss his condemnation, he writes of slaves "driven by a devil, whom men call overseer" (34). Their predatory nature sets them as one of several "nature's plagues": "Snakes, scorpions, despots, lizards, centipees" (9–10). The juxtaposition of reptiles with "despots" demonstrates that their participation in slavery removes them from humanity.

Freneau also employs the inversion of binaries by juxtaposing the beauty of Jamaica's landscape with its hellish conditions. He draws upon classical allusions to describe the island: "Here Stygian paintings light and dark renew, / Pictures of hell, that Virgil's pencil once drew" (47–48). Virgil's images of the underworld, found in book 6 of his *Aeneid*, parallel, in Freneau's mind, the scenes of slavery witnessed in Jamaica. This comparison continues as slave ships, referred to as "Guinea ships" in the poem, are sailed by "surly Charons," referring to the boatman who shuttles the dead over the river Styx and into the underworld (49–50).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Freneau employs Shakespeare and Virgil as literary predecessors to draw cultural authority for his position against slavery. Read act 5, scene 1

of *The Merchant of Venice* and book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid* and consider Freneau's employment of these texts to lend credence to his poem's political message.
2. Compare Freneau's argument against slavery with the poetry of PHILLIS WHEATLEY. Do they make similar arguments? Do they reference similar literary or cultural sources?
3. Consider the dangers inherent in Freneau's employment of racially loaded terms like *dark* and *black* to refer to slave owners.

"On the Religion of Nature" (1795)

As a precursor to the transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Freneau's "On the Religion of Nature" marks his belief in the divinity of nature, and an inevitable progression from a sympathy for deist and pantheistic thought expressed in "On the Universality and Other Attributes of the God of Nature." As in his other lyric poetry written in iambic tetrameter, Freneau returns to an earlier aesthetic to convey what would become a more popular, if still unconventional, form of theology.

Freneau begins by noting that nature's power that "gives with liberal hand" "abundant products of the year" is the source of life-giving and life-sustaining food and drink as well as the source of religion itself (1, 4). The definition of religion, however, will shift as the poem progresses to note the shortcomings it has or expresses in its current organized forms. Pointedly absent from the treatment of organized religions are any references to conventional iconography such as biblical figures or crosses. By writing more generally about both nature and conventional forms of religion, Freneau's poem attains the kind of universality he seeks in support of transcendentalist thought.

In contrast to the conventional doctrine of original sin that believes humans are marked from birth by the crimes committed by Adam and Eve, Freneau argues that humans are "born with ourselves, her early sway / inclines the tender mind to take / the path of right" (7–9). He insists on humans' innate goodness by stating that mankind is "born with ourselves," meaning that no prior history or stigma exists at birth. Indeed, one's natural inclination is to "take the path of right," or to behave in a morally sound manner. If this supposition is true, Freneau contends, then humans need only look to nature, to the world around and within them, for a "religion, such as nature taught" (13).

Moreover, Freneau offers the conviction that a religion of nature avoids all of the negative aspects that characterize organized religion: "This deals not curses on mankind / or dooms them to perpetual grief" (19–20). When he writes these lines, Freneau refers to the doctrine of original sin, a "curse," and to a life lived in a postlapsarian world, or "grief" after humans' expulsion from Eden. Freneau states that all "can make their heaven below," as a way of ignoring or negating the exile from paradise and providing a reward in the here and now rather than in the hereafter (18). For those who are nonbelievers in the religion of nature, Freneau notes that there are no negative repercussions: "It damns them not for unbelief" (22).

He ends the poem with a hopeful note, imagining the "day when all agree" on the nature of religion (25). On such a joyful day, "truth and goodness lead" and "man's religion [will] be complete" (28, 30).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Freneau's arguments against conventional religion with those raised by Emerson.
2. Freneau offers less of an argument in favor of transcendentalism than a critique of the shortcomings of other forms of religion. How does this rhetorical strategy relate to his political poetry?

"On the Causes of Political Degeneracy" (1798)

Freneau's poem arguing against the doctrine of absolute monarchy, also titled "Reflections on the Gradual Progress of Nations from Democratic Status to Despotic Empires," was written and pub-

lished in 1798. He contemplates the source of despotism, wondering "whence came these ills, or from what causes grew," and considers the possibility that "this vortex vast" originated in Mother Nature (7, 8). Such a concept as nature's producing despotism, once raised, is just as quickly dashed, for "her equal blessings through the world displays," meaning that because Mother Nature provides equally for all, she cannot be the source of a "life accurst" (14, 4). To exemplify nature's egalitarianism, and thus to shore up an argument for the naturalness of democratic government, Freneau references seasons (death in winter is balanced by birth or rebirth in spring) and the water cycle (evaporation will lead to condensation and precipitation).

Freneau compares the condition of humans subjected to the doctrine of absolute monarchy to that of slaves: "Now starv'd in camps, now groveling in the mine, / Chain/d fetter'd, tortur'd, sent from earth a slave" (22–23). The first description of starving in camps might be a reference to forced conscription into military service, a practice that England put into place when its numbers of soldiers and sailors were low. The mines clearly refer to the practice of employing native peoples in colonies to mine and extract precious metals, such as gold, which were then shipped back to the colonial power. The image of a figure chained, fettered, and tortured, in other contexts, would clearly indicate the conditions experienced by either a slave or a prisoner. Here, it is a common condition held literally or metaphorically by all who are under despotic sway. Freneau offers another example of the enslaving qualities of absolute monarchy when he writes of wars, bloodshed, and countless dead at "some proud tyrant's nod" (55). Warfare on a grand scale not only creates a significant death toll, but, as Freneau points out, is opposed to humankind's natural peaceful disposition: "Left to themselves, where'er mankind is found, / In peace they wish to walk life's little round" (61–62).

Freneau places the blame for despotism on "man's neglected reason [which] breeds all the mischiefs that we feel or fear" (35–36). Against the "folly" and foolishness of the despot who deems himself capable of rule, Freneau offers the metaphor of democracy as a machine, with "man, wise and skillful, giv[ing] each part its place" (38). In the reference to machinery, one might see a nod to deism over the Christian-based religions that provide a justification for their rule by divine right. At the heart of monarchical rule, Freneau finds nothing more "base" than "a robber's view," meaning that avarice provokes monarchs to conquer new territories (66). The use of a term like *robber* is also quite telling as it reduces the symbolic power behind "crowns and scepters" to the weapons that they are in the despot's artillery (67–68).

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Freneau's depiction of slavery under monarchical rule compare with his account of race-based slavery in "To Sir Toby"?
2. Compare the use of natural metaphors to depict democratic rule with the language employed by such founding fathers as Franklin, John Adams, Jefferson, and even Thomas Paine.

"On the Universality and Other Attributes of the God of Nature" (1815)

Although it appeared relatively late in Freneau's career in 1815, this poem seems to be the product of his earlier conversion to deism, the same belief held by the founding father Benjamin Franklin. The Freneau biographer Philip Marsh notes that Freneau's membership in the Deistical Society began as early as 1797 (236). In the margins of Burnet's *Theory of the Earth,* Freneau wrote the following praise of this system of belief: "The hypothesis of the Deist reacheth from top to bottom, both through the intellectual and material world . . . is genuine, comprehensive, and satisfactory; hath nothing forced, nothing confused, nothing precarious" (reported in Marsh 53).

According to deist thought, the world was created by a benign but indifferent God commonly referred to as the "great clockmaker." Following this theory, the universe operates on mechanical principles, and thus no nation or people may claim miracles or special favor or the attention of God. In

Freneau's poem, "nature's God" has crafted a "system fix'd on general laws," which some critics interpret as an indirect reference to Newtonian science and its pursuit of general laws or principles governing key aspects of life such as gravity. As support for deism's renunciation of principles of predestination and a model society most favored or worthy of favor by God, Freneau writes, "impartially he rules mankind" and insists upon his existence "throughout all worlds, to make them blest" (11, 24).

Freneau's depiction of nature's God seems to strike a compromise between the uncaring or uninvolved "clockmaker" and a Judeo-Christian god who displays acts of benevolence. Unlike the absent figure of God common in deism, Freneau's characterization "He lives in all, and never stray'd / a moment from the works he made" (7–8) harkens to a belief held by pantheists: that god resides in everything and everywhere. The line "He all things into being loved" implies that the act of creating the universe and all its inhabitants stemmed from love. This sentiment seems more attuned to a Judeo-Christian notion of God and the creation as depicted in the Old Testament and less a deistic notion of an uncaring but wise Creator.

The power of nature's god is "unlimited," but he is not cruel or capricious in the exercise of that power. For Freneau, this power "to all intelligence is a friend," meaning that he is a friend to all who value or embody intelligence but also that those who are swayed by their rational intellect, as deists must be, recognize a friend in nature's God.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Freneau's notions of God, life, and death in this poem with those depicted in "The House of Night" or in "The Wild Honey Suckle."
2. Examine how Freneau's sympathies for deism compare to Franklin's in his *Autobiography.*
3. How might JOHN WINTHROP's notion of a "city upon a hill" described in *A Modell of Christian Charity* or COTTON MATHER's belief in a divine war between good and evil, as detailed in *Magnalia Christi Americana*, clash with Freneau's belief in the impartiality of nature's God?

"On Observing a Large, Red-Streak Apple" (1822)

In this poem, Freneau returns to an often addressed theme originating from his earlier days of writing poetry in the vein of the graveyard poets: the inevitability of death. Rather than addressing the mortality of humans or Death personified, as he does in "The House of Night," Freneau centers his philosophical musings on a commonplace object, a red-streak apple.

In the first stanza, Freneau expresses admiration at the resiliency of an apple, which can endure on a branch "in spite of" winter's harsh conditions: ice, snow, hail, frost, and blowing winds. He wonders why the apple has "one wish to stay" "amidst this system of decay" (8, 7). He turns from the apple's durability to chastise nature as "a system of decay," or a large cycle that includes decline and death, to wonder at the motivation behind other larger systems such as fate and fancy (9). In the line "they meant you for a solitaire," Freneau conjectures that these inscrutable forces intended for the apple to function as a solitary gem does, gaining beauty and brilliance by virtue of its isolation. As the only apple remaining on the tree, the piece of fruit distinguishes itself.

When the narrator considers the possible though unlikely future of the apple on the tree for a second spring, Freneau speaks of how unnatural such a feat would be: "Another race would round you rise / And view the stranger with surprise" (19–20). The solitary nature of the apple that was once its source of beauty and a symbol of its endurance, when viewed in a different setting, the following spring or nature's rebirth, becomes a "stranger." Thus, the figure who endures beyond its natural time or time span would be estranged, rejected as an "old dotard" (22). Freneau might easily be considering his own fate, as he felt estranged and removed from his former brilliance and fame as a writer for newspapers and a figure in political circles. He pities the apple's fate: "a sad memento of the past" (28).

Freneau offers empty hope for this once-brilliant and promising apple. In the language of the subjunctive, he "would" that "the wrongs of time restrain" (31). The futility of these hopes is immedi-

ately revealed as "fate and nature both say no" (33). This line offers the first glimpse into a powerlessness shared by the poet's subject, the red-streak apple, and the poet himself. Neither can chart a course for existence, as fate and nature reign in a capricious and perhaps inscrutable manner. The poet's impotence at being unable to enact his sympathy for the late-blooming apple is best captured in the lines "All I can do, all in my power / Will be to watch your parting hour" (37–38). The poem accomplishes this task by bearing witness to the apple's demise.

The apple's death does not mark its end. In a moment reminiscent of the mythical phoenix who rises from its own ashes, Freneau imagines a progeny of "three or four" that rise from the apple's core. Its seeds provide the poem's final note of hope as the poet bids the apple, "live again" (42, 48).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the treatment of death in "On Observing a Large, Red-Streak Apple" and "The House of Night." How is the subject treated in each poem?
2. In "Thanatopsis," Bryant writes of the dynamic between humans and nature. Contrast Bryant's sense of this dynamic with the one Freneau expresses here.

"To a New England Poet" (1823)

Freneau's poem "To a New England Poet" follows the form of iambic tetrameter, with four feet of unstressed followed by stressed syllables. The rhyme scheme is *aabbccddeeffgg,* with a return to the rhyme of *d* (*land* and *stand* with *hand* and *stand*) in the third stanza and *c* in the fourth stanza (*pay* and *day* with *away* and *pay*). The least regular line, "And England will reward you well," stands apart from the remainder of the poem, in terms of both its rhyme scheme and its content. As the 25th line of the poem, it serves as the fulcrum, or crux on which the poem relies as its foundation. Thus, it is all the more telling that the line, while it conforms to the meter of iambic tetrameter, deviates from the rhyme scheme by not rhyming with any of the other lines. In a five-line stanza, "And England will reward you well" becomes more prominent as the odd-numbered line in a poem dominated by eight-line stanzas. When taken in context, the line stands as both a piece of sage advice intended for a "New England poet" and an angry complaint against a nation that pays its bards the same amount as "the meanest drudges" (5).

Freneau begins the poem with the disparity between the knowledge the poet holds, "Though skilled in Latin and Greek," with the modest income he earns for his knowledge or education, "fifty cents a week" (1–2). The argument Freneau makes is that the poet, with his extensive classical knowledge, should be wise enough to realize that there is no economic advantage to be gained by writing poems. But Freneau's argument is less about the foolishness of the poet who pursues a less than lucrative career. Rather, his real anger is targeted at America's lack of respect for poets, especially when contrasted with their treatment by the aristocracy of England. He writes specifically of the case of Washington Irving, who did not gain fame in America until he had become a celebrated writer in England and Europe in general. Freneau compares Irving's reception in England, "he has kissed a Monarch's hand! / Before a prince I see him stand," with the daily stresses of a poet in America: "While you with terror meet the frown / Of Bank Directors of the town" (15–16, 19–20). The contrast is quite stark and effective. While Irving is feted and celebrated in England, the unnamed New England poet receives disapproving looks from bank directors, perhaps because his work is deemed unworthy, or perhaps because he owes money.

Given Freneau's dislike of British aristocracy, as evidenced by the tone and content of his more politically charged poems, the reader should not mistakenly assume that Freneau wishes for the replication of this system in America. Indeed, the lines describing Irving's royal reception are deflated with a reminder of the American Revolution and its express charge to eliminate rule by a monarch: "Forgetting times of seventy-six" (18). It is unclear from the placement of this line whether Freneau means to chastise Irving for acting in an un-American manner by "mixing"

with the "glittering nobles" or whether the nobles themselves have forgotten and forgiven the recent events of the Revolutionary War. The poem ends on a somewhat humorous note with the esquires in America "guzzl[ing] beer" (39). The image is a refreshing one in that it deflates the pomp and circumstance of the royal settings of England and replaces them with a lowly but more popular form. The poet, Freneau insists, should be of the people, not above them.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider the political stance of "To a New England Poet." How does its division of England and America, the aristocratic and the plebeian, compare with Freneau's more overtly political poems such as "A Political Litany," "On the Causes of Political Degeneracy," or "On Mr. Paine's Rights of Man"?
2. What role does Freneau argue that poetry should have in America? How does this argument square with the position that Phillis Wheatley and Sor Juana assume in their poetry, especially in "To Maecenas" and "In Reply to the Gentleman from Peru"?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON FRENEAU AND HIS WORK

1. Philip Freneau is best known as the "poet of the Revolution" because of the patriotic zeal for America that he expressed both in his prose and in his poetry. Considering some of the more lyrical or less overtly political of his poems, how might you argue that this title is deserved?
2. Several critics consider Freneau's poetry about nature to anticipate the transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau. How might you link his views of nature with his views of democracy? In what ways are they mutually informing and why?

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Jupiter Hammon (1711–1806)

If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being black, or for being slaves.

("An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York")

Jupiter Hammon is often called the first published black writer in America. From the Lloyd family ledger, we know that Hammon was born into slavery on October 11, 1711 (O'Neale 38). His master at his birth was Henry Lloyd, and throughout his life, Hammon would remain a slave of the Lloyd family. In 1763, when Henry Lloyd died, Jupiter's ownership transferred to Joseph Lloyd. In his later years, Hammon became the property of John Lloyd, the grandson of his original owner. The Lloyds were "one of the few families on Long Island, or for that matter in the state of New York, which had strong familial and commercial ties to Boston, Hartford, New York City, and London; the Lloyds obtained slave labor for their section of the state, prospering greatly from an exchange of goods and human chattel" (O'Neale 17). The family claimed ties to Welsh royalty and traced its lineage to Queen Elizabeth's personal physician. Their manorial grant in Queen's Village, which the family patriarch renamed *Lloyd's Neck,* consisted of 3,000 acres. The nearby seaport proved essential to the family's mercantile business, which included the slave trade to the island of Jamaica, as Henry Lloyd described his business ventures (O'Neale 18). The critic Sondra O'Neale, who studied the Lloyd family ledgers, has asserted that Jupiter Hammon's parents were two other slaves owned by the family: a male slave referred to only as Opium and a female slave called Rose (22). O'Neale bases her assertion about the identities of Jupiter's parents on two observations gleaned from studying the Lloyd family ledgers: that Opium is one of two slaves who were owned continually, and he was not hired out after Henry Lloyd's establishments as lord of the manor, and Jupiter's birth, which both took place in 1711. Hammon was able to attend school and apparently served the Lloyd family as a clerk. The Long Island Quaker community helped Hammon find a publisher for his work.

As has his contemporary Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon has suffered his share of negative criticism, most of it generated in the centuries after their works appeared. The contemporary critic and advocate Sondra O'Neale attributes the negative statements made by other critics, both past and present, to their lack of knowledge of the Bible and the circumstances inhibiting any overt rebellion in the published works of slaves (3). J. Saunders Redding, who wrote critically in 1939 of Hammon's poetic style, focused primarily on the religious content of his prose and on the supposed absence of a political message. Redding referred to Hammon's verse as "rhymed prose, doggerel, in which the homely thoughts of a very religious and superstitious man are expressed in limping phrases" (4–5). Indeed, Redding yoked Hammon with Wheatley when he offered his most scathing remark: "Both preferred slavery in America to freedom in Africa" (5). Similarly to Redding's assessment, the critic Benjamin Mays argues that Hammon's devotion to

Christianity "serve[s] as an opiate for the people." He also asserts that Hammon "was more interested in salvation in Heaven than he was in any form of social reconstruction" (102). For both Redding and Mays, Hammon appears as a naive and blindly devoted Christian whose religious convictions have erased all vestiges of rebellion against and subversion of the institution of slavery.

In her analysis of the often overlooked or unknown history of slavery in the North, Sondra O'Neale refers to the execution of slaves charged with rebellion and attempted escape; the draconian laws instituted in New York, Hammon's home state, which dictated all aspects of a slave's life; and the environment he must have endured as a slave at the Lloyds' manor house. One specific example in which O'Neale argues that most critics misinterpret Hammon's writings and messages involves his simple admonishment against slaves' cursing. A law passed in New York in 1730 made the use of profane language by a slave punishable "by whipping, not exceeding forty stripes" (O'Neale 13). In researching the legal statutes that regimented the lives of slaves in New York, O'Neale offers a persuasive context in which critics should reimagine Hammon and his works. What on the surface seems to be a request for slaves to remain free of any form of sin becomes instead a matter of practical advice for slaves to save them from the whipping post.

In defense of Hammon's employment of the Bible in his writing, O'Neale asserts, "In antebellum America the Bible functioned as a main instrument for slave proponents and abolitionists alike" (27–28). During Hammon's life, Calvinist doctrine prevailed, and this sect promoted the institution of slavery as it complied with their vision of God and their relationship to him. For Calvinists like the Puritans who believed in predestination, humans had no free will: God had already selected who would be among the "elect" to enjoy the pleasures of heaven after death. If God had such overwhelming power over humans, then the humans were well within their rights to exercise the same system of complete control over those they deemed brutes, Africans. O'Neale believes that Hammon was introduced to Puritanism (28); despite his knowledge of Puritan beliefs, it is quite evident that Hammon received a more liberating sect of Christianity in his association with the Quakers of Long Island and Oyster Bay (O'Neale 28). It was the Quakers of Philadelphia who published Hammon's "An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York" posthumously.

Against critics who directly or indirectly insinuate that Hammon must have been content with his lot as a slave or else he would have rebelled or died in his efforts to escape the bonds of slavery, O'Neale offers a bleak picture of the slave named Opium, who she believes may have been Jupiter Hammon's own father. As mentioned earlier, O'Neale bases her assertion of Opium's patrimony on his presence in the Lloyd household at the time of Jupiter's birth and on his ownership by the Lloyd family for his entire life. Judging from the Lloyd family ledger, O'Neale argues that Opium was a valued member of the household who was routinely rented out to neighboring families for a sizable amount of money. He is listed as one of the family's assets at one point in the ledger, and family members request his presence when he is serving at other homes. Despite his ability to generate significant revenue for the Lloyd family, Opium was also a significant liability to their accounts, as he was returned only one day after being leased to a neighboring family because he was recalcitrant and had attempted to escape. According to the ledgers, Opium made several escape attempts in his lifetime, and all of them ended with his punishment and return to the Lloyd manor. O'Neale suggests that in witnessing the fruitless attempts of his fellow slave and possible father, Opium, Jupiter Hammon would have lost all hope in attempting escape himself.

To address charges by critics that Hammon should have rebelled, O'Neale provides accounts of public executions held in New York of slaves whose only crime was attempting to gain their own freedom. In 1741, 18 blacks and four white indentured servants were hung on the strength of the sole testimony of a fellow indentured servant, Mary

Burton (O'Neale 12–13). A rash of house fires in New York that were all imagined to be the work of house slaves fomented widespread panic about the possibility of slave rebellion. O'Neale also points to a succession of laws passed in 1708 and 1712 "for preventing, suppressing, and punishing the conspiracy and insurrection of Negroes and other slaves" (11). Although the first law was created before Hammon's birth in 1711, the passage of the second act in the year after his birth indicates that the animus spurring the first law was still in existence and strong enough to warrant another piece of legislation.

In his writings, Hammon exhibited a profound and abiding understanding of the Bible and of its cultural importance in colonial American society. For contemporary readers of his works like "An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley" and "An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York," knowledge of 18th-century culture and religion, as well as knowledge of biblical Scripture, are a key to understanding what O'Neale calls "the founder of African American literature" (34).

"An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries" (1760)

In Jupiter Hammon's first poem, "An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries," he develops a theme that carries throughout his writings: a direct challenge to Calvinist belief in predestination of a select few, who do not include Africans. O'Neale argues that Hammon's challenge appears directly in the poem's title in its use of the term *salvation*. "In eighteenth-century theological definitions, the meaning of 'salvation' was related to the title of Christ as Savior and to that act of redemption whereby a person was 'saved' from sin and Satan. 'Savior' is the title for the Old Testament Jehovah, who delivered the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt" (42). Therefore, O'Neale states, Hammon's contemporary readers, who were well versed in 18th-century religious rhetoric, would immediately associate the poet's use of the term *savior* with the enslavement of the Israelites, and their own enslavement by abstraction. "It was impossible for a slave, writing the first literary expression by an African-American, to have penned the term 'salvation' without having slavery—his own ubiquitous crucible and that of African fellows—utmost in mind" (42).

O'Neale alerts readers to the 18th-century interpretation of another key term and concept, that of *redemption*. "'Redemption related even more to implications of slavery and emancipation than 'salvation.' Old Testament Jews called Jehovah the 'Great Redeemer' because he 'bought' them back from slavery" (43). As testament to the use of the term *redemption* in African-American letters to address release from slavery, Venture Smith, a 69-year-old former slave who wrote his narrative in 1798, used this term when addressing the topic of buying the freedom of his wife and children (Porter 551–555). Further proof of the term's association with emancipation from slavery appears in the Reverend Daniel Veysie's definition of the term: "A price, in the common acceptance of the word, is something given in exchange for some other thing: and this price becomes a ransom, when it is given for the deliverance of a person who is in a state of bondage or captivity" (43).

In the opening stanza of his poem, Hammon writes, "Redemption now to every one / That loves his holy Word" (3–4). The notion expressed in these lines directly challenges Calvinist thought about predestination, which held that God had selected a few who were to receive his salvation while the majority would suffer for eternity. As Hammon declares, redemption is available to all Christians. Hammon's only qualifier, "every one that loves his holy Word," does not discriminate along lines of class, race, or nationality, but instead penetrates these external trappings to consider only their faith. Further, as O'Neale has argued, the use of the terms *redemption* and *salvation* in this first stanza oriented readers to a more egalitarian sense of Christianity than that held by Calvinists in early America, and immediately reached out to fellow slaves.

With the lines "Dear Jesus give thy Spirit now / Thy Grace to every nation / that hasn't the Lord to whom we bow," Hammon functions in his role as a preacher and prays to God to extend his grace over the world, and not reserve it only for select nations or countries. This belief, too, flies in the face of early colonial thought, perhaps best expressed by JOHN WINTHROP, who imagined the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in "A Model of Christian Charity," as a beacon for other civilizations to emulate, a "city upon a hill." Even those climes not currently devoted to Christianity receive Hammon's sincere hope for their salvation. Christ's sacrifice, through his death and Resurrection, is imagined by Hammon to extend to all, as he writes, "It's well agreed and certain true / He gave his only Son" (23–24). In a deft rhetorical move, Hammon states what is "well agreed and certain true," yet takes this accepted knowledge of Christ's Redemption and applies it to himself and other slaves. This reading of Christ's sacrifice as an act intended to save all of humanity results from the combined effect of the preceding stanzas and their insistence on God's grace for "every nation" and Redemption available to "every one."

Hammon's persona as a preacher in the poem appears again in stanza 7, when he pleads, "Lord hear our penitential Cry" (25). The use of *our* is key, as it expands the identity of the speaker from a singular voice to a representative of a larger body, perhaps a congregation. If this *our* is fellow slaves, as seems to concur with O'Neale's interpretation, then the plea for "Salvation from above" resonates with a double meaning: spiritual salvation and physical relief from the sufferings of bondage. Another reference to slavery appears in the following stanza, stanza 8, in which Hammon names Christ as "being thy captive Slave" (32). O'Neale traces Hammon's reference to Christ as a slave to the Gospel of Mark: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). The use of biblical text to refer to Christ as a servant or slave places African slaves like him in an elevated position, as it calls into question the authority that slave owners hold over fellow humans. If Christ is a slave, and he is the slave of the Lord, then only the Lord can rightfully occupy a position of authority. Hammon cannot write out these conclusions in his poem and still have it published, but he can reference the gospel and trust that his readers, well versed in biblical text, would draw such a conclusion.

Hammon makes another biblical allusion, as O'Neale notes, in stanza 11 when he writes of "our lamentation." She points out that in addition to the traditional definition of the term as a "mournful cry, it also is the title of an Old Testament book by the prophet Jeremiah. To understand Hammon's use of the term, one should note that Jeremiah wrote the brief book to lament Israel's enslavement under Babylon" (64). As an interpretation of the stanza's final line, "We felt thy salvation," O'Neale refers readers to a belief widely held "in the old-time camp meetings among Blacks in agrarian culture [that] prayer was not consummated unless the supplicant was assured that he had gotten his message through" (54). As an intermediary between fellow sinners and God, Hammon assures those joined with him in prayer that their penitential cries have been received, as evidenced by the speaker's emotional response (54). Such a practice was widely exercised during the revivals of the Great Awakening in which sinners physically demonstrated their repentance (54–55). O'Neale's interpretation extends to the next stanza and its second line, "give us a true motion." Lest readers misinterpret this line for "true emotion," O'Neale cautions, "Hammon is concerned here with general repentance rather than simply a veneer of church attendance and societal recognition that could result in pseudoassumptions of authentic Christian experience" (64).

The poem's final biblical allusion to the common sufferings of Africans and Israelites in the bonds of slavery occurs in stanza 16 when Hammon references "thy leading Staff." O'Neale points to Moses' association with a staff in confrontation with Pharoah, "the archetypal oppressor of Israelites" (64). For Moses, the staff functioned both as a weapon of revenge, for he used it to "bring plagues

on the Egyptians," and as a source of nourishment and escape: "He parted the Red Sea with the same staff and used it to smite a rock to provide water for the tribes as they were exiting from Egypt" (64).

The speaker's voice shifts from sincere supplicant and preacher to that of God, assuring them all of the reception of their pleas and of their future salvation in stanza 18. "Salvation gently given / O turn your hearts, accept the Word / Your souls are fit for Heaven" (62). Having laid the groundwork for an egalitarian interpretation of salvation from the initial stanza, Hammon makes clear that "your souls" includes his fellow slaves, whom Calvinism would deny a position among the elect. The remaining stanzas of the poem eagerly anticipate salvation in heaven: "let us with Angels share."

For Discussion or Writing

1. In "An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York" as well as "An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley," Jupiter Hammon directly identifies himself as a Negro slave, but his first poem makes no such statements. How does Hammon position or identify himself in this poem?
2. How does Hammon's message in this poem compare to those in his other works? How would you describe the tone of this poem? Does it shift? If so, where?

"An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley, Ethiopian Poetess, in Boston, Who Came from Africa at Eight Years of Age, and Soon Became Acquainted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (1778)

Jupiter Hammon invites Wheatley, defined as a "pious youth," to celebrate God's wisdom in taking her to America from "that distant shore" so she might "learn his holy word" (1, 3, 4). The complementary biblical verse to this opening stanza is from the final chapter of Ecclesiastes: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years approach when you will say 'I find no pleasure in them'" (12:1). Within this passage, we are reminded of the faith that we held when we were young and living lives devoid of trouble and filled with pleasure. Given Wheatley's youth spent in Africa until her kidnapping and enslavement at the age of eight, this passage seems at odds with the first stanza. Although Wheatley referred to her own delivery into a Christian nation from the "land of errors," the circumstances of her early life seem to work against a direct reading of Hammon's own writing and references to the Bible.

Psalm 136, verses 1, 2, and 3 accompany Hammon's second stanza, in which he considers the possibility that were it not for "God's tender mercy," Wheatley might still reside "amidst a dark abode" (7, 6). All three lines from the citation in Psalms begin with the same refrain, "Give thanks," and end, "His love endures forever" (Psalm 136:1–3). This second half of the refrain, which speaks of God's enduring love, might echo as a consolation to Wheatley for the temporary condition of enslavement that marks her time on earth. Because her journey to America occasioned her possession of the "holy word," the brief difficulties she must endure will be rewarded in the hereafter. Hammon's choice of terms, "Thou hast the holy word," contains an allusion to her poetry, which is often informed by her Christian belief (8).

The third stanza builds upon the idea of slaves' receiving their rewards after death for the ills suffered in life. Hammon writes of "reap[ing] the joys that never cease" (11). The second verse of Hammon's first of two biblical citations for this particular stanza seems most in line with his own expression, as Psalm 1, 2 refer to God's law that the mindful Christian "meditates [on] day and night." The faithful who "does not walk in the counsel of the wicked" are blessed (1). The metaphor of walking appears to be carried over into Hammon's line "fair wisdom's ways are paths of peace, and they that walk therein" (9–10). The Psalms citation makes no mention of peace but speaks instead of wisdom and joy. It is possible that Hammon refers to peace as an indirect admonition to those who would rebel against the harsh

conditions of slavery. Hammon's reference to wisdom appears also in the second biblical citation for this stanza: "Do not be wise in your own eyes" (Proverbs 3:7). Despite the double appearance of this term in both the Bible and the poem, its meaning seems to be obscured rather than clarified. When considered in concert, the two references to wisdom defer to God and to peace, as though advising Wheatley to place her faith in God's plan and thus act peacefully when confronted with any difficulty. Given Wheatley's propensity to utilize the authority and voice afforded by her position as a pious Christian, the two passages on wisdom could easily be Hammon's indirect applauding of Wheatley's "wise" employment of Christian belief and biblical references when addressing the difficult subject of enslavement.

Hammon repeats the idea that "God's tender mercy" was at work in removing Wheatley from Africa. He writes of earthly and celestial rewards that are available to her because of her conversion and abiding faith: "In Christian faith thou hast a share / worth all the gold of Spain" (15–16). The rewards afforded by Wheatley's Christian faith, as outlined in Psalm 103, include the following "benefits": "He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion" (3–4).

Tellingly, the fifth stanza, which alludes to the middle passage that Wheatley endured "while thousands [were] tossed by the sea" makes no reference to a supporting biblical passage. Instead, Hammon simply includes the ominous but accurate term to describe the sea voyage from Africa to enslavement in the West: *death.*

Stanzas 6, 7, and 8 provide a meditation on the salvation purchased for both Wheatley and mankind in general through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. For Wheatley in particular, the death and resurrection of Jesus oblige her to uphold herself as "a pattern" "to [the] youth of Boston town" (21, 22). The corresponding biblical passages from Corinthians, Romans, and Psalms make no mention of the obligation Christians have to model proper behavior, but all speak instead of the benefits of a life guided by righteousness, and of God's love and deliverance.

Hammon returns to Wheatley in stanza 9, in which he advises her to "seek the living God," echoing the language of Matthew, which assures the faithful that "he who seeks finds" (7:8). Such inquisitiveness, Hammon assures Wheatley, will result ultimately in her being "perfect in the word" (36). As with stanza 2, Hammon retains the double meaning of Wheatley's understanding of the Bible, or holy word, and the crafted verse of her poetry.

Although stanzas 10 and 11 return to the theme of Wheatley's removal from a "distant shore" and "heathen shore," neither of the accompanying verses from Psalms refers to God's deliverance. Hammon's invitation, "come magnify thy God," closely echoes the declarations of extolling, praising, boasting, and glorifying the Lord (Psalm 34: 1–3).

Hunger and thirst, two common needs that animals and humans alike must satisfy, are the subjects of stanza 13, which Hammon transforms to the basic needs the soul has for God. Psalm 42 describes a person whose "tears have been [his] good," a lamentable condition that too many slaves shared (42:1–3). Hammon's reminder, the third time it has appeared in his poem, that Wheatley "hast the holy word," might now refer to her ability to live off the monies earned from the publication of her verse. In direct opposition to the subject of Wheatley's meeting her basic needs on earth, Hammon devotes his remaining eight stanzas to the rewards that Wheatley, as a righteous Christian, can enjoy in heaven. The stark contrast between Hammon's only reference to the very real condition Wheatley and he could face as slaves—being hungry—and his immediate return from this subject to "heaven's joys," where Wheatley may "drink Samaria's flood" and never thirst again, is worthy of further examination. Hammon seems to take on a tone of gentle but firm admonition in his address to Wheatley. While he has praised her before as a model for the "youth of Boston town," and thus imagined within her a moral compass that would guide her and allow her to guide others, his sub-

sequent stanzas advise her to "seek heaven's joys" and thus differentiate herself from those "thousands [who] muse with earthly toys" (67, 65). How can a reader reconcile these contrasting treatments of Phillis Wheatley—first as a "pattern" for others and later as a potentially fallen Christian in need of remonstration? It might well be that Hammon's reference, however brief, to the conditions of slavery, which were too difficult to solve on earth, indicates that all he could imagine were the rewards of heaven for those like him and Wheatley who suffer on earth.

For the first time in the poem, he refers to the two of them as *we* and projects himself into the poem. This occurs in stanza 17 when he writes, "Where we do hope to meet" (68). The reference to an eventual meeting place for the two of them is not to earth but rather to heaven, and the language falls short of the certainty expressed in previous stanzas as Hammon states that they "hope to meet." Hammon again refers to their common fate in the 20th stanza, "Whene'er we come to die" (78). The two shall leave the body, "its cottage made of clay," and transcend the brutal conditions of slavery imposed on them on earth (79). This is the only reference made to the body or to his and Wheatley's African racial identity until the closing lines, when Hammon identifies himself as "a Negro Man belonging to Mr. Joseph Lloyd." This reference to himself as "belonging" to another breaks the unified "we" between him and Phillis Wheatley as the African-born poetess had been manumitted in 1773, nearly five years prior to the writing and publication of Hammon's poem. With this knowledge in mind, readers might cast a second look at the hopefulness of the first half of the poem with the potential for doing good deeds on earth and the transfer of such high feeling to one's life after death.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Read some of the biblical references for the stanzas that are not provided in this entry and compare the concepts presented in them with the message contained within Hammon's stanza. How might you account for the differences?
2. Compare Hammon's treatment of slavery with Wheatley's and Olaudah Equiano's. How do they address freedom, racism, and the slave-owning Christians who use the Bible for justification of the institution of slavery? How do they reconcile Christianity with slavery?

"An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York" (1786)

Hammon composed this prose piece at Queen's Village (present-day Hartford, Connecticut) in September 1786, and it first appeared in print the following year in New York, and then in Philadelphia. The urban area of Hartford, which was a haven for Joseph Lloyd during the Revolutionary War, proved a fruitful place for Hammon's writing, as it also was the location where he wrote and published his address to Phillis Wheatley (O'Neale 248). The third edition of "An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York" appeared in 1806, an indication that Hammon's message struck a cord with a readership across the century. The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery (the Quakers) published 500 copies of the "Address."

Hammon's "Address" is prefaced by both his brief statement of humility, which was in keeping with literary tradition, as well as an authenticating note from the publishing house, verifying Hammon's identity as an African slave. In his authorial address to "members of the African Society in the city of New York," Hammon commends them for "discovering so much kindness and good will to those you thought were oppressed, and had no helper." Hammon offers his humble hope that the society members will "think it is likely to do good among [African slaves]" and "be of any service to them." In their note dated February 20, 1787, the printers attest, "As this address is wrote [*sic*] in a better stile than could be expected from a slave, some may be ready to doubt of the genuineness of the production." In addition to attesting to Hammon's identity as both the author of the address

and a slave, the printers provide readers with a brief moral sketch of him, avowing that he "has been remarkable for his fidelity and abstinence from those vices, which he warns his brethren against." It is quite likely that the printers were mindful of Puritan doctrine when offering statements regarding Hammon's moral character, for the Puritans feared that the written word could be a potential source of moral corruption if either the author or the message were morally tainted. The printers' pledge about Hammon's morality also speaks indirectly to Northern fears of slave rebellion and contagion. If the printers were to disseminate a text by an amoral or immoral person to a body of African slaves, they could potentially be responsible for inciting rebellion or insurrection. If, however, as the printers testify, Hammon is free of the vices he addresses in writing to his fellow slaves, then the possibility of his mounting an insurrection is negligible.

Hammon likens his position of speaking to "my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" to that of the apostle Paul, who writes in Romans to his fellow Jews who have not converted to Christianity. By making this comparison, Hammon foregrounds his biblical knowledge and thus solidifies the position of authority from which he speaks. As Paul, who was a Jew who preached among fellow Jews to convert them to Christianity, Hammon imagines himself to be a prophet speaking to his fellow Negroes, who may or may not be Christians. Additionally, Hammon's specific use of Paul, as the critic Sondra O'Neale views it, serves a subtler, but nonetheless crucial, purpose. The parallel with Paul allowed Hammon indirectly to reference the practice of segregation of black parishioners in colonial churches just as Paul "vehemently disagreed with this practice and the prejudice against Gentiles that it perpetuated" in the book of Galatians (O'Neale 213).

By opening with a biblical reference, and imploring his fellow slaves to read and believe the Bible, Hammon was not only looking to their spiritual well-being, but also providing them with what O'Neale refers to as a "secret code" to his own writing (213). "Hammon encouraged his slave audience to master reading and then to apply this skill to Scripture for two reasons: first, they could hardly understand his coded messages without some knowledge of biblical symbolism, of narrative, and of ethics, and of God's special concern for all pariahs; and second, they could not comprehend the pretentiousness of colonists who professed Christianity while continuing the slave system" (O'Neale 215). O'Neale offers several biblical references that Hammon makes but "could not publicly explore" in his "Address" such as his references to God's preference of the poor (slaves) to the rich (slave owners), his final judgment against slave owners, and a direct challenge to the Anglican-Calvinist belief in the absolute will of God. Hammon cites a passage from the second book of James in the New Testament in which God chooses the poor for salvation. This passage directly contradicts Puritan belief in predestination for the elect who envision themselves as the only ones deemed worthy of salvation; if God has also selected the poor for salvation, then the Puritans are not the only elect ones. Further, as O'Neale states, readers familiar with James would naturally think of the first book of this particular Gospel, in which James writes that "the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower," and recognize in this indirect reference an indictment of wealthy slave owners (James 1:10). Another example of how Hammon relies upon the Bible as a "covert code" for communicating with his fellow slaves involves his use of Ephesians in his imaginings of slavery. In other portions of this gospel, Paul advised masters to treat their slaves as brothers, and then, in his epistle to Philemon, Paul pointedly requests that the master free his brother (former slave), who is now his equal.

Hammon offers his readers specific advice that appears to contemporary readers and critics to advocate complacency in enslavement, and for this reason, O'Neale and others believe that "this misinterpretation has done much to damage Hammon's integrity and to prevent his veneration as the first Black writer of America" (228). When

Hammon cautions his fellow slaves to refrain from profanity, stating plainly, "All of those of you who are profane are serving the devil," his purpose must be surmised from an understanding of New York law regarding slaves' behavior. The historian Hammond Trumbull provides a list of punishments for blasphemy, ranging from having a "bodkin thrust through his tongue" to receiving "censure of death for his offence" (321). By advising his readers not to curse, Hammon was attempting to save them from the severe punishments meted out against blasphemers. Similarly, his admonishments against slaves' stealing objects stem from knowledge of the legal consequences of such crimes. Hammon plainly states, "You must think [stealing] as wicked, and some accounts more wicked, to steal from your masters than from others." A slave named Johnson Green was hanged in 1786 "for the atrocious crime of burglary" (Greene 153). It is not that Hammon was advocating that slaves be well-behaved, but rather that he was mindful of the legal boundaries of their behavior and the horrific sentences they faced if they violated those boundaries.

When imaging the end of slavery in his address, he does so in accordance with the general tenor of New York and its plans for gradual emancipation. "Many modern readers have been critical of Hammon for saying that he did not wish to be free and for suggesting emancipation only for slaves who were much younger than he" (O'Neale 221). In 1799, New York adopted a plan similar to that advocated by Hammon in his "Address," and it was not until 1821 that the state had finally abolished slavery (O'Neale 221). For O'Neale, then, an understanding of the historical context in which Hammon lived would help contemporary readers understand why his "Address" does not call for the immediate abolition of slavery. Hammon was looking realistically at the tenor of the times and attaching his hopes to future generations, who might taste a freedom he, at the age of 76, would never know.

Short of rebellion or a call to insurrection, Hammon advocates the forms of freedom that will pass under the radar of his white publishers. He calls for slaves to become literate so that they may read the Bible: "seeing that the Bible is the word of God and everything in it is true and that it reveals such awful and glorious things, what can be more important than that you should learn to read it?" Were his fellow slaves to gain literacy skills and knowledge of the Bible, they would surely, as O'Neale argues, gain access to and fluency in Hammon's coded language. They would recognize his pattern of alerting readers to passages that require them to read in the margins or periphery, to examine Hammon's application of the Bible to a language of protest and a desire, however coded, for freedom.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Both SAMSON OCCOM and Jupiter Hammon have the opportunity to address "their brethren, their kinsmen according to the flesh." Compare Hammon's imaginings of his fellow slaves with Occom's address to his fellow "Indians" in his address delivered at the execution of Moses Paul. How do they address and imagine their kinsmen? How do they position or identify themselves? To what degree does their position as ministers inform their authority or their identity?
2. How does Hammon's representation of slavery compare to that of his fellow slave and poet Phillis Wheatley?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON HAMMON AND HIS WORK

1. As a Christian, Jupiter Hammon was guided by biblical morals and precepts, but as a slave, he had to learn of the laws written and enforced by slave owners in a secular world. In reading through his writings, which sets of rules or laws did Hammon seem to advocate or respect more and why?
2. Some critics have referred to Hammon as the father of African-American literature. How might you see his influence in 19th-century writers like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper?

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Handsome Lake (1735–1815)

Take these cards, this money, this fiddle, this whiskey and this blood corruption and give them all to the people across the water.

("How America Was Discovered")

Handsome Lake was born in 1735 in Conawagas, a Seneca village alongside the Genesee River, across from the present-day town of Avon, in Livingston County, New York (Parker 9). His teachings and prophecies were initially transmitted orally, until the ethnographer Arthur C. Parker, himself a member of the Seneca tribe, codified much of his work in the 1913 book *The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet.* Parker learned from interviewing Buffalo Tom Jemison that Handsome Lake was "a middle-sized man, slim, and unhealthy looking" (9). Parker could not determine Handsome Lake's warrior name but did learn that he belonged to the "noble" class of Seneca, known as the *Ganiòdai'iò* or *Ska'niadar'iò* (9). Although Handsome Lake was a member of the Turtle Clan, he was raised primarily by the Wolves (9). As Parker states, "The general story of his life may be gleaned from a perusal of his code, there being nothing of any consequence known of his life up to the time of his 'vision,'" which took place in 1799 (9). The only exception, Parker admits, is the presence of Handsome Lake's name on a treaty dating from 1794, but the future prophet's involvement in the debates leading up to the signing of the treaty is unknown.

From general oral tradition, Parker learned that Handsome Lake suffered from alcoholism, fueled in part by the despair he and fellow members of the Seneca tribe felt upon losing the Genesee territory, which was his birthplace. When he and fellow tribe members moved to the Alleghany settlement, he fell into drinking, or, as Parker describes it, "became afflicted with a wasting disease that was aggravated by his continued use of the white man's fire water" (9). Living alone in a "bare cabin [that] scarcely afford him shelter," Handsome Lake seems to have endured this sick or drunken state for nearly four years, until his daughter, who was married by then, returned to care for him (9). During his illness, he experienced revelations or visions, which he later described in detail.

Handsome Lake's popular appeal gained the attention of President Thomas Jefferson, and after his visit to Washington, D.C., with a delegation of Oneida and Seneca in 1802, Jefferson requested that Secretary of War Dearborn write a letter commending the Seneca prophet. His message and his model of temperance were applauded by Dearborn, who wrote that if the tribes follow Handsome Lake's wisdom, "the Great Spirit will take of [them] and make [them] happy."

Handsome Lake's vision in 1799 created what is referred to as the "Religion of Handsome Lake" and "The Old Way of Handsome Lake," a set of moral codes directed to members of the Six Nations, another name for the Iroquois. In the early 18th century, six tribes, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora, banded together to become the Six Nations. Parker describes the emotional impact of Handsome Lake's teachings by

contextualizing his message of hope and possibility against the historical events that had demoralized the tribe: loss of ancestral lands, broken treaties, and daily acts of hostility from the encroaching Anglo-European settlers. Against this atmosphere of collective despair, Parker situates Handsome Lake's vision as "a new system, a thing to think about, a thing to discuss, a thing to believe. His message, whether false or true, was a creation of their own and afforded a nucleus about which they could cluster themselves and fasten their hopes."

In Handsome Lake's vision, he falls down outside his cabin, apparently dead, after having uttered the words "So be it." His daughter and son-in-law spread word of his death, and relatives gather around his corpse only to discover a warm area on Handsome Lake's body that seems to spread until the presumed dead man opens his eyes and declares that he is well, and that he has been visited by four beings who impart a message to him from the Great Creator. In their message, they speak of four words that anger the Great Creator: *alcohol, witchcraft, evil charms,* and *abortives* (plants used to promote the spontaneous abortion of fetuses). The Great Creator's additional words of advice primarily concern the institution of marriage: He wishes for husbands to remain with their wives, especially after they have borne children together; for mothers-in-law no longer to intervene and disrupt marital harmony between new brides and grooms; for husbands to refrain from physically abusing their wives; and for spouses to remain loyal to one another. Interestingly, the Great Creator advocates practicing three activities that white men perform: cultivation of land, construction of houses, and cultivation of livestock.

Handsome Lake's prophecies, as the ethnographer Parker records in *The Code of Handsome Lake,* were still taught in the early 20th century as an integral part of the annual midwinter festivals that take place on reservations in New York and Ontario (5). Six chiefs (originally including Handsome Lake's half brother, Cornplanter) are considered to be the "holders" of Handsome Lake's teachings, and they exchange places with one another to proclaim the three-day-long recitation of the *Gai'wiio,* the Iroquois name for Handsome Lake's "new religion" (6). Parker attributes the lasting appeal of Handsome Lake's teachings to the linguistic tie affected through the recitation of the *Gai'wiio* in the Seneca language, as well as the lucid manner in which the moral precepts are expressed (7). The various versions of the *Gai'wiio* were consolidated and codified by Chief John Jacket in the mid-19th century when he transcribed what was deemed by consensus to be the most accurate version of Handsome Lake's words into the Seneca language (7). The paper version was passed among the "holders" so that they might memorize the portions that they had misspoken in past years, but one of them, Chief Cornplanter, a different Cornplanter from the chief who was Handsome Lake's half brother, reportedly "lost the papers sheet by sheet" (8). Cornplanter's attempt to reconstruct the work was drawn to the attention of Parker, and a translation was begun.

"How America Was Discovered" (1799)

As the preface to Handsome Lake's prophecy, which occurred in 1799 and was later memorized and retold by six "holders" at sacred meetings held around the time when the first wild strawberries appear, this is the tale of how America was discovered. In Arthur C. Parker's *The Code of Handsome Lake,* the tale is entitled "How the White Race Came to America and Why the Gai'wiio Became a Necessity." The term *Gai'wiio* refers to the moral teachings of Handsome Lake. Thus, in the prophecy the original appearance of Anglo-European settlers in America is intricately tied to the moral teachings passed down from the Great Creator to Handsome Lake through his vision. The contemporary version of this tale derives from the oral version of "How America Was Discovered" given to the ethnographer and fellow Seneca Arthur C. Parker.

In Parker's *The Code of Handsome Lake,* the tale begins by situating the place from which this young minister or preacher originates: "Now this happened a long time ago and across the great salt

sea that stretches east. There is, so it seems, a world there and soil like ours. There in the great queen's country where swarmed many people—so many that they crowded upon one another and had no place for hunting—there lived a great queen" (16). The "great salt sea" refers to the Atlantic Ocean, and the world that appears with "soil like ours" is clearly Europe. The reference to a queen rather than a king, and the later reference to CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, specifically narrow the continent down to Spain, with the queen as none other than Isabella, who, along with King Ferdinand, financed Columbus's famous voyage that was supposed to discover a new trade route to the Indies.

Both versions, however, contain the same details of the young minister performing the duty his queen requested of him: dusting some old volumes hidden in a chest. When he finishes his chore, he opens the final book resting at the bottom of the chest. In Parker's longer version, the minister looks about him and listens for anyone approaching, signs "he had no right to read the book and wanted no one to detect him" (16). Thus, the knowledge derived from the book—that the preacher had been deceived and that the Lord was not on earth—appears in the longer version as forbidden knowledge, linked indirectly with the Genesis tale of the Tree of Knowledge from which both Adam and Eve ate, causing their expulsion from Eden. This aspect of the longer version recurs at the end of the tale, when the figure whom the minister trusts and with whom he enters into a bargain is revealed to be the devil.

The moral aspects of the tale are pervasive, with the search for God on earth ending with mankind corrupting mankind. The journey the minister first makes takes him to a golden castle across a river that is spanned by a bridge of gold. The multiple references to gold symbolize the avarice of early explorers such as Columbus who seek out new lands in the hopes of exploiting their natural resources. The minister ignores the warnings he has that his new acquaintance who dwells in the golden castle should be feared and not trusted. Two of his fellow companions pray, fall on their knees, and quickly depart before ever reaching the castle doors. They are symbols of true believers who recognize a source of evil and turn their backs upon it just as the truly devout were said to look away from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament. When the minister enters the castle and is asked to bear a bundle of five things in exchange for a great reward, he has in essence sold his soul to the devil. Further, the implication of moral corruption in Handsome Lake's tale is not reserved solely to the unnamed minister but is extended to all explorers, beginning with Columbus, who hears the minister's tale and bargain and agrees to set sail for the new land.

The people who live "across the ocean that lies toward the sunset [in] another world" are described as "virtuous, they have no evil habits or appetites but are honest and single-minded." Columbus takes with him to the New World a bundle containing five things "that men and women enjoy"; in the longer version, these very items are described as the vehicle by which Columbus will "make [indigenous people] as white men are" (Parker 17). The five items are playing cards, money, a fiddle, whiskey, and "blood corruption." The latter is further defined in the longer version as a "secret poison [that will] eat the life from their blood and crumble their bones." All are inextricably linked with acculturation into Western civilization (18). Parker's *The Code of Handsome Lake* provides a more detailed explanation or definition of "blood corruption" so that it seems to refer to the fatal introduction of epidemics such as smallpox to indigenous populations by Anglo-European colonists.

Both tales end with the same note—the devil himself lamenting "his enormous mistake" of wreaking "havoc and misery" on such a grand scale.

For Discussion or Writing

1. As stated, Handsome Lake's tale "How America Was Discovered" appears as a preface for his moral tales and is even titled in such a way as to make the moral tales a necessity. Consider the moral aspects of the tale. Is it a particularly Christian morality? Does it directly condemn European explorers such as Columbus?

2. Compare Handsome Lake's stance on temperance with SAMSON OCCOM's "A Sermon Preached . . . at the Execution of Moses Paul an Indian." Who are the two men's intended audiences? How do they address the problem of alcohol abuse among American Indians? What role does Christianity play in temperance?
3. Handsome Lake references CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS directly in this tale. Compare his view of Columbus's arrival in the Americas with Columbus's own view of himself and his destiny. How does each writer employ images from Christianity to justify his viewpoints?
4. Compare Handsome Lake's vision of the original peoples in America with Thomas Jefferson's, either from *Notes on the State of Virginia* or from his 1802 letter addressed to Handsome Lake.

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON HANDSOME LAKE AND HIS WORK

1. The ethnographer and member of the Seneca tribe Arthur C. Parker notes that Handsome Lake's vision continued to be told in tribal meetings over a century after it originated. Reading through the "Religion of Handsome Lake," write an essay in which you identify the timeless elements contained in the text that might account for its continued influence.
2. Handsome Lake participated in the 1794 peace treaty that brokered peace between the Six Nations and the United States government. Read through the treaty and locate similar impulses for peace in Handsome Lake's own writing.

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Washington Irving (1783–1859)

A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener by constant use.

("Rip Van Winkle")

The youngest of 11 children, Washington Irving was born on April 3, 1783, to a merchant family residing in New York City. His father, William, derived from a wealthy Scottish family whose ancestry could be traced back to the secretary and armor bearer of William Bruce. Because of the family's declining circumstances, William left Scotland and took to the sea. During service in the French War, William met Sarah Sanders, and the two married in 1761 and departed two years later for New York, where William took up work as a merchant. As a testament to the family's loyalties to the American cause of the Revolutionary War, they named their youngest son after the nation's founding father and first president, George Washington. The biographer Charles Dudley Warner reports that the family's Scottish maid, following General Washington into a shop, presented the baby named after him, and that the young Irving received a blessing from his namesake. Little did the Revolutionary War hero know that he was meeting one of his future biographers.

Irving's childhood education is described as barely adequate, chiefly because of the young boy's desires to be outdoors, reading travel and adventure books such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Sinbad*. Owing to his lack of engagement with a formal education, he was allowed to complete his schooling at age 16, when his family insisted that he enter into the pursuit of law, following the career choice of two of his older brothers. In 1806, Irving completed his study of law with Judge Hoffman and successfully passed the bar. As a lawyer, Irving joined his brother John in a partnership (Warner 44). His association with the Hoffman family would endure throughout his lifetime and be the source of much joy and sorrow. Judge Hoffman's daughter, Matilda, soon became enamored of Washington, as he did of her. Their families both embraced the possibility of marriage, but young Matilda contracted a disease and died a short time after at the age of 17. Irving's grief was palpable and a central reason, as he explained to the Foster family while in Dresden, Germany, years later, why he never entertained the thought of marriage again. His biographer Warner reports that Irving slept for months with Matilda's Bible prayer book beneath his pillow, and after his death, a locket of her hair, together with a sketch of her, were found among his possessions.

Matilda's death occurred while Irving was still composing *The History of New York*. Irving writes of the incongruity of the two events in his memorandum:

> When I became more calm and collected, I applied myself, by way of occupation, to the finishing of my work. I brought it to a close, as well as I could, and published it; but the time and circumstances in which it was produced rendered me always unable to look upon it with

> satisfaction. Still it took with the public, and gave me celebrity, as an original work was something remarkable and uncommon in America. I was noticed, caressed, and, for a time, elevated by the popularity I had gained.

Irving began his literary career as a commentator on American life and character at the age of 19. In a series of pseudonymous letters signed *Jonathan Oldstyle,* Irving published his comments on America's desires to emulate France and Britain in the arts and fashion, among other subjects. The letters appeared in his brother Peter Irving's *Morning Chronicle,* which circulated in their hometown of New York City (Hedges 17). All of Irving's critics who read the Oldstyle letters recognize the budding author's parody of Addison and Steele, British writers famous for their satirical articles in the newspapers the *Spectator* and the *Tattler.* Nevertheless, many critics see in Irving's early writings the hallmarks of what would be honed into his own style and subject matter in subsequent years.

His view of society was significantly widened when he embarked on the fashionable trend of the grand tour, leaving home for 21 months on travels through Italy, France, Switzerland, England, and the "Low Countries." The biographers William Hedges and Charles Dudley Warner reason that Irving's "respiratory ailment" was a central cause of his journey. Just years before, Irving made several trips along the Hudson with the sole purpose of alleviating his pulmonary weakness, and when symptoms erupted again, his brothers determined to send him to Europe. Hedges notes the trip's dual purpose: As his health improved, so too did Irving's aesthetic sense (34). In Rome, Irving's focuses on the ruins and "sense of inevitable decay were to be his substitute for a theory of history or a philosophy" (42). It was also in Rome that he met Washington Allston, a painter whose passion for the art and enthusiasm for the city's landscapes nearly persuaded Irving to remain in Rome and take up the profession of painting. It is quite likely that some of his attention to landscape, seen most particularly in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," where the landscape appears as a character, derives from his association with Allston. In direct contradiction to Hedge's reading of a growing aesthetic in Irving, Warner argues that the young traveler enjoyed the finer aspects of society such as theater, salons, and fine dining, but "there is little prophesy that Irving would be anything more in life than a charming 'flaneur.'"

While attending to his affairs as a lawyer, which included acting as a minor aide during Aaron Burr's trial for treason, Irving stole away to write and begin publishing a semimonthly periodical entitled *Salmagundi,* which means "hash," a parody of British periodicals such as Addison and Steele's *Spectator.* He delineated its purpose: "simply to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age." Irving received support from his brother William and the publisher David Longworth (45). Irving's recent journey to Europe appears to have influenced his subject matter for *Salmagundi* as Hedges states that travelers and traveling "manifest a great deal of interest." He turns the lens on Europeans and their views of America: "trying to read European meanings into America" (Hedges 53). Warner notes that *Salmagundi* struck a cord with readers: "From the first it was an immense success; it had circulation in other cities, and many imitations of it sprung up."

Irving followed the two years of *Salmagundi* with *The History of New York,* a satire in which he introduces readers to the highly unreliable historian Diedrich Knickerbocker. He was 26 years old at the time of *History*'s publication. Warner writes that Irving's brother Paul was central to the earliest imaginings and drafts of the text, which originally offered "a mere burlesque upon pedantry and erudition." When Paul had to leave for Europe to attend to business, however, Irving took it upon himself to complete the manuscript. In this text, Irving explores a relativistic concept of history, which is highly dependent upon point of view. He achieves such an end by offering readers a host of conflicting opinions on any given subject, ranging from the superstitious and absurd to the most rational and studied. As a result, the latter seems just as likely, or unlikely, as the former. The creative advertisement of the book bears mention, as it

adds another layer to Irving's treatment of legend. In local newspapers, Irving advertised for a missing person named Diedrich Knickerbocker, who was described as an old man clad in knee breeches and wearing a cocked hat. In subsequent weeks, the tale of Knickerbocker had grown, including the fact that he had left without paying his landlord, and that all that remained of his personal effects was an odd book. The book, of course, was Irving's *The History of New York*.

As testament to the book's success, Sir Walter Scott wrote praise for Irving's creation, comparing his wit to that of Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels,* and Laurence Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy*: "I have never," Sir Walter Scott wrote, "read anything so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift as the annals of Diedrich Knickerbocker. I have been employed these few evenings in reading them aloud to Mrs. S. and two ladies who are our guests, and our sides have been absolutely sore with laughing. I think, too, there are passages which indicate that the author possesses power of a different kind, and has some touches which remind me of Sterne."

In 1848, when Irving issued a new edition of *The History of New York,* he expresses his main aim in penning the book: "to embody the traditions of our city in an amusing form; to illustrate its local humors, customs, and peculiarities; to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home." Here, Irving expresses a desire to yoke the enviable qualities of the Old World, its charms and spells, to the sights of New York. And yet, when Irving does include legends in his tales, their grandeur is severely undercut and critiqued by the banal, the man who dreams such wonderful stuff while napping at the dinner table, or the figure who is just as prone to enjoying the more sophisticated elements of culture as he is the most crude. Irving's artistry, developed with this text, lies in his ability to create and explore further his own contradictions.

One such area of contradiction that continues to baffle critics involves Irving's own political views, and his class-oriented sensibilities. The Irvings' patriarch was a merchant, and the rather large family was populated by lawyers. Indeed, one of the judges under whom Washington Irving first worked became a member of the Supreme Court, and he was then forced to take up with another judge. Even then, Irving himself reports his doubts about his abilities to have passed the bar without a certain predisposition in his favor among those determining his examination results. Thus, Irving recognizes how his family name and influential associations have worked in concert to gain him his career as a lawyer. It is clear, then, that Irving arrives at the subject of his native soil from a privileged point of view, and yet he does not categorically look with disdain or condescension on the lesser elements of America. Indeed, they are celebrated, as they compose the primordial mass of the nation. However, in 1816, when the family fell on misfortune, particularly with the law firm, Irving worried whether he could make a living as a writer. In a letter to his friend Brevoort, Irving expresses a less elite sense of himself and his joys in life: "Thank Heaven I was brought up in simple and inexpensive habits, and I have satisfied myself that if need be, I can resume them without repining or inconvenience." The international success of *The Sketch Book* proved that he could. Warner includes as an anecdote to support Irving's fame that an English family, upon viewing a bust of George Washington, mistakenly identified him as the author of *The Sketch Book*.

Despite Irving's declarations that he could economize without grousing, he expresses a genuine disgust with the masses with whom he spoke and caroused while involved in the election campaign of a Federalist. "Oh, my friend, I have been in such holes and corners; such filthy nooks and filthy corners; sweep offices and oyster cellars! I have sworn brother to a leash of drawers, and can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life, —faugh! I shall not be able to bear the smell of small beer and tobacco for a month to come. . . . Truly this saving one's country is a nauseous piece of business, and if patriotism is such a dirty virtue, —prythee,

no more of it." Despite these professed feelings of distaste for the masses, Irving proved himself too malleable than to be constricted by party lines, for although a Federalist and thus a loyalist to Alexander Hamilton, Irving expresses sincere sympathy for Aaron Burr, who killed Hamilton in a duel. Further evidence of his ability to cross party lines appears in a letter in which he expresses his surprise when dining with the very men who the night prior had been excoriated by "honest furious Federalists" as "consummate scoundrels," as Irving discovers them to be "equally honest [and] warm" as those the previous night.

During the War of 1812, Irving became editor of the *Analectic,* a position that exposed him to British periodicals as the organ reprinted leading reviews and articles from England, as well as original material from America. He issued a second edition of *The History* and wrote letters to his friend Brevoort about town gossip and his profound sense of lethargy and ennui. In 1814, Irving enlisted in the army and became Governor Tompkin's aide and military secretary. This is yet another example of the contradictory nature of Irving, who had a deep affinity for Britain, but whose patriotism for America was riled with the burning of the capitol. Soon after his enlistment, in February 1815, peace was brokered between the two nations and Irving left for what was to be a brief trip to England to visit his brother Peter. He remained in Europe for the next 17 years.

With Peter's poor health, the future of the failing law firm fell to Irving, who spent 1815 and 1816 in Liverpool, engaged in attempting to buoy the family business. Critics and biographers of Irving all point to his dislike for the profession of law, as well as his predisposition, somewhat like his character Rip Van Winkle's, to avoid profitable labor at all costs. The two years thus employed were odious to Irving, as his letters home to his friend Brevoort prove. In a bit of a reversal of the very patriotism he had just recently expressed for America in his military enlistment, Irving writes to Brevoort of his general distaste for the breed of American he spied while in Liverpool: "Nothing can surpass the dauntless independence of all form, ceremony, fashion, or reputation of a downright, unsophisticated American. Since the war, too, particularly, our lads seem to think they are 'the salt of the earth' and the legitimate lords of creation."

Despite his reluctant work for the law firm, Irving managed to find time for one of his favorite pastimes, enjoying the theater. When on a trip to visit his sister Sarah, who had married Henry Van Wart of Birmingham, he came across a character of whom a sketch would soon appear in his next and most famous book, *The Sketch Book*. In a draft of what would become "The Angler," Irving writes of a veteran angler who had spent some of his youth in America. "What I particularly liked him for was, that though we tried every way to entrap him into some abuse of America and its inhabitants, there was no getting him to utter an ill-natured word concerning us." In comparison with Irving's general critique of the Americans he had recently spied in Liverpool, readers witness another in the author's series of contradictions. While he was quick to judge his fellow Americans abroad harshly, he seems quite defensive about hearing any disparaging words from Britons.

While in England, Irving met such notable literary figures as Lord Byron, Thomas Moore, and Isaac D'Israeli (father of Benjamin Disraeli, an author and later prime minister of England). He renewed his friendship with Sir Walter Scott. In the first part of 1818, all attempts to secure the family firm were exhausted, and Peter and Washington entered into bankruptcy. Although the process was excruciating for Irving, his biographer Warner characterizes the end of his family obligations to the firm as liberating, for it allowed the author to pursue his craft and allow nothing to distract him. This meant that the efforts of his brothers to procure him political and military posts, as secretary of legation and chief clerk in the navy, were declined. Likewise, Irving turned down the generous offers of Walter Scott and Mr. Murray to act as editor for various periodicals.

Instead, Irving dedicated himself exclusively to *The Sketch Book,* whose first number appeared in

America in May 1819, with the series completing in September the following year. "Rip Van Winkle" was one of the two pieces that appeared in the first installment. Of the success and instant fame he received on both sides of the Atlantic with the publication of *The Sketch Book,* Irving writes humbly: "I feel something as I suppose you did when your picture met with success, —anxious to do something better, and at a loss what to do." To his friend Brevoort he expresses his intended aesthetic goal: "I have attempted no lofty theme, nor sought to look wise and learned, which appears to be very much the fashion among our American writers at present. I have preferred addressing myself to the feelings and fancy of the reader more than to his judgment."

On the success of his latest work, Irving traveled to Paris, returned to England, and, in search of a cure for an unknown illness that plagued his ankles and prevented him at times from walking, toured Germany. He later returned to England and published "Tales of a Traveler." Soon after, in February 1826, Irving journeyed to Madrid, Spain, and began work on his famous biography of CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, which was published in 1828. Warner considers this three-year period in Irving's life to be his most productive, as he also wrote *The Alhambra, The Conquest of Granada,* and *The Legends of the Conquest of Spain.* These works came about through Irving's access to primary sources and other documents, including Columbus's journals. He returned to England when he received, and reluctantly accepted, an appointment as secretary of legation to the Court of St. James. In April 1830, the Royal Society of Literature awarded him a gold medal in honor of his literary works.

He died shortly after the final volume of his last work, a biography of his namesake, George Washington, was in press. He was buried overlooking Sleepy Hollow.

"Rip Van Winkle" (1819)

On its most basic and straightforward level, Irving's short story, taken from *The Sketch Book,* recounts the tale of a lovable henpecked husband named Rip Van Winkle who travels into the Kaatskill (Catskill) Mountains and sleeps for 20 years after having consumed the contents of the Dutch settler Hendrick Hudson's flagon and witnessed figures resembling "an old Flemish painting" enjoying a game of ninepin. He hastens with his faithful companion, a dog named Wolf, to escape from the harping remonstrances of his wife. When he awakens and returns to the village, he discovers that his extended nap transpired during the Revolutionary War, his wife and dog are deceased, and his daughter has grown and married, with a family of her own. Irving complicates this fantastic tale of a sociable loafer with a propensity to "attend to anybody's business but his own" by interrogating the notions of truth, history, and what may or may not be believed.

The epigraph for "Rip Van Winkle" derives from a play entitled *The Ordinary* by the British playwright William Cartwright. In his selective reference to the play, Irving introduces readers to the idea that a person will keep truth "unto thylke day in which I creep into my sepulcher," meaning that a person carries his or her own version of truth until death. In referencing Cartwright's play, Irving preempts readers' skepticism by turning the very notion of truth on its head. If each person carries his or her own sense of truth to the grave, then he or she cannot be persuaded to part with what he or she believes to be true, and this truth is not subject to interrogation or inspection. For Irving, then, truth is subjective. On a humorous note, Irving's theme of the capricious nature of truth, that it exists for everyone but is not necessarily shared, explains the odd pairing of Dame Van Winkle and her husband. To him, the other members of the village, and his numerous friends and acquaintances, Rip Van Winkle is a "simple, good-natured man." To Dame Van Winkle, his "termagant wife," his reluctance to perform productive work for the farm has caused his estate to dwindle and fall into disrepair.

The discord between husband and wife, representing two different notions of labor and value, are reflective, perhaps, of the cultural shifts America

experienced in the years prior to and immediately following the Revolution. Dame Van Winkle appears somewhat despotic, and Rip must avail himself of the landscape, the physical distance separating England from the colonies, as a means of escaping from her. Just as England utilized the colonies for its own profit (such as with the imposition of taxes such as the Stamp Act), Dame Van Winkle relies upon her husband to perform "profitable labor." In his direct and indirect rebellions, Rip might represent the American colonists desirous of a less despotic leadership than the "discipline of shrews at home." His general popularity among members of the village likewise promotes the reading of Rip as an amiable American: "The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians." In his pastime as a storyteller among the children, especially considering the topics of his tales, Rip Van Winkle represents a more amiable figure than Ichabod Crane, as he substitutes the fantasy of the tales for the reality of life.

The natural setting of New York plays a central role in this short story just as it does in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," but the relationship between the Kaatskill Mountains and Rip Van Winkle differs from that between Ichabod Crane and Sleepy Hollow. Although nature seems indifferent if not antagonist to Rip's farm, it provides him with the means of escaping from a termagant wife whose tongue has been sharpened over the years by constant use berating her husband. Rip "declares it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him." Gone is the fruitful and fecund landscape from "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" that provided the Van Tassels with such natural bounty. "In the fictional world of Rip Van Winkle . . . [there is not] something familiar and comforting in nature" (Rubin-Dorsky 405). The wildness of the Catskills, however, provides Rip with a refuge but not without a cost. Although Rip has successfully avoided the drudgery and demands of the work-a-day world, "he has had to surrender the major part of his mature life and become an alien in a community of which he had once been a valued part" (Ringe 465). The critic Philip Young views the loss of time in Rip's life in the following manner: Rip "passes from childhood to second childhood with next to nothing in between" (570). Young's point is that Rip has avoided precisely the responsibilities that mark adulthood, which his wife has chastised him repeatedly for neglecting. When he awakes, he has reached "that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity."

The critic Donald Ringe views Irving's story within a genre used by his fellow author JAMES FENIMORE COOPER in which New York writers critique the Yankee usurpers from New England who introduce rapid change and a profit-driven mentality to the tranquil New York neighborhoods, such as the old Dutch communities of Sleepy Hollow and Rip Van Winkle's village. In contrast to the embodiment of New England in the figure of Ichabod Crane, Irving permeates the very atmosphere of the post–Revolutionary War village Rip encounters upon awaking with "a strong New England accent" (Ringe 464). As testament to Irving's sense of New England as a destructive force, Ringe points to the inn that has become a Yankee hotel and the great tree cut down for a liberty pole. This critique, Ringe continues, was less about regions per se and more about Irving's associations with them. For him, and for Cooper, New York represented the last vestiges of peace and tranquility available in America; New England, on the other hand, symbolized the chaos brought about by a society intent upon progress and profit at all costs. Ringe points to the fact that Rip is not a lazy fellow, as the narrative informs us of his numerous acts of labor performed for the benefit of his neighbors. What Rip is averse to, however, is the very kind of labor that New England represented for Irving: profit-based work (Ringe 465). Irving writes elsewhere of his dislike for New Englanders in "Conspiracy of Cocked Hats" in which he views "all turnpikes, railroads, and steamboats [as] those

abominable inventions by which the usurping Yankees are strengthening themselves in the land, and subduing everything to utility and commonplace."

Another set of opposing forces like that represented by New England and New York exists in Irving's fiction, that between truth and fiction. Haskell Springer terms Irving's tension between truth and fiction a "technique of self-contradiction: the story proper and the comments upon the tale [move in] opposite directions" and by thus foregrounding the "reality" of events like Rip Van Winkle's 20-year slumber, keep the fictional element of the tale ever present in the reader's mind (14–15). The critic Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky elaborates on Springer's concept by considering "Rip Van Winkle" as a meditation on the art and dynamics of storytelling. Unlike the current inhabitants of Winkle's village, who believe the long-bearded man to have been out of his mind for 20 years, Rubin-Dorsky argues that the readers recognize the villagers' "blunder" in not "acknowledg[ing] that doubt and belief combine to form the listening/reading experience" (399–400). Despite their initial skepticism, the villagers flock to Rip precisely, Rubin-Dorsky believes, because he has a story to tell, a "palliative, alleviating the anxiety of his loss . . . and compensat[ing] for unsettling changes" (400). By retelling his tale to the villagers in a postrevolutionary period, Rip Van Winkle not only makes sense of his own unsettling experience of outliving family and friends and returning to an entirely transformed village, but makes the chaotic effects of the Revolutionary War understandable because he has turned them into a story.

Ironically, despite the fact that Rip's story centers on his witness to radical change in his village, the critic Rubin-Dorsky considers that his narrative allows temporal shifts because it echoes other stories of life: "The real, profound changes are the ongoing, perpetual ones, those of mortality. . . . This type of alteration is the result neither of historical nor political processes but rather of the natural ones of birth and death, growth and decay, which never cease and, in effect, make one period of time the equivalent of any other" (401). Thus, Rip's tale reinforces the human condition: that all experience change as the very fabric of their lives, and that these changes, which occur perpetually, are the norm and thus not distinguishable from each other. In such a reading, Rubin-Dorsky minimizes the disorienting effects of the Revolution and its alteration of Rip's village by arguing that the act of storytelling itself has a homogenizing effect, "mak[ing] one period of time the equivalent of any other." As testament to this interpretation, Rubin-Dorsky notes that George Washington has replaced George III, but there remains an authority in place, whether monarchical or democratic. Second, his son, Rip, Jr., looks exactly the same as he does and thus demonstrates how sameness can abide across time. In these continuities across time, in the discovery of a cyclical time that governs not only Rip Van Winkle but everyone, Rubin-Dorsky sees that Irving has discovered a truth. Rip's storytelling "make[s] the connections between fact and fiction, between existence in the mutable world and the unchanging foundations of all human endeavor" (Rubin-Dorsky 405).

The tale does not end, however, with the interpretations of the villagers who "almost universally gave [Rip]'s tale full credit." In a note, appended to Knickerbocker's tale, he "shows that it is an absolute fact, narrated with his usual fidelity." Fact, here, is entirely dependent upon perspective, and Knickerbocker's avowal of factualness is more a testament to the fact that he copiously scribed the tale told to him rather than to the content of the tale itself. Irving adds yet another level of storytellers and truths in one additional layer in the postscript in which Knickerbocker details another tale of the Catskills, this one a myth of American Indians. In the tale, Manitou, a trickster figure, dwells in the Catskills, in a place called Garden Rock. When a hunter trespasses into Garden Rock, Manitou drops a gourd, whose contents creates a flash flood and drown the hunter.

For Discussion or Writing

1. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" both address change and attempts to

resist it. How is this theme presented in the Leatherstocking series, of JAMES FENIMORE COOPER, a fellow New York writer?

2. Rip sleeps through the nation's foundational event, the Revolutionary War. Does he represent America, or is he a figure sympathetic to pre–Revolutionary War times when the colonies were ruled by England?
3. Both of Irving's tales point to aspects of the country's violent past—the Salem witch trials and the Revolutionary War. How does Irving reconcile his treatment of these two events with his general desire for an idyllic past, represented by the secluded Dutch communities in the two tales?
4. How is the landscape imagined for the Dutch and native communities? Consider the arid conditions of Rip Van Winkle's farm and the dangers inherent in the Catskills.

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820)

Irving's short story, taken from *The Sketch Book*, opens with four lines from the Scottish poet James Thomson's "Castle of Indolence" in which a "most enchanting wizard" captures men who are curious or desirous of the life of ease presented by a minstrel who sings tales of the castle accompanied by his lute. The promises of a life given over to pleasure, repose, and the absence of work, however, are purchased at a dear price. The inhabitants of the castle lose their will and thus the means of escape:

> For whomsoe'er the villain takes in hand,
> Their joints unknit, their sinews melt apace;
> As lithe they grow as any willow-wand,
> And of their vanish'd force remains no trace

In his description of his unlikely protagonist, Ichabod Crane, Irving clearly draws upon the language Thomson uses in describing the victims of the wizard: "He had . . . a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in this nature; he was in form a spirit like a supple jack—yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away—jerk! —he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever." Readers familiar with Thomson's poem would be likely to recognize that Crane resembles the inhabitants of the "Castle of Indolence," and that their lack of will, alluded to in their extremely supple spines, will be their undoing.

Irving provides two frames for the telling of the encounter between the itinerate schoolmaster, Ichabod Crane, and the famous headless horseman of Sleepy Hollow. One of these frames involves the figure of Diedrich Knickerbocker, the inept fictional historian who narrates Irving's satirical *History of New York* and who also knits together his widely popular *The Sketch Book*. As a tale "found among the papers of the Late Diedrich Knickerbocker," the story of Crane and the headless Hessian soldier gains prominence. It is less the fictional tale meant to entertain and more the documented oral tradition of an antiquated Dutch community whose "population, manners, and customs, remain fixed, while the great torrent of migration and improvement . . . in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved." The second frame appears in the story's postscript, in which Diedrich vows to have given "the preceding tale . . . almost in the precise words in which [he] heard it related at a corporation meeting." The tale thus has multiple storytellers: Irving himself, his fictional historian Knickerbocker, and the unnamed storyteller who appears at the end of the tale to discount nearly half of the story's truth.

The multiplicity of narrators keeps the fictional aspect of the tale ever present in the reader's mind, as does Ichabod Crane's reverence for COTTON MATHER's *History of New England Witchcraft* as well as Irving's references to Thomson's poem and to a German folktale as the basis for the story of the headless horseman. Irving purposefully mistakes the title of Mather's tale of witchcraft and the witch trials, which was *Wonders of the Invisible World,* because his readers would be familiar with Mather's famous book and would thus recognize the less-than-accurate account provided by his fictional historian, Knickerbocker. Although

Mather's recounting of the Salem witch trials does not include any mention of a headless horseman, it does imbue the story with a foreboding tone in which diabolic elements prey upon helpless inhabitants who have barely carved a space out of the howling wilderness for themselves. Indeed, most of the devilish acts retold by Mather occur in the wild, the same landscape that promotes the excitations of Crane's bewildered and befuddled mind.

The presence of multiple narrators and narratives also contributes to the tale's timelessness, which is a characterization not only of Tarry Town, but also of the culture of Dutch settlers residing there. The very dress of the women who gather for the party hosted by Old Baltus Van Tassel is a "mixture of ancient and modern fashions." A sloop out on the Hudson appears "suspended in the air," as though its very movements are arrested and it exists in a kind of drawn-out time. In creating a place prone to repose and sleepiness, and in conjuring multiple storytellers, Irving allows the very distant past and the present to coexist, and even to interact. One example of the past and the present's coalescing are the reverberations of Crane's voice as he sings out psalms in order to calm his anxieties while traveling alone at night. After his disappearance from the town, a young boy "has often fancied [Crane's] voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow." The echoes or vestiges of Crane's voice also appear in the tales of old country wives "about the neighborhood round the winter evening fire" of how "Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means."

The image of a voice lingering long after the speaker has ceased talking appears in Thomson's poem as the voice of the minstrel who seems to lure unsuspecting victims to the castle with his tales of rest and pleasure:

> He ceas'd. But still their trembling ears
> retain'd
> The deep vibrations of his witching song;
> That, by a kind of magic power, constrain'd
> To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng.
> (172–175)

Likened by Thomson to a "syren song," that of women who lured sailors to their deaths by bewitching them with their beautiful voices as their ships drifted heedlessly toward a rocky shore, the minstrel's voice tempts the listeners who still hear the song in their ears. The narrator of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" assures the reader that "there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, which may even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the mill pond, of a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane." Similarly, the oral tradition of this Dutch community who trade tales of the Revolutionary War and then promptly switch to more haunting tales of goblins, specters, and the headless horseman creates an alluring atmosphere that draws its listeners into a kind of stupor. Crane is especially prone to the effects of these tales as he encounters countless terrors on his walks homeward such as a snow-covered shrub that he mistakes for a ghost and his own feet crunching through frosty crust, which he imagines to be "some uncouth being trampling close behind him."

In the figure of Ichabod Crane Irving has created an unlikely protagonist with whom readers cannot identify, given Crane's excessive nervousness. His physical attributes do not speak highly of him, for he is described as "a scarecrow eloped from a cornfield" or "the genius of famine descending upon the earth." Further, his positions as the village's schoolmaster and singing master both appear unwarranted, revealing more about the ignorance of the inhabitants than about Crane's own ineptness. In reference to his knowledge or intelligence, "our man of letters" is rumored to have "read several books quite through." His second occupation as the village's song master gives him unparalleled access to his love, Katrina Van Tassel, but his talent for singing seems to reside mostly in his own opinion of himself, in his broken pitch pipe, and in his ability to make up in volume what he lacks in talent.

Thus, it is in the naive narrator, who reveals more about himself than he appears to understand,

that the kernel of Irving's tale rests. Crane's self-importance and his somewhat cruel dispatching of his duties as the village schoolmaster (he bore in mind the golden maxim "Spare the rod and spoil the child" and his scholars certainly were not spoiled) make him a likable version of England who wrestled to maintain its despotic control over the colonies who fought for their independence in the Revolutionary War. Irving's multiple references to this particular war, when the Hessian is said to have lost his head, aids in this reading of Ichabod. The language of empire and royal symbols abounds in Irving's descriptions of Ichabod Crane in the classroom and atop his neighbor's horse. The school is referred to as "his little empire," and on the day that he receives an invitation to Van Tassel's party, he "sat enthroned on the lofty school stool from when he usually watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that scepter of despotic power." Tellingly, Brom Bones, the rival to Ichabod's suit with Katrina, is the very image of physical power, but he is never described as given over to the cruelties associated with Crane. Indeed, Brom Bones enjoys "to play off boorish practical jokes" and "had more mischief than ill will in his composition."

Given their diametrically opposed personalities and physical features, it is perhaps not so surprising to imagine in the two suitors vying for Katrina's hand in marriage, and access to her father's sizable and fertile estate, a replaying of the Revolutionary War, which is also echoed again and again in the retelling of war stories and the tale of the Hessian soldier who rides out of his grave every night in search of his missing head. Crane's power is cruelly carried out against those who are smaller and less able to defend themselves, his pupils. Brom Bones, on the other hand, who is "broad shouldered" and known for his "feats of strength and hardihood," does not engage in a violent confrontation with Crane, which he would surely win. In his "not unpleasant countenance" and "air of fun and arrogance," readers might see the personification of the United States of America. He is naturally strong, good-natured, and not prone to the kind of cruelty or despotism that marks England, represented by Crane. Rather, Brom Bones is the local hero, whom "neighbors looked upon with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good will."

By casting Katrina as the love interest and point of contention and competition between the two characters of Crane and Bones, Irving recasts the Revolutionary War in terms of a love triangle. Katrina becomes less a fully developed character and more a symbol of the fecund land of North America over which both nations fight. As Crane, perpetually hungry and searching out his next meal, sees all aspects of the landscape as future dinners, Irving assumes his voice in the description of the young heroine. Crane describes her in terms of food: "plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy cheeked as one of her father's peaches." As he rides to their house to attend the party, the last evening on which he will see Katrina, Irving lampoons Crane's propensity to view the world in terms of his next meal by likening Katrina's hand to pancakes: "Soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slap jacks, well buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle, by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel." Crane's avarice, channeled into a constant hunger and search for food, cannot abide, and his favor with Katrina is quickly and ironically dispatched with a well-aimed pumpkin thrown by Brom Bones. As the figure of Crane's fears, Brom Bones becomes the headless horseman and drives the superstitious rival out of the village. As America, mighty but just, marries Katrina, the romantic recasting of the Revolutionary War concludes, along with Irving's tale of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Irving details the landscape of this particular nook in New York quite assiduously. Read over some of these descriptions of the landscape and explain their role in creating the story's tone.
2. In the postscript, the storyteller and one of his listeners engage briefly over the question of a tale's purpose or moral lesson. The storyteller concludes that he does not "believe one half of

it [him]self." How does a dubious storyteller affect the reader's sense of the tale?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON IRVING AND HIS WORK

1. In both of Irving's famous tales, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," he describes a figure who is both within and yet not a part of a particular society. What might be the benefits of placing protagonists in such liminal positions? How are readers to assess the judgments of Ichabod Crane and Rip Van Winkle?
2. Irving scholars and critics argue that he both defended America from European insults and yet was abusive of Americans when living abroad in Europe. Examining two of his stories, how might you make an argument for Irving's ideal notions of Americans? Are there characters who embody these ideals, or are these characteristics dispersed among several characters?
3. Irving's detailed landscapes are a signature aspect of his writing and are what critics believe helped to foster an American literary identity. Look closely at passages about the natural settings in "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." What conclusions might you draw about the Americanness of these landscapes?

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Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

The earth should belong . . . always to the living generation.

(letter to James Madison, September 6, 1789)

We hold these truths to be self-evident: 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; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter and abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

(The Declaration of Independence)

Thomas Jefferson was a Virginian, farmer, father, husband, statesman, writer, revolutionary, collector of books, avid reader, lawyer, inventor, architect, diplomat, president of the United States, and founder of a university. He believed in a strict interpretation of the Constitution, an unintrusive federal government, and states' rights but did not always follow these beliefs. Jefferson spent most of his life in public service, though he "always claimed to yearn for a life of tranquil contemplation spent with his books, his architectural drawings, and his researches in science" (Bernstein ix). Jefferson is perhaps best known for his role in writing the Declaration of Independence and serving as the third president of the United States. It is not surprising, given his paternal family's history, that he was involved in politics despite his claim of distaste for public service. When Jefferson's Welsh ancestors first immigrated to the colonies, one served in the Virginia Assembly of 1619 (Parton 3). Jefferson's father, Peter, served in the Virginia House of Burgesses (Parton 10).

Peter Jefferson was born in Chesterfield, Virginia, in 1708 and he later "won fame and respect for his industry, strength, endurance, and skill as a surveyor and mapmaker" (Bernstein 2). Peter courted and won the hand of Jane Randolph, the eldest daughter of Isham Randolph, a tobacco lord whose plantation was located on the James River in Virginia. For two years Peter worked to build his farm and house so that he might entice Jane to marry him, and she did in 1738. Though the Randolph family was of the planter elite of Virginia, they were living in London at the time of Jane's birth. Peter named his farm *Shadwell* for the place in London Parish where Jane was born.

Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743, at Shadwell in Goochland (later Albermarle) County, Virginia, "on the western edge of the British empire" (Bernstein 1). He was the third child to Peter and Jane Randolph Jefferson. He had two older sisters, Elizabeth and Jane. Elizabeth, the younger of the elder sisters, had "developmental disabilities" and died at the age of 28 when "she

wandered from the family house during a thunderstorm and was found dead after the storm cleared." He revered his older sister Jane and shared her love of music. He often accompanied her singing with his violin playing. According to Parton, when Jane, "the best of [Jefferson's] friends," died, there was a "void in the home and the heart [of Jefferson] that was never quite filled" (45). Jefferson also had several younger siblings, one younger brother and two younger sisters.

Jefferson was educated at home until the age of nine, when he went to a local private school run by the Reverend William Douglass from Scotland. There he learned Latin, Greek, and French nearly exclusively. In 1757, the year his father died, Jefferson added classical literature and mathematics to his list of subjects, now under the Reverend James Maury. Feeling he learned everything he could from Maury, Jefferson petitioned one of his guardians, John Harvie, to allow him to enter the College of William and Mary. He entered in 1760 and stayed until 1762. It was at William and Mary that he met a man who was to be one of his lifelong friends and confidants, as well as his law teacher and bar sponsor, George Wythe.

Jefferson met Wythe through Professor William Small, a mathematics, natural philosophy, and eventually moral philosophy professor. It was also through Small that Jefferson entered the circle of Virginia's lieutenant governor, France Fauquier, also a compulsive gambler. Wythe, on the other hand, was a much better influence and role model for Jefferson. When Jefferson met him, he was one of the two leading attorneys in Virginia and was already "famous for his learning and culture" (Bernstein 5). Unlike some of the other students of law during Jefferson's time, Wythe "refused to let Jefferson's legal training rest on the familiar, threadbare formula of Coke and copying. Rather, he used an educational plan modeled on his own habits of thought and reading that was designed to inspire love of the law as a body of learning, devotion to its study, and adherence to rigorous standards of legal research and argument" (Bernstein 6). This would seem to suit Jefferson's love of learning, as he claimed that he spent at least 15 hours a day at his studies during his time at William and Mary. It is no surprise then that he constructed for himself a rigorous schedule for his study of law. Jefferson studied law under Wythe for five years, more than double the regular course of study. In 1767, Jefferson was admitted to the Virginia bar, with George Wythe as his sponsor. The following year, 1768, Jefferson, following in his father's footsteps, was elected to his first political post, in the lower house of the Virginia legislature, the House of Burgesses. He was 25. Jefferson joined the radical bloc, including Patrick Henry and George Washington, against those backing the royal governor; they sought to govern themselves. The seeds of independence had already been planted in Jefferson.

In 1765, two years before Jefferson was admitted to the bar, the British Parliament and King George III enacted the Stamp Act against the colonies. This began the colonies' argument against taxation without representation. Though Jefferson was not yet part of the legislature when the Stamp Act Congress met—it was the first intercolonial gathering to oppose British policies—the desire to see the colonies united was something Jefferson believed in. Even though Jefferson "insisted that the colonists were freeborn Englishman," he also insisted that he was a Virginian and "a Virginian gentleman was as good as—and entitled to the same rights as—any native born Englishman" (Bernstein 19, 20). As such, Jefferson was one of the earliest proponents of the American cause.

So in 1773, Jefferson, Dabney Carr, and Richard Henry Lee proposed a "committee of correspondence." This was to be a "group of politicians who would write letters to like-minded politicians in other colonies to share ideas, spread news, and coordinate political strategy and tactics in resisting British colonial practices" (Bernstein 20). After the Boston Tea Party, "Virginia took the lead in organizing colonial resistance" with Jefferson as a crucial figure. The First Continental Congress was formed as a result, and the instructions Jefferson wrote for the Virginian delegates, though considered too radical, were published by his friends as

A Summary View of the Rights of British America (1774) and became his first major political work.

In the midst of this political activity, Jefferson suffered two major tragedies. One was the fire on February 1, 1770, that burned much of Shadwell, where he was living with his mother and sisters. The most distressing part of the fire for Jefferson was the destruction of his already extensive library and his "painstakingly amassed collection of legal notes and papers" (Bernstein 10). The other was the sudden death of his boyhood friend, brother-in-law, and fellow politician Dabney Carr in May 1773. Amid these tragedies and his political work, on January 1, 1772, Jefferson and the woman he had been courting, a young recent widow, Martha Wayles Skelton, were married.

As the tensions between the American colonies and the British were rising, the call for independence from Britain became greater, and the Second Continental Congress, of which Jefferson was a member, began to focus its attention on independence. Although he was not originally part of the declaration committee, Jefferson replaced Richard Henry Lee. John Adams, along with the general favor of the entire committee, persuaded Jefferson to draft the "declaration." Though we like to believe the myth that the Declaration of Independence was solely Jefferson's own, and it chiefly was, the Congress made several changes, each of which Jefferson took as a personal affront.

Jefferson left the Congress in the fall of that same year (1776) to serve once again in Virginia's lower legislative house, renamed the House of Delegates. He started immediately on law reform. His first projects were the issues of *entail* and *primogeniture*—he believed that men should be able to leave their properties and money after their death to whomever they wanted. At the time, Virginia did not allow this. Jefferson's "most sweeping law reform, the one central to his vision of a just society and closest to his heart" was his "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom," which emphasized his belief in the separation between church and state and "declared that the government has no right to dictate what anyone could believe in matters of religion" (Bernstein 42). Many of Jefferson's other bills, however, did not receive acclaim or support.

Jefferson was elected as Virginia's second governor on June 1, 1779. The Revolutionary War infiltrated nearly every political issue and was Virginia's dominant problem. During his second term as governor, Charlottesville and Monticello were seized briefly by Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton of the British army. When Jefferson left the capitol before Tarleton's seizure of it and joined his family in Poplar Forest, he left Virginia without a governor for 10 days. Since the election was postponed, he was still acting governor though he assumed he was acting as a private citizen when he left two days after when his term would have ended (Bernstein 46). Jefferson was accused of cowardice and an investigation was supposed to follow. However, when the inquiry was to begin, George Nicholas, who proposed the resolution to begin Jefferson's investigation, did not appear. No one else was interested in pursuing the charges. Jefferson retired from public service and would do what he would do every time he left office: swear he would never return to government.

By the time Jefferson retired from politics in what would become a string of retirements, he had already left his legal career. In this retirement, he began work on *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Originally *Notes* began as a response to a questionnaire sent out in 1780 by a French diplomat, François Barbé-Marbois. Later this manuscript would be revised to help refute Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon's claims that America was naturally degenerative. The finished, authorized edition was published in 1787, the first publication bearing Jefferson's name on the title page.

It was also during this retirement that Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson died on September 6, 1782, after giving birth to their sixth child, Lucy. Three of their children preceded her in death. Lucy would die approximately two years later while Jefferson and his oldest daughter, Martha, were in France. Some speculate that it was because of his wife's death that he returned to politics to assuage his grief. In late 1782, he accepted his appointment

by Congress as part of a delegation including Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay to negotiate with the British. However, the three men were so successful in their negotiations that the Treaty of Paris of 1783 was signed before Jefferson arrived in Europe.

Instead of going to Europe, he was then sent to Philadelphia to lead the Virginia delegation to the Confederation Congress. Jefferson's main interest was America's expansion westward, and Congress was amenable to his view. Because of his work in Congress, he had won great admiration and esteem and was once again given the chance to travel to Europe, this time as an American minister to France, an appointment he accepted in 1784. The Congress also named Jefferson in this same year, again with Adams and Franklin, to negotiate commercial treaties with Europe. Though the only successful free-trade agreement Adams and Jefferson were able to settle was with the king of Prussia, Jefferson was able to negotiate the Consular Convention of 1788, which outlined diplomatic activities between France and the United States. Aside from treaty negotiations, Jefferson also excelled at gathering information on other countries' affairs and reporting on it to the secretary of foreign affairs and other well-placed Americans.

While Jefferson was in France, the United States Congress was busy working on the Constitution. Jefferson saw the main flaw of the Constitution as its lack of a statement of a bill of rights. In a letter to James Madison on December 20, 1787, Jefferson writes that "a bill of rights is what the people are entitle to against every government on earth, general or particular, & what no just government should refuse, or rest on inference" (Bernstein 72). As Jefferson was advocating a bill of rights for the American constitution, he was at the same time witnessing the political turmoil and precursors to the French Revolution from the front row of the French theater. Although Jefferson, as a diplomat from another country, was supposed to remain neutral, this did not stop Lafayette and his supporters from seeking his advice, nor did it prevent Jefferson from giving it, despite assuring both the United States and France that he was not violating his diplomatic duties (Bernstein 78). It seems that Jefferson was determined to have a bill of rights passed somewhere, even if it was in France. Jefferson contributed significantly to the drafting of the most famous document of the French Revolution, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. When Jefferson left Paris in fall 1789, he intended to return after six months, but he was to spend the remainder of his life in the United States.

Jefferson and his daughters arrived back in the United States about seven months after George Washington had been unanimously elected as the first president of the United States. Upon his arrival, Jefferson received a letter from Washington informing him that he had been nominated and confirmed as the first secretary of state. Jefferson finally accepted the position after receiving pressure from Washington. His ideological and personal conflicts with other members of Washington's cabinet, particularly Alexander Hamilton, led to what became the Republican and Federalist Parties. One of their main arguments was over foreign alliances. Hamilton wanted to remain neutral; Jefferson "feared that Hamilton's policies would enslave the United States to the dangerous, corrupt nation from which Americans had won their independence" and argued that they should ally with France since "the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty and equality—were the ideals of the American Revolution" (91). This, however, did not create the picture of revolution Jefferson had hoped as his enemies and opponents linked him to the love of excess and extravagance found in Europe, particularly France (Bernstein 94). After a series of frustrations and political battles, Jefferson resigned from his position as secretary of state on January 5, 1794, and swore, once again, that he was finished with politics.

During the next three years, Jefferson spent his time at Monticello. As when he returned from France, he found Monticello in disrepair. He spent much of this time at home working on new crop rotations, planting trees, and continuing his architectural hobby of building and designing

Monticello. Jefferson also experimented in farming: "He spent months devising and experimenting with a mechanical threshing machine. . . . He also designed a new type of plow that would cut through the soil more swiftly and with less resistance, making it easier and more efficient to cultivate the land" (Bernstein 107). Jefferson also had the opportunity to take on the role of the "doting grandfather" to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, the son of Jefferson's daughter Martha and her husband, Thomas Mann Randolph. It was also during this time that Sally Hemings's first child was born. Today most scholars agree that Jefferson was the father of this child by his slave.

Jefferson was called back to politics when he was elected vice president in 1796. At the time, the vice presidency was a rather undemanding job; at least it was for Jefferson. During his vice presidency he was named the third president of the American Philological Association, and he published *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice,* which is still used as a reference in Congress today. Jefferson's major act as vice president was his response to the Alien and Sedition Acts, and his draft of the Kentucky Resolutions, which "declared that a state could strike down, or nullify, unconstitutional federal laws, preventing them from having effect within its own borders" (Bernstein 125). Madison drafted a similar resolution for Virginia. Both men hoped that these resolutions would have a broader acceptance and declare the acts unconstitutional; however, only Kentucky and Virginia adopted them.

As internal and external toil plagued the Federalists, by the elections of 1800 they were out of office. The Republicans, or rather what became the Jeffersonian Republicans, won both houses of Congress and the presidency. Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr tied for the presidential vote. Burr was an attractive candidate for the Federalists because they were hopeful that there would be a spot for them in his government even though he was a Republican. Nevertheless, on March 4, 1801, Jefferson was sworn in as the third president of the United States, and Aaron Burr was sworn in as vice president. It was because of this election that Congress decided that the electoral votes had to be designated as a vote for "president" or "vice president" to prevent a tie.

Jefferson claimed that he wanted a smaller government and states' rights, and that he would abide by a strict reading of the Constitution. This was not always the case, most notably in his purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France. There was nothing in the Constitution that allowed the federal government to spend money to buy land or make treaties for land purchase. Though the treaties that made up the Louisiana Purchase were ratified by the Senate, "Federalists mocked Jefferson for having abandoned [a] strict interpretation of the Constitution" (Bernstein 143). Another foreign policy issue that challenged Jefferson's commitment to a strict reading of the Constitution was his dealing with the Barbary pirates. After "five separate naval bombardments" against Tripoli in 1804, the rescue of the crew of the captured *Philadelphia,* and a sea and land raid on Tripoli in 1805 accompanied by a threat to seize the city and overthrow the pasha, the United States and the pasha signed a treaty involving a ransom payment for hostages held in Algiers. According to Bernstein, these events showed that "Jefferson was committed to a broad interpretation of the president's war powers—acting on his own initiative without asking Congress for a declaration of war" (146).

On the domestic front during his first term as president, Jefferson commissioned the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Northwest. They returned two years into Jefferson's second term. In the months before the 1804 elections, Jefferson's vice president, Aaron Burr, fatally wounded Alexander Hamilton in a duel. Burr's self-exile in the Southwest would cause problems for Jefferson during his second term as president.

Jefferson's second term was easily won with his new running mate, the New York governor, George Clinton. However, that seems to be about the only easy aspect of Jefferson's second term. Domestically, Jefferson waged an ongoing war with Chief Justice Marshall over attempts to convict Aaron Burr. The *Chesapeake-Leopard* incident of 1807 led

to the Embargo Act, which affected both foreign and domestic relations. A watered-down version of the Embargo Act, the Non-Intercourse Act, was enacted in 1809, three days before the end of Jefferson's presidency. The results of these two acts are what some scholars believe set the stage for the United States' lack of preparedness for the War of 1812 (Bernstein 169).

After his second term ended, Jefferson stayed in Washington long enough to witness James Madison's inauguration. His reason for not seeking a third term, though under pressure to do so, was that even though the Constitution did not forbid it, he feared the "office would become one for life" (Cunningham 314). Once he returned to Virginia, he stayed there for the remainder of his life. His time spent in his final retirement was bittersweet. He was plagued by debts due largely to a lifetime of overestimating what his crops would earn. He was also an extremely generous host in his later years. Many believed that the majority of his visitors were looking for free room and board rather than genuinely interested in meeting the former president and the "sage of Monticello." Furthermore, his lifelong project, Monticello, was expensive: "Jefferson continued to remodel his house until he no longer could commit funds to the enterprise" (Bernstein 171), and he "never recovered from the burden of debt with which he ended his public career" (Cunningham 345). Jefferson maintained his extensive correspondence with his friends, particularly James Madison. And his friendship with John Adams was restored through the intervention of Benjamin Rush. In this final retirement, he was able once more to take on the role of the devoted grandfather. His daughter Martha and her eight children moved in with him in 1809. By 1812 he was a great-grandfather.

The legacy that Jefferson left in the final years of his life was the creation of the University of Virginia. For nearly 25 years Jefferson had been dreaming of this university, and on March 7, 1825, the university opened its doors for enrollment. Reportedly, "It was one of the happiest and proudest days of Jefferson's life" (Bernstein 176). It was, in nearly every respect, from the architecture to the hand-picked professors, to the way the courses of study were designed, Jefferson's brainchild (Bernstein 174).

Though we can arrange Jefferson's life and legacies by dates and accomplishments and sift through his correspondence and writings, he remains a bit of a mystery, even today. He believed that slavery would one day end and believed that it would be in his time, yet he never ended slavery on his own plantation. Likewise, his views and policies toward American Indians were equally conflicting and complex. And though he loved the company of women, he never thought them fit for public life or politics, with the exception of Abigail Adams. He remained vigorous into his 80s, but at the age of 83, it seemed as if old age hit him all at once. Jefferson was besieged by a series of ailments in that final year of his life: diabetes, arthritis, a urinary tract infection, and what some biographers speculate was colon cancer (Bernstein 188). He died the day he was to be the guest of honor at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Declaration of Independence in Washington, D.C., July 4, 1826.

Nicole de Fee

Declaration of Independence (1776)

Thomas Jefferson composed the document that remains a living testament to the Enlightenment ideals embraced at the inception of the United States of America. As Jefferson recounts in his *Autobiography,* a committee composed of him, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston was established to write the Declaration of Independence. Despite the talents of members of this committee, they asked Jefferson to take up the task alone. In his trademark humble form, Jefferson refers to his work in simple terms: "The committee for drawing the Declaration of Independence desired me to do it. It was accordingly done, and being approved by them, I reported it to the House on Friday, the 28th of June, when it was read, and ordered to lie on the table."

The ensuing debates among members of the thirteen colonies over the language and subject matter covered in this defining document are briefly mentioned in the *Autobiography* but not fully detailed. Rather, Jefferson's *Autobiography* accounts for the redactions. He claims that "the pusillanimous idea that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with" caused the removal of "those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England." Similarly, Jefferson states, "The clause . . . reprobating the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa, was struck out in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wished to continue it." Despite the removal of these passages, the Declaration stood and stands as a brilliant expression of the Enlightenment principles that governed the thinking of the founding fathers of the nation.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the language and reasons for revolution given in the Declaration of Independence with those of THOMAS PAINE's *Common Sense*. Are the two documents written for different audiences? Are the ideas the same but expressed differently?
2. In John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government,* Locke lists the natural rights as "life, liberty, and property," whereas Jefferson adds another, "the pursuit of happiness." Consider reasons why Jefferson would make such a change, and why the phrase refers to the "pursuit of happiness" rather than simply to happiness itself.
3. One of the redacted sections of the Declaration directly addresses the institution of slavery: "[The king of England] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither." Consider the sympathetic light in which Jefferson writes of slaves versus his treatment of them in his *Autobiography*.
4. Consider other portions of the original Declaration that have been omitted or revised and offer an argument that identifies a pattern to these omissions.

Notes on the State of Virginia (1785)

As he mentions in the advertisement for the book, Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* originated as his 1781 response to a French delegation in Philadelphia who were desirous of more information on the American states they were aiding during the American Revolutionary War. As the book began as a formal response to a formal query, Jefferson organizes each chapter or section in response to a specific question, such as "An exact description of the limits and boundaries of the state of Virginia?" Although the text is thus artificially constructed, and organized according to the wishes of the French delegation, Jefferson nevertheless finds rhetorical entry points that permit him to craft the text to his own purposes, one of which was to refute Buffon's theory of American degeneracy, another of which was to contemplate his own thoughts on the fates of American Indians and Africans in the new republic. The theory of the Comte de Buffon (George Louis Leclerc) of American degeneracy was a particularly well-known idea, having been published in 1761, and Jefferson's response to it was made public prior to the 1787 publication of this book. In answering the query regarding the boundaries of Virginia, for example, Jefferson demonstrates his adroitness at directing the questions to his own ends by concluding his scientific response of the longitude and latitude that form the boundaries of the state with a boast of the enormous size of Virginia in comparison to current British territories: "This state is therefore one third larger than the islands of Great Britain and Ireland, which are reckoned at 88,357 square miles" (127).

Jefferson delineates, in great detail, Virginia's river system, giving detailed accounts of navigable waterways, the tonnage of vessel that can pass

unobstructed into various rivers, harbors, and the amount of water carried by each river. He is also attentive to possible questions regarding the navigation of certain rivers, with an eye toward future commerce and transportation. He anticipates the Mississippi River to be "one of the principal channels of future commerce for the country westward of the Alleghaney" (131). Aside from his more scientific rendering of the rivers, such as his noting that the channel of the James River is "from 150 to 200 fathom wide," Jefferson gives himself over to a prideful and somewhat poetic depiction of Virginia's waterways (129). He describes the Illinois River as "a fine river, clear, gentle, and without rapids" (133). He opines, "The Ohio is the most beautiful river on earth" (133). The Mississippi River, aside from its promise as a central means for national commerce and trade, provides a home to a host of wildlife. Jefferson lists "turtles of a peculiar kind, perch, trout, gar, pike, mullets, herrings, carp, spatula fish of 50 lb. weight, cat fish of an hundred pounds weight, buffalo fish, and sturgeon" (132). Note that the Mississippi River not only hosts an abundance and variety of aquatic life, but also supplies life to substantially large fish. It is as if Jefferson were already anticipating his response to Buffon's theory by including a host of rather large-sized fish that dwell within Virginia's rivers.

Although Jefferson readily admits, "Since the treaty of Paris, the Illinois and Northern branches of the Ohio since the cession of Congress, are not longer within our limits," "they shall be noted in their order" (132). It is as though the abundance of life mentioned just prior in his description of the Mississippi River inspired him to lay claim to rivers no longer within the state's purview. He relies upon the reports of Spanish merchants at Pancore for news on the exact length of the Missouri River (133). Jefferson does display a considerable knowledge of some Spanish colonial territories such as Santa Fe, Potosí, and Zacatecas, even to the extent that he knows that a road extends from the Red River along the coast down to the city of Mexico (133). Although he offers no additional comment on this connection to Spanish colonies, it seems certain that Jefferson presents this information as sources of future commerce routes. Indeed, he begins his section on Mexican territories with a brief anecdote regarding the "not inconsiderable quantity of plate, said to have been plundered during the last war by the Indians from the churches and private houses of Santa Fe on the North River and brought to these villages [in Virginia] for sale" (133).

In his response to a query regarding the state's mountains, Jefferson defers to the maps of Fry and Jefferson, as well as to "Evan's analysis of his map of America for a more philosophical view of them than is to be found in any other work" (142). When he begins to provide names for the mountains, Jefferson obliquely references the American Indians who once inhabited the mountainous region. The Appalachian Mountains, he warrants, received their name from "the Apalachies, an Indian nation formerly residing on it" (142). He defers to their native name for the mountains rather than those imposed on the various ranges from European maps: "European geographers however extended the name northwardly as far as the mountains extended; some giving it, after their separation into different ridges, to the Blue ridge, others to the North mountain, others to the Alleghaney, others to the Laurel ridge, as may be seen in their different maps. But the fact I believe is, that none of these ridges were ever known by that name to the inhabitants, either native or emigrant" (142).

To assert the precedence of inhabitants over foreign cartographers, Jefferson includes his own account of the spectacular view afforded in passing from the Potomac through the Blue Ridge (known as the Natural Bridge and Potomac River Gap): "perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in nature" (142–143). "The scene," Jefferson assures his readers, "is worth a voyage across the Atlantic," yet he mentions those living in close proximity to the "monuments of a war between rivers and mountains" who have yet to survey the spectacle (143). The critic Richard Slotkin notes of Jefferson's description of this particular natural wonder: "Jefferson adopts as his vision neither the pastoral

nor the sublime extreme. Rather, he combines the two into a vision of the land which both excites and soothes the soul, which stimulates the mind with terrors and drama and sates it with bounty and beauty, which exhibits both the ruinous force and the creative power of time and nature" (245). Slotkin concludes, "For Jefferson the ideal experience of America is one which enables a man to immerse himself temporarily in the wild landscape and then to emerge on a high plane of thought, from which he can analyze the significance of the spectacle below him" (247).

In query 6, which pertains to minerals, plants, trees, and fruits, Jefferson opens with straightforward answers regarding the appearance and abundance of precious metals and jewels. When he arrives at the subject of limestone, however, Jefferson mentions the discovery of petrified shells impressed within "immense bodies of schist," considered by "both the learned and the unlearned as a proof of an universal deluge" (154). Ever the rationalist, Jefferson performs a brief calculation to refute this claim and declares that a "second opinion has been entertained": that the landmass was heaved up to the higher lands in a time prior to recorded history. Jefferson just as quickly dismisses this theory, noting the absence of any "natural agent" powerful enough to create such a "great convulsion of nature" (154). The third and final theory Jefferson considers to account for the appearance of the seashells in the North Mountain is that of M. de Voltaire, who believes that the rock, which can metamorphose into soft stone, shot its "calcareous juices" into the form of a shell (155–156). Rather than subscribe to any of these theories, Jefferson proclaims a preference for ignorance over error: The "great phenomenon is as yet unsolved" (156). In contemplating and rejecting various hypotheses as to the seashells' origins, Jefferson assumes an air of a rational scientist, as he does in a considerable portion of his book.

This air of confidence is nowhere more apparent than in his section on animals, where he directly refutes Buffon's theory that animals in the New World are smaller than those in the Old, that domesticated animals have degenerated in America, and "that on the whole [the New World] exhibits fewer species" (169). Jefferson provides readers with Buffon's theory behind his conjectures: "the heats of America are less; that more waters are spread over its surface by nature, and fewer of these drained off by the hand of man" (169–170). Jefferson remarks sarcastically, "as if both sides were not warmed by the same genial sun," before launching into a more studied analysis of the French naturalist's theory (169). Buffon believes "moisture is unfriendly to animal growth," and thus the abundance of water in America renders animals smaller in size and stature. Jefferson points to experience: "We see more humid climates produce a greater quantity of food, we see animals not only multiplied in their numbers, but improved in their bulk" (170). In his narrative and in his comparison chart of America and Europe, Jefferson includes the mammoth as proof of the superiority of American conditions (climate, etc.) to produce extremely large quadrupeds. The mammoth bones that Jefferson later ships to Paris are less a gesture of goodwill than additional proof of the superiority of the American climate over the European, and direct refutation of Buffon's theory. In addition to the mammoth's bones, Jefferson offers the narrative a member of the Delaware tribe presented to the governor of Virginia regarding the mammoth, which they term the Big Buffalo (165).

Jefferson concedes Buffon's argument regarding the degeneracy of domesticated animals in America but attributes their smaller size and weight not to the "heat and dryness of the climate, but . . . good food and shelter" (181–182). Had the Americans a greater population and less wilderness spaces in need of cultivation, they would not need to tax their beasts of burden so much with labor and a scanty amount of food and rest. So, while he accedes to Buffon this particular aspect of his argument, he does so for entirely different reasons than Buffon's, even to the point of indirectly chastising the Europeans for not being as industrious as Americans; if they were, their domesticated animals would likewise be smaller in stature and girth.

Most noteworthily, Buffon extends his theory of American degeneracy beyond the animals inhabiting the New World to include humans, both native and immigrant. Jefferson disdains to address Buffon's theories for the native population of South America, likening the beliefs to "fables" like those one would read by Aesop (183–184). Buffon's notion of degeneracy in humans relates specifically to an absence or reversal of stereotypically male traits such as virility, bravery, and sexual prowess. Jefferson celebrates the composite portrait of American Indians:

> He meets death with more deliberation, and endures tortures with a firmness unknown almost to religious enthusiasm with us: that he is affectionate to his children, careful of them, and indulgent in the extreme: that his affections comprehend his other connections, weakening, as with us, from circle to circle, as they recede from the center: that his friendships are strong and faithful to the uttermost extremity: that his sensibility is keen, even the warriors weeping most bitterly on the loss of their children, though in general they endeavor to appear superior to human events: that his vivacity and activity of mind is equal to ours in the same situation. (185)

Note that Jefferson's depiction of American Indian males imagines them balancing the bravery necessary for battle and warfare with the tenderness requisite to create and maintain bonds of familial relations. These traits are similar to those imagined for male members of the republic. Jefferson's portrait, however, deserves further consideration as there are rhetorical reasons for imaging American Indians in such a positive and glowing light. If Jefferson were to accede to Buffon's belief that the native population was governed by cowardice, he would cast a negative light on the colonial soldiers who fought in King Philip's War and other battles against the nation's native inhabitants. Rather than address the virility of American Indian males, Jefferson focuses on the fecundity of its female population, and the circumstances that prevent them from producing large families. Their position on battlefields and exposure to "excessive drudgery" make childbearing "extremely inconvenient" (186). Further, the women themselves are prone to "procuring abortions by the use of some vegetable; and that it even extends to prevent conception for a considerable time after" (186). Thus, Jefferson emasculates American Indian males not in accordance with Buffon's line of thinking, that they lack sexual prowess and virility, but in comparison with the division of labor between the sexes practiced in New England societies. "Were we in equal barbarism," Jefferson argues, "our females would be equal drudges" (186). As proof of the role environment plays in a human's development, Jefferson points to the fecundity of American Indian women who marry traders or who are held enslaved by colonists (186–187). Similarly, the lack of education is to blame for the apparent lack of genius or mental powers.

Jefferson offers up the eloquent speech of Logan, Mingo chief, when addressing Lord Dunmore as proof of "their eminence in oratory," which he believes rivals those of Demosthenes and Cicero (188). Logan's speech is delivered via a messenger as part of a peace treaty brokered among the Mingo, Delaware, and Shawanee with the governor of Virginia. The occasion of their battle involves the chief's egregious loss of his entire family as Colonel Cresap's act of vengeful retaliation for the robbery and murder of two frontiersmen by members of the Shawanee tribe (188). Logan eloquently describes his own loss: "There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature" (189). Jefferson readily admits to "varieties in the race of man, distinguished by their powers both of body and mind," but he does not subscribe to Buffon's notion that such difference is dependent upon "the side of the Atlantic on which their food happens to grow, or which furnishes the elements of which they are compounded" (189). By moving so swiftly from praise to denigration, Jefferson reveals here a tendency that prevails in his life and his writings to deal inconsistently and incongruously with the

other races present in America. As to the eloquence and literary merit of Anglo Americans, Jefferson takes on the critique of the Abbé Raynal, who enumerates the great poets of the Greeks, Italians, Portuguese, English, and French but argues, "America has not yet produced one good poet" (190). Jefferson identifies Washington, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, and Rittenhouse as three American-produced geniuses whose brilliance in the arts of war, physics, and astronomy was forged in their American experiences.

In response to query 8, which asks about the number of inhabitants in Virginia, Jefferson consults public records, historians, and the census, calculating that "should this rate of increase continue, we shall have between six and seven millions of inhabitants within 95 years" (209). Jefferson takes this occasion of projected populations to address the proposal to "produce rapid population by as great importations of foreigners as possible" (210). Given America's form of government, "more peculiar than those of any other in the universe," coupled with the fact that the "greatest number of emigrants" will have imbibed the principles of absolute monarchies, Jefferson cautions against this emigration policy (211). Further, he points to the differences in languages and fears that "they will infuse into [the nation] their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mess" (211). Jefferson's opposition to massive immigration of foreigners, for fear that it will introduce heterogeneity into the polis, seems at odds with his policy for American Indians to intermarry with Anglo Americans. Similarly, Jefferson expresses another inconsistency in his thinking at the conclusion of this query; a slave owner himself, he refers to the institution of slavery as "this great political and moral evil" (214).

When Jefferson addresses the question regarding the native inhabitants of Virginia, he offers up what he readily admits to be rather faulty numbers. Notwithstanding, he observes the rapid depletion of the native population by "one-third of their former numbers [based on] spirituous liquors, small pox, war, and an abridgment of territory" (221). Rhetorically, Jefferson seems to anticipate JAMES FENIMORE COOPER's notion, just decades later, of a vanishing race of people. This is most evident in Jefferson's entertaining of his own curiosity regarding the burial rites of American Indians through the excavation of a burial mound. With the air of a detached scientist, Jefferson details encountering the skull of an infant, another rib of an infant, and "a fragment of the underjaw of a person about half grown" (224). Nowhere in his description of the burial mound is there a reverence for those whose bodies he has decided to examine, but only a conjecture as to the circumstances leading to the mass burial (225). He concludes this section with anecdotes of the reverence that American Indians still hold for such sites, mentioning that those who had visited a burial mound returned "with expressions which were construed to be those of sorrow" (225–226). It might well be that Jefferson wished to maintain his tone of scientific objectivity and thus only expressed his own respect, perhaps, in the anecdotal form of reporting its appearance in others.

"By [1781] critics were already beginning to draw attention to his blunt pronouncement of human equality in the Declaration of Independence, and his *Notes on Virginia* is his most comprehensive explanation of his understanding of the idea. This text, to a large degree, was an explication of the Declaration of Independence; it grounded, as he thought, some of the grand philosophical principles of the Declaration in the empirical proofs of science" (Boulton 472). On the basis of Jefferson's disparagement of blacks in *Notes on the State of Virginia,* Boulton concludes that his famous article "all men are created equal," never included blacks, as Jefferson "excluded blacks from the category of man" (472). Boulton references Jefferson's often repeated phrases "physical distinctions proving a difference of race" and "the different is fixed in nature" as proof that Jefferson considered blacks to be an inferior race (483).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Jefferson's treatment of the abundant flora and fauna found in America with that rep-

resented by THOMAS MORTON in his *New English Canaan*.

2. Emerson, Murray, and others will also take up Raynal's critique of America's lack of celebrated literature. Examine their responses, as authors, and compare them with these of Jefferson, who was primarily a statesman.
3. Compare Jefferson's exhumation of an Indian burial mound with his contemporary PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU's "The Indian Burying Ground."
4. Compare Jefferson's treatment of American Indians with his treatment of Africans. Why might he consider American Indians to be future citizens but argue that "the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race."

Letter to Peter Carr (1787)

Peter Carr was Jefferson's nephew, the son of Jefferson's sister Martha and brother-in-law Dabney Carr. Through advising his nephew on the subjects suitable for his study, Jefferson considers the republic's future and expresses his reliance upon an elite group of individuals possessing what he deems to be a solid education. Although Jefferson considers Carr's recent association with George Wythe, a self-educated man who became a lawyer and statesman in Virginia, to be as fortuitous for his nephew as it was for himself, he nevertheless feels compelled to "mention . . . the books . . . worth your reading, which submit to [Wythe's] correction." Central to Jefferson's notions of a worthy education is an understanding of Latin, which provides scholars with the ability to read the classics in their original language. Jefferson detested reading translations and preferred the difficult pleasure afforded from deciphering texts on one's own. Thus, he advises Carr to learn Spanish as "the antient history of a great part of America is written in that language." "Jefferson's educational object was to create an intellectual aristocracy, by taking the most gifted young men, irrespective of their parents' wealth or social station, and giving them a liberal education—an education of which the classics and ancient history were the core—that they might be the more fit to govern America, to embellish her cities with beautiful buildings, and to write a national literature" (Morison 78). "Jefferson saw three reasons for the study of the classics in America. These were, first, as models of pure style and taste in writing; second, the happiness and satisfaction to be derived from the ability to read the authors in the original; and last 'the stores of real science deposited and transmitted in these languages'" (Sand 94–95).

On the subject of morality and religion, Jefferson recommends "the writings of [Laurence] Sterne particularly form the best course of morality that ever was written." He bases this belief in morality's being located in Sterne's fiction, and not in the Bible, because of his conviction that "moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man as his leg or arm." In other words, since Jefferson considered humans to be inherently moral, a tenet that directly contradicts biblical interpretations of mankind's inherent evil based upon Adam's fall from grace, he would rather his nephew dedicate his moral education to Sterne than to the Bible. If Carr is to read the Bible, Jefferson recommends perusing it "as you would read Livy or Tacitus," two respected Roman historians. He cautions against a literal interpretation of the Bible, especially when it comes into direct contradiction to "the laws of nature." It is not surprising that Jefferson would advocate knowledge of the classics since his plans for public education in Virginia included a curriculum filled with classes in Latin and Greek that would permit young boys access to classical writings. What seems a bit surprising, however, is that Jefferson, who penned this epistle while in Paris, should attempt to dissuade his nephew from similar travels, stating, "There is no place where your pursuit of knowledge will be so little obstructed by foreign objects as in your own country."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Jefferson's vision for a young man's education, as outlined in his letter to his nephew Peter Carr, with that for young women, as described in his letter to Nathaniel Burwell. What might account for these differences? What position must he imagine women taking in the nation?
2. Compare COTTON MATHER's *Bonifacius* and its reliance on the Bible to Jefferson, and his preference for classical texts. How does each writer imagine the inherent nature of mankind? What is the purpose of an education for both?

Letter to Handsome Lake (1802)

In his November 3, 1802, letter to Ganioda'yo, the Seneca Indian chief commonly known as HANDSOME LAKE, Jefferson continues to advance many of the theories he set forth in *Notes on the State of Virginia* regarding the present and future of American Indians in the nation, with the exception of the considerable focus placed on the sale of "spirituous liquors." In *Notes,* Jefferson included liquor as one of three central enemies responsible for the drastic reduction in the native population. In his letter to Handsome Lake, Jefferson dilates upon the subject of alcohol: "It has weakened their bodies, enervated their minds, exposed them to hunger, cold, nakedness, and poverty." Years prior, on the occasion of Moses Paul's execution for murdering a fellow American Indian during a drunken brawl, the missionary SAMSON OCCOM provides a similar, but more elaborate list of alcohol's ill effects: "By this sin we can't have comfortable houses, nor any thing comfortable in our houses; neither food nor raiment, nor decent utensils. We are obliged to put up with very mean, ragged, and dirty clothes, almost naked. And we are half-starved, for most of the time obliged to pick up any thing to eat. And our poor children are suffering every day for want of the necessities of life; they are very often crying for want of food, and we have nothing to give them; and in the cold weather they are shivering and crying, being pinched with cold."

Interestingly, Occom never mentions white men's complicity in the alcoholism of American Indians through their selling or trading of liquor. Handsome Lake, however, does. Jefferson acknowledges that the Seneca chief's "censures" not only of his own people for buying and consuming the alcohol, but of "all the nations of the white people who have supplied their calls for this article" is understandable. Nevertheless, Jefferson initially defends the trafficking of alcohol between natives and whites by referencing the rules of a free-market economy: "They have sold what individuals wish to buy, leaving every one to be the guardian of his own health and happiness." Jefferson's argument here is that the supply for alcohol would not exist if the natives did not express a desire for it. He further argues that each is responsible for his own health and happiness, a tenet expressly derived, ironically, from the Declaration of Independence. Having expressed these defenses of the white men's trading and supplying an "article" Jefferson readily admits is a central cause of the demise of the native population, he proceeds to applaud Handsome Lake's efforts to arrest the trade of alcohol for his people's own good and promises to assist in stopping the flow of "spirituous liquors" to his tribe. This bit of praise, however, is not without negative repercussion. Jefferson writes, "As you find that our people cannot refrain from the ill use of [alcohol], I greatly applaud your resolution not to use [alcohol] at all." Note that Jefferson does not point to a lack of restraint of natives when it comes to the "ill use" of alcohol, but of fellow white people.

Evidently, Jefferson continues in his belief that whites represent the model to which native peoples need to aspire in their struggle for progress. This belief informs his next topic in the letter: natives' sale of their "excess" land and forfeiture of their hunting and gathering mode of living for the more civilized practice of agriculture. Jefferson assures Handsome Lake that America is "ready to buy land" provided "your consent is freely given [and] a satisfactory price paid." He further testifies, "Nor do I think, brother, that the sale of lands is, under all circumstances, injurious to your people." Jefferson urges Handsome Lake to persuade his people

to abandon hunting in favor of agriculture. The results, he forecasts, will reverse the image of ruin and degradation presented in the first half of the letter in reference to the abuse of alcohol: "Your women and children well fed and clothed, your men living happily in peace and plenty, and your numbers increasing from year to year."

Jefferson's letter to Handsome Lake concludes with language of kinship and amity as he describes the Seneca as "our brethren of the same land."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Jefferson's treatment of the ruinous effects of alcohol on American Indians with Samson Occom's portrayal of the "devilish sin of drunkenness" in his sermon preached at Moses Paul's execution.
2. Jefferson hired Philip Morin Freneau to author a propaganda organ for his political party. Consider how the two men write about American Indians.

Letter to Benjamin Hawkins (1803)

As he expressed in *Notes on the State of Virginia,* Jefferson disapproved of American Indian industries and what he deemed to be their inefficient use of the land, particularly because such activities as hunting and gathering exposed native women to drudgery and were central reasons for the low birth-rates among native peoples. The political scientist Claudio Katz believes that Jefferson relied on a "Lockean vocabulary of improvement . . . enclosure and husbandry would enable Indian families to use much less land to provide a more comfortable subsistence for themselves" (9). Katz argues that Jefferson's acknowledgment of native rights to the soil "was a tactical concession: purchase was a safer and less expensive way of acquiring land than war, and it made for a better representation of American intentions before European public opinion" (9).

In his letter to Hawkins, Jefferson expresses his plan for Indians to quit the "business of hunting" and "become better farmers." Such a shift in land use would, Jefferson avows, be mutually beneficial to both citizens of the United States as well as its native inhabitants: "While they are learning to do better on less land, our increasing numbers will be calling for more land, and thus a coincidence of interests will be produced between those who have lands to spare, and want other necessaries, and those who have such necessaries to spare, and want lands." As farmers, Jefferson seems to suggest, American Indians will become more acculturated to an American sensibility and will thus situate themselves in a position to pursue his ultimate goal, the incorporation of American Indians into American culture: "The ultimate point of rest and happiness for them," Jefferson writes, "is to let our settlements and theirs meet and blend together, to intermix, and become one people."

As the historian Roger Kennedy remarks, Jefferson's own family history attests to his approval of interracial marriage: Jefferson "was pleased with his daughters' marriages to men who claimed Pocahontas as an ancestress" (105). Kennedy is quick to point out, however, that Jefferson's approval of miscegenation was strictly reserved for mixtures between American Indians and Anglo Americans; he did not conscience unions between blacks and whites, despite his own notorious affair with the slave Sally Hemings. His somewhat utilitarian notions of land use and interracial marriage were predicated on the belief that American Indians were capable of improving to the level of Anglo Americans; all they wanted was for a change in environment or circumstances. Indeed, nothing speaks to Jefferson's sense of egalitarianism with American Indians than his plans to confer U.S. citizenship upon them. He writes to Hawkins, "Incorporating themselves with us as citizens of the U.S., this is what the natural progress of things will of course bring on, and it will be better to promote than to retard it."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Historians have long argued that Jefferson's policy toward American Indians was a guiding principle for President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Policy of the 1830s. In his letter to

Hawkins, Jefferson advocates extending U.S. citizenship to American Indians. How might Jefferson's policy apply to Jackson?

2. Consider Jefferson's stance on education as a cornerstone to citizenship and an elite-run government. How might this belief be reconciled to his imaginings of an American Indian citizenry? What kinds of education does he suggest for the nation's native population?

Letter to Nathaniel Burwell (1818)

Jefferson confesses that prior to Burwell's letter, "a plan of female education has never been a subject of systematic contemplation with me." That said, he consults his "surviving daughter" and one of her pupils to arrive at the general goals and specific subjects deemed proper for a "good education."

Although his letter to Peter Carr advocates the novels of Laurence Sterne, such as *Tristram Shandy,* for their moral content, Jefferson warns against young females' "inordinate passion prevalent for novels." He fears that "the result [of reading too many novels] is a bloated imagination, sickly judgment, and disgust towards all the real businesses of life." One might conjecture that Jefferson's warning stems from a fear that females are prone to indulge in the fantasies presented in novels to the neglect of their household duties, or to the dedication of their attentions to more serious subjects. He does not dismiss literature altogether, however, but recommends narratives modeled "on the incidents of real life" because they are "useful vehicles of sound morality." He likewise cautions against too liberal a reading of poetry but applauds Pope, Dryden, Thompson, and Shakespeare for "forming style and taste." Markedly absent from Jefferson's list of subjects indispensable to a young female's education are the classics, which have a considerable influence on him and on his views about a proper man's education.

Jefferson advocates the "ornaments" of dancing, drawing, and music, although he strictly admonishes any female who pursues dancing after marriage. While the parent of a young single woman can derive pleasure from seeing "his daughter qualified to participate with her companions" in dance, for the married woman, "gestation and nursing leav[e] little time to . . . this exercise [to make it] either safe or innocent." Drawing, which he confesses to be more fashionable in Europe than in America, is nevertheless useful and may be later employed in the mother's instruction of her children. Likewise, music, provided the young woman "has an ear," is an essential accomplishment and "furnishes a delightful recreation for the hours of respite from the cares of the day."

Jefferson concludes by acknowledging the central educational subject of "household economy," in which "the mothers of our country are generally skilled and generally careful to instruct their daughters." Given the thoroughness of mothers' instructions to their daughters on this subject, Jefferson does not feel the need to provide any further detail or recommendations. Rather, he elevates the importance of a house's order and economy by noting that in its absence, "ruin follows and children [are rendered] destitute of the means of living."

For Discussion or Writing

1. How would you characterize Jefferson's expectations for women in the nation on the basis of his recommendations for their education?
2. Contrast Jefferson's suggestions for a good female education with his suggestions for a good male education.
3. Compare Jefferson's ideal female education with HANNAH WEBSTER FOSTER's as presented in *The Boarding School* and JUDITH SARGENT MURRAY's as outlined in "On the Equality of the Sexes."

Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson (1821)

Jefferson identifies his own "ready reference" and "information [for] my family" as the chief reasons compelling him to write "some memoranda and state some recollections" of his life at his current age of 77 (3). He begins by tracing back his paternal side

of the family to Wales, and then briefly mentions his uncles, Thomas and Field, before proceeding with an account of his father, Peter Jefferson, born in either 1707 or 1708 (3). His mother, Jane Randolph, married at the age of 19 and was born to a family derived from England and Scotland (3). Jefferson dedicates considerably more attention to his father, writing with pride that despite his father's lack of an education, his "strong mind, sound judgment, and eager[ness] for information" soon garnered him the honor of becoming a mathematics professor at William and Mary College, and later cartographer, with Mr. Fry, of the first map of Virginia. Jefferson references his father's map in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Jefferson further distinguishes his father by referring to him as the "third or fourth settler of the part of the country in which I live" (4). Almost immediately after these passages, Jefferson abruptly writes of his father's death: "He died August 17, 1757" (4).

Jefferson's autobiography then proceeds to address his own education, beginning at his father's behest at the age of five in English, and continuing at age nine in Latin. After his father's death, Jefferson pursued his study of Latin with a more apt instructor, the Reverend Mr. Maury, whom he describes as a "correct classical scholar," for two years, followed by two additional years at William and Mary College (4). His greatest mentor, however, is George Wythe, whom he met through Dr. William Small while attending classes at William and Mary. Through Wythe, whom Jefferson refers to fondly as "my faithful and beloved mentor in youth, and my most affectionate friend through life," he began his legal studies and an association with then-governor of Virginia, Fauquier (4). His positions as a lawyer, as well as a "member of the legislature," were both abruptly stopped by the events of the American Revolutionary War (5). Despite laboring under a government that attempted to circumscribe their minds "within narrow limits," Jefferson "made one effort in that body for the permission of the emancipation of slaves" (5).

His position as a lawyer introduced him, through his acquaintance with his fellow lawyer John Wayles, to his wife, Martha Wayles Skelton, who was the 23-year-old widow of Bathurst Skelton (5). Interestingly, Jefferson's description of their marriage is devoid of any sentiment but speaks instead of their financial standing. Her patrimony, minus debts, "was about equal to my own patrimony, and consequently doubled the ease of our circumstances" (5).

Jefferson narrates his initial experience with revolutionary events as a law student, "at the door of the lobby of the House of Burgesses," where he overhears the eloquent oration of Patrick Henry (5–6). Just a few years later, Jefferson joined the ranks of Henry and others to create a committee that would unite the thirteen colonies in concert against the British government (6–7). Although the consulting members wished Jefferson would represent them, he demurred, offering his brother-in-law, Mr. Carr, instead (7). The second request made for Jefferson to take a leadership role, however, was met with his approval, and in anticipation of the new meeting designed to combat the Boston port bill with a day of fasting and prayer, Jefferson wrote a draft outlining the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain, which was published in pamphlet form as "A Summary View of the Rights of British America" (10). In a precursor to the Declaration of Independence, this pamphlet was "penned in the language of truth, and divested of those expressions of servility which would persuade his majesty that we are asking favours, and not rights, shall obtain from his majesty a more respectful acceptance" (105).

Jefferson recognizes that the historical events he is recounting of the Constitutional Congress blend both personal history, and thus are placed rightly within his autobiography, and "general history . . . [thus being] known to every one, and need not therefore be noted here" (10). In their review of two recent biographies of Thomas Jefferson, the historians Jan Lewis and Peter Onuf address this very issue of Jefferson's personal history's blending with the nation's by quoting the 1874 biographer James Parton: "If Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson was right"

(125). Pauline Maier attributes the synedochal relationship between the nation and Jefferson to his authorship of the Declaration of Independence (reported in Lewis and Onuf 125).

Through the reported speech of Governor Livingston, Jefferson includes a fine piece of praise for his writing, and readers understand a link between the penning of his pamphlet and his eventual construction of the Declaration. Livingston deems the former "a production certainly of the finest pen in America" (11). With equal humility, Jefferson states, "I prepared a draught of the Declaration committed to us" (12). He proceeds to offer readers a rare glimpse into the internal struggles and debates within the Second Continental Congress, including the fear and reservations of some colonies to approve the Declaration of Independence (15–17). When all thirteen colonies were in agreement with the proposed resolution to break ties with England, the various representatives deliberated on the exact wording and sentiments expressed in that all-important document. Jefferson attributes the striking out of certain language related to "censure on the people of England . . . lest they should give them offence" to the "pusillanimous idea that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with" (18). South Carolina and Georgia argued for the removal of a clause "reprobating enslaving the inhabitants of Africa" (18). Other passages removed or amended are made available to the reader in the pages immediately following, with Jefferson's judgment: "The sentiments of men are known not only by what they receive, but what they reject also" (18). By introducing the original Declaration of Independence, Jefferson makes an indirect statement regarding his own sentiments. As author of the document, Jefferson expresses more passionate sentiment, both in his desire to end the institution of slavery and in his critique of King George III's despotism (19–24).

Jefferson informs readers that he writes selectively of the "details of reformation only; selecting points of legislation prominent in character and principle, urgent, and indicative of the strength of the general pulse of reformation" (37). He provides readers with notes on debates among the founding fathers regarding the census and how each state will determine its tax, whether by the number of workers in the state (both free and slave), the number of houses, or the number of free persons. Further debate ensues regarding the establishment of voting rights for the various states, especially since the states vary so widely in size and population (24–32). He leaves these debates without imputing his own opinion until he introduces a bill that would change the system for inheritance. Rather than allow the patriarchs of "founding great families" to pass all of their property and thus create "an aristocracy of wealth, of more harm and danger, than benefit, to society" through the practice of primogeniture, Jefferson proposes to require an even distribution of lands among a father's children. Such a requirement, he believes, will "make an opening for the aristocracy of virtue and talent, which nature has wisely provided for the direction of the interests of society and scattered with equal hand through all its conditions" (32). Jefferson considers such a class of people to be "essential to a well ordered republic" (32). Such a belief accords with Jefferson's letter to his nephew Peter Carr, as well as his plans to establish schools throughout Virginia and the University of Virginia (42–43). Jefferson writes of his attempts at legislation regarding education in the state of Virginia. The bill to introduce elementary education "for all children generally, right and poor" does not succeed because "it would throw on wealth the education of the poor; and the justices, being generally of the more wealthy class, were unwilling to incur that burden" (42–43).

Interestingly, Jefferson promises readers to "recur again to this subject towards the close of my story, if I should have life and resolution enough to reach that term; for I am already tired of talking about myself" (43). Just as he has written earlier in his autobiography, Jefferson again links his private life to the public history of Virginia: "Being now, as it were, identified with the Commonwealth itself, to write my own history during the two years of my administration [as governor], would be to write the public history of that portion of the revo-

lution within this state" (45). Jefferson continues, "For this portion therefore of my life, I refer altogether to [Girardin's] history" (45).

Jefferson abruptly changes topic to address another bill he successfully introduced to stop the importation of future slaves. Recalling his failure to include language regarding this very subject when he was first a representative of the House of Burgess, and while authoring the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson seems pleased to know that his bill "stopped the increase of the evil by importation, leaving to future efforts in final eradication" (34). He returns to the subject a few pages later and writes more forcefully about the inevitable end of slavery and emancipation of all slaves: "Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these two people are to be free" (44). Despite these strong words that presage the Civil War, which would be fought in large measure over this very subject, Jefferson does not imagine a future for Africans in America: "Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion has drawn indelible lines of distinction between them" (44).

In his descriptions of heated debates regarding the abolition of "religious tyranny" in Virginia, Jefferson is quite kind to his opponents, Mr. Pendleton and Robert Carter Nicholas. Jefferson's love for oral debate is made evident in his praise of worthy opponents: "In justice to the two honest but zealous opponents . . . they were more disposed generally to acquiesce in things as they are, than to risk innovations, yet whenever the public will had once decided, none were more faithful or exact in their obedience to it" (35). When debating Pendleton over the form of inheritance, Jefferson refers to him as "the ablest man in debate I have ever met with. He had not indeed the poetical fancy of Mr. Henry, his sublime imagination, his lofty and overwhelming diction; but he was cool, smooth and persuasive; his language flowing, chaste and embellished, his conceptions quick, acute and full of resource" (33). He offers similar praise of George Mason and James Madison (36–37). Lest readers believe Jefferson prone to verbosity, he declaims the current method by which Congress "waste[s] and abuse[s] the time and patience of the house" by giving in to lengthy and tedious debates (53). As examples of succinct debate, he points to Dr. Franklin and George Washington, both of whom he "never heard . . . speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point which was to decide the question" (53). In such praise, readers recognize that Jefferson's own aesthetic is informed by his preference for brief but well-spoken comments.

From 1777 to 1779, Jefferson worked arduously with Pendleton and Wythe to create laws for the state of Virginia; Mason and Lee, who were on the original committee with them, both excused themselves from the difficult task (37–40). These four bills Jefferson was pivotal in drafting and passing—abolishing religious tyranny, abolishing primogeniture, creating general education, and providing the right to trial by jury—he regards as "forming a system by which every fibre would be eradicated of ancient or future aristocracy; and a foundation laid for a government truly republican" (44).

After the completion of his services as governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Jefferson returns to his service in Congress. He takes up the debate over national currency, is involved in the ratification of the peace treaty with Great Britain, and is appointed as plenipotentiary to Paris, where he takes his eldest daughter and joins Dr. Franklin and John Adams (54–55). Jefferson devotes several pages to an international proposal he makes, and whose terms he successfully negotiated with various European countries, in an attempt to mitigate against the "piratical states of Barbary," who attack and plunder ships (59–61). Despite his valiant efforts, and his ability to garner support from various ambassadors and representatives of other nations, Jefferson's proposal ultimately "fell through" because his own nation failed to ratify it, believing themselves incapable of gathering the necessary funds to contribute to a peacekeeping force of frigates who would patrol the waters against pirates (61).

Uncharacteristically, Jefferson provides readers with some insight into his personal life by mentioning his own travels through France in an attempt to alleviate the pain caused by "a dislocated wrist, unsuccessfully set" (65). He provides readers with a list of the various towns and provinces he visits, first as part of his pursuit of "mineral waters" and later in a more official capacity to determine favorable trade routes and to assess the rice country of Piedmont (65). In this passage that provides readers a rare glimpse into Jefferson's personal life, he also mentions the arrival of his "younger daughter Maria from Virginia by way of London, the youngest having died some time before" (66). Jefferson treats the death of his wife in a more emotional manner, writing: "I had two months before that lost the cherished companion of my life, in whose affections, unabated on both sides, I had lived the last ten years in unchequered happiness" (46).

Upon his return to America, Jefferson debates the absence of particular articles to the Constitution, which he had no part in orchestrating. Specifically, Jefferson points to the term limitations for the president, the right to trial by jury, and "declarations ensuring freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of the person under the uninterrupted protection of the habeas corpus" (71–72). Further, Jefferson worries over the independence of judges from the executive branch of the government (72–74). In their current position, Jefferson labels them "the corps of sappers and miners, steadily working to undermine the independent rights of the States, and to consolidate all power in the hands of that government in which they have so important a freehold estate" (74).

His discussion of the obstacles currently facing the United States naturally blends into a historical recounting of the French Revolution, and Jefferson's passion for a republican form of government is reignited as he speaks against the various means of oppression imposed on the citizens of France (78). The declarations made by the king in December 1788 closely resemble those that appeared in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, including a free press and the states' independence from new taxes imposed by the king (80). Because the king's "constitution [is] timid, his judgment null, and without sufficient firmness even to stand by the faith of his word," the queen, who exercised "absolute ascendancy over him," in concert with the aristocratic ministers "whose principles of government were those of the age of Louis XIV," reversed the king's declarations by the evening of the same day (80). Jefferson "felt it very interesting to understand the views of the parties of which it was composed, and especially the ideas prevalent as to the organization contemplated for the government. I went therefore daily from Paris to Versailles, and attended their debates, generally till the hour of adjournment" (83). Jefferson further places himself squarely within the French Revolution and parallels it with the recent one in America: "I was much acquainted with the leading patriots of the assembly. Being from a country which had successfully passed through a similar reformation, they were disposed to my acquaintance, and had some confidence in me" (85). On the basis of this rapport, Jefferson proceeds to advise the French patriots to "secure what the government was now ready to yield, and trust to future occasions for what might still be wanting" (85). In other words, Jefferson attempted to prevent the bloody warfare of the French Revolution by asking the patriots to accept the rights offered by the king.

Despite the bloodshed of the Revolution, Jefferson believes that the French have never achieved anything more than the nine original articles of rights and privileges the king initially offered (85). Jefferson's close proximity to the events of the Revolution places him passing through the lane just moments before the "signal for universal insurrection" commenced with the stoning of French cavalry that led to their desertion of Versailles (89). Jefferson learns firsthand from Monsieur de Corny of the arming of the people by the governor of the Invalides (90). He squarely lays the blame for the bloodshed and horror of war on the queen, who did not allow the king to act as Jefferson feels assured that he would have and who held undue sway over the monarch. Twice Jefferson assures his readers that the king always acted with France's best interest, "and had he been left to himself, he would have willingly acquiesced in whatever they should devise as best for the nation" (92).

When the marquis de la Fayette, Duport, Barnave, Alexander La Meth, Blacon, Mounier, Maubourg, and Dagout all attend dinner at Jefferson's, in the hopes of allaying their fears regarding dissension among the patriots surrounding the nation's constitution, Jefferson is asked to moderate the more passionate voices and to promote a "wholesome and practicable reformation only" (95–96). Jefferson concludes his autobiography with an awareness that his account of the French Revolution has been disproportionate in the "grand scale of my narrative" (97). He justifies his prolonged attention to this event by stating "the whole world must take in this revolution" (97). He imagines France's wrestling with the rights of man to have a ripple effect on the "tyrants of the North," who are allied against the spirit of independence first created in America and now being addressed by France (97). He returns to America upon receiving General Washington's letter notifying him of his appointment as secretary of state (98). His return home allows him to attend to his eldest daughter's wedding, and to the sickbed of Dr. Franklin (99). Jefferson abruptly concludes his autobiography with the following sentence: "I arrived at New York on the 21st of March where Congress was in session" (103).

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Jefferson's autobiography compare with Franklin's? How do these two founding fathers imagine themselves and their roles in the creation of the nation?
2. Much of Jefferson's autobiography involves his public life as a politician rather than his private life as a father and husband. How might you account for this shift in a sense of the self? How might you argue that this is or is not the proper subject for an autobiography?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON JEFFERSON AND HIS WORK

1. Jefferson advocated wealth and education as two essential tenets of American citizenry. Reading through the Declaration of Independence, locate references to these characteristics and identify others that Jefferson states directly or else assumes.
2. Jefferson's autobiography is in many ways a history of the early republic. Compare this connection between public and private to his treatment of groups other than Anglo-European males, namely, American Indians, Africans, and Anglo-European females. How do you reconcile the disparity between his public and private treatments of these groups?

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Cotton Mather (1663–1728)

I write the Wonders of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Depravations of Europe, to the American Strand.

(*Magnalia Christi Americana*)

Named after two "most honored families in early New England," the Cottons and the Mathers, Cotton Mather was destined for life as a Puritan minister. His paternal grandfather, Richard Mather, migrated to Massachusetts in pursuit of religious freedom from the Church of England. Richard Mather preached for nearly 34 years in Dorchester. He is perhaps best known for drafting the famous Cambridge Platform of 1648, which established the particular form of church government known as Congregationalism. Cotton Mather's maternal grandfather, not surprisingly, was also a Puritan minister. In fact, John Cotton delivered the farewell sermon for John Winthrop's departure for Massachusetts Bay in 1630 (Silverman 3). Just a few years later, John Cotton, along with his congregation, left England and landed in America, where he ministered at the First Church of Boston.

Richard Mather's son, Increase, married Maria Cotton, the daughter of John Cotton, on March 6, 1662. Six years prior, Richard had married John Cotton's widow; thus, the union of Maria and Increase created a double bond between the two formidable Puritan families, forged by consanguine and affilial relations. "At a quarter past ten in the morning, February 12, 1663," Cotton Mather was born (Silverman 6). He was named after his maternal grandfather, "the most Eminent Man of God that ever New-England saw" (Silverman 6). With such a name as *Cotton Mather,* Increase acknowledged and privileged his son's family heritage. Increase expected Cotton to follow in the family's profession, and so he did.

Early in life, Cotton began to exhibit signs of his propensity for knowledge and religion. He is said to have begun praying, even creating his own prayers, around the time when he first began to speak. As had his father, who first attended Harvard at the age of 12, Cotton Mather proved himself no less dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. By the age of 11, Cotton had read Cato, Tully, Ovid, and Virgil in Latin, as well as good portions of the New Testament in Greek. Reading in Greek was a skill he honed while attending Harvard. As part of the curriculum, students were expected to translate Old Testament passages from Greek into Hebrew or from English into Greek (Solberg xxiv). In 1674, Cotton passed the entrance examination, which involved proving a working knowledge of Greek and Latin, and was admitted to Harvard as its youngest student. He was 11. Because most of the scholars were years older, ranging in age from 15 to 18, and because Cotton suffered from a speech impediment (he stuttered), he left Harvard as a resident student after a month or so and studied at home with his father. His stutter remained with him until a few months prior to his 21st birthday, and then returned again years later.

Cotton Mather graduated from Harvard at the age of 15; the following year, on August 22, 1680,

he began his career as a Puritan minister by delivering his first public sermon in his grandfather's church in Dorchester. He spent five years in candidacy before his ordination as a minister. During this time, Cotton suffered a crisis of faith and sexual temptation (Solberg xxvii). It is not surprising, given his repeated advice in *Bonifacius* for readers to devote themselves to periods of self-examination, that Mather devoted a considerable amount of time in his five years prior to candidacy to just this practice. Given the Puritan belief in original sin and the impossibility of successfully purging himself of all sin, especially lust and pride, Mather sought out divine intervention. These two particular vices would haunt Mather for a good part of his life and cause him anguish and self-doubt. When he was awarded membership in the illustrious Royal Society, for example, Mather debated in his diary whether or not to wear the ring that signified his membership. His diary contains repeated entreaties to God to assist him in making sure that his actions were taken not to satisfy his own ambitions and desire for fame and recognition, but to further the glory of God.

On March 4, 1686, he married Abigail Phillips, the daughter of "worthy, pious, and credible Parents" who resided in Charlestown. She was nearly 16, and he was 23 (Silverman 50). Their firstborn, Abigail, died after five months, and two others died in infancy; Cotton was extremely fearful for the lives of his children who survived past the first few years. He prayed fervently for the life of his son, Increase, Jr., also known as "Creasy." Samuel died; Mehetabel died; Abigail died. His wife, Abigail, succumbed to smallpox on December 1, 1702. He married his second wife, Elizabeth, the daughter of the Boston physician Dr. John Clark and widow of Mr. Hubbard, and had four more children. Elizabeth Hubbard died in 1713 during a measles epidemic, along with the twins she had recently borne, and their daughter, Jerusha. He married his third wife, Lydia Lee Green, who was the widow of the wealthy merchant John George and the daughter of the Reverend Samuel Lee, on July 5, 1715. Unlike his almost pious devotion to his first two wives, who he thought would make him closer to Christ, Mather was clearly physically and sexually attracted to Lydia. His third wife's considerable wealth and social standing put him and his family in a much roomier house than he had previously had.

In April 1721, a smallpox epidemic raged in Boston, infecting nearly half of the city (Silverman 336). Because Mather had two children, Elizabeth and Sammy, who had been born after the last epidemic (1702–3), he was particularly fearful that they would become infected. During the smallpox epidemic in Boston of 1721, Mather took a controversial proinoculation stance (Jeske 585; Silverman 338–339). In July of that same year, Mather addressed a letter to local physicians, informing them of the efficacy of inoculation in warding off the deadly effects of epidemics like smallpox. Much of his letter was based on information he had gathered from the Royal Society's *Transactions.* His biographer Kenneth Silverman also asserts that Mather's own servant, Onesimius, also served as a source on inoculation (339). Further, Mather's early interest in medicine, piqued during his days at Harvard, provided him with a requisite knowledge of medical theories in practice. Indeed, he corresponded briefly with Robert Boyle, who figures prominently in Mather's *The Christian Philosopher,* while acting as an amanuensis for Dr. William Avery. Mather's interest in preventing fatalities from the 1721 outbreak of smallpox also resulted in a "Letter about a Good Management under the Distemper of the Measles," which he intended as a means of instructing people unable to afford physicians. In it, Mather provides detailed descriptions of smallpox symptoms along with potential remedies, but his main advice is to let nature take its course. His scholarly interests and pursuits did not rest solely in the contemplation of religious matters, however. In fact, Mather's scientific inquiries, published in *A Christian Philosopher,* contributed to his being made a fellow of the Royal Society in 1713.

Cotton published over 460 texts in his lifetime but was most disappointed that he could not find a publisher for his *Biblia Americana.* At the end of

his *Bonifacius,* Mather includes a lengthy advertisement for *Biblia,* in the hope that it would pique the interest of subscribers and find a publisher. He describes the work as a collection of information on the Bible from nearly every conceivable angle, including biblical geography, the history of Jerusalem, scientific theories on the flood and Creation, and analysis of various translations of the Bible. A book that Mather worked on for nearly 15 years, from 1693, *Biblia* was a staggeringly large text whose sheer size made its publication cost prohibitive. Indeed, the finished product was six volumes, each volume containing roughly 1,000 pages.

As Perry Miller, Sacvan Bercovitch, and other scholars have argued compellingly, Cotton Mather employed the jeremiad in much of his writings. He strove to restore what he saw to be an increasingly straying and secularized Puritan culture to the origins of their religious convictions. With the dying out of the first generation of Puritans, Mather began to see the potential demise of the constant battle New England was waging between the Puritans and the creatures of the invisible world, witches and devils, who wanted to tempt the pilgrims away from their path of righteousness. In his lifetime, New England suffered two smallpox epidemics, two fires that destroyed large portions of Boston, and King Philip's War. Puritans read religious portent into these disasters and viewed them as a harsh judgment from God for their backsliding. This central theme—decline—operates through most of Mather's sermons and published materials. Besides heralding the deplorable conditions of a society, however, the jeremiad contains a message of future hope. Despite the fallen status of Puritan New England, Mather writes, there remains the potential to reclaim past glories and to surpass them.

The relationship between Cotton and his father is particularly relevant when understanding the conflicting emotions that animated the son. Increase was a formidable force. Not only did he have multiple visits with the acting monarchs in England, but he seemed to have curried enough political favor to be instrumental in the appointing of the governor of Massachusetts and in the restoration of their charter. As a religious figure, Increase was known for a history of prognostications. He seemed to have the uncanny ability to predict disastrous events that befell New England, such as King Philip's War. As did his father, Increase, Cotton believed in the occult, or the ability to divine God's intent through signs in nature. The death of his wife Abigail in 1702 to consumption, as well as the death of his second wife, Elizabeth, to measles, however, severely tested this faith, as he had divined the signs to foretell of both wives' recoveries (Levin 753).

Like most sons, Cotton was desirous of his father's approval and felt himself constantly tasked with the difficult goal of surpassing a very accomplished and well-respected member of the Puritan community. Most tellingly, in the years of Increase's residence in England, Cotton enjoyed a prominence in both political and religious circles that he never enjoyed before or afterward. Another example of Increase's influence on his son can be seen in a general perusal of Cotton's papers and journals. He copied his father's sermons in a deliberate script and annotated them. At times, his annotations far outpaced the number of pages of his father's original sermons.

With the shift in the British monarchy from Protestantism to Catholicism under King James II, Massachusetts and the Puritans saw a challenge to their way of governance and worship. A new governor was sent to rule over New England, and he took with him a revocation of the Massachusetts charter as well as the king's commission for a new government. Sir Edmund Andros, the new governor, demanded Anglican services be held in the same church currently serving the Puritans; he arrested Cotton's father, Increase, on charges that he had slandered Edward Randolph, "a leading advocate of strict royal control over Massachusetts" (Silverman 61–65). When Increase left for England to meet with King James and discuss his indulgences for non-Catholics, as well as the environment under Andros's governorship, Andros seems to have targeted Cotton. In 1689, Andros sent out

a warrant for Cotton's arrest on the same charges that his father faced—libel against Randolph. Just months before, Cotton had managed to copy bits of Randolph's letters that clearly displayed his animosity for New Englanders. However, the charges against Cotton included an anonymous pamphlet published two years prior entitled *A Brief Discourse Concerning the Unlawfulness of Common Prayer Worship.*

When King James's wife bore a son, William of Orange gathered Dutch allies to help him attack the king and reclaim the throne. The Glorious Revolution in England resulted in Bostonians' taking arms against Andros and his government; the arrest warrant that had been pending for nearly two months over Cotton's head was now no longer a threat. Wait Winthrop, who would soon after serve as a judge in the Salem witch trials, was instrumental in squelching the arrest order. Scholars remain uncertain of the degree of Mather's involvement in this revolution against Andros, partly because Mather's journal is missing for this period, and partly because his chief adversary, Edward Randolph, accused Mather of fomenting crowds to riot against Andros and of holding meetings with armed men at his own home. What is certain is that in April 1689, Andros was arrested, chained, and imprisoned. The king recalled Andros, Randolph, and their sympathizers in July to stand trial against complaints against them.

Out of these events in New England emerged the *Declaration of the Gentlemen,* which may or may not have been penned by Cotton Mather. It is certain, however, that he embraced its notions of nonviolent revolt against Andros's governance in New England, which they proclaim to be part of a larger plot to undermine Protestantism in the New World in favor of Catholicism. Despite their seizure of government officials, the colonists of New England maintained their allegiance to England. This moment helped to launch Cotton Mather into a dual role as a political and religious leader.

Three months into their rule over England, William and Mary declared war against the French. In New England, Sir William Phips (future governor of Massachusetts) launched a highly unsuccessful attack against the French in Canada. When Phips was appointed the new governor, and returned to Massachusetts with Increase, the colony once again had a charter that blended the relationship between church and state. Further, it should be noted that it was Increase Mather who negotiated the new charter with William and Mary.

At the insistence of William Stoughton, lieutenant-governor under Governor William Phips, who presided over the witch trials, and that of several other judges (including Judge Hathorne, great-grandfather of the well-known author Nathaniel Hawthorne), Cotton Mather set about explaining and supporting the trials. Samuel Sewall, Wait Winthrop (grandson of John Winthrop), John Richards, and Lieutenant-Governor William Stoughton, the men who made up the seven-man commission for the witch trials, were all close friends of the Mathers (Silverman 97). Cotton Mather began writing from court summaries, called breviates, and completed *The Wonders of the Invisible World* in mid-October 1692, just a few weeks after the final execution in Salem on September 22, 1692. It is perhaps this particular text, which was a best seller in its time, that solidifies the relationship between Mather and the Salem witch trials. In 1689, Cotton and his wife, Abigail, took in Martha Goodwin for a period of five or six weeks to try to learn more about the invisible world and to depossess the girl. Martha claimed to be suffering under the torments of a laundress named Goody Glover. Mather published his account of Martha Goodwin in *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions* in 1689. It went through a second edition in London in 1691 and a third edition in Edinburgh in 1697. Because of this particular publication, some critics see Cotton Mather as an instigator in the Salem witch trials, arguing that he taught the people of New England how to see cases of witchcraft. In the 18 months between the publication of the Goodwin case and the Salem outbreaks, Cotton Mather continued to draw the public's attention to the existence of devils and witchcraft.

While it is certainly true that a significant number of Mather's sermons, most of which were published, addressed issues of witchcraft and deviltry, his was not the only voice preaching from the pulpit on these subjects (Silverman 88).

Although his ill health prevented him from accepting John Richard's invitation to attend the trials, he did write an extensive letter where he laid out guidelines for the court. He believed that the surest sign of witchcraft was in the form of credible confession from the accused. Further, and this point is worth emphasis, Mather warned against the overreliance on spectral evidence, arguing that the devil could represent the figure of an innocent or virtuous person (Silverman 98). He was alarmed when Bridget Bishop, the "thrice-married owner of an unlicensed tavern," was found guilty and hanged on June 10, 1692, the first victim of the trials (Silverman 100). In response, Mather wrote *The Return of Several Ministers,* in which he chastised the court for acting so hastily and placing an undue emphasis on spectral evidence, the only form of evidence used against Bishop. Nevertheless, Mather's statement went on to "humbly recommend unto the government the speedy and vigorous prosecution of such as have rendered themselves obnoxious, according to the direction given in the laws of God, and the wholesome Statutes of the English nation, for the detection of witchcrafts."

After the execution of eight of nine condemned witches, Increase Mather wrote *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits Personating Men* (1693), in which he "declared and testified that to take away the life of any one, merely because a spectre or devil in a bewitched or possessed person does accuse them, will bring the guilt of innocent blood on the land." Fourteen of the prominent ministers in Boston signed Mather's statement; Cotton Mather did not sign. Cotton had his reasons for dissenting. He believed this statement might endanger the lives of the judges, might divert attention from the diabolical plot unleashed against the Puritans, and might undermine the new government that his own father had helped to establish after the revolt of 1689 (Silverman 114).

Within 10 days after the publication of *Wonders of the Invisible World,* the court hearing witch trials disbanded, and most of those still held in jail were set free. It is clear from his notes in his diary that Mather was uneasy with his text, feeling, perhaps rightly, that he had been too swayed by Governor Phips and others on the court to render a more just treatment of the trials. He was soon facing trials of his own as his first son, named Increase, was born with an imperforate anus and died just a few days later. It was said that Mather's own wife, Abigail, had been assaulted by devils and other specters during her pregnancy and that this accounted for the infant's demise. In January of the following year (1694), Robert Calef, who had voiced his opposition to Mather and the witch trials just months before, wrote a lengthy letter accusing Cotton and his father of having inappropriately touched a young woman (Mercy Short) under the pretext of saving her from witches and posed leading questions to induce her to confess to being plagued by witches. Until 1696, the two would carry on lengthy correspondence in which Calef would pose direct and difficult questions regarding the Salem witch trials that Mather would elide or in other ways evade. Chief among his questions, however, was whether humans were capable of committing acts previously ascribed to devils or God exclusively. He also inquired into the extensive reliance on spectral evidence as the primary means of convicting and executing.

Mather's heated debates with Calef were not the end of his controversial tangles. In 1701, when Joseph Dudley (brother to the early Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet), who had served under the much-despised Governor Andros, began writing letters to Cotton Mather, he was seeking the minister's assistance in becoming the next governor of Massachusetts. Mather grudgingly complied, thinking that far worse individuals could be appointed by the king to serve as governor (one person who resigned before sailing for New England had been convicted of murder). Dudley arrived in 1702, 13 years after he had been imprisoned along with Governor Andros in the Revolt of 1689. He

quickly proved himself a dangerous figure for the Mathers, as he advocated the Church of England, a branch of religion that the Mathers regarded as close to the papists, who practiced Catholicism.

When Dudley became involved in Queen Anne's War against the French and indigenous tribes of North America in 1706, the differences bubbling below the surface erupted. Mather accused Dudley of having illicitly traded with the French, the very people he was sworn to fight. When exchanging prisoners with the French, Dudley and his friend Captain Samuel Vetch are reported to have initiated trade with the French in Nova Scotia, and to have profited personally from it. Mather seems to have joined forces calling for Dudley's removal by authoring a pamphlet entitled *A Memorial of the Present Deplorable State of New England . . . by the Male-Administration of their Present Governour* (1707). In the anonymous pamphlet, Dudley's crimes under Andros's governorship are recited, as well as accusations of his most recent illegal trade of ammunition and other supplies to the French and Indians. Dudley adroitly had himself cleared of all the charges laid out in the pamphlet and then proceeded to name the new president of Harvard. This seems to have been a turning point, for both Increase and Cotton began an earnest and much more frank campaign against Dudley. Dudley's recent failed attempt to attack Port Royal against the French was viewed as proof of his treason; the troops he led did not attack the fort, Mather wrote, precisely because Dudley "peremptorily forbad it."

Dudley replied by publicly ridiculing Cotton. He dredged up the name of Katharine Mccarty, a woman who had written to Cotton two months after the death of his wife Abigail and declared her love for him. Although in his journal he expresses admiration for her "rare wit and sense," he finds a divide between her and his life in the ministry. What compels him to continue visiting her, Cotton insists, is her conversion. Kate, however, had developed a bad name in the community; her reputation, coupled with the congregation's shock over Cotton's attentions to her so soon after his wife's death, made him ultimately decide against a match with her (Silverman 188). In his private journal, Cotton confesses to the significant impact Kate had on him as a man and as a minister. He felt himself tempted by her, even to the point of questioning his belief in God. It is thus understandable how Cotton must have reacted when Dudley brought up her name up again in their public feud.

Dudley's attack on Cotton Mather's character seems to have invited other such forms of abuse. Quakers printed a broadside in 1710 entitled *A Just Reprehension of Cotton Mather* in which they accuse him of anonymously writing invectives against people, but not signing his name because he was rightly ashamed of his own work. In his *The British Empire in America* (1708), the historian John Oldmixon lambasted *Magnalia Christi Americana* as something that "resembles school boy's exercises forty years ago" (reported in Silverman 222).

But even in these difficult times for Mather when his public persona and reputation were being questioned, his published inquiries into religious and scientific matters were gaining him an international name. Mather received an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow, the first American to have such an honor bestowed upon him, in 1710. His *Magnalia Christi Americana* was listed as a singular reason for his doctor of divinity degree. Yet just as Mather was gaining international prominence, his reputation and his involvement in government and the North Church were diminishing. The building of a New North Church, only three blocks away from his own church, and the considerable depletion of his congregation surpassed his public feud with Dudley.

Mather died on February 13, 1728, one day after his 65th birthday. His final words are reported to have been "Now I have nothing more to do here. . . . My will is now entirely resigned to the will of God." In this death, as in his life, he wished to make of himself a subject of instruction and emulation. His son, Sammy, who would go on to pen a biography of his famous father, wrote: "He alone was able to support the character of this country abroad, and was had in great esteem through many nations in Europe" (reported in Silverman 425).

Today Cotton Mather, perhaps unfairly, is chiefly remembered for his connection to the Salem witch trials. One can discern him in the rigorous religious climate dominating Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and see him quoted directly in *Whole History of Grandfather's Chair.* His influence continues across the centuries, deeply informing Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, a play about witch hunts that parallels the events of the late 17th century with the McCarthy hearings against communism in the mid-20th century. *Bonifacius* was most influential to BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, who fashioned his pseudonym, *Silence DoGood,* and his *Poor Richard's Almanac* after Mather's famous essays. The two men met at least once, and Mather is reported to have attempted to warn Franklin as he headed out the door to stoop lest he hit his head on the doorjamb. Franklin did just that, and Mather advised him, "You are young, and have the world before you; stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps."

The Wonders of the Invisible World (1693)

At the urgings of Chief Justice William Stoughton and Governor William Phips, Mather's account of the Salem witch trials was completed and published a mere month after the final execution, which took place on September 22, 1692 (listed as September 17 in Craker). It contained multiple parts: "Enchantments Encountered," which covered the kinds of evidence that should be, but were not used, in the Salem trials; two sermons, "A Discourse on the Wonders of the Invisible World" and "An Hortatory and Necessary Address"; a brief account of witchcraft in England; five summaries (transcripts) of New England witchcraft trials; an account of witchcraft in Sweden. It concluded with a sermon entitled "The Devil Discovered." Mather completed *Wonders* on October 11, 1692.

In *The Wonders of the Invisible World,* Mather argues that there is a diabolical conspiracy under way in New England: Witches wish to root out Puritanism from America and plot New England's ruin. This was, for Mather, a representation of the Puritans' war with the invisible world, over which witches and devils reigned. Also of importance to the witch trials was the specter of Catholicism. It is thus without surprise that several of the court testimonies include the taking of sacraments as a devilish variation on Catholic belief in transubstantiation (that the wine and bread offered during Mass are indeed the Blood and Body of Christ). When taken in the recent context of the Glorious Revolution, when a Protestant (William of Orange) took the throne from a Catholic (James), the references to "popery" are not surprising.

Nor is Mather's racialization of the devil or of witches in general. In early "confessions" by Tituba, the servant from Barbados who was accused of afflicting Betsy and Abigail, the devil is clearly described as a prominent white man. It is only in subsequent "confessions" that the devil transforms into a "tawny" or a "little black man." Most of Mather's sermons reveal a racialization of the devil so that he resembles American Indians or African slaves. Critics attribute this to the racial unconscious of the colony, which imaged itself as besieged by forces within (American Indian tribes that were being displaced and decimated through direct and indirect means) and without (King James's Catholicism, Andros's insistence on holding Anglican services, the French conversions of American Indians along the East Coast and into Canada). Indeed, Mather summarizes the book's intent by writing, "I have indeed set myself to countermine the whole plot of the Devil, against New England."

Perhaps the most widely known section of Mather's work is the trial involving Martha Carrier. In court testimony, which Mather reproduces, Carrier's own children number among those who accuse her of witchcraft. A repeated theme in the testimony offered by Carrier's neighbors are their dead cattle, for which they believe Carrier to be responsible. Samuel Preston testified that "he had lately lost a cow . . . a thriving and well-kept cow, which without any known cause quickly fell down and died." A commonality in the accusations of witchcraft involved individuals' suffering some

ailment, affliction, or significant loss in property or income. Because Puritans subscribed to the Platonic notion of the world in which objects on earth were merely shadows of the real things in heaven, any occurrence, such as the unexplained death of one's cattle, could be, and was, taken for a sign from God.

The witch trials of 1692 can be divided into two periods: the Salem phase (late February to early June 1692) and the Andover phase (mid-July to mid-September 1692). Combined, these two courts tried 156 individuals who were accused of witchcraft. Of that number, 60 confessed to making pacts with the devil (Craker 333). The majority of those who confessed (43) did so in the Andover phase of the trials. Twenty-eight individuals were brought to trial; 20 were executed by hanging. Confession was the surest way to avoid trial. Interestingly, spectral evidence (based on the belief that a person who has entered a pact with the devil thus enables him to assume the person's appearance in order to recruit others) did not result in a single execution of a person accused of witchcraft. Further, spectral evidence alone was not considered by the court to warrant a trial (Craker 333). Indeed, the most damaging type of evidence in the Salem witch trials was what Craker refers to as "non-spectral evidence of malefic witchcraft," by which he intends the attribution of maladies, deaths of cattle, accidents, or other woeful events to a single person.

The events of 1692 began in February with Betty Parris (age nine) and her cousin, Abigail Williams (age 11), exhibiting strange behavior (babbling, crawling under chairs) and complaining of some unseen person pinching them in a most painful manner. The Reverend John Hale later published an account of their sufferings in *A Modest Inquiry* (1702). The two girls were in such a terrible state that their neighbor, Mary Sibley, implored her servant named Tituba to fashion a "witchcake" in order to discover who was behind these demonic acts against Betty and Abigail (Breslaw 538). When their "symptoms" worsened, Tituba found herself accused of witchcraft, arrested, and taken in for questioning. After two days of interrogation, Tituba apparently confessed to being in league with the devil. She and another accused woman, Sarah Good, went to trial and were found guilty of witchcraft on May 25 (Silverman 97).

The gender dynamics of the trials are worth mentioning as more women were accused and executed than men. By some accounts, the ratio is three women to every man. The scholar John McWilliams creates the following profile of women most likely to be accused of being witches: "over forty years of age, without a secure social position or a male heir, but known to have a sharp tongue, skills and midwifery, familiarity with tavern life, and/or a reputation for having practiced white or black magic" (580–581).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider the devil and witches afflicting Salem and the Puritan community in general as a manifestation of Mather's and other Puritans' fears. What are those fears? Is there any consistency or pattern to them?
2. How is Mather's text a defense of the Salem witch trials? What information does he give in defense? What does he assume about the beliefs of his reader?
3. The topic of witchcraft, and a society obsessed with rooting out evil threatening it from within, reappears in the centuries following *Wonders* with Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Consider the treatment of witchcraft in two of these three historical moments and argue for commonalities or differences among or between them.

Magnalia Christi Americana (1698)

First conceived in early summer 1693, Mather's opus, a history of New England, was occasioned in part by the deaths of many members of the first generation of Puritans. The critic Michael G. Hall singles out this particular text, arguing that "*Magnalia* has received more attention over

the past two-and-a-half centuries than any other writing by an American Puritan" (496). The noted scholar Sacvan Bercovitch refers to it as "perhaps the supreme achievement of American Puritan literature" (337). This seven-volume work establishes an originary myth for the Puritans in America: history of the settlement of New England, lives of the governors, lives of the leading ministers, history of Harvard, account of New England manner of worship ("Acts and Monuments"), "Remarkables of Divine Providence," and a history of the invasion of New England churches by heretics, Governor Edmund Andros (a member of the Church of England), devils, Indians, and others. Critics continue to argue over the nature of *Magnalia*. David Levin refers to it as history; Sacvan Bercovitch recognizes its indebtedness to *The Aeneid* and Milton's *Paradise Lost;* Kenneth Silverman values its "sheer amassment of precious information about the early history of New England" and its function as "a small anthology of early American poetry" (338, 158). The work not only addresses the biblical and Puritan notion of regaining a glorified position with respect to God, but continues to imagine an ongoing battle between God and Satan in which the latter has the advantage. What unites this seeming mass of disparate items (sermons, biographies), a book made up of "many little rags," is Mather's desire to set down a history of American Puritans in New England, and a sustained argument regarding the elect status of the Puritans as the chosen people of God.

With the deaths of many of the first generation of Puritans, the people of New England began clamoring, as early as the 1670s, for someone to write the history of God's providences toward New England (Silverman 157). Among the primary sources Mather used to assemble his history of America were William Bradford's history of New England, surviving diaries, letters, his father's correspondence, and Cotton's own personal acquaintances with members of the first generation (Silverman 158). The larger aim of Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* was "of keeping Alive, as far as this poor Essay may contribute thereunto, the Interests of Dying Religion in our Churches." Thus, Mather saw in the death of the first generation the potential death of the passion and conviction so necessary for the original Puritans who settled in New England to practice a religion for which they were persecuted by the Church of England.

Book 1 addresses the flight of the "primitive Christians" from Europe, described as the "kingdom of Anti-Christ" and a depraved environment, across the Atlantic to the "pure enjoyment of all his ordinances" in America. With the founding of the first Puritan church, Mather relates how "an howling wilderness in a few years became a pleasant land." Mather's book on the history of Harvard includes biographies of 10 of the university's "exemplary" graduates.

Sir William Phips, who became governor of Massachusetts during the Salem witch trials, figures prominently in Mather's section "The Great Works of Christ in America." Within this section, Mather retells the stories of how Phips overcame a mutiny plot on his frigate and how his discovery of sunken treasure off the coast of Hispaniola resulted in his knighthood. The point of this story explains why Mather includes the life of a governor who was previously a rather raucous treasure hunter among the lives of former ministers in New England. Phips was able to maintain rule and order at a time of mutiny. Further, he is an early example of the kind of self-fashioned individual, "A Son of his own Labours," made popular by Benjamin Franklin (Silverman 163–164).

Book 3 contains biographies of 50 of the greatest ministers who laid the foundation of New England theocracy. Chief among them is a hagiography of John Eliot, who was known as an "apostle to the American Indians." Just as Mather was called upon to help justify the Salem witch trials in *Wonders of the Invisible World,* he felt the need to provide a similar narrative to justify the marked absence of proselytizing by members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Indeed, several criticisms had been launched against New Englanders for their apparent unwillingness to engage in one of the practices that were central

to their charters—the conversion of "heathens." Eliot himself, who receives such high praise from Mather in this text, first arrived in North America in 1631 but did not begin the business of converting the Algonquian until 1646 (Post 418). As Mather relates, Eliot believed American Indians to be descended from Israelites and cites their many similarities (including dowries, aversion to pork, and tradition of parables).

Mather devoted book 6, "Remarkables of Divine Providence," to accounts of God's favor of the Puritans. This particular book responded to calls made by his father and by a group of church elders in 1681 for ministers around the country to provide accounts of "apparitions, possessions, inchantments, and all extraordinary things wherein the existence and agency of the invisible world is more sensibly demonstrated."

The final book characterizes the Indian wars as the latest obstacle set before the New Jerusalem. Because these wars were ongoing, they appear in the *Magnalia* as a continuation into the present moment of the religious battles the American Puritans had been fighting since their flight from Europe and their initial landing in the New World. The battles helped to solidify the connection Mather was drawing throughout the *Magnalia* between Puritans and the children of Israel.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Mather's *Magnalia* resembles an accordion in its ability to expand to address the millennium and the second coming and its ability to contract and discuss the life of an early Puritan minister. Find examples of both movements in the text and argue for their relationship to each other.
2. Mather imagines Puritan Americans embattled and in a current moment of struggle against demonic forces. Provide textual support for this idea of warfare and trace its biblical and historical parallels.
3. As mentioned, Sacvan Bercovitch sees parallels between Mather's book and the *Aeneid*, as well as Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Consider one of these two texts and argue either in favor of or against Bercovitch's comparison.

The Negro Christianized: An Essay to Excite and Assist That Good Work, the Instruction of Negro-Servants in Christianity (1706)

This essay was published in the same year that members of Mather's congregation purchased Onesimus, a young man "of a promising aspect and temper," for their minister. Mather encouraged Onesimus's study, permitted him to work outside the household and keep his income, and allowed him to marry. In 1716, however, the servant proved to be "wicked, and grow[ing] useless, forward, immorigerous," and Mather permitted the rude and disobedient Onesimus to purchase his own freedom. In *The Negro Christianized*, Mather argues for the conversion of African slaves and servants in the face of common belief that Christianized servants would become discontent and were therefore more likely to revolt or demand their freedom. On the contrary, Mather argued, Christian servants would be more patient and faithful to their masters. This idea was in part due to his belief that Christianity "wonderfully dulcifies, and mollifies, and moderates the circumstances" of slavery.

Not surprisingly, Mather employs biblical passages as proof that masters should become the "happy instruments of converting the blackest instances of blindness and baseness, into admirable candidates of eternal blessedness." Although apologists for slavery habitually made use of biblical passages to justify their cruel institution, abolitionists like Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) wrote nearly a century and a half later than Mather of the Christian duty to free slaves, convert them to Christianity, and eliminate the institution of slavery altogether. Mather does not dismiss the belief that African Americans might well be the sons of Ham (a biblical argument set forth by slave owners in the 18th and 19th centuries), but he does postulate that they may also "belong to the Election of God!" In offering up this possibility that African Americans can be among the elect, among the chosen people of God, Mather insists upon their humanity, their possession of souls, and the duties that their masters have in treating them as fellow members of the community. However, Mather's characterization of servants is limited; he

sees them as "barbarous" and "stupid." Nevertheless, what is remarkable about Mather's essay is its insistence on the humanity of slaves and the duty of masters to attend to their salvation.

Among Mather's recommendations in *The Negro Christianized* are the employment of children in the home, a teacher on a plantation, and a master over his household to assist in the teachings of the catechism to black servants. He created a three-line catechism to instruct "poor Stupid Abject Negro's" and personally paid a schoolmistress to teach blacks to read (Silverman 264). Specifically, Mather reminded readers of the shared humanity with African "servants": "Men, not Beasts, that you have bought."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Locate and summarize Mather's characterizations of African servants. How does this characterization square with his proposition that they may be among God's elect?
2. Consider Mather's use of the Bible in *The Negro Christianized*. Explain how it is employed to dual purposes.
3. Mather's congregation purchased Onesimus in the same year as this essay's publication. Consider the passage on Onesimus and how it might relate to Mather's own conflicting views of slavery.
4. Compare Mather's use of religion in his treatment of slaves to the writings of OLAUDAH EQUIANO and PHILLIS WHEATLEY on the same subject.

Bonifacius: An Essay to Do Good (1710)

As with most of Mather's work, Bonifacius actually has a much longer title: *An Essay upon the Good, That Is to Be Devised to Answer the Great End of Life, and to Do Good While They Live*. Early on in the essay, Mather establishes the reason for his book: "I am devising such a book; but at the same time offering a sorrowful demonstration, that if men would set themselves to devise good, a world of good might be done, more than there is in this present evil world" (19). Cleverly, Mather anticipates critics of his book, arguing that a reader cannot call him- or herself a Christian and chastise a book whose aim is to perpetuate good in the world. Indeed, he goes so far as to call "an enemy to the proposal" as "little better than a common enemy of mankind" (21). He passionately writes about the need for repentance, and for people to be humbled by the little good they have done in the world. People need to put as much thought into their souls as they do into their business transactions (28). The noblest question in the world, Mather suggests, is "What good may I do in the world?"

Mather's instructions or suggestions for parents are particularly lengthy and detailed. In considering them, readers may easily infer Mather's own parenting practices and, perhaps, those of his famous father, Increase Mather. Parental resolutions begin with baptizing children and reminding them of their covenant with God formed in the baptismal rites, praying daily for the children's well-being, teaching them stories from the Bible, teaching them short biblical passages that they can memorize and recite, teaching them the catechism, and teaching how to pray and how to conduct themselves with a courteous disposition. Mather suggests giving children money that they may then pass along to the poor in their community. He also advocates parental duties in the education of their children: teaching them to read and write, providing them with suitable books, teaching them to follow Christ's example, hearing their confessions, inquiring into the state of their souls, watching carefully over the character of their companions, and preparing them for eternal life in Christ after their deaths.

Mather directs various proposals in this essay to different readers: family members and friends, children, servants, neighbors, distant relatives, masters, pastors, schoolmasters, magistrates, physicians, rich men, deacons, constables, grand jury members, selectmen, church elders, commanders at sea, military commanders, lawyers, judges, and ministers. For each of these different groups of people, he offers a list of activities they should engage in in order for them to do good works. Chief among these, not surprisingly, are practices that Mather engages in: reading good books in leisure time; spending time

in private meditation, prayer, and fasting; visiting widows, orphans, and the afflicted; giving alms to the poor; praying at home with family and servants; being watchful over members of the community as well as the associates of your family members; teaching catechism to children, servants, and members of the community; and spending time contemplating what good works still need to be performed.

Mather returns to the arguments he made in *The Negro Christianized* by asserting that servants should be taught to read and write and be converted to Christianity. Against critics who claim that Christianized servants are prone to rebel and escape, Mather argues, "They would be better servants to you, the more faithful, the more honest, the more industrious, and submissive servants to you, for your bringing them into the service of your Common Lord" (68).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Despite its extensive list of different occupations and thus different readers, Mather's *Bonifacius* is by no means exhaustive. Consider one or more occupations absent from the book and conjecture reasons for the omission.
2. One of Mather's central concerns is to eliminate "filthy" or "evil" books, which are more specifically identified as "foolish romances, or novels, or playes, or songs" (58). Why might Mather address these particular genres as working against his book's premise, which is to instruct people on how to perform good works?
3. Education and child rearing would quickly fall into the purview of republican mothers (18th century) and the cult of true womanhood (19th century). How does Mather's advice for parenting skills and practices compare with the writings of HANNAH FOSTER WEBSTER's *The Coquette*, or the writings of Lydia Maria Child and Harriet Beecher Stowe?

The Christian Philosopher (1720)

In the mid-17th century, there was a growing trend among theologians of making inquiries into scientific matters and discoveries, believing that one could read God's blueprint in nature. It is no surprise, then, that the Royal Society, which accepted Mather as a member in 1713, was founded in 1663 by a majority of Puritans (Jeske 584). In this book, which was originally a series of 10 letters sent to the Royal Society under the title of "The Christian Virtuoso," Mather seeks to yoke science and faith, using examples from scientific discoveries as proof of the existence and genius of God. *The Christian Philosopher* was the "first general book on science to be written in America" (Silverman 249). Within its pages, Mather summarizes the works of other eminent scientists such as Flamsteed (who was the first royal astronomer), Leeuwenhoek (Dutch merchant who refined the microscope), Huygens (who writes on the laws of refraction and reflection of light), and Newton (who studied the laws of gravity). The purpose of the text was to demonstrate Mather's own "Enquiries into the Wonders of the Universe, so it is both an Instruction and a Pattern to a serious mind." Patterning the work on other physico-theological writing, Mather sees all of the recent scientific discoveries, particularly those afforded by the use of telescopes and microscopes, as further proof of the divine purpose of the cosmos. To balance his praise of scientific discoveries with his continued belief in supernatural phenomena such as witches, Mather concludes by reminding readers of the limitations of human reason: "Every Thing puzzles us. Even the Nature, yea, the Extent of an Atom, does to this Day, puzzle all the Philosophers in the World." Mather's text contributed greatly to the popularity of new scientific knowledge in New England (Silverman 25). Mather's prominence as a minister in North Church, as well as his family's connections to Harvard University, certainly contributed to the reception of this book. Mather hoped it would appear in "our colledges" and that students in Glasgow would benefit from it (Solberg xlviii).

Beyond the summarization and recitation of other famous scientists and their theories, Mather includes information on his own scientific experiments and scientific observations made in his neighborhood (De Levie 364). The two most frequently

cited passages from *The Christian Philosopher* are Mather's treatment of the hybridization of Indian corn and his description of winter in New England (Solberg lxvi). These two original passages, probably taken from information gathered at the Boston Philosophical Society, have provided historians and cultural critics alike with valuable information on life in Puritan New England.

In April 1683, Increase founded the Boston Philosophical Society; naturally, Cotton was a member. The society patterned itself on England's Royal Society and endeavored to collect remarkable events like earthquakes and floods that displayed God's glory and served as warnings against sinners (Solberg xxiv). Mather drew heavily from the descriptions of natural phenomena in New England collected by the Boston Philosophical Society, as well as from John Ray's *Wisdom of God* and William Derham's *Physico-Theology*. Indeed, Mather's debt to these two texts is so great that Winton Solberg, who edits the most recent edition of *The Christian Philosopher,* states that "about 79 percent" of the text is taken from these two books (xlix).

As the first comprehensive study of science's relationship with faith written in America, *The Christian Philosopher* examines how American Puritans in the 18th century conceived of new scientific discoveries and technologies. Styled after other published works and respected scientific treatises (it was originally titled *The Christian Virtuoso,* which is the title of Robert Boyle's publication), Mather's book borrows its organizing structure for each of the 32 essays. He cites ancient authorities such as Pliny and Plato, then provides information from modern writers (including his own observations), and finally closes with an argument that the newly acquired knowledge "redounds to the glory of God." Mather also draws on the metaphor of two books: the Bible and nature. This metaphor, which is a central tenet of natural theology, can be traced back to its pagan origins with Plato, who used the beauty of the natural world, coupled with general consent, as his two-prong argument in favor of God's existence.

In the final and longest essay, "Of Man," Mather discusses how "the lord of this lower world" occupies the highest position of all earthly creatures in the golden chain of being, which has God as its highest link. Mather states that humans "wert designed by God to be, the high-priest and orator of the universe" (237). In his study of the human body, Mather affirms, "Every writer of anatomy will offer enough to trample atheism under foot" (239). Mather exclaims, "Who can behold a machine composed of so many parts, to the right form, and order, and motion whereof there are such an infinite number of intentions required, without crying out, who can be compared to the Lord" (247–249).

In his earnest effort to prove that each aspect of the body serves a divine purpose, Mather accepts and offers as evidence some observations that contemporary readers will find absurd. He observes, for example, that men's breasts "besides adorning of the breast, and their defending of the heart, sometimes contain milk" (240). Mather continues by reference to Thomas Bartholin's example of a widower who suckled his infant son after his wife's death. Likewise, Mather offers multiple uses for hair, "not only to quench the stroke of a blow to the skull, but also to cherish the brain" (250). Mather refutes the ancients' belief that earwax is the "excrement of the brain," yet he offers up testimony of its healing properties against scorpion and serpent bites (262). When relating tales of afflicted men cured by music, Mather expounds, "But after all, who but a God infinitely wise could contrive such a fine body, so susceptible of every impression that the sense of hearing has occasion for" (268). Finally, when discussing the marvels of the intestines, Mather rhapsodizes, "The intestines, 'tis wonderful, they are six times as long as the body to which they appertain and now that they should keep their tone, and their site, and hold on doing their office, and give an undisturbed passage to what every day passes thro them, and this for some scores of years together, 'tis impossible for me to consider without falling down before the glorious God" (283).

Aside from providing summations of various medical and scientific treatises, measurements, and experiments into the human anatomy, Mather offers up the human cognitive faculty of reason as

further evidence of God's existence. "Reason, what is it, but a faculty formed by God, in the mind of Man, enabling him to discern certain maxims of truth, which God himself has established, and to make true inferences from them! In all the dictates of reason, there is the voice of God" (297).

Mather concludes *The Christian Philosopher* with a clear statement of the book's purpose: "To enkindle the dispositions and the resolutions of piety in my brethren, is the intention of all my essays, and must be the conclusion of them" (308). "Were what God hath spoken duly regarded, and were these two things duly complied with, the World would be soon revived into a desirable Garden of God" (309). In short, were readers to follow the example Mather lays out in his book, mankind would be improved on such a scale that they would be in the "Garden of God." This statement is very much in keeping with all of Mather's work: He envisions the third generation of Puritans as backsliding, moving further away from the purpose and goal of the founding Puritan fathers; with recognition, repentance, and a strict adherence to Puritan dogma, New England could fulfill its destiny and become a "Garden of God."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider a recent scientific discovery and consider how it challenges Puritan faith. How might you incorporate some of Mather's techniques for demonstrating the harmony between science and religion?
2. Mather relies heavily on two central scientific figures from his time—Ray and Derham. Who would replace them in current times? What kinds of literary responses have they received?
3. In Mather's time, the telescope and the microscope were instrumental in scientific discoveries. What technologies are central to our current understanding of the world and beyond?
4. Contrast Mather's insistence on the mutually reinforcing relationship between science and faith to Hawthorne's "Rappacini's Daughter" or "The Birth-mark," where science seeks to replace faith.

Manductio ad Ministerium (1726)

It was not until the 1710s and 1720s that Mather and other writers began to formalize the curriculum for New England ministers. Mather's *Manductio ad Ministerium,* later published under the title *Dr. Cotton Mather's Student and Preacher* (1781 and 1789), was a guide for ministerial candidates in New England during their college years. From Mather's own experience of fraudulent ministers in Boston, it was imperative that strict guidelines be created for the education and screening of ministerial candidates. One "preacher" in particular, whose tale Mather recounts in *A Warning to the Flocks* (1700), was a man named Samuel May who advised the female members of his congregation to sleep with him. When the true story of this "preacher" was exposed, he was found to be Samuel Axel, a brickmaker from Hampshire (Silverman 142).

Among Mather's recommendations for future ministers was knowledge of Greek and Latin, a curriculum that closely followed the requirements for Harvard. Although Hebrew was out of favor in England and New England, Mather suggested its use in elucidating the Bible. Instead of studying Aristotle, whom Mather deems a "muddy-headed pagan," he suggests reading the works of Sir Isaac Newton. As further proof of Mather's conviction in liberally educated ministers, he advocates such subjects as mathematics, astronomy, music, and geography. It is no surprise that Mather would place such heavy requirements on ministers, as he declared their profession to be "certainly the highest dignity, if not the greatest happiness, that human nature is capable of."

For Discussion or Writing

1. In light of Mather's influence not only on the education of ministers, but on liberal education in general, what particular ideas in *Manductio ad Ministerium* remain important to a contemporary definition of an education?
2. In terms of Mather's rigorous curriculum for ministers, what kind of role or position does he imagine them to have in society? Are these roles

different for contemporary ministers who are not required to adhere to the same educational program?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON MATHER AND HIS WORK

1. The transcendentalist writers Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller envisioned their own distinctive relationship between spirituality and the natural world. To what extent does transcendentalism follow mid-17th-century theology promoted in *The Christian Philosopher*?
2. Critics agree that the jeremiad continues to be a popular and enduring genre in America. Examine how Mather uses the jeremiad in two of his writings. Identify the central values being threatened and the remedies that Mather advocates for regaining them. Are they echoed in secular writings such as JAMES FENIMORE COOPER's Leatherstocking Tales?

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Thomas Morton (1579–1647)

I will now discover unto them a country whose endowments are by learned men allowed to stand in parallel with the Israelites Canaan, which none will deny, to be a land far more excellent than Old England in her proper nature

(*New English Canaan*)

The biographer Donald Connors notes that details of Morton's early life are relatively scarce, with the exception of his birth in the western part of England in 1579. Records indicate that Morton studied law at Clifford's Inn, one of the Inns of Chancery in London. After his training, Morton practiced law as an attorney in England's "west countries." On November 6, 1621, Morton married Alice Miller, a wealthy widow who owned significant property. He had been managing her legal affairs for roughly four or five years prior to their marriage. Court documents reveal that questions of property rights soon became a bone of contention between the newly married Morton and his stepson, George Miller, who had just come of age (Connors 18).

The following year, in 1622, he sailed for the first of several trips to New England. Donald Connors argues that Morton actually arrived in 1624, not 1622, as has been previously reported, and offers as evidence Morton's name on the passenger list for Captain Wollaston's ship. William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation,* which mentions the arrival of Wollaston's ship in 1624, supports Connors's claim. Further, the critic Edith Murphy's investigation into Morton's legal battles with George Miller, his stepson, reveals that their disputes were ongoing in 1622, and thus Morton's appearance in America at such a time seems quite unlikely. She argues that his physical presence would probably have been required in England to resolve these matters. The following year, 1623, Morton's ongoing disputes with George Miller resulted in his abandoning his wife and taking all of her property with him (Murphy 761).

Morton arrived in New England in June 1624 aboard the *Unity* and soon became head of a trading post at Passonagessit (which translates as "little neck of land") located near present-day Quincy, Massachusetts. On May Day, May 1, 1627, Morton erected a maypole at Mount Wollaston, a place so named after Captain Wollaston, who commanded the ship that first carried Morton from England. In celebration of May Day, Morton renamed Mount Wollaston as *Ma-re Mount* and engaged in May Day games with local planters, fur traders, and native traders. His social interactions with American Indians did not sit well with his neighbors, however. Nor did his indulgence in alcohol in celebration of what the neighboring Puritans decried as a pagan holiday. Because his antics directly offended the Puritans, Miles Standish arrested Morton and sent him back to England for the first time in 1628. Morton spent the month of July on the Isle of Shoals (thinly disguised as Cape Ann in *The New English Canaan*) and, the following month, was shipped back to England to face trial.

The charges against Morton were dropped and he returned the following year, but his house at Ma-re Mount was seized or burned by Puritans, and he was forced to flee to England once again.

Morton began to work in earnest with an anti-Puritan Anglican authority to undermine the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but to no avail. It is during his 12 years in England when Morton penned his work praising New England but lampooning the Puritans, *New English Canaan,* which was first published in Amsterdam. Morton was associated with the Council for New England and employed his resources with them to promote book sales. When he returned to New England again in 1644, he was charged with slander and imprisoned in Boston. He settled in Maine and died two years later.

Morton's legacy is his single but influential publication, *New English Canaan,* not only because it provides contemporary readers and scholars with details of early colonial life, but also because it gives insight into American Indian culture and a balance to early colonial history, which has traditionally focused on Puritans exclusively.

According to the colonist Edward Winslow, when the settlers in Plymouth heard of a plot for the American Indians to attack Wessagusett and then Plymouth, they arranged a meeting, locked the doors of the meetinghouse, and killed all of the conspiring natives as a "preemptive" act of self-defense (Kupperman 660). The remaining colonists from Wessagusett found passage back to England, and the Plymouth colony lost its only source of competition in the fur trade so necessary for their success (661).

New English Canaan (1637)

Part promotional tract, part political pamphlet, part natural history, and part ethnography, Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan* contains three sections that address life in New England. The first book, "Containing the Originall of the Natives, Their Manners & Customes, with Their Tractable Nature and Love towards the English," provides readers with a detailed account of American Indians in Massachusetts. The second book focuses specifically on detailing the landscape: flora, fauna, and land. The final book takes on the subject of life in New England. And it is in this third book, entitled "Containing a Description of the People That Are Planted There, What Remarkable Accidents Have Happened There since They Were Settled, What Tenets They Hould, Together with the Practice of Their Church," that Morton attempts to provide his own version of history, which is markedly removed from Puritan doctrine. The two central principles animating Morton's publication are promotion of colonization in New England and warning of the antics of the Puritans, who he believed would undermine or in other ways frustrate the colonial enterprise.

Morton writes in his preface that the impetus for the book lies in "the zeale which I beare to the advancement of the glory of God, the honor of his majesty, and the good of the weale publike, hath incouraged mee to compose this abstract, being the model of a rich hopefull and very beautiful country, worthy the title of nature's masterpeece, and may be lost by too much sufferance" (3). To the reader, Morton writes of a desire to provide "better information of all such as are desirous to be made partakers of the blessings of God in that fertile soyle, as well as those that, out of curiousity onely have bin inquisitive after novelties" (6). His target of the Puritan settlers is obliquely referenced as "divers persons (not so well affected to the weale publike in mine opinion) out of respect to their owne private ends)"; these folks "have laboured to keepe both the practice of the people there, and the reall worth of that eminent country concealed from publike knowledge, both which I have abundantly in this discourse layd open" (6).

Morton opens book 1 with a discussion of the temperate zones (Torrida Zona and Frigida Zona) and discusses the need for moderation in life (people should not desire to be rich, for they risk Nebuchadnezar's fate, or too poor, for fear of despairing, as Job's wife did). He agrees with Aristotle that the Frigida Zona is "unfit for habitation" and thus praises Sir Ferdinando Gorges Knight as the "noble minded gentleman" who found the "goulden mean" between these two poles and "what land is to be found there," meaning he discovered New

England by navigating a path between these two extremes (15). Because New England "doth participate of heat and cold indifferently, but is oppressed with neither: [it] therefore may be truly sayd to be within the compasse of that golden mean, most apt and fit for habitation and generation, being placed by almighty God the great creator . . . and is therefore most fitt for the generation and habitation of our English nation" (15–16). Because England is situated at similar latitude to New England's, Englanders seem destined for this New Canaan, where they can enjoy life in a temperate climate; Massachusetts is ripe for colonization; and its coastline and wind currents are conducive to anchoring ships (17). As further proof of divine Providence's hand in British colonization, "the wondrous wisedom and love of God, is shewne, by sending to the place his minister, to sweepe away by heapes the salvages" (15). Here Morton refers to the large number of native inhabitants killed by the plague. In the first book, dedicated to the lives of American Indians, Morton tells of the plague of 1616–18 and remarks how fortuitous it was that this disaster rid the land of most of its native inhabitants and thus made New England more fit for English colonization.

In chapter 2, Morton states that he was in New England in 1622 and reports that of the "two sortes of people" that he discovered there, "the infidels [were] most full of humanity, and more friendly then the other," or "Christians" (17). Morton spends time among the natives of New England, seeking to learn their language, which he declares "doe use very many wordes both of Greeke and Latine" (18). Morton disagrees with those who believe "the natives of New England may proceede from the race of the Tartars" (19). Rather, he offers up the theory that "the natives of this country might originally come of the scattered Trojan" (20). As a sign of the natives' desire to traffic in commerce with England, Morton points to the presence of a "mixed language" (20). Morton relies on the writings of Sir Christopher Gardiner Knight and David Tompson, a Scottish gentleman, both of whom are "scollers and travelers," in his conclusion that "the originall of the natives of New England may be well conjectured to be from the scattered Trojans, after such time as Brutus departed from Latium" (22).

Chapter three opens with the story of five Frenchmen who survived the burning of their ship, where they traded beaver with the natives. The five men became servants of five sachems. The remaining survivor warned them that God would punish them for "their bloudy deede," but the "savages replyed and sayd, that they were so many, that God could not kill them" (23). As Morton recalls, their foolish pride is quickly checked by the visitation of a plague that "fell heavily upon them with such a mortall stroake, that they died on heapes" (23). Because of the catastrophic nature of the plague, the natives were unable to bury their own dead; instead, the carcasses became fodder for kites and other vermin. Morton informs readers how highly unusual this was, as the "custome of those Indian people [is] to bury their dead ceremoniously, and carefully, and then to abandon that place" (24). Once again, Morton insists that the plague severely reduced the native inhabitants of Plymouth with the result that "the place is made so much the more fitt, for the English nation to inhabit in, and erect in it temples to the glory of God" (24).

In chapter 4, Morton compares the houses of the natives of New England to those of the "wild Irish" (24). He provides some minute details regarding the materials central to the construction of teepees (24–25). He also writes of Native hospitality, stating that they will feed their guests as well as provide bedding for them if they remain long enough to sleep. "Such," Morton declares, is "their humanity" (26). In comparison to the "gentry of civilized natives," the natives of New England do not summer or winter in the same place but remove in the seasons to hunting or fishing grounds. In their leisure time Morton notes that they perform juggling tricks and "all manner of revelles" (26).

Morton cites Cicero's belief that even the most barbarous people have some form of worship and argues that if Tully had had the same experiences he has had with the natives of New England, Tully would have changed his opinion (27). Further,

his theory would be refined were he to take the "judiciall councell of Sir William Alexander" (27). Despite other sections that directly and indirectly address native worship, Morton concludes this chapter by stating quite definitively, "The natives of New England have no worship nor religion at all" (28). Indeed, Morton confesses himself more inclined to believe that elephants worship the moon than to believe natives have a form of religion (27).

In the chapter dedicated to Indian apparel, Morton speaks of the modesty of natives, who are ashamed of their nakedness and their "secreats of nature; which by no means they suffer to be seene" (29). Once again, Morton compares the Natives to the Irish, stating that in their apparel, they look like "their trouses, the stockinges joyne so to their breeches" (30). The Native men wear shoes and stockings and mantles that are so long that they trail the ground behind them. Morton applauds their modesty, which he places on par with that of civilized people (31).

Morton seems to be impressed by the physical strength of pregnant women, who are capable of carrying heavy burdens on their backs without the threat of miscarrying the child (31). Further, Morton remarks that the babies are born "of complexion white as our nation" (32). This issue of racial markings seems key to this particular chapter as Morton writes at length about the conjecture that follows the birth of a gray-eyed child. Morton, on seeing the child's eyes, informs the father in his native language that the child is a bastard. The father responds that the child should have an English name (32). What Morton is indirectly addressing here, despite an apparent insistence on racial difference, is the intermarriage and thus the closing off of any apparent gaps between the natives and the British. Indeed, Morton remarks on the artificial means employed by mothers to give their children tawny skin. The mothers make a bath of "walnut leaves, huskes of walnuts, and such things as will staine their skinne for ever" (32). Thus, were it not for actions taken by the mothers to effect a change in their children's skin tone, it appears as though they would be indistinguishable from children of Morton's nation.

As further testament to Morton's recognition of the humanity and civility of New England's native tribes, Morton writes in chapter 8 of their reverence and respect for their elders, hoping that this will "reduce some of our irregular young people of civilized nations when this story shall come to their knowledge, to better manners" (33). In essence Morton's characterization of American Indians, and his detailed accounting of social and cultural practices ranging from clothing to the treatment of elders, results in a reversal, at times, of the racially charged categories of civilized and barbarian. Native behavior becomes exemplum for the more "civilized" Britains to emulate.

Chapter 9 briefly covers the subject of the shaman and equates the natives' respect for their "powahs" with the British esteem for surgeons and physicians (36). Morton concludes with an anecdote of an unnamed Englishman cured of a swollen hand by a powah. Chapter 10 covers the rules of dueling, which involve two combatants' firing arrows at each other from behind two trees.

Chapter 11 relies on one particular anecdote of a married woman whose father would not return her to her husband and whose husband would not send men to accompany her on her return as an illustration of the weight of reputation.

Morton provides some details of native commerce between tribes and with the British. Their currency is called *Wampampeak* and consists of white shells (which Morton likens to silver) and violet shells (which he compares to gold) (40). Morton mentions the natives' ability to discern counterfeit or fake forms of Wampampeak but fails to mention whether it is the British or other natives who have been the counterfeiters. Note again that Morton's subject of study presupposes not only that British settlers will engage in trade with the native population, but also that the natives have their own economies and currency systems, symbols of civilization.

In a discussion of native industry, Morton turns to the figures of labor common from Aesop's fables, the ant and the bee. As they do, he declares, the natives store corn for the winter (42). Morton believes that if they knew of the preservative quality of salt, which

he deems a "chiefe benefit in a civilized commonwealth," they would diversify their stored foods to include fish and meats (43). It is quite possible that Morton mentions salt because of its potential as a commodity for future trade.

Morton warns against an underestimation of natives: "These people are not (as some have thought) a dull, or slender witted people; but very ingenious and subtile" (43). He follows this pronouncement with a tale of how a sachem named Cheecatawbak used subtlety and psychological warfare to make the Narragansett believe the English with whom they had been trading were angry with them and would surely kill them if the natives did not depart quickly. To persuade the English to raise arms and prepare to battle the Narragansett, Sachem Cheecatawbak spun a tale of the ulterior motives for trading: to gain information on the strength of the English and assess their weapons and storehouses in order to reclaim the corn they had traded.

Morton's celebration of this one particular sachem's military or psychological strategy is followed by a chapter in which he makes a similar assessment of their physical skills. He is amazed by their keen sense of sight, stating that they can spy an approaching ship before the English, as well as their sense of smell. He claims that a native man can sniff the hand of a Frenchman and distinguish his scent from a Spaniard's (48).

Despite previous statements denying the possibility of natives' practicing religion, including a rather exaggerated statement that elephants are more likely to worship the moon than natives hold a theology, Morton states that "these salvages" have their own creation myth, which includes the initial origin of humans in one man and one woman, dominion over the earth, and a flood as punishment from a higher being. This figure is called Kytan, and those who are good are taken to his house when they die; those who are evil go to the centers of the earth. This belief very closely follows the Genesis myth of the Old Testament in which God creates the human race from Adam and Eve and delivers a flood as punishment for sinfulness. As further testament to the parallels between the two belief systems, Morton concludes the chapter with an anecdote of a savage who had lived with him before marrying and raising a family. This same man approached Morton with the request that his son taught to read the Bible and thus become an Englishman and a good man (50). Morton is not personally interested in converting natives to Christianity, so his mention of this event in which a father wishes for his son to emulate the ways and beliefs of the English might be seen outside the context of proselytizing.

Morton relates burial and mourning customs, noting that they differ in accordance with the nobility or obscurity of the person who has died. He mentions that the Plymouth planters defaced the burial site of Sachem Cheekatawback's mother, believing it to be superstitious, and that the natives rightly considered this an impious act (51). Further, Morton includes an additional offense the English colonists committed against the natives when they made mention of anyone who had died, since the natives consider it a painful reminder (52). With an oblique reference to future democracy, Morton includes the natives' observation that the English must be without a sachem since all of their graves look similar (52).

In chapter 18, Morton details the custom of control burns to remove underbrush ("underweedes") (52–53). As a result, Morton suggests that settlers search the lower grounds and valleys when looking for large trees and good timber (53).

Ever with an eye toward the English settlers' success in New England, Morton mentions the use of "lusty liquors" as a central component to trading in the northern parts of the country (54). Given Morton's reported May Day revelries with American Indians, which included a fair amount of alcohol, it might seem as though he had no reservations in supplying the native inhabitants with "fire water." Such an assumption, however, would be inaccurate. He seems to add a word of caution and even one of remonstrance by closing this short chapter with a tale of a native man who, when drunk, put a gun in his mouth and pulled the trigger. Keeping this story of desperation brought on by drink in mind, Mor-

ton avows, "Yet in al the commerce that I had with them, I never proffered them any such thing" (54).

Morton concludes the first book of *The New English Canaan* with an earnest and detailed attempt to dispel myths that the natives of New England—and hence the English settlers who live there—lead harsh lives. Morton assures the reader that the natives are without want; indeed, were the beggars of England to find food with such ease as the natives of New England, no one would starve in the streets and there would no longer be "gallouses with poore wretches" (55). The riches to be found in New England are not equal to the fineries and luxuries of civilized nations like England, Morton admits, but these trappings make men prone to sin. They become too proud of their clothing; they become gluttonous if their food is always served "in dishes of plate with variety of sauces" (57). In New England, one learns to appreciate simple pleasures and be unencumbered of too many trinkets or "superfluous commodities." Indians live contented lives without the pomp that they daily witness in the English planters (58). Morton compares the idyllic life of natives to the utopic society envisioned by Plato.

Morton opens the second book by writing:

> What I have resolved on, I have really performed and I have endeavoured, to use this abstract as an instrument, to be the means, to communicate the knowledge which I have gathered by my many yeares residence in those parts, unto my countrymen, to the end, that they may the better perceive their error, who cannot imagine, that there is any country in the universal world, which may be compared unto our native soyle, I will now discover unto them a country whose indowments are by learned men allowed to stand in parallel with the Israelites Canaan, which non will deny, to be a land farre more excellent then Old England in her proper nature. (61)

In fulfillment of this purpose, book 2 offers, at times, a catalog of flora and fauna that reads like a promotional tract. Chapter 2, for example, covers the various trees to be found in plenitude. Chapter 3 briefly mentions "pottherbes and other herbes for sallets" (66–67). Chapter 4 covers native fowl, and chapter 5, "beasts of the forrest" (83). Morton covers stones and minerals in chapter 6 and fish in chapter 7. Chapter 8 is dedicated to the waters and contains tales of their extraordinary properties, such as a water that cures melancholy located on Morton's property at "Ma-re Mount," a water that cures barrenness, and a water that produces a deep sleep for 48 hours (93). The idea of medicinal waters was quite popular, stemming in part from tales of miraculous healing waters in places like Lourdes that were circulated by the Catholic Church.

Morton declares it to be truly a land of milk and honey (93). The final two chapters of book 2 cover various aspects of "New Canaan": moderate rainfall, winds milder than in England, no inhabitants suffering a cold or cough, and fertile soil. "And since the separatists are desirous to have the denomination thereof, I am become an humble suiter on their behalfe for your consents (courteous readers) to it, before I doe shew you what revels they have kept in New Canaan" (96). In the final chapter, he speaks of increased understanding between the British and natives through knowledge of each other's language: "It is tenne yeares since first the relation of these things came to the eares of the English: at which time wee were but slender proficients in the language of the natives, and they, (which now have attained to more perfection of English), could not then make us rightly apprehend their meaninge" (98). Contemporary historians and ethnographers have benefited greatly from Morton's documentation of Native languages and customs. What might have been a strategy to appear as an expert in American immigration or an attempt otherwise to curry favor with those in charge of the colonies, Morton's inclusion of linguistic information has been invaluable.

To express the potential for England to lose or forfeit its colonial hold on America, unless they act in a timely fashion, Morton mentions the threat the

Dutch pose by encroaching on the Hudson River and gaining control of the beaver trade over both the French and the English (99). Morton offers up the possibility that one of the great rivers mentioned by the natives might well prove itself to be a passage to East India (100). For all of the reasons laid out in detail in book 2, Morton concludes that "it would be adjudged an irreparable oversight to protract time, and suffer the Dutch (who are but intruders upon his majesties most hopefull country of New England) to possesse themselves of that plesant and commodious country of Erocoise before us" (100).

Book 3 "contain[s] a description of the people that are planted there, what remarkable accidents have happened there, since they were settled, what tenets they hould, together with the practise of their church" (103). Morton opens the first few chapters of book 3 on the fate of Thomas Weston's enterprise to colonize Massachusetts. He tells of how the English colonizers were known by the name *Wotanquenange,* which translates as "stabbers or cutthroats" (112). The savages at Wessaguscus were enjoying a feast set for them by the English planters who were their guests when the Plymouth planters murdered them with their own knives (111). Another act of cruelty and injustice against the natives occurred when one of the "planters of New England" stole a cache of corn. Although the Parliament desired to punish this man by executing him, they could not bring themselves to follow through with this plan. Instead, they dressed an old and sickly man in the clothes of the young man and prepared to execute him instead. A third action that results in a battle between these two groups is caused by desecrating the grave of the sachem's mother (107). Morton provides another anecdote "so that by this [the reader] may easily perceive the uncivilized people are more just than the civilized" (125). He tells a tale of theft when white settlers take the 10 skins meant as payment for corn taken from the house of Passonagessit. The white settlers take the skins for themselves rather than pass them on to the owner; the owner then asks the sachem for payment of 10 skins for the corn. This time, a man approaches the sachem the day before their arranged meeting and demands the skins of the sachem (125).

When Weston finally arrives at his plantation, he learns of the number of planters dead from sickness or else killed in battle against the native population. The surviving planters who have scattered in Plymouth begin to spin tales of the dangerous, subtle, secret, and mischievous nature of the savages (113). Morton seems to catalog this series of calamities for two purposes: to exonerate Thomas Weston of the crimes carried out by those he fitted out to create a plantation and to demonstrate how treacherous and deceitful the Plymouth planters are predisposed to be. As a corrective to these unfounded portrayals of the native population, Morton assures readers, "I have found the Massachusetts Indian more full of humanity then the Christians, and have had much better quarter with them" (114). Morton concedes that it is inevitable when two nations meet that "one must rule and the other be ruled" (114).

The planters do not limit their treachery to the natives of Massachusetts but mistreat the "good merchant," Thomas Weston himself. They confiscate his ship, rob it of its contents, and hold Weston hostage while they do so. Just as they glossed their own misdeeds with Weston, so they spread false tales of Weston's madness to cover their actions against him.

They then conspire to abandon Morton on Cape Ann, under the pretense that the weather requires them to take shelter. Morton chronicles how the planters' plans were foiled by the wise Weston, who insisted that the oars and sails be taken ashore (thus dashing their plans to maroon him on Cape Ann and sail away in the night). Morton opens a bottle of "lusty liquor," a sparkling Claret that the conspirators begin to drink in great quantities. Morton has quite fun declaring the religious implications of this act by the very people who had earlier been lamenting the lack of "the meanes" to worship: "knowinge the wine would make them Protestants" (118). In response to the Plymouth planters' request for a minister, Master Layford is sent as their preacher. When they ask him to renounce

his calling from England (and thus the Church of England) as "hereticall and papisticall" (118) and he refuses, the "brethren" manufacture a scandal about Master John Layford to "conclude hee was a spotted beast" (119). They rid themselves of another Anglican minister, John Oldam, by declaring him to be too passionate and moody (119).

Morton makes good sport of a new minister, whom he names Master Bubble. This man makes such use of his profound oratory gifts, his whole audience was fast asleep (122). When Bubble takes up residence with a man at Passonagessit, he says grace so lengthily that the meat turns cold (123). He proves ineffective in helping his host hunt for fowl because by the time he "paddles out like a cow in a cage," all of the ducks have departed and escaped (124).

Chapter 12 relates the deceitful actions of Master Bubble, master of ceremonies, who takes some guides with him on his hunt for beaver. In the night, Bubble leaves behind his sack with all his provisions and his shoes and makes his way out into the forest with his pants over his head to shield his head from imaginary arrows. The next day, his guides, bewildered by his absence, consult the English, carrying Bubble's effects intact. The English are at first inclined to believe their tale of Bubble's mysterious disappearance but suspect something when they notice that he left without his shoes. The English threaten to kill the natives' wives and children unless they give Master Bubble back, alive or dead. When they discover the "maz'd man," he spins a tale of his travels and "perilous passages" that Morton deems them worthy of "knight errant, Don Quixote" (128). Morton closes this chapter, urging the reader to "observe whether the savage people are not full of humanity, or whether they are a dangerous people as Master Bubble and the rest of his tribe would perswade you" (128).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the vision animating Morton's work with that of his nemesis, WILLIAM BRADFORD. How central is the depiction of American Indians to each man's vision of the "New World"?
2. Morton's tale seems similar to JOHN SMITH's because both men are early settlers whose central concerns were fortune and fame rather than finding a safe haven for religious tolerance. What or who becomes the higher authority for these authors instead of God? How do they imagine religion's role in America?
3. Morton's narrative marks itself as different because of its inclusion of poetry mixed in with ethnography, history, and personal narrative. Consider how this mixture of genres aids or detracts from Morton's tale. How does his mixture of genres compare with ÁLVAR NÚÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA's?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON MORTON AND HIS WORK

1. Not much is known about the life of Thomas Morton, aside from *New English Canaan* and Bradford's treatment of him in *Of Plymouth Plantation*. What details or aspects of his life can you glean from reading *New English Canaan*?
2. As a gadfly, Thomas Morton might provide readers with more insight into the reality of Puritan life. What aspects of Puritan culture does Morton address or defy most directly? What conclusions might you draw about Puritan life and culture in early America from Morton's outsider perspective, and how do these conclusions compare with those of early writers within the Puritan culture such as William Bradford and JOHN WINTHROP?

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Judith Sargent Murray
(1751–1820)

I feel the pride of womanhood all up in arms.

(letter to a female cousin, 1777)

Judith Sargent was the first of eight children born to Captain Winthrop Sargent and Judith Saunders Sargent. Both her mother and her father were from wealthy New England families; her mother's family was associated with the area's maritime industry, and her father was a shipowner and merchant. As Judith Sargent wrote in a letter to her brother, her early education was hardly adequate: "But during my first years, although our parents were, as you know, the best of human beings, they yet did homage to the shrine of fashion, custom tyrannizes over the strongest minds—It was the mode to confine the female intellect within the narrowest bounds, and by consequence I was robbed of the aid of education—I shall feel the effects of this irrational deprivation, as long as I shall continue an inhabitant of this world." As Sargent would go on to advocate women's access to education, it seems certain that her own lack of a formal education influenced her later writings. Sargent's parents eventually recognized her exceptional intelligence and employed the Reverend John Rogers to tutor both her and her younger brother, Winthrop, Jr., who was to prepare for his entry into Harvard (Harris xvi). Because Sargent deliberately destroyed letters written before 1774, which she refers to as "a kind of history of my juvenile life," we do not have much further information on her childhood (Harris xvii). She married her first husband, John Stevens, who was a sea captain from Gloucester, on October 3, 1769, and their marriage lasted 17 years. In reviewing Judith's letters to her sister, it is evident that the marriage, like most of its time, was not based on love, and Judith expresses a longing to return to her childhood home and the emotional comforts afforded by her mother and her siblings (Harris xviii).

Because of the Revolutionary War's impact on the maritime industry, as well as the financial ruin of Judith Stevens's father-in-law, John Stevens was forced to take to the seas in the hopes of avoiding debtors' prison and recouping some of the family's lost monies. He sailed to the West Indies in 1786, and shortly after his departure, Judith Stevens received news of his death. While she seemed content to live out her life as a widow, her growing friendship with a fellow Universalist, John Murray, who preached at the first Universalist meetinghouse, which was dedicated to him in 1780 by her father, blossomed into love and the two were wed on October 6, 1788. In stark contrast to a loveless marriage of respect with Stevens, Judith Sargent Murray describes a marriage of equals in her happy union with second husband, John Murray.

The critic Sharon Harris speculates that the couple's dedication to the principles of Universalism, which Harris is quick to point out Murray advocated years prior to her marriage to John Murray, might have contributed to their egalitarian marriage (xxi–xxii). Universalism set itself in contradistinction

to Puritan belief in the elect, or predestination, in which only a select few were "elected" by God for eternal salvation. In Universalist thought, all people were eligible for salvation, and moreover, they had individual religious liberty. The Universalist Church was the first to ordain women; its first three female ministers would prove to be figures in the feminist movement. Murray certainly embraced the faith's belief in equality of the sexes, as she would delve into the religious and biblical aspects of this theme in her famous essay "On the Equality of the Sexes." She recognized the influence of the Genesis tale of Adam's, and thus humankind's, fall based on Eve's temptation as a cornerstone to sexual inequality and wrote her own version of the first couple, providing Eve equal if not superior status to Adam. On their travels together during John's preaching tour, Judith had occasion to meet some of the key figures of the 18th century, including JOHN ADAMS and ABIGAIL ADAMS, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, and Martha Washington.

Just as she offered support to her husband in his career as minister for the Universalist Church, so did John promote and support Judith's literary career. The *Massachusetts Magazine,* to which she began contributing in earnest in 1789 after the stillborn birth of her first child, was the "longest lived of all eighteenth century American magazines" and the central vehicle of Murray's publishing career (xxiii). The *Magazine* provided Murray with the distinguished honor of being the first female writer in America with her own ongoing column (Harris xxv). She published under the pseudonyms *Constantia* and *The Gleaner* and under the second published an ongoing column focusing on contemporary cultural topics (Harris xxvi). Her first and only novel, *The Story of Margaretta,* appeared serially in the *Gleaner* in 1792.

When the Murrays moved to Boston in 1793, Sargent Murray was introduced to a more culturally and politically rich arena, and she quickly found herself debating some of the central issues of the day in her columns for the *Massachusetts Magazine.* It was while in Boston that she began writing and producing her plays, the first of which was *The Medium, or Virtue Triumphant.* Although it had only one performance, on March 2, 1795, it had the honor of being "the first play by an American author [to be] performed at [Boston's Federal Street Theatre]" (Harris xxxvii). The critic Sharon Harris contradicts the assessment of other critics who attribute the play's single run to its lack of quality and points instead to the gender bias that caused one critic to assume that her husband had coauthored the play, and a second critic to refer to her as a man, assuming that only men could be playwrights (xxxvii–xxxviii).

In 1798 Sargent Murray gathered her most popular writings and published them in a three-volume set entitled *The Gleaner* under her pseudonym, *Constantia.* Despite her use of the pen name, Sargent Murray's identity was well known at the time she published *The Gleaner.* The three-volume series offered 100 essays on various topics and represents "a compendium of cultural issues relevant to late eighteenth-century America" (Harris xxxix). The series was extremely popular and successful, its list of subscribers including the foremost figures in 18th-century America: John Hancock, Martha and George Washington, President John Adams, the governors of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and SUSANNA HASWELL ROWSON, author of the best-selling seduction novel *Charlotte Temple.* The family's financial strain was a central reason why Murray published *The Gleaner,* and despite its success, they continued to suffer.

Her cousin Lucius Murray was a source of criticism and cruel tricks. In 1807 21-year-old Lucius wrote to his 56-year-old cousin under the pretense of being a printer from Blecher & Armstrong with an interest in publishing her latter works, which appeared under the pseudonym *Honora Martesia.* After the demise of the *Massachusetts Magazine,* Sargent Murray had returned to poetry and, in honor of her time with the former, sought out a new pen name for the work she published with the *Boston Weekly Magazine.* After Sargent Murray "devoted precious time selecting appropriate works for the collection," she was stunned to read from Armstrong that the printers had made no such request (Harris xlii). Lucius Murray in further acts of cruelty attempted to tarnish the reputation

of Sargent Murray's daughter, Julia Murray Bingaman, alleging that she had seduced her future husband while he was a boarder in her parents' home and that her pregnancy forced Adam Bingaman to marry her.

In 1809 John Murray suffered a stroke that left him paralyzed until his death six years later in 1815. In his last years of life, Murray edited and published her husband's writings, as well as wrote a biography of him. After his death, Murray moved to Natchez, Mississippi, to live with her daughter Julia and her son-in-law, Adam Bingaman, and remained there until her own death at the age of 69. Judith Sargent Murray was buried in the Bingaman family cemetery on St. Catharine's Creek.

"Desultory Thoughts upon the Utility of Encouraging a Degree of Self-Complacency, Especially in Female Bosoms" (1784)

Murray's other central essay on the station of women in 18th-century America opens with a poem in which she expresses the need for "self estimation" in young women. As her virtuous eponymous heroine does in *The Story of Margaretta,* Murray argues that young girls are easily the prey of conniving men unless they are armed with enough sense of self-worth that they recognize praise as empty or hollow words and are thus immune to its seductive effects. Murray utilizes a nautical metaphor to imagine the effects of a lack of self-esteem: "lost to conscious worth, to decent pride / Compass nor helm there is, our course to guide" (15–16).

In delineating the various subjects composing Margaretta's education, the narrator dilates at length on the necessity of "constantly inculcating one grand truth . . . her person, the symmetry of her features . . . are the endowments of nature—while the artificial accomplishments with which she is invested, resulting wholly from accident, and being altogether independent of her own arrangements, confer upon her no real or intrinsic merit." In this passage, Murray distinguishes not only between those endowments deserving merit and those void of it but also the regard Margaretta should have for herself and her accomplishments. Rather than cultivating vanity or false pride in their adopted daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Vigillius nurture her self-esteem, placing due value on those aspects of her that deserve consideration. Armed with such sage advice, Margaretta steers clear of Sinisterus's traps, depicted in the essay's poem as the dangers facing a ship at sea. If a young woman is not truly apprised of her beauty and her features, Murray suggests, then she is prone to a seducer's flattering tongue and corrupting influence.

Murray moves from the vague example of the "beautiful female" to a more intimate illustration of her point, her instruction for her own daughter. Although she would readily concede her daughter's external beauty, Murray would, above all else, address her "as a rational being" and persuade her to "adorn her mind." To "set [her daughter] above the snares of the artful betrayer," Murray believes her child should be well acquainted with the language of praise: so that "her mind would not be enervated or intoxicated . . . by a delicious surprise." In so doing, Murray feels that a parent like her "would destroy the weapons of flattery, or render them useless" because the novelty of praise would have worn off through years of kind words from the young woman's family. A healthy dose of self-esteem would serve not only the young woman unaccustomed to praise, but also her kindred who are "taught also to regard her character ridiculously contemptible." The "depression of the soul" resulting from a parent's desire to eradicate pride appears to Murray to have an extreme influence and to render the child just as susceptible to the seducer's flattery.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Murray's advice about a young woman's education relate to the descriptions of the educations received by SUSANNA HASWELL ROWSON's Charlotte Temple and HARRIET WEBSTER FOSTER's Eliza Wharton?
2. Compare Murray's treatise on female education with that of COTTON MATHER. To what extent

do the religious beliefs of the two authors contribute to their ideas about education?

"On the Equality of the Sexes" (1790)

Murray's most famous and anthologized essay first appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine* in March and April 1790. Murray opens with a poem in which she expresses her belief that "such distinctions [between men and women] only dwell below" because "the soul unfetter'd, to no sex confin'd" (40–41). Thus, the poem establishes Murray's central argument in the essay: For souls that are not "confin'd" by sex, gender is irrelevant and only becomes a concern to those on earth, who "dwell below." The distinction, then, between men and women is not inherent but due to depriving women of the substantial education reserved for men.

Murray playfully addresses the issue of women's innate mental faculties by dividing these up into four categories: imagination, reason, memory, and judgment. As proof of women's capacity for invention, she offers up the daily changing fashions and women's "talent for slander." Any lack of reason she places squarely on the general deficiency of the education available to women: "We can only reason from what we know." She likewise attributes any disparity in women's and men's reasoning faculties to "the difference in education, and continued advantages." From an early age, Murray argues, the male "is taught to aspire" while the female "is early confined and limited." As a result, when the young girl arrives at womanhood, she "feels a void . . . she feels the want of a cultivated mind." Had she received something more substantial than a "proper education," the woman would employ her knowledge of geography, astronomy, or natural philosophy in her understanding and contemplation of God. In other words, Murray assures her readers that educated women would be pious, more capable of religious devotion because of minds cultivated to comprehend God. Further, educated women would be better wives to their husbands. With their current lack of education, Murray argues, wives are set so far below their husbands "that in those entertainments which are productive of such rational felicity, she is not qualified to accompany him." Minds thus filled with worthy thoughts and substantive contemplations "would have little room for the trifles with which our sex are, with too much justice, accused of amusing themselves . . ."

Against the argument that educated wives would neglect their household duties, Murray insists that these activities are "easily attained" and, once attained, "require no further mental attention." In short, because no education is necessary for conducting themselves about their daily chores in their homes, wives would be "at full liberty for reflection" even as they are "pursuing the needle or the superintendency of the family." If time permitted, wives could commit these reflections to paper; if not, they would contribute to a more "refined and rational" conversation. Affluent women have the leisure time to devote to studies and more commendable subjects of contemplation, while for those who are in "embarrassed circumstances" Murray recommends early hours and close application.

On the subject of men's superior physical strength, Murray points to not only the presence of masculine females and effeminate males, but also to great minds like that of Alexander Pope, "clogged with an enervated body and distinguished by a diminutive stature." As yet another example that physical strength does not account for a natural inequality among the sexes, Murray points to those who, though approaching death, and thus possessed of a "clay built tabernacle . . . well nigh dissolved," remain capable of attaining sublime heights.

Murray ultimately arrives in a supplemental article to the *Magazine* at the most difficult argument held up to prove the inequality of the sexes: the downfall of humanity (and Adam) through the biblical tale of Eve. Extracted from a letter she wrote to an unnamed male friend in December 1780, Murray tackles the "sacred oracles" that constitute the entirety of her friend's argument in favor of the inequality of the sexes. Murray disagrees with the traditional reading of a "malignant demon" who appeared to Eve in "the guise of a baleful serpent"

and instead relies upon "the criticks in the Hebrew tongue" who insist that the "fallen spirit presented himself to her view as a shining angel." Further, she considers the message of this entity, a promise of "perfection of knowledge." Thus, she deduces, Eve was animated by "a desire of adorning her mind, a laudable ambition fired her soul, and a thirst for knowledge impelled the predilection so fatal in its consequences." Her motivation was not based upon a satisfaction of her base appetite, but a noble desire for knowledge. Adam, Murray suggests, was not acting upon such a noble premise; nor was he deceived as Eve was, for he had witnessed "the fallacy of the argument, which the deceiver had suggested." Adam "was influenced by no other motive than a bare pusillanimous attachment to a woman!" Sharon Harris traces the germs of this revision of Adam and Eve's tale of fatal fall to a letter Murray penned to her cousin in 1777: "That Eve was indeed the weaker Vessel I boldly take upon me to deny" (reported in Harris xxv).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the subjects delineated in Hannah Foster Webster's *The Boarding School* as proper and suitable for a young woman's education with those suggested by Murray in her essay. In terms of the subjects they advise, what conclusions might you draw about their expectations for women after graduation?
2. Murray's direct address to biblical precedent as an argument in favor of women's inferiority to men only appears in the essay as a supplemental address extracted from a letter to an unnamed male friend. How does this form relate to the supplement's content? Does it matter that it was addressed to a male?

"Sketch of the Present Situation of America, 1794" (1794)

As early as 1940, the critic Chester Jorgenson praised Murray for her ability to tackle the thorny political and philosophical issues raging in the newly formed nation. "Greater wonder is it that she devoted so many of her Gleaner papers to discussions of ideas not normally found in the American magazine literature written by blue-stockinged females during our early national period. Judith Murray's mind was as catholic and resilient as her heart was exquisite and tender. Her interest in masculine ideas is suggested most boldly in her essays on nationalism, the battle between ancients and moderns, and liberty in a federal republic" (Jorgenson 74). Murray tackles the thorny issue of the French Revolution and debates whether America, which had so recently been the beneficiary of France's aid in breaking its colonial ties with Britain, is obliged to lend support to France. She considers the idyllic scene America enjoys because of its peaceful period after the Revolution. Commerce thrives, agriculture is hearty, and literature and the arts, genres specific to America, are growing. These signs of a peaceful republic, however, are rather recent, as the nation had suffered not long before from the chaos and bloodshed of war. Murray offers an uncommon view of war by focusing her attention on the women who weep at home for husbands never returned, and on the men conscripted into service who suffered "camp sickness and fatigue." "These are not fancy pictures," Murray avows.

Neither are the images of France in its current state of chaos and barbarity, Murray argues. "But alas! France exhibits, at this period, a spectacle, from which lacerated truth indignantly hastes, at which reason stands aghast, while morality and holy religion have received from base and murderous hands a fatal stab." In this image, Murray paints the destruction of the very institutions of civility upon which all societies rest. Thus, at the same time that she offers a dire image of France, she suggests an immediate need for America to intervene. Murray characterizes factionalism with "its cloven foot" as the main obstacle preventing America from going to the aid of those from whom "we derived advantages so indisputably beneficial." Murray wonders at the motivations of those who ascribe to Federalist thought and goals, which she terms "an aristocracy in the midst of your brethren." And it is once she has alighted upon this subject that the reader recognizes that

Murray's main purpose is to hold up the promise of America, symbolized by a fragile and infantlike Constitution, against the terrors of France and the threat by Federalists to a government of the people.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Murray's and CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK's treatment of the factionalism, as described in "A Reminiscence of Federalism," dividing Federalists from Democrats. Considering that the two women subscribed to the two opposing factions (Murray was a Democrat while Sedgwick was raised a staunch Federalist), how do they imagine national harmony and the end of divisions?
2. How does Murray's argument about equality among people, a central tenet of Democrats rather than Federalists, adhere to the views she expresses of women's position in society?

The Medium, or Virtue Triumphant (1795)

Murray's first play was produced at the Federal Street Theatre, but only for one night. Critics speculate on the reason for the short-lived run, offering up critiques of the play's quality as well as sexism that clouded male theater critics' vision, prohibiting them from imagining a woman to be a playwright, or, for those who knew her to be the author, to believe that she had authored the play independently of her husband, John Murray.

In a refreshing reversal of emotional stereotypes, Sargent Murray casts Ralph Maitland in the role of mercurial male in need of a medium while Eliza Clairville and her star-crossed lover, Charles Maitland, embody virtue. Ralph Maitland's moods vacillate greatly, even as he professes a desire to embrace a calm medium between extreme emotions. He banishes his son when he learns of the latter's desire to marry a penniless orphan, Eliza. Despite their strong and abiding feelings for one another, Charles and Eliza refuse to marry against his father's wishes, which are predicated on Eliza's social status as an orphan and financial status as a servant. Although she describes it in socioeconomic terms, Eliza's desire to marry on equal standing with her husband resonates with Sargent Murray's own ideas of the equality of the sexes, which she wrote about in the *Massachusetts Magazine*. The appearance of her maternal uncle, Colonel Mellfont, functions as the play's deus ex machina as he explains to her in the final act that she fled, under the false advice of Olivia, on the eve of discovering her mother's patrimony.

Sargent Murray peoples the play with characters who do little more than offer comic relief, such as Captain Flashnet, who repeatedly mixes classic references to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with allusions to contemporary writers like Jonathan Swift and John Milton. His flashiness is also revealed in his exaggerated tales of bravery during the Revolutionary War and his close friendship with General Washington. The female version of Captain Flashnet is a catty socialite named Miss Dorinda Scornwell, who brags of "already looking in on a little hundred of her friends" before visiting Augusta Bloomville. Although Scornwell laments "stiff compliments" and "the awkward grimace of ceremony," she immediately proceeds to engage her friend Matronia in a recitation of the previous evening's entertainment, replete with a narration of her own central position in the pleasantries.

Sargent Murray delivers the message of moderating such hectic social schedules in the advice Mrs. Matronia Aimwell offers to her newly married niece, Augusta Bloomville, after hearing from Augusta's husband that the new bride is rarely at home, having packed her schedule with social events and shopping sprees. Augusta reflects, "I have plunged into a life of gaiety, and the conclusion, which forces itself upon me, does not decide in favor of dissipation." She, too, amends her extreme behavior in promising at the play's conclusion to dedicate herself to her marriage and her husband, Major George Bloomville.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the depiction of marriage in the two plays, *The Medium* and *The Traveller Returned*.

What roles does Sargent Murray imagine for men and women?

2. In this play, Sargent Murray emphasizes the need for moderation, or striking a happy medium, both in married life and in one's personal life. What are the political ramifications of this message? How does it resonate with her writing in *The Gleaner*?

The Traveller Returned (1796)

Murray's second play was first performed at the Federal Street Theatre in Boston on March 9, 1796. The play appeared in printed form in *The Gleaner*.

Act 1 opens with a scene of Mr. Rambleton and his servant, Patrick O'Neal, arriving on the docks of a major port city (presumably Boston). Mr. Rambleton's identity and motivations for arriving at the city are immediately called into question as his servant, Patrick, begins to puzzle aloud about his master's reticence to reunite immediately with his wife and family. As the play progresses, the audience pieces together that Montague Rambleton wishes to discover whether his wife has been true and faithful to him, and so he has affected the disguise of Rambleton. The master and servant quickly befriend a hero of the Revolutionary War named Major Camden, and in their laudatory exclamations on the heroism and greatness of General Washington, Rambleton proudly recognizes the figure of his long-lost son, although he delays their reunion until later in the play. Patrick and Rambleton lodge in the same boardinghouse as Camden, and there they are introduced to Camden's landlords, Mr. and Mrs. Vansittart.

His wife, Louisa Montague, worries about the marriage of her daughter Harriot to the young military hero, Major Harry Camden, who saved her life. While Camden feels some affection for Harriot, her cousin, Emily, who discovers to her own dismay that she reciprocates his affection, stirs his finer feelings. The love triangle is potentially resolved with the introduction of a second young gentleman, Alberto Stanhope, who wishes to marry Harriot and to whom she seems better suited. The marriage plots are suspended while the play turns to the plot of Rambleton, who has been falsely accused by the Vansittarts of being a Tory spy (in the wake of Benedict Arnold and Major Andre) and is detained by members of the Committee of Public Safety. By aligning Rambleton's disguised identity to the famous spies so recently associated with the Revolutionary War, Murray makes the events of the domestic plot (Montague has taken on this disguise to test the fidelity of his wife) resonate with the national plot (America's gaining its independence from Britain and worrying about harboring any disguised Tories or Loyalists).

The play's two plotlines resolve themselves in the fifth and final act, when Mrs. Montague recognizes her husband in the figure of Rambleton; Mr. Montague reunites with his daughter Harriot; and the parents become reacquainted with their son, who has been raised by a friend under the name *Harry Camden* rather than *Harry Montague*. Mrs. Montague considers in horror the possible sin she might have forced upon Harry and Harriot had their arranged marriage taken place, for brother and sister would have been united in holy wedlock. The specter of incest appears briefly in the play as the domestic equivalent to spying, as both oppose the natural affinities that one should have for one's family members and one's nation, newly formed.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Murray's play imagine the American Revolution? What place, if any, do women have in this nation-building event?
2. How do the women in the play (Mrs. Louisa Montague, Harriot Montague, and Emily Lovegrove) relate to the model of republican motherhood?
3. Compare Murray's treatment of General Washington and his role in the Revolution to PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU's in his poem dedicated to Washington.

The Story of Margaretta (1798)

Murray's serialized novel, which appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine* under the pen name The Gleaner, distinguishes itself by being narrated from a male perspective (that of Margaretta's adopted father, Mr. Vigillius), and by breaking with narrative convention, a tale of marriage and honor prevailing over seduction and fatal shame written partially in epistolary form. Margaretta, with the sage advice and solid moral upbringing of her adopted parents, Mr. and Mrs. Vigillius, escapes moral fall at the hands of the aptly named seducer, Sinisterus Courtland. Through the machinations of her parents, Margaretta learns Courtland's true nature and ends their association. Soon after, she receives a letter from her friend Amelia Worthington informing her of Courtland's part in the ruin of a young orphan named Frances Wellwood, whose patrimony he quickly depleted and whose reputation he tarnished. Enclosed in Amelia's letter is a short epistle written by Wellwood herself, begging Margaretta to "help [her] to reclaim a husband, who, not naturally bad, hath too long wandered in the dangerous paths of dissipation." Fanny Wellwood promises to "draw the impenetrable veil of silence" over Courtland's past indiscretions in the hope that he will "acknowledge the honorable and endearing ties [of] father and husband." Again, Margaretta and her adopted parents prove their virtuous nature by reuniting Courtland and Wellwood, settling the debts that imprisoned Courtland, and overseeing their matrimonial vows. Thus, Murray not only allows for Margaretta's escape from Courtland's seductive snare, but redeems the unfortunate victim of his vice, Frances Wellwood, and their illegitimate children, through the bonds of holy wedlock.

Margaretta reunites with her intended, Edward Hamilton, and the two marry once Margaretta has reached the proper age of 19. Their marriage, however, suffers from Hamilton's gambling debts, which threaten to separate husband from wife since Hamilton's only financial solution seems to be to take to the open seas, as had Murray's first husband, John Stevens. The arrival of Margaretta's biological father, who was erroneously reported to be drowned during a storm at sea, ends the Hamilton's financial woes and happily reunites father and daughter. Further, Margaretta's fears that her husband was in love with his childhood companion, Serafina Clifford, are dispelled by Serafina's declaration that she and Edward are in fact brother and sister. As with her two dramas, Murray relies upon the unexpected return of family members and the discovery of secret identities that aid in family reunions. The critic Sharon Harris believes Murray's only novel distinguishes itself from other 18th-century fiction by incorporating the fictional critiques within the story's plotline. As the novel appeared in serial form, Murray had opportunity to reflect upon some aspect of the novel that might have piqued the readerships' curiosity or drawn their critique. "Murray uses reader-response criticism for two significant purposes—first, to suggest the eclectic nature of her readership; and second, to emphasize her theme of equality" (Harris xxxi). On the subject of equality, Murray devotes several pages on the subject of Margaretta's education and her right to choose her own husband (even if her choice opposes her parents' wishes).

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Murray's depiction of marriage differ from that in her plays and essays? What role does she imagine for women as wives and mothers? What role does she imagine for men as husbands and fathers?
2. Compare Murray's novel to Susanna Haswell Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* and Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*. What enables Murray's heroine to avoid the traps that ensnare Eliza Wharton and Charlotte Temple?

"Observations on Female Abilities" (1798)

The critic Nina Baym celebrates "Judith Sargent Murray, [as] the only Enlightenment historian of women-as-such, [who] based her account on claims of equality: scrutiny of the historical record showed women to be equally brave, equally intelligent, equally articulate, equally loyal, and so on"

(40). Murray's essay "Observations on Female Abilities" offers, in its introductory poem, to present readers with examples of the "Sex's worth" in "the patriot's zeal, the laurell'd warrior's claim / The scepter'd virtues, wisdom's sacred name / Creative poesy, the ethic page" (2–5). She further enumerates the various pieces of evidence that will be produced in the essay's span to prove women's equality "in every respect" to men. These shared qualities include bravery, patriotism, influence, heroism, ingeniousness, emotional endurance, eloquence, faithfulness, literary merit, and leadership in government.

In support of women's ability to endure, Murray points both to the women of Britain and to the "savage" women who are "subjected to agonies unknown to manhood." Murray anticipates a common 19th-century theory that native women were unfairly treated by their men and forced to suffer physical as well as mental hardships that their Anglo-American counterparts were spared. Women's ingenuity, which she believes too prevalent to require any specific example, is nevertheless expressed in the tale of a queen who commissioned an artist to render a feast in gold, as a means of convincing the king to desist from overworking his people in the mines while the fields lay fallow and his subjects were starving. Murray draws again upon classical history to narrate the incredible tale of heroism and fortitude exemplified by Arria, a Roman wife who, when apprised that she could not procure the freedom of her husband, took the dagger he was to use to dispatch his own life and killed herself. Handing the weapon to her husband, Murray relates, Arria stated, "Paetus, this gives me no pain." Not wishing to limit her examples to ancient Roman times, Murray points to Lady Jane Grey and Miss Anna Askew, who both bore their death sentences with grace and heroic stoicism.

Females who took up arms to defend themselves and their families or to avenge the bloody deaths of their family members are counted as illustrious examples of women's displays of heroism. Murray briefly recounts the tales of Jane of Flaunders, Margaret of Anjou, and Charlotte Corday (who was executed for killing the Jacobin leader Jean Paul Marat). Murray adheres to the notion of republican motherhood when presenting examples of female heroism: mothers who tender up their young men or husbands in service of the nation. Murray considers both the physical taking up of arms, as well as the emotional sacrifice necessary to send loved ones to war, equally powerful proofs of women's shared qualities with men.

In contrast to the beliefs in innate equality between the sexes espoused by the *Godey's Lady's Book* editor, Sarah Josepha Hale, who recorded in the *Woman's Record* the opinion that the sexes' difference stems from "an organic difference in the operations of their minds," Murray not only provides a catalog of historical women whose feats illustrate on a factual and incontrovertible level the equality of women to men, but also considers contemporary women in England and America who deserve the laurels of fame and recognition for their accomplishments (reported in Baym 40).

Murray concludes by considering how many more women would prove themselves worthy members of and contributors to society were they given adequate educations to expand and cultivate their minds.

For Discussion or Writing

1. In this essay, Murray takes up what could arguably be called "male" traits and proves that women also possess them. Does she offer any celebration of stereotypically "female" traits? If so, what are they and how are they treated?
2. Consider Murray's argument in light of THOMAS JEFFERSON's two letters addressing the proper subject matters for both men and women, his letters to Benjamin Hawkins and Nathaniel Burwell, respectively.

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON MURRAY AND HER WORK

1. Murray penned several essays on the subject of female equality. Reviewing them as a whole, decide which essay appears most credible or persuasive and why?

2. Consider the qualities Murray holds up as exemplary of both men and women. How do these characteristics coincide with her notions of democracy and the American nation? Which characteristics do not seem particularly laudable or do not require education?

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Samson Occom (1723–1792)

I was both a School master and Minister to the Indians, yea I was their Ear, Eye & Hand, as Well as Mouth.

("A Short Narrative of My Life")

The American Indian critic Bernd Peyer believes "Native American literature in English actually began in the second half of the eighteenth century with the writer Samson Occom" (208). Occom's position as the "father of modern Native American literature" seems all the more impressive when one considers both the circumstances of his own life and the larger cultural and political tensions he had to negotiate (215). At the time of Occom's birth in 1723, factors including disease and colonial genocide had reduced the number of Mohegan to 350 (Peyer 209). Further, the remaining members had divided into two factions over land disputes. Ben's Town and John's Town were named after the two communities' sachems, or leaders. Although Occom's brief autobiography does not detail his family history, Peyer cites Harold Blodgett's 1935 biography of Occom, which mentions his paternal grandfather's migration from "the region around the Shetucket and Quinebaug Rivers" (in northeastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts) to Mohegan territory in the early part of the 17th century (209). His father, Joshua Ockham, married a woman named Sarah, who was a Mohegan. Her ancestry is rumored, according to *The Life of the Countess of Huntingdon,* to trace back to Uncas, the famous leader of the Mohegan. Both Blodgett and Peyer attribute Samson Occom's conversion to Christianity to his mother, Sarah's, prior embracing of the Christian faith.

The pivotal event in Occom's life occurred in 1741, when he was 17 years old; the Reverend John Davenport converted Samson Occom to Christianity. Tellingly absent from his own narrative is his appointment by Ben Uncas as one of 12 councillors for the Mohegan. When he was 19, the Mohegan placed Occom into a leadership role. It is quite likely that his conversion to Christianity might have seemed at odds with his newfound position within his tribe, and thus Occom chose not to focus on it in his narrative. It is also just as likely, however, that his baptism into Christianity prompted his selection as a councillor because it placed him in an intermediary role between the two cultures.

In Occom's own account of this life-changing event, his conversion to Christianity is strongly linked to his desire for literacy and access to biblical texts. On December 6, 1743, he began his education with the Reverend Eleazor Wheelock, a disciple of the Great Awakening who was appointed pastor of the Second Congregational Church of Lebanon one year after his graduation from Yale University. The Great Awakening, which lasted from the 1730s through the 1770s, was especially popular in England, Scotland, Germany, and in the British colonies in North America. Evangelical preachers held revivals throughout Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and beyond in the hope of countering the secularization of society caused by the age of Enlightenment. The prominence of the Great

Awakening in England and Scotland would prove pivotal to Occom's fund-raising tour of these two countries in 1766 and 1767. At the behest of his former teacher, Wheelock, and under the financial support of George Whitefield, the second earl of Dartmouth, Occom traveled to England and Scotland, delivering over 300 sermons to collect funds for what would eventually become Dartmouth University, which was then Wheelock's Indian Charity School. Peyer reports that Occom's efforts raised £12,000 for the school (211).

When Occom returned from his successful trip to England and Scotland, he learned of a land dispute commonly referred to as the "Mason Controversy," between the governor of Connecticut, who gained jurisdiction over the tribe in 1725, and the Mohegan. The Mason family, who represented the Mohegan in the court case, appealed the return of their lands from Connecticut's possession (Peyer 210). Occom's support of the Mohegan created tension between him and his fellow Christians, including his employers, who threatened to withdraw their financial aid for his missionary work. In a letter following the court's decision in favor of the colony of Connecticut, Occom writes of his outrage:

> The grand controversy which has subsisted between the Colony of Connecticut and the Mohegan Indians above seventy years, is finally decided in favor of the Colony. I am afraid the poor Indians will never stand a good chance with the English in their land controversies, because they are very poor, they have no money. Money is almighty now-a-days, and the Indians have no learning, no wit, no cunning; the English have all. (reported in Caulkins 163)

Occom had good reason to rail against the undue sway money held over the English. While he was sermonizing in England and Scotland to raise funds for an Indian Charity School, Occom was under the mistaken impression that Wheelock would meet the needs of his wife, Mary Fowler, and their 10 children. Instead, he returned to the disheartening scene of his family "in a state of extreme poverty and ill health" (Peyer 212). For Occom, the Mason Controversy and the dire circumstances his family suffered during his absence while fund-raising for the Indian school revealed how money could corrupt human relations and replace the respect one should have for another with greed for more money. To add insult to injury, Occom discovered that Wheelock "was no longer inclined to instruct Native American missionaries . . . and was removing the [Indian] school to New Hampshire . . . [where it] would be of no benefit to [Occom's] people" (Peyer 212). In an 1894 newspaper account of Occom written by the Reverend Dr. W. Deloss Love, the latter reports that the former "fell into intemperance. The original authority for the charge was a confession by Occom himself" (*Utica Morning Herald*). The community determined that Occom's intemperance was due to partaking of a small amount of alcohol on an empty stomach, and not to a more alarming pattern of alcohol abuse. Those who heard Occom's famous temperance sermon, delivered at the execution of Moses Paul on October 31, 1772, might well have heard rumor of his drinking problem and imagined that he wrote the sermon with himself in mind.

Occom's disillusionment with Wheelock, coupled with further conflicts between American Indians and English colonists, prompted him to join his former pupil and son-in-law, Joseph Johnson (who had married Occom's daughter Tabitha), to take up lands offered by the Oneida in New York as a resettlement location for American Indians from New England who had converted to Christianity. As early as July 1774, Occom and one of his brothers-in-law, David Fowler, traveled to New York to survey the lake and land that would eventually become a new settlement of converted American Indians. The outbreak of revolutionary activities, culminating in the Revolutionary War, which lasted until 1783, postponed the settlement. On November 7, 1785, Occom and Johnson founded Brothertown, "a Native American community with a political system modeled after Connecticut town government" (Peyer 213). Twenty families, including that

of Occom's son-in-law, Anthony Paul, traveled to Brothertown. The Oneida Historical Society reports that the town was geographically centered on the home of David Fowler, which also served as one of two places of worship over which Occom presided as pastor. The other house of worship was located in Stockbridge at Hendrick Aupaumut's home.

In 1787, just two years after the founding of Brothertown, the settlement's utopian vision was shattered by a land dispute between Occom and his extended family and the Oneida, who had initially gifted Occom and his followers with the land. Elijah Wampy, who brokered the deal with the Oneida to provide land for the new settlement, was later urged by the tribe to yield their tract and live in common with the tribe. Occom and his faction, led by David Fowler, had begun to make a living as farmers and did not wish to forfeit their labor to the community. Although a treaty was brokered the following year that reaffirmed Occom's and Fowler's title to the land, and thus affirmed their right to own tracts privately rather than communally, the bitterness from the dispute lingered. Matters regarding land rights and use continued to haunt the inhabitants of Brothertown. When English colonists began to lease lands from the American Indians, Occom once again resisted. He maintained that lands could only be leased to outsiders with the community's consent. Included among Occom's notion of outsiders were not only the white colonists, but members of other tribes from New England that were not "pure blooded," but had intermixed with Africans. "Occom had introduced into the original deed of gift, October 4, 1774, a condition that no such [people] should have any right to land in Brothertown, for his purpose was to keep the New England blood pure and preserve a tribal unity" (*Utica Morning Herald*).

Samson Occom died on July 14, 1792, at the age of 69. The Reverend Samuel Kirkland preached the funeral sermon. The Oneida Historical Society ended their 1894 meeting with a charge to "find the lost grave of Reverend Samson Occom, whose fame as a fervid Indian preacher lives on in the early history and traditions of Oneida county" (*Utica Morning Herald*).

"A Short Narrative of My Life" (1768)

Samson Occom's "A Short Narrative of My Life" was unpublished until 1982, when the 10-page manuscript began to find its way out of Dartmouth College's library and onto the printed page of contemporary collections and anthologies of early American literature. Its three sections divide his life in terms of his conversion to Christianity, his time studying with the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, and his life as a missionary after leaving Wheelock. By imagining his life in such a framework, Occom emphasizes the religious and spiritual aspects of his life and diminishes or all but erases his preconversion life among the Mohegan.

The first sentence of his narrative establishes a preference for his life after his conversion to Christianity: "I was born a Heathen and Brought Up in Heathenism, till I was between 16 and 17 years of age, at a place called Mohegan, in New London, Connecticut, in New England." Casting it in this light of heathenism, Occom offers no redeeming qualities about his indigenous childhood except in negative contrast to his life after his midteen years. Such a construction serves more than one purpose: It allies him immediately with an English Christian readership who would ascribe to the very language and belief promulgated in the opening sentence and thus forms an alliance with these readers against non-Christian American Indians. It also creates a trajectory of conversion that would be expected from such readers and thus reaffirms the kind of work that he performs as an ordained missionary among the Oneida and Mohegan tribes. There remains yet a third purpose served by Occom's virtual silence regarding details from his own early childhood, and that is that he is able to maintain a cultural allegiance to the Mohegan by not revealing the sacred aspects of their culture to outsiders. The very tensions laid out in analyzing the opening sentence of Occom's narrative are not fully resolved in the brief tale of his life.

In his description of the Mohegan, Occom appears almost reticent to reveal many details, writing instead that the tribe "chiefly depended upon hunting, fishing, and fowling for their living." Truly, this statement could be made about every tribe residing along the East Coast as well as the British settlers who were newly arrived. It is possible from the generic nature of this description to gain further insight into Occom's doubleness—his status as a member of the Mohegan and his tentative status as a Christian missionary. By portraying the Mohegan in the same light as one would any other people residing in America, Occom might be in effect making a subtle comparison between the two cultures that recognizes their similarities rather than their differences. This notion of cultural similarity between the heathen and the Christian certainly resonates when Occom writes that they had no connection with the English except to "traffic with them in their small trifles." Again, this very statement would certainly have been true as a descriptor of the English, who isolated themselves from the indigenous tribes, only meeting with them when brokering economic deals.

The uneven nature of the trade between the two cultures, however, breaks down this brief moment of cultural cohesion. Occom writes that the American Indians would attend meetings held by "a Minister from New London" but not with the intent of fulfilling the missionary's purpose of converting them. Occom suggests that they did not attend the meetings out of "regard [for] the Christian religion, but [for] the blankets given to them every fall of the year." Far from meeting their spiritual concerns, the American Indians were more invested in fulfilling the practical concerns of keeping warm for the coming winter months. Contemporary readers will no doubt recognize the bitter irony of American Indians' sitting through meaningless sermons in order to receive blankets. Historians have linked the significant number of deaths among American Indians after their initial contact with English settlers to the infection of the plague, which was transmitted, unbeknown to either culture, through the circulation of blankets. As 18th-century scientists were rather unversed on theories of contagion and infection, one would offer an anachronistic reading of this passage by imagining that Occom was aware of the blankets' capacity to transmit fatal diseases. He certainly was not. His point here is merely to contrast the desires of the English minister with those of the native population.

By portraying the Indians as uninterested in Christianity, Occom is certainly not categorizing all indigenous peoples as doomed to heathenism, but rather is creating a niche for his own invaluable services as a native missionary. As the narrative develops, it becomes rather clear that Occom feels he has been a remarkably successful missionary, whose cultural and linguistic knowledge of the Mohegan people prove invaluable tools in their conversion to Christianity, a goal that the minister from New London was unable to accomplish because he could not create any desire, curiosity, or regard for the Christian religion among the native population. Occom continues by mentioning the sporadic efforts and successes of the missionaries to teach "Indian children," including him, to read. Occom recalls that when he was 10, he and fellow children would "take care to keep out of [the missionary's] way." When the unnamed man was able to catch Occom or other children, he would "make [them] say over [their] letters," but "this was soon over too; and all this time there was not one amongst us that made a profession of Christianity." From Occom's recollection, past missionaries proved ineffective not only at teaching literacy, but, more critically, at the very task they set out to accomplish: converting American Indians to Christianity.

In his second section of the narrative, entitled "From the Time of Our Reformation Till I Left Mr. Wheelocks," Occom briefly relates his own conversion to Christianity and his time studying under the tutelage of Wheelock. Having heard "a strange rumor among the English, that there were Extraordinary Ministers Preaching from Place to Place and a Strange Concern among the White People," Occom introduces a collective identity and recollection of the events leading up to his own conversion. He also subtly implies that such

acts as baptism and acceptance of God and Jesus Christ provoke anxiety in the English colonists by referring to the latter's reactionary feelings as "strange." It was certainly true in the 18th century that baptism was a controversial sacrament because it affirmed the humanity of American Indians and Africans, the very people who were deemed to be "savage heathens" by the Puritan culture. Because baptism is predicated on the notion of a soul that will be saved for all eternity from the damnation of hell, the act of baptizing or being baptized carried with it the tacit agreement that the baptized had a soul. A Christianized American Indian, derisively termed a "praying Indian" by the captive MARY WHITE ROWLANDSON, would prove very challenging to Puritan belief in the "savage heathen" as he or she would undermine the certainty that the native inhabitants of North America were not the Puritans' equals and thus could not be dispatched in such an inhumane manner.

Interestingly, Occom portrays his own conversion as being less the result of work by "extraordinary missionaries" or himself and more the result of "Divine Influence." Occom writes, "It pleased the Lord, as I humbly hope, to Bless and accompany with Divine Influences to the Conviction and saving conversion of a number of us." The phrase "I humbly hope" requires further attention. If neither the missionaries nor he is responsible for his conversion to Christianity, and divine influences are at work in the conversion of Occom and several others, then why would he "humbly hope"? Taken as a whole with the previous section that spoke with some judgment on the ineffectiveness and sporadic nature of visits and efforts of previous missionaries, this description of his actual conversion appears to be unfathomable. No one, not even God, seems to have orchestrated it.

The absence of any language clearly identifying an agent or agents central to Occom's Christianization seems to continue in this section. This rhetorical strategy could be attributed to his conversion, his identity as Mohegan, or both. Because a strong tenet of Christianity, particularly Calvinism, which preaches the doctrine of predestination, involves the powerless position of humans, whose lives are directed by God, it seems understandable that Occom would write in a similar fashion, in which all the events that transpired in his life are attributed to God rather than to his own devices. Further, Occom's precarious position as a converted Mohegan, a figure existing between two worlds, would necessitate some rhetorical maneuvering on his part when leading up to his final argument in the narrative, which is for equal pay and equal treatment as a missionary. This being said, the narrative is of Occom's own life, and the tradition of autobiography provides literary license for authors to exercise authority over their own accounts. Occom's concluding plea for additional funding as a missionary must of necessity boast of his actions and abilities. Thus, this early moment in the narrative, which one would imagine to be pivotal to the life of a missionary, that is, conversion, seems to be rhetorically at odds with the rest of the narrative, which tells of his accomplishments and qualities.

Immediately after the rather strange description of his conversion, Occom begins writing in active voice of his desires and accomplishments such as learning to read and write. After six months of going to "all the meetings [he] could come at," Occom experiences a "trouble of mind" that results in his literacy lessons. Given the vague nature of the phrase "trouble of mind," one can only speculate as to its meaning. In the context of his conversion and first attempts at literacy, it may be that he is troubled by the inability to read the Bible on his own. However, his lessons seem to be secular in nature, as he describes the process: "Got me a Primer, and used to go to my English neighbors frequently for assistance in Reading, but went to no school." Once again, the vague nature of Occom's prose leaves it to the reader to discern whether he is gently rebuking the missionaries who held meetings but did not offer classes in reading and writing, or whether he is touting his own initiative to learn by any means available, or both. The "English neighbors" are not described as fellow Christians, so one might argue that the missionaries were not involved in the education of converted American

Indians. If this was true, then it makes one wonder about the missionaries' view of "praying Indians" and their perceived mental capacity to deepen their spirituality through studying the Bible.

Regardless of the missionaries' views of American Indians, Occom believed them to be his "Poor Brethren According to Flesh" who could be redeemed through literacy and religious conversion. His phrasing, which he would use also in his sermon on the occasion of Moses Paul's execution, is taken from the Bible. In Romans, the apostle Paul speaks of the Jews who have not accepted Christ as "my kinsmen according to the flesh." His four years under the tutelage of Mr. Wheelock included the study of English and Hebrew. Because of severe eyestrain and ill health, Occom "was obliged to quit [his] Studies." Turning the tables in his analysis of the teacher/student dynamic, the critic Bernd Peyer believes "it was primarily because of [Wheelock's] experience with Occom that [the former] decided to concentrate his teaching efforts on Native American students and founded the famous Indian Charity School" (210). It is an interesting angle for analyzing the dynamic of Wheelock and Occom, as the latter's time in England and Scotland, fund-raising for Wheelock's school, would demonstrate how Wheelock had begun to rely on, and even prey upon, the intellectual work and goodwill of Samson Occom. Once Occom returned from his European tour, his friendship with Wheelock abruptly ended.

Occom concludes his brief autobiography by developing his character and skills as a missionary after his ordination as a minister in 1759. He writes that he "endeavored to find some employ among the Indians." He taught in New London for two years and subsequently moved to Long Island and taught among the Montauk for 11 years. In direct contrast to his memories of the Mohegan reactions to missionaries, "the Indians were very desirous to have [him] keep a School amongst them." Occom further distinguishes himself from other missionaries by directly comparing the receptions of Mr. Horton and of him. Despite "a remarkable revival of religion among these Indians," they abandoned Mr. Horton and would have been lost were it not for Occom's efforts to "reclaim them" in his "mild way."

Occom makes his motivations in taking up the position of teacher and missionary clear by noting that when he lived and taught among the Montauk, he "left it with them to give [him] what they pleased; and they took turns to provide food for [him]." The absence of any language about a salary or wages is telling, as the latter portion of the autobiography is given over to a direct and matter-of-fact address about the disparity in pay between him and a fellow white missionary without his years of experience or linguistic and cultural skills. Occom continued with this arrangement until his marriage and "needy circumstances" required him to take up the matter of his salary with Mr. Wheelock and Mr. Buell, who "were so good as to grant fifteen pound sterling." Despite the increase in salary, Occom's additional responsibilities and the births of several children necessitated an additional boost in salary. His tale now becomes extremely detailed as he provides an account of his various responsibilities, including acting as judge, visiting the sick, and entertaining visitors. He details his pedagogical methods for teaching literacy, to include "making an Alphabet on small bits of paper, and glu[ing] them on small chips of cedar" and requiring students to fetch particular letters as a means of learning their alphabet and recognizing alphabetical order.

Occom also details his extreme circumstances at home, including the "increase of [his] family fast." In all, Samson and Mary had 10 children. Occom "was obliged to contrive every way to support [his] family." He mentions his endeavors to supplement his income by raising corn, potatoes, and beans; keeping swine; binding books; catching fish or hunting for his family's meals; carving wooden spoons and ladles; stocking guns; and making pails and other items out of wood to sell. He briefly mentions an unlucky streak with horses: a young mare who slipped into quicksand and died, another who disappeared or was stolen, another who broke a leg, and another who died of distemper. All of these detailed accounts of his responsibilities, his attempts to augment his income, and his difficulty

with livestock and crops culminate in providing an emotional plea at the autobiography's conclusion. For all of his work, for all of his resourcefulness, for all of his skill as a bilingual and bicultural missionary, Occom has received "180 pounds for twelve years service, which they gave for one year's services in another mission."

Occom rightly guesses the reason for the gross disparity in salary and points directly at the inherent racism practiced among his fellow missionaries. He compares his plight to that of a "poor Indian boy" who explains that the reason he is beaten almost every day is "because I am an Indian."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Occoms fails to provide any account of his early childhood before conversion to Christianity and remains silent on the topic of his family and his role as husband and father. Consider possible reasons for these silences in the narrative of his life.
2. How does Occom's image of himself compare with that constructed by BENJAMIN FRANKLIN in his *Autobiography*? What or who helped to fashion them into the men that they became?
3. How does Occom articulate an American Indian identity? How does it compare with the depictions of American Indians presented by THOMAS JEFFERSON in *Notes on the State of Virginia* or in the poetry of PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU? How does it compare with the fictional depictions of American Indians such as Chingachgook in JAMES FENIMORE COOPER's Leatherstocking Tales?

"A Sermon Preached by Samson Occom, Minister of the Gospel, and Missionary of the Indians; at the Execution of Moses Paul an Indian" (1772)

Moses Paul, an American Indian sailor from Martha's Vineyard, was sentenced to hang for the murder of a fellow American Indian, Moses Cook, in December 1771. The murder happened during a drunken brawl, and thus Occom's speech addresses the issue of temperance. On the day of Moses Paul's execution, September 4, 1772, Samson Occom delivered a sermon, at Paul's request, on repenting one's sins and on abstaining from the evils of alcohol. The sermon was so popular that Thomas and Samuel Green published it on October 31, 1772, and it went through 19 editions (Peyer 213). With the publication of this execution sermon, Samson Occom became the first American Indian to publish in English.

Occom opens the printed version of the sermon, which he considerably lengthened for publication, with a preface that situates his voice and his message within an overabundant literary marketplace: "The world is already full of books," Occom writes, but he offers readers three "considerations that have induced [him] to be willing to suffer [his] broken hints to appear in the world." One of these three considerations is his plain style, a voice that "common people understand." Unlike "the most excellent writings of worthy and learned men," who write in a "very high and lofty stile," Occom's "talk" is accessible to little children, "poor Negroes," and his "poor kindred the Indians." His use of plain style also keeps him well within the parameters of Puritan culture, which emphasized the need to eliminate all sources of vanity in its writers and ministers as well as avoid any potential corruption of its readers through falseness, misinterpretation, or immoral reference. Occom's appeal to those figures on the outskirts of society, to include him, was quite radical for the period and imagines that Africans and fellow American Indians are just as worthy an audience. The biographer Harold Blodgett recognizes a coyness in Occom's preface, writing that he was "probably no more poorly educated than many a preacher of his day, and in eloquence, earnestness, and simplicity, superior to not a few" (36).

Occom includes two other "considerations" in his preface that might persuade readers to consider his published sermon. He considers his own ethnic identity to be a reason for readers to be induced to read: "because it is from an Indian." His next "consideration," that God "has used weak and unlikely instruments to bring about his great work," seems

to amplify his second consideration regarding his self-identification as American Indian. Rather than treat his identity as a member of the Mohegan as a liability to his position as a writer and a minister, Occom proudly proclaims it as a compelling reason for others to consider reading his work. He identifies the ethnic affinity between himself and the condemned man, Moses Paul, by referring to him as "the bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." He calls Moses a "despised creature" but offers his sin of murder as the cause for this condition rather than his ethnic identity. In short, Occom both plays upon the ethnic difference he and Moses Paul share in contrast to the majority of his audience and readership and insists upon the similarities. When imagining the fate of those destined for hell, such as unrepentant sinners, Occom writes, "Thus must be the unavoidable portion of all impenitent sinners, let them be who they will, great or small, honorable or ignoble, rich or poor, bond or free. Negroes, Indians, English or of what nations soever, all that die in their sins, must go to hell together." Occom's position as a minister allows him to make statements about the inherent equality of all men based upon their potentially shared fate as sinners condemned to hell.

Occom further distances Moses Paul from the racist notions of American Indians by expounding on his exceptional qualities: "You have been brought up under the bright sunshine, and plain, and loud sound of the gospel; and you have had a good education; you can read and write well; and God has given you a good natural understanding." Such qualities, Occom argues, make Paul's sins all the more egregious because they were not committed "in such an ignorant manner as others have done."

Occom concludes by directly addressing the sin of drunkenness and its sinners, "the Indians, my brethren and kindred according to the flesh." He compares the state of Moses Paul, for whom "the sin of drunkenness . . . has brought this destruction and untimely death upon him," and the race as a whole, stating that "this abominable, this beastly, and accursed sin . . . has stripped us of every desirable comfort in this life . . . [and] for this sin we are despised in the world." Drunkenness, or a "love of strong drink," appears for Occom to be at the heart of American Indians' suffering, be it from a lack of food and shelter or an inability to stave off the weather and supply families with creature comforts. Because drunkenness undermines Natives' ability to replicate the markers of civilization set forth by the English colonists, it demeans them to the level of beasts and thus serves to reaffirm negative stereotypes about them. This line of argument is much in keeping with Occom's original indictment of Moses Paul: They make themselves despised creatures because they do nothing to overcome the negative stereotypes associated with American Indians. Occom concludes his sermon by calling on all in attendance to "break off from your drunkenness . . . and now awake to righteousness."

The first edition of Occom's sermon sold out in two weeks, and demand necessitated a second edition in November and a third the following month (Peyer 214). It remained in circulation until well into the 19th century (Peyer 215).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the images and rhetoric in Occom's sermon with JONATHAN EDWARDS's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." How do they persuade their readers or listeners to repent? How do they depict eternal damnation?
2. What aspects of Occom's sermon are ethnically marked as Mohegan? How does he identify himself as American Indian, and how does this identity compare with that projected in his autobiographical writing?
3. Compare Occom's sermon with HANDSOME LAKE's moral teachings. How does the shift in intended audience change their message about the evils of alcohol?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON OCCOM AND HIS WORK

1. In his sermon and in his autobiographical writing, Samson Occom addresses radically different audiences. How does he identify himself in these two pieces? How does he successfully or unsuccessfully bridge the gap between two

cultures: Native and Anglo European? Look for evidence in the pieces to support your claim.

2. As a minister, Occom gains an authority denied to most American Indians in the 18th century. What are the conditions of his authority? In what ways does Occom use his authority? Is it exclusive to him, or does he extend it to others?
3. What is Occom's vision for future relations between Anglo Europeans and American Indians? What are the conditions under which they might live together harmoniously?

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Thomas Paine (1737–1809)

These are the times that try men's souls.

(*The American Crisis*)

Thomas Paine, a notable figure in America's history, lived a life full of both accomplishments and controversy. He was considered to be a strong influence on Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, and George Washington. He was a catalyst in the colonies' separation from England. He advocated promoting equal rights, creating a world peace organization, establishing a social security system, and abolishing slavery. His ideas have proven to be a forerunner to many of today's political policies and beliefs.

Paine was born Thomas Pain on January 29, 1737, in Thetford, England, to Joseph Pain, who was a Quaker staymaker (a maker of corsets, which are women's underclothes), and Frances Cocke Pain, who was an Anglican. Thomas Paine added the *e* to his name when he arrived in America (Fruchtman 56). Paine had one sister, Elizabeth, who had died at birth. The young Paine attended school until the age of 13, when he left his studies behind and became a staymaking apprentice. In 1753, Paine did attempt to join a merchant ship, but his father found him and prohibited him from boarding. Luckily for Paine, he did not remain on the ship, because it was reported that most of the seamen were killed. Several months later, Paine attempted once again to join a ship, and this time he was successful. In 1756, he served on the *King of Prussia*.

After his short attempt to work at sea, he returned to the trade of staymaking in 1757. In 1759 a master staymaker, Mr. Morris, loaned him money to set up his own shop in Sandwich. Paine met Mary Lambert, who was a maid for one of the town's shopkeepers. Their marriage was short-lived. Mary and their child died during childbirth in 1760. Mary's father worked as an officer for the Customs and Excise Service and persuaded Paine that he should study in this same field. At first Paine was unsure, but when his staymaking shop in Sandwich was having major financial problems, Paine decided to return to Thetford and study to be an excise officer.

Shortly after his first job collecting excise taxes in Alford, Lincolnshire, he was fired because he stamped a shipment without inspecting the contents. He decided to move to Norfolk and resume staymaking but still was not content. So, in 1766, he moved to London and tried his hand at teaching. He discovered that the salary was too low, so he wrote a letter of apology to the excise office, hoping to mend fences and return to his previous line of work. His request was accepted, and in 1768 he was appointed to another excise post in Lewes, Sussex. Because of his financial situation, Paine became a boarder of Samuel Ollive, who was a prominent tobacco shop owner. Shortly after Ollive's death in 1771, Paine married Ollive's daughter, Elizabeth, and took over the tobacco shop.

From 1772 to 1773 Paine abandoned his job and went to London to establish an excise tax col-

lectors' movement for higher salaries. He suffered a series of setbacks: The movement failed, he was fired for leaving his post, his tobacco shop became bankrupt, and his wife left him. In 1774, while in London, Paine met BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, who helped him emigrate to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Paine ventured into journalism.

He published an antislavery tract and became coeditor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. From February to September 1775, Paine worked as an editor and contributed poems and essays of his own. These early writings were already establishing the foundation for his later more political writings. For the magazine, Paine wrote articles about the latest inventions; later Paine himself would be the inventor of an iron bridge, smokeless candle, and several other items. In addition to covering the newest inventions, he wrote articles on social issues that interested him such as calling for the humane treatment of animals and urging equal civil rights (but not suffrage) for women. Paine was extremely vocal in his political beliefs. In one of his own articles, which he published on March 8, 1775, Paine advocated the abolition of slavery. In April 1775, he helped found one of the first abolitionist societies. He also criticized the colonists for complaining about Britain's enslaving them whereas many of the colonists kept their own slaves.

Through his association with the magazine, Paine met Benjamin Rush, who was a friend of JOHN ADAMS and other members of Congress. These individuals were already contemplating the idea of a free and independent America. Benjamin Rush was the person who suggested to Paine that he write a pamphlet on the subject of the colonies' separating from England. Rush was concerned with how the pamphlet would be accepted so he cautioned Paine to avoid the terms *independence* and *republicanism* (Freed 74). Paine disregarded the warning.

At first, no publisher would agree to set the pamphlet in print, but finally Robert Bell agreed. Paine wanted to title the pamphlet *Plain Truth,* but Rush suggested the name *Common Sense* (Foner 75). The pamphlet was published on January 10, 1776, and quickly became popular. *Common Sense* actually began with "an analysis of the principles of government and an attack on hereditary rule and the validity of monarchy, not with a discussion of America's relations with Britain" (Foner 75). Without *Common Sense* to sway public opinion, most historians now agree, the American rebellion would have failed from lack of popular support. THOMAS JEFFERSON reportedly was inspired by Paine's essay when writing the Declaration of Independence.

In 1777 Paine joined the army and served as an aide to one of George Washington's generals. While at Valley Forge, Paine wrote *The American Crisis,* which had a significant positive impact on the soldiers' morale. In April 1777 Congress appointed Paine as secretary of its foreign affairs committee, which included Indian affairs. In 1780 Paine wrote *Public Good,* a text that further explored the themes in *Common Sense*. *Public Good* explains Paine's disagreement with Virginia's claims to western land.

In 1787 Paine returned to Europe and spent the next four years traveling in Britain and France. While in France, Paine published the first part of *The Rights of Man* (1791), a doctrine banned by the English government and William Pitt, the leader of the Tories, because it supported the French Revolution. The book criticized the idea of monarchies and other European social institutions. Paine further argued for the ideal of a republic governed under a constitution with a bill of rights, elected leaders serving limited terms, and a judiciary accountable to the general public. He urged equal suffrage for all males.

Paine wrote and published part 2 of *The Rights of Man* in 1792. "Paine declared that governments exist to guard the natural rights of people unable to ensure their rights without that government's help. The four inalienable rights he named are Liberty, Property, Security, and Resistance to Oppression." Paine further argued that because in God's eyes all men are equal, every generation had the right to establish a political system that satisfied its needs. "Paine argued rationally that all men had an equal claim to political rights and that government must rest on the ultimate sovereignty of the people. He

expanded on this belief by explaining the ideal of a republic governed under a constitution with a bill of rights, elected leaders serving limited terms, and a judiciary accountable to the general public. He urged equal suffrage for all men (but not women). In part 2 Paine called for the end of social divisions by virtue of birth, rank, economics, or religion. He suggested specific social legislation for removing class inequities. He wanted *The Rights of Man* to inspire in England the same revolutionary thirst for independence from the monarchy as *Common Sense* had inspired in America. Pitt was furious with Paine, but Paine felt safe because he was in France. Nevertheless, Pitt had him tried in absentia and Paine was convicted of treason. Paine's native country, England, had banished him in December 1792.

Thought to be safe in France, Paine was still in the middle of political upheaval. France was also having some political problems in 1793 and Paine once again found himself in the middle of the controversy. In 1793, Paine was imprisoned in France for not endorsing the execution of Louis XVI. During his imprisonment, he wrote and distributed the first part of what was to become his most famous work at the time, the antichurch text *The Age of Reason*. Many people believed it to be an assault on organized religion. He was to be executed, but most biographers report that because of a mistake in marking prisoners' doors, Paine was spared. Finally, in 1794, thanks to James Madison, then the United States minister to France, Paine was released, poor and sickly, at the age of 57.

In 1795 Paine wrote his last pamphlet, *Agrarian Justice,* which further developed ideas proposed in *The Rights of Man* as to how the institution of landownership separated the great majority of persons from their rightful natural inheritance and means of independent survival. The United States Social Security Administration recognizes *Agrarian Justice* as the first American proposal for an old-age pension (Kaye 211).

Paine remained in France until 1801, when he returned to America at the invitation from Thomas Jefferson. Paine was in poor health. Although he was the inspiration for the Declaration of Independence, Americans treated him as an outcast in society. His old friend, James Monroe, gave Paine a place to live until he regained his strength. Once his health seemed to improve, he then moved to New York's Greenwich Village in 1808 into a first-floor boardinghouse room paid for by a friend. Paine died eight years later on June 8, 1809, at the age of 72. Some biographers thought Paine had arteriosclerosis of the brain, but this was never confirmed.

Paine's will, dated January 1809, requested that he be buried in the Quaker cemetery, but his request was denied. He was finally buried in a corner of the New Rochelle Farm. His will also stated that he wanted his gravestone to read only his name, age, and the words *Author of Common Sense*.

According to Craig Nelson, in 1809, William Cobbett, a journalist who in the past had openly criticized Paine, now began to admire his political ideas. Cobbett dug up Paine's bones and transported them to England for reburial under a grand patriotic monument that Cobbett intended to build. The British government refused to allow the construction of the monument. Paine was still considered an outlaw of the country. Cobbett died in 1835 before anything pertaining to the reburial could be settled. The location of Paine's remains has become a mystery. Some researchers such as Isaac Kramnick and Michael Foot suggest that the majority of them were lost at sea in the transporting from America, but this does not seem to be accurate because there are ship records that when Cobbett arrived in England, his luggage was inspected and it was recorded that he had transported the bones of Thomas Paine. Other researchers suggest that when Cobbett had died, his son took Paine's remains and possibly buried them in the family plot, and still others suggest that they were separated and still being kept by unknown individuals. The location of his remains is still unknown today.

Paine's statement in *The American Crisis* that "these are the times that try men's souls" also seems to be appropriate in describing his controversial life. Paine felt strongly about political issues and was able to relate his concerns to the common

man. His writing was accessible to the average individual, not just the elite. Because of his ability to explain his ideas to everyone, Paine was a man who had great influence on the founding of America as we know it today, yet at the time of his death it appeared that he had lost everything that was dear to him. Paine's biographer Jack Fruchtman characterizes Paine's legacy: "He wrote and said things that distinguished him as one of the great original thinkers, whose observations seem intensely relevant even today" (32). Paine, the man who was believed to suggest the *United States of America* as the name for the colonies, died without acknowledgment that was due him. In the 21st century there has been a resurgence of interest in the life of Paine, and maybe finally there will be some closure to the question of his remains and he will have the acknowledgment he deserved.

Cardaic Henry

Common Sense (1776)

Thomas Paine's most famous pamphlet is fully titled *Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, on the Following Interesting Subjects: I. Of the Origins and Design of the Government in General, with Concise Remarks on the English Constitution. II. On Monarchy and Hereditary Succession. III. Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs. IV. Of the Present Ability of America, with Some Miscellaneous Reflections.* It first appeared on January 9, 1776, and quickly went through 25 editions in that year alone, a publishing feat that speaks to the general interest Paine aroused in the Americans who were clamoring for independence from Great Britain. It was not as though other writers were not arguing for America to separate itself from Britain; rather, what made Paine's argument so singular, aside from his deliberate use of plain style to reach the widest reading public possible, was its basis in reason rather than in the religious realm of the Bible. Prior to Paine's pamphlet, Separatists and Puritans had made new homes for themselves in America precisely so they could exercise religious freedoms and escape mandatory membership in the Church of England. Paine's very title, *Common Sense,* speaks to an audience on an entirely different ground, arguing for American independence from a secular perspective. This very basis for his argument would later become a point of public outrage against Paine, as he was considered both in Great Britain and in America as a threat to Christianity since his model for a harmonious society was not predicated on religious belief.

In his introduction, Paine creates a parallel between America's "cause as the cause of all mankind" and his anonymity as author of the pamphlet. Paine sees the crisis before America "not [as] local, but universal, and through which all the principles of all Lovers of Mankind are affected." Similarly, he refuses to identify himself as the pamphlet's author, arguing that "the Object for Attention is the Doctrine itself, not the Man." This rhetorical strategy, staged in the introductory pages of the pamphlet, sets the reader's expectations for the argument that will ensue and emphasizes the universal import of American independence. The concept of natural rights, for Paine, is larger than America and its struggles with Great Britain, just as it is larger than the writer himself, who remains anonymous in order to focus attention on the issue at hand rather than on its author.

In his first section, "Origin and Design of Governments in General," Paine wishes to separate society (produced by our wants) from government (produced by our wickedness). He offers a hypothetical situation, "a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth, unconnected with the rest," to illustrate the natural evolution of society and to provide readers with a "clear and just idea of the design and end of government" (6). One man alone, Paine argues, will be unable to survive in this new environment unless he forms bonds of "reciprocal blessings" with other immigrants, whose combined labor allows for the construction of houses and mitigates against the vulnerability of the individual to disease or other misfortune.

When the colony reaches a certain number, however, Paine describes the necessity for representative government rather than public gatherings in which all residents participate as they could do initially when their numbers were not so great. The presumption, Paine states, is that these representatives will have "the same concerns at stake which those have who appointed them [have]" (7). This form of government, in which representatives are elected, re-creates the image of the organically appearing society, for the electors "will establish a common interest with every part of the community, they will mutually and naturally support each other" (8). To this representative form of government, which Paine believes "the simple voice of nature and reason will say . . . is right," he harshly contrasts England's unwritten constitution, whose complexity makes it nearly impossible to discern "in which part the fault lies" (9).

Paine believes that the English constitution merely allows the absolute monarchy to continue, with only the pretext that the government contains some "republican materials." Even though the constitution gives the commons the ability to check the king's power, the king can exercise the same power over the commons, thus reinforcing the notion from the days of absolute monarchy that the king is wiser than any group of people (10). Paine concludes this first section by likening the Americans' loyalty to the British constitution to a man's fancying a prostitute: Such an individual is unfit to choose a wife. "Any prepossession in favor of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one" (12).

In the second section, which covers the topic of the monarchy and hereditary succession, Paine situates the origins of monarchies with the heathens, stating, "It was the most preposterous invention the Devil ever set foot on for the promotion of idolatry" (13). He cites the Holy Scriptures, specifically Gideon and Samuel, as expressly disapproving of government ruled by kings (14). Paine recalls how Gideon, after his successful campaign against the Midianites, not only refused the public outcry for him and his children to rule over the people as their king, but also denied their right to create hereditary succession (14). Likewise, Samuel, when called upon to rule as king, prayed to God for guidance and even asked God to send signs in the forms of thunder and rain so that the populace might understand how God discountenanced their desire for a king (15–17). Just as he employs two tales of specific men who refused the title of king in the Old Testament, so, too, does Paine cite a specific monarch, William the Conqueror, to launch his argument about hereditary succession. Quite plainly, Paine labels William the Conqueror "a French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives." William the Conqueror, Paine quips, is "in plain terms a very paltry rascally original" (20). Paine returns again to the Bible, noting, "A family of kings for ever hath no parallel in or out of scripture" (20). Indeed, with the notion of original sin passed down to all humanity from Adam's fall, Paine notes, none can claim superiority over another (21). On a less religious and more practical note, Paine mentions that minors are able to gain access to the throne, as are those too increased in age to rule rightfully (21–22).

In the third and best-known section of *Common Sense,* in which he tackles "the present state of American affairs," Paine prefaces his argument with a plea to the reader to maintain an open mind: "No other preliminaries to settle with the reader than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves" (24). He has not required such a precondition of his readers in previous sections, thus leading the reader to recognize the singular importance of this section; it is the heart of *Common Sense.* Paine immediately calls for war between America and Britain in the second paragraph, deeming the "volumes [that] have been written on the subject of the struggle" as "ineffectual" and "the period of debate . . . closed" (24–25). His tone is more strident, effective, and direct.

He justifies the call to arms and war by reference to the battle of Lexington, which took place

on April 19, 1775. He considers this battle, "the commencement of hostilities," as a turning point, which rendered all previous "plans [and] proposals" as "useless now" (25). Paine deems it "right" to examine "on the principles of nature and common sense" what America stands to gain through independence and to lose through continued dependence on Britain (26). To address America's losses as a colony of Britain, Paine examines the metaphor of "Mother England," stating that even if America is the child who has "thrived upon milk," it is just as preposterous to suggest that a child, even at the age of 20, should maintain the same diet as it is to suggest that America, who has been a colony for too long a time, should persist in its infantile and dependent state. As a child does, America has grown, and as a child who has grown up should, America should demand its independence. Following this metaphor further, Paine states that if "Britain is the parent country . . . then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their own families" (27). His reference to cannibalism stems from the various ways in which Britain figuratively feeds upon the American colonies as a source of raw materials, soldiers for its battles, and tax revenues for its coffers.

To disentangle the parent/child relationship between Britain and America further, Paine returns to his favorite whipping boy, William the Conqueror, noting that as the "first king of England of the present line" of monarchs, he was a Frenchman, "and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country." Further, Americans themselves are not wholly British: "Not one third of the inhabitants, even of [Pennsylvania] are of English descent." In addition to the fiction of common English blood uniting Britain and America, Paine notes the geographical distance between the two continents: "Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other, was never the design of Heaven." Where these arguments regarding the fiction of unity between Britain and America are not enough to convince his readers of the need for American independence, Paine lists the ways in which America is victimized by England. Great Britain's foreign policy dictates America's so that if England engages in a war, America is compelled to send troops and fight against "nations who otherwise seek our friendship and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint." America's foreign trade, Paine notes, is also determined by Britain's foreign policies.

Paine's final section calls for immediate action in the form of a military campaign against Great Britain in order to obtain independence. "The present time, likewise, is that peculiar time, which never happens to a nation but once, viz. the time of forming itself into a government" (55). Against anticipated arguments that Britain and its forces, particularly its naval power, significantly outnumber American forces, Paine argues that the geographical distance is to America's advantage since Britain must travel overseas in order to refit and resupply its forces, that the absence of many seaports means America has less territory to protect, and that the military powers are based upon experiences of American colonists from the last war.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Paine takes a logical approach to the subject of America's independence from Great Britain, except in section 2, where he repeatedly cites the Bible as a source opposed to monarchies and the practice of hereditary succession. Consider the shift in his argument, and write your own version of section 2, in which you take a logical approach to these two political practices.
2. Compare Paine's argument for natural rights with PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU's depiction of them in his poem "On Mr. Paine's Rights of Man." Does Freneau's characterization do justice to Paine's prose? How do you reconcile the different genres (pamphlet and poem) to the manner in which the message of natural rights is presented?
3. Paine's *Common Sense* and *The Age of Reason* influenced both the American Revolution and

the French Revolution. Review the doctrines and list several similarities in his arguments.

The American Crisis (1776–1783)

The first installment of *The American Crisis* begins thus:

> These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it *now* deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

These electrifying opening words effectively capture Thomas Paine's tenor in the pamphlets that he published serially throughout the American Revolution. Intended to rally the revolutionaries and bolster the morale of soldiers during periods of doubt and uncertainty, the 13 *Crisis* papers (one honoring each colony) stress the promise of America, assert the righteousness of the cause as well as its significance in world history, and insist on the certainty of victory despite the frequently dismal outlook on the battlefield. At times fiery, bitingly funny, and meticulously rational, Paine's rhetoric appeals to both the sentiments and the intellect of his countrymen. The pamphlets, which Paine composed in what he called "a passion of patriotism," were reprinted in newspapers across the country, cementing Paine's reputation as one of America's leading writers and as one of the most highly esteemed public figures of the revolution.

The first issue of *The Crisis* was published on December 19, 1776, in the *Pennsylvania Journal.* As was the case with following installments, the author donated all profits to the cause. In it, Paine argues in his characteristically clear and direct style that, despite the dire situation confronting the American forces, "no great deal is lost yet" (171). Paine assures his countrymen that there is no cause for fear, urging each individual to volunteer aid in support of the cause (and not so subtly prodding lapsed militiamen to return to their units). In a stunning display of verbal dexterity, he contends that the obstacles facing the military actually work to the country's advantage, for "what we obtain too cheap we esteem too lightly" (170), and that the challenges will bring out the best of the "manly and martial spirit" (173) in the soldiers and General Washington. The general himself must have agreed with this notion, for he commanded that this pamphlet be read to the troops on Christmas Eve 1776, shortly before the historic crossing of the Delaware—a victory that served as proof that American forces could in fact defeat the ruthless mercenaries hired by the British. Paine signed this and all further installments of *The Crisis* not with his name but with the title of his first pamphlet, *Common Sense.*

The second *Crisis,* published on January 13, 1777, was addressed "To Lord Howe," the commander in chief of British forces during the Revolution. The pamphlet was not, however, a personal appeal to the general, but rather a lampoon of his tactics and personal character. Paine published this paper in response to Howe's proclamation that all members of provisional congresses and commissions must cease and desist from "treasonable acts." In *The Crisis,* Paine ridicules this pronouncement, claiming that Howe does not possess the authority to make such a proclamation since America has already declared its independence. Paine explicitly states that his purpose in penning this pamphlet is "to expose the folly of your pretended authority as a commissioner; the wickedness of your cause in general; and the impossibility of your conquering us at any rate. On the part of the public, my intention is, to show them their true and solid interest; to encourage them to their own good, to remove the fears and falsities which bad men have spread, and weak men have encouraged; and to excite in all men a love for union, and a cheerfulness for duty" (192). He accomplishes these tasks by disparaging Howe's honor, attacking him for his mercilessness, and reiterating the idea that every challenge to the American side is in fact an opportunity for success.

This suggestion that obstacles actually present important possibilities for victory surfaces again in the third and fourth installments of *The Crisis.* In the third pamphlet, published on April 19, 1777 (exactly one year after the Battle of Lexington, which signaled the beginning of the conflict), Paine compels his readers to reflect on the course that the war has taken thus far and learn from the experiences, both positive and negative. He implores his fellow patriots to recall the arguments in support of independence in order to maintain their clarity of purpose. *Crisis IV,* published soon after the stinging defeats at Fort Ticonderoga and Brandywine, adopts a more austere tone, as Paine writes, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it" (229). Paine also notes that Americans should take heart, for many British victories have revealed themselves to be catastrophic failures over time.

The year 1778 saw three installments of *The Crisis.* In the fourth issue, published on March 21, Paine mocks Howe, noting that although the general merits a monument for his infamy, it would have to differ from traditional memorials; ultimately, he suggests that Howe be preserved as the pharaohs were, but embalmed with tar and adorned with feathers. He then reasons that Howe's conquests are trivial when compared with the vast expanse of America and further reassures his countrymen that the English army is in its last throes. Finally, he compares the republican project to that of Greece, arguing that America has far surpassed its predecessor in the scope of this new democracy.

The fifth pamphlet, published on October 20, is addressed "To the Earl of Carlisle, General Clinton, and William Eden, Esq., British Commissioners at New York," who were sent to quell the chaos in the colonies. Congress responded that it would only consent to peace if Britain recognized America's independence, but the king scoffed at this idea, replying that "farther concession is a joke" (261). Again, Paine indicates that the subsequent proclamations are "tedious and unmeaning" (262) and stresses that the revolutionaries do not seek violence, but will retaliate if the king acts on his threats. Published only a month later on November 20, the fifth pamphlet is addressed "To the People of England," whose lack of anger about the war Paine attributed to the deceptions of Parliament and the enormous distance between the countries, which makes the horrors of the conflict difficult to grasp. Appealing to the national honor and the pragmatism of English subjects, Paine urges the British public to entreat their government to end the war, as it is causing both financial and moral damage.

The eighth pamphlet was published in March 1780, five years after the beginning of the hostilities. Again addressing the people of England, Paine speaks about the "wanton cruelty" of the British in America (294) and asks the English to imagine how they would respond if the situation were reversed. He urges the British to liberate themselves from their insular prejudices and put an end to the war before any more damage is done to either nation.

On May 12, the British captured Charleston, South Carolina, issuing the Americans one of the worst defeats in the war. The Continental Army was already so bedraggled and lacking in provisions that the baron von Steuben had dubbed the American troops *sans-culottes* (no pants). In response, Paine contributed his entire life savings to the military and on June 9 published *Crisis IX,* an appeal to the states to support the federal government, warning of the financial penalties they would confront were they to become subjects of England once again. He argues that the United States will not be conquered piecemeal and that defeats such as this one only rouse more passion for the American cause. This pamphlet was followed by a supernumerary *Crisis* paper titled "The Extraordinary Crisis" and dated October 6, 1780, in which Paine defends the taxes being levied on the American public in support of the war. Since the rebellion was largely in response to British taxation, financing the war becomes a delicate issue. Printing more currency was often proposed as a quick solution, but, as Paine notes, this practice led to rampant inflation. Ultimately, Paine demonstrates through various calculations that the taxes in

America are far less than those paid by British subjects and argues that it is better to pay now in support of the Revolution than to lose the war and pay exorbitant taxes to the British Crown.

There is a large gap before the publication of the next *Crisis,* and the sea change that occurred in the intervening years is immediately clear in the 10th installment, published on March 5, 1782. Subtitled "On the King's Speech," it is a response to a speech the king made on November 27, 1781, just six weeks after General Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, which effectively ended major combat. In this speech, however, the king hints at further aggression (and, indeed, the Treaty of Paris that solidified the peace would not be signed until 1783). Paine declares that the king's words were "inquired after with a smile, read with a laugh, and dismissed with disdain" by the American people (323). The second part is addressed to the people of the United States, and it urges the government not to underestimate the costs of the war. Looking ahead, Paine argues for a strong central government in which "each state is to the United States what each individual is to the state he lives in" (341) for reasons of safety and national strength.

The last three *Crisis* papers confront an America at the close of war. The 11th edition, published on May 22, 1782, and entitled "On the Present State of News," warns of Britain's attempts to establish treaties with countries such as France without the participation of their allies. Paine advises the United States to reject any unilateral treaty proposed by Britain, because broken alliances would undermine the new nation's standing abroad. Eight years after the initial battles at Lexington and Concord, on April 19, 1783, Paine published *Crisis XII,* in which he casts doubt on America's ability to forgive and work with Britain in the future. The final *Crisis* paper, aptly titled "Thoughts on the Peace, and the Probably Advantages Thereof," declares, "'The times that tried men's souls' are over—and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew gloriously and happily accomplished" (370). Despite this celebratory tone, Paine does express some concern over the future of America. He warns that the nation must realize and hold true to its promise; the experiment of democracy is on display for the rest of the world, and "it would be a circumstance ever to be lamented and never to be forgotten, were a single blot, from any cause whatsoever, suffered to fall on a revolution, which to the end of time has contributed more to enlighten the world, and diffuse a spirit of freedom and liberality among mankind, than any human event (if this may be called one) that ever preceded it" (372).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare *Common Sense* with *The American Crisis.* In both, Paine employs a clear, easily accessible writing style. What function does this "simple" language serve? What rhetorical strategies does Paine employ to attract others to his cause?
2. So much of *The American Crisis* is concerned with the project of independence that we frequently neglect to examine Paine's imagination of the future. How would you describe the America and the Americans Paine envisions? To what extent was this vision realized?

Aimee Woznick

The Age of Reason (1794)

Paine's *The Age of Reason* must be understood in its intellectual context. Historically, the period between the 1600s and 1800s was an intellectual revolution that provided the basic framework for modern man. By rejecting medieval theology as the final authority on matters, modern man now discovered that he was able to interpret the universe, the world, and himself through reason, science, and logical analysis. This "new rationalism" was widely considered by the 18th century to be the final key to the problems of mankind, and during these two centuries of intellectualism, the "rationalists," finding in mathematics and science what they believed to be infallible methods for solving problems, accepted a mechanical interpretation of nature, which eventually led to the application of natural law to religion, society, and government.

Some effects of this intellectualism can be found in its application to religious ideas and purposes, since both religion and the concept of God were also altered and transformed. Some rationalists were skeptical of traditional religious views and instead established a new religion of reason: deism. To deists, the traditional views of God were contrary to other accepted attitudes concerning the freedom of man in an open and tolerant society. God was now simply the clock winder of the universe and, surprisingly, an impersonal force that was absent from micromanaging individual lives. The God who fashioned the Newtonian world machine, they said, would never "reveal" anything to man unless it was simple, clear, and logical. Since natural religion—that is, religion without revelation—had always been accepted as perfectly useful, revelation could add nothing to it. They, therefore, admitted that God had indeed created the universe, but after that, its immutable laws (laws that, by definition, excluded and rejected any concept of miracles) came into play, and those laws alone would be the focus of reason. It became useless and presumptuous to attempt to change these laws by prayer or by any other means. The deists accepted the moral and ethical teachings of Christ, but they refused to recognize the tenets of traditional Christianity, which they described as a mysterious and incomprehensive body of revelation. To them, the miracles associated with the divinity of Christ were in direct conflict with reason and established scientific law.

The attitudes of deism can be found most clearly among the writings of the early American founders—specifically in Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*. Paine's book is divided into two parts. The first consists of an overview of deism and its relation to reason, and the second consists of the application of reason to critiques of both the Old and the New Testaments. (Criticism of traditional religious belief is provided throughout both parts.) Paine writes in the first few pages:

> I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy. But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them. I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church. All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit. . . . Each of those churches shows certain books, which they call *revelation,* or the Word of God. Each of those churches accuses the other of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

It is difficult to overemphasize just how connected these religious attitudes of deism were to the conception of a free individual in an open society. Since the God of old refrained from micromanaging human affairs, man himself was left to his own rational devices. Divine commands handed down from revelation were rejected, and instead the moral and ethical teachings of Christ were understood and followed in a naturalistic, as opposed to supernaturalistic, context. This naturalism was connected at that time to the radical idea of self-government, as opposed to government by an absolute ruler (Durant 613–615).

> Soon after I had published the pamphlet, *Common Sense,* in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a Revolution in the System of Government, would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, . . . [entailed that] those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world: but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. (Paine 667)

But political considerations aside, Paine's criticisms of revealed religion in general (and of Christianity in particular) are the primary focus of *The Age of Reason*. In addition to Paine's claim that all revealed religions are promoted through the suspicious modes of "mystery, miracle, and prophecy" (711), his formal criticisms fall into several general categories: (1) attacks on the concept of revelation; (2) claims that Christianity either is founded on, or has adapted to, the earlier "heathen mythologies"; (3) claims about the atrocities committed in God's name in the Old Testament; and (4) claims about the irrationality of miracles and doubts about authorship claimed in both the Old and the New Testaments. It will be convenient to take each of these categories in turn.

For one, Paine draws an important distinction between *revelation* and *hearsay*:

> Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated *immediately* from God to man. . . . But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. . . . It is revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other; and consequently, they are not obliged to believe it. . . . It cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it in the same manner, for it was not a revelation made to *me,* and I have only his word for it that it was made to *him*. (667–668)

That is, hearsay can be objectively evaluated—and this is very different from the subjective nature of revelation. For hearsay, Paine will offer reasons for why this or that claim in the New Testament ought to be believed. But he also understands that for any claimed case of revelation, reason simply cannot be applied. He is also critical of the way in which such "revelations" were *arranged* into the completed forms we see today. Paine writes, "they decided by *vote* which of the books, out of the collection they had made, should be the WORD OF GOD, and which should not. . . . Had they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling themselves Christians, had believed otherwise; for the belief of the one comes from the vote of another" (675).

Second, Paine simply appeals to historical explanations:

> It is . . . not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the Son of God. . . . It was not a new thing at that time to believe a man to have been celestially begotten: the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. (669)

Third, Paine believes that both the Old and the New Testaments, with their stories of Creation, the Fall, and sacrifice by innocent proxy, are both morally atrocious and unjust. In addition to calling the claim that "God *visits the sins of the fathers upon the children*" morally unjust, Paine is critical of further examples of bloodshed in the Old Testament by claiming it to be "scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales" (668, 680).

Consider also his rejection of the assumptions concerning sacrifice through crucifixion:

> If I owe a person money and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself and pay it for me. But if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case has changed. Moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself. . . . It is then no longer justice. It is indiscriminate revenge. (Paine 685)

Finally, Paine offers two sets of criticisms. The first concerns the irrationality of miracles:

> Suppose, I were to say, that when I sat down to write this book, a hand presented itself in the air, took up the pen, and wrote every word that is herein written; would any body believe me? certainly they would not. Would they believe me a whit the more if the thing had been a

> fact? certainly they would not. Since then, a real miracle, were it to happen, would be subject to the same fate as the falsehood, the inconsistency becomes the greater, of supposing the Almighty would make use of means that would not answer the purpose for which they were intended, even if they were real. (715)

These comments actually parallel David Hume's thoughts on the subject (1748):

> When anyone tells me, that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact, which he relates, should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other; and according to the superiority, which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle (Hume).

The second set concerns skepticism about the authorship in both the Old and the New Testaments. After pointing out numerous inconsistencies in the Bible, Paine concludes:

> The books . . . ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and . . . they are impositions. The disordered state of the history in these four books, the silence of one book upon matters related in the other, and the disagreement that is to be found among them, implies that they are the productions of some unconnected individuals, many years after the things they pretend to relate. . . . In fine, that they have been manufactured as the books of the old testament have been by other persons than those whose names they bear. (796)

The Age of Reason closes with a challenge to the reader. Paine writes, "I leave the evidence . . . to be refuted, if any one can do it" (830). This challenge, of course, goes right along with Paine's attitude, for, if ever an argument is to be suggested for a belief, those aligned with reason will always reflect. But, in contrast, those who have blind faith in revealed religion will claim heresy (cf. Romans 14:23).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider Paine's proclamation that institutions of churches are "human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit." How does this statement resonate with his fellow deist Benjamin Franklin as he addresses his own religious beliefs in his autobiography?
2. How do the tenets set out in *The Age of Reason* compare with those in Paine's *Common Sense*? Does he imagine the same audience for both texts? How does his treatment of faith and organized religion compare in the two?

Bob Seltzer

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON PAINE AND HIS WORK

1. Thomas Paine's biography reveals that he was not born into a wealthy family and that he tried his hand at a variety of occupations before arriving at his true calling as a writer of revolutionary pamphlets. Read through one of his works and consider the role that class status played in helping him to formulate arguments for America to separate from England.
2. Paine fell out of favor for his statements against organized religion and in favor of deism. How are these beliefs in keeping with the political ones he espouses? Is there a sense of continuity between his desire for American independence and his belief in a God who functions as a great watchmaker?

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Mary White Rowlandson
(1637–1711)

I have been in the midst of these roaring lions and savage bears.

(*Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*)

Born in Somerset, England, to John White and Joan West, Mary White and her nine siblings immigrated to the Bay Colony in 1639. Although they first lived in Salem, in 1653 the Whites were among the earliest Puritans to settle in Lancaster, Massachusetts, which was then a frontier town (around 35 miles west of Boston). The land comprising Lancaster had been purchased 10 years prior from the Nashaways by a "Boston trader" (Blevins Faery 25). Mary must have enjoyed a relatively privileged childhood since her father was Lancaster's wealthiest original landowner (Burnham 14). Scholars attribute her uncommon degree of literacy, which afforded her the necessary skills to pen her own remarkable narrative of captivity and deliverance, to her class status and its access to education.

Around 1656, Mary White married Joseph Rowlandson, a prominent Puritan minister of Lancaster. Joseph had been the only graduate in his class at Harvard in 1652; he began his ministry in Lancaster two years later, in 1654 (Blevins Faery 26). Their first child, a daughter named Mary, was born in 1658, but died at the age of three. The Rowlandsons had three other children: Joseph (1662), another Mary (1665), and Sarah (1669).

Because of its remoteness, Lancaster was a likely target for attacks. In June 1675 King Philip's War broke out. The cause was the sudden death of Metacom's older brother, who Metacom suspected was poisoned by English settlers, and a number of other grievances, chief among them the continual encroachment of English settlers into Wampanoag territory. Further, the death of a "praying Indian" (Christianized Indian) named *John Sassamon* sparked retaliatory actions on both sides: The English executed three Wampanoag, and Metacom attacked the village of Swansea. As sachem of the Wampanoag, Metacom rallied members of his own tribe, as well as soliciting the aid of the Nipmuc and Narragansett to form an alliance against the English. Because his sister-in-law, Weetamoo, was squaw sachem of the Narragansett, it was easy to unify these two tribes against a common enemy. Rumors of a potential attack on Lancaster spurred Joseph Rowlandson to travel to Boston to seek additional support. During his absence, Mary Rowlandson and the couple's three children were taken captive.

On February 10, 1676, the town of Lancaster was attacked. Their garrison house, which was meant to be a fortress against the "vast and howling wilderness," housed Rowlandson's immediate family, plus two of Mary's sisters and their families. Of the 37 people living in the Rowlandson home, 24 were taken captive. Rowlandson and her youngest, Sarah, were separated from her elder children, Joseph and Mary. Although Sarah died of wounds she received while in captivity, Rowlandson was rescued on May 2, 1676. A few weeks later, son and daughter were reunited with their family. Historians conjecture

that her captivity was due to the fact that her husband was a prominent figure in the community, with the result that she would fetch a high ransom. Indeed, her ransom was £20. John Hoar of Concord secured Mary's release on May 2; her total time in captivity was 82 days.

After her return, Rowlandson's family moved to Boston and eventually settled in the town of Wethersfield in Connecticut. In 1678, just six years after her captivity, her husband, Joseph, died suddenly. The following year, Rowlandson married Captain Samuel Talcott, a leader in the local community, who was also named as one of the those appointed to administer her late husband's estate (Greene 28). Talcott was born into an armigerous family, meaning that they were of a class entitled to bear arms, and was a graduate of Harvard. Nevertheless, as his father and stepfather were tradesmen by profession, it is clear that Talcott gained social status when marrying Rowlandson. Samuel Talcott was a member of the War Council during King Philip's War (June 1675–1678). His first wife, Hannah Holyoke, died in February of either 1677 or 1678 and left behind six sons and two daughters (Greene 29).

Rowlandson's *Narrative* of her captivity was published in 1682, with an introduction by the Reverend Increase Mather, an influential family friend.

Talcott died in 1691, and his will bequeaths to his "dear and Loveing wife Mary, the sum of ten pounds per annum; & the use of one of the lower room in my dwelling house, which she shall choose, with convenient cellaring & use of an oven or ovens in the same, as she shall have need, with sutable land for a garden, as she shall desire, & the keeping of one cow, which she shall choose out of my cows to be at her owne dispose" (reported in Greene 29).

Mary's son, Joseph, was the center of a sensational case in the colonial period involving the disappearance of his brother-in-law, Nathaniel Wilson. Joseph's wife, Hannah Wilson, was part of an upper-class family from Boston. Nathaniel made an even better match. He wed Susannah Jones, whose father, William Jones, was the deputy-governor of Connecticut, and whose grandfather, Theophilus Eaton, was the governor of New Haven Colony (Greene 31). Two years into their marriage, however, Nathaniel disappeared, and it was rumored that he had died. Just when the courts were willing to consider evidence of his death, however, news arrived that he had appeared in court in 1707, declaring that Joseph Rowlandson, along with another man named, David Jesse, had gotten Nathaniel drunk, put him on a boat sailing for Virginia, and sold him as a servant (Greene 32). Joseph was arrested. Scholars have used court records of the trial to determine both the birth and the death of Mary Rowlandson, as she served as a guarantor that her son would appear in court.

On January 5, 1711, at the age of 73, Mary White Rowlandson Talcott died. Her legacy continues, as her captivity narrative has remained in print since its first edition in 1682. Rowlandson's narrative was widely read and recommended by some of the most prominent and learned men of New England: Samuel Sewall, Increase Mather, COTTON MATHER, and Thomas Prince (Derounian-Stodola 39). Increase Mather was already personally acquainted with the circumstances of Rowlandson's captivity since her first husband had sought out the minister's assistance in securing the release of his wife (Derounian 241).

The Soveraignty and Goodness of GOD, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (1682)

As Kathryn Derounian-Stodola notes, Rowlandson's narrative went through four editions in 1682, and "its estimated minimum sales of over 1,000 copies made it one of the earliest American bestsellers" (36–37). Rowlandson's narrative of her three-month captivity is sandwiched between an introduction, signed *per amicum* but most likely written by Increase Mather, and an appendix containing her first husband, Joseph Rowlandson's, final sermon, delivered on November 21, 1673, in

Wethersfield, Connecticut, just three days prior to his death. It was customary for a parish to publish the final sermon of their minister upon his passing. John Woodbridge, Jr., who succeeded Joseph Rowlandson in his position in Wethersfield, is thought to be responsible for collecting Rowlandson's final sermon and for sending it, along with Mary's captivity narrative, to the printer in Boston. (The Woodbridge family, as noted in the entry on ANNE BRADSTREET, was also instrumental in the publication of her first book of poetry.)

Mather opens the "Preface to the Reader" with a recitation of the military events preceding Rowlandson's capture. After English victories over the Narragansett, Wampanoag, and Nipmuc, the War Council agreed not to pursue the "Heathen[s]"; this decision, Mather opines, "soon proved dismal." Removed from their territory and with dwindling supplies, the Narragansett "fell with a mighty force and fury upon Lancaster." What follows for Mather "is a Narrative of the wonderfully awful, wise, holy, powerful, and gracious providence of God." He likens Rowlandson's trials to those depicted in the Bible for Joseph, David, and Daniel. In Genesis, God saves Joseph from prison; in Samuel 1, David is saved from Goliath; and in Daniel, he is saved from a den of lions. Thus, Rowlandson's rescue fits as another story in the book of divine providence from which Puritans can read of "God's dealing with her." Because the Puritans took a Platonic notion of the world where all observable events were interpreted as signs of God's judgment, Increase Mather naturally views Mary Rowlandson's captivity as such an event.

Mather's framing of Rowlandson's tale as an exemplary narrative laden with religious and communal portent deserves further comment. First, Mather's stamp of approval helps to dissipate aspersions on the unorthodox situation her narrative creates by thrusting a female member of the Puritan community into the public eye. In Puritan culture, women were to be modest; that Rowlandson penned her own narrative, and that her narrative is about herself, did, undoubtedly, place her outside the bounds of acceptable female conduct. Mather's endorsement of her as author and as the subject of her narrative works assiduously to squelch any thoughts of improper female behavior on Rowlandson's part. Second, Mather characterizes Rowlandson's narrative less an autobiography and more a form of testimony where a faithful member of the community narrates events that illuminate divine Providence. In this manner, Rowlandson's captivity is less about her and more about the Puritan community in general; less about the afflictions suffered by one person, and more a "dispensation of publick note and of Universal concernment."

Finally, Mather casts the story of Rowlandson's capture and release as a moral tale whose message warrants multiple readings by members of the faithful community of Puritans. He closes his preface in the following manner: "Reader, if thou gettest no good by such Declaration as this, the fault must needs be thine own. Read, therefore, peruse, ponder, and from hence lay up something from the experience of another, against thine own turn comes: that so thou also through patience and consolation of the Scripture mayest have hope."

Rowlandson's narrative is structured by "removes," or the geographical locations where she and her captors struck camp temporarily before continuing their journey. There are 20 removes in total, and scholars who have tracked her descriptions of various locations—as well as the comings and goings of certain members of the Narragansett tribe—have estimated that she traveled around 150 miles in the span of 83 days (Leach 353).

In her opening scene of the attack on her house and on the town of Lancaster in general, Rowlandson includes gruesome details of human carnage: people knocked on the head, "stript naked" with their bowels split open; witnessing firsthand the deaths of her brother-in-law, John Divoll, and her eldest sister; a bullet that passes through her side and mortally wounds her daughter, Sarah, whom she is holding in her arms; and her house burning to the ground. She characterizes her attackers as "merciless Heathen" "hell-hounds" and "ravenous Beasts." This depiction of American Indians, however, will shift during her captivity as Rowlandson becomes acquainted with people who treat her nicely and extend unexpected courtesies to her.

Rowlandson's shifting depiction of American Indians has been a subject of much discussion and debate among scholars. Although she shows a marked dislike for neophytes (Christianized Indians), whom she refers to as "praying Indians," she appears to develop a friendship with Metacom, King Philip. Two "Praying Indians," Tom and Peter, who were converted members of the Nipmuc, mediated between the English and the Narragansett for Rowlandson's release. Despite their crucial role in liberating her, Rowlandson paints all "praying Indians" with the same brush, remarking on one person in particular, who liked to "wear a string about his neck, strung with Christian Fingers." And yet, Rowlandson's narrative contains numerous examples of large and small acts of kindness. There are people who give her the last of their food and go without so that she can eat. There are people who invite her to live in their wigwam when she fights with her mistress. Rowlandson details how "the squaw laid a mat under me, and a good rug over me; the first time I had any such kindness shewed me."

Among some of the more significant courtesies extended to her in captivity are her reunions with her son, Joseph, and her surviving daughter, Mary, and her possession of a Bible. Soon after the death of Sarah, Joseph's mistress takes him to see his mother while his master leaves for an assault on the village of Medfield. Rather than recognize the kindness of Joseph's mistress in arranging a meeting between her son and her, however, Rowlandson attributes this act to God. Similarly, she writes, "I cannot but take notice of the wonderful mercy of God to me in those afflictions, in sending me a Bible. One of the Indians that came from Medfield fight and had brought some plunder; came to me, and asked me, if I would have a Bible." Although she is a captive and thus a pawn among the Wampanoag, Narragansett, and English, Rowlandson retains much of the class status into which she was born. The exceptionality of her status among the Puritans continues even while she is a captive. Rowlandson developed a friendship with Metacom, King Philip, himself. Her master and mistress during her captivity were Quinnapin, the Narragansett sachem, and Weetamoo, the Wampanoag squaw sachem. Weetamoo was the widow of Metacom's deceased brother, Wamsutta. It is from King Philip's own mouth that Rowlandson learns of her impending release.

Unlike slaves or indentured servants in Puritan culture, Rowlandson as captive of the Narragansett receives payment for her labor. When she makes shirts, hats, stockings, aprons, and socks for her master, mistress, and other tribesmen, she receives food and money as compensation. She attempts to hand over her payment to her master, "but he bade me keep it: and with it I bought a piece of Horseflesh." As an illustration of how common a practice it was for Rowlandson to receive compensation for her labors, she tells in the ninth remove of "a sorry Indian, who spake to me to make him a shirt, when I had done it, he would pay me nothing." Rowlandson hounds him until he agrees to give her a knife if she makes another shirt for his papoose. These details of exchange are important, as they indicate the social position Rowlandson held while captive. Had she been viewed as a slave or a mere piece of property, it is doubtful that she would continue to receive food and other forms of payment for her services.

Another subject commonly discussed by scholars as a sign of Rowlandson's gradual acculturation into Native society is her changing palate for indigenous foods. At first, she writes, "I hardly ate any thing . . . 'twas very hard to get down their filthy trash." But by her third week in captivity, she begins to find a Native diet "pleasant and savoury." Contemporary readers might blanch at her professed taste for horse liver, bear, a fawn taken from the womb of a slain deer, boiled horse hoof, and horse entrails. Indeed, she steals the horse hoof from a captive English child who is having difficulty chewing it.

Rather than depict Rowlandson's life after her return, the narrative concludes with a list of five passages of providence that are meant to speak more generally to the contentious relationship between the American Indians and the English settlers, and God's favor for the one group over the other. The first "remarkable passage of providence" is a repetition of Mather's preface in which he writes that the

Puritans' decision not to pursue the Wampanoag directly resulted in the attack on Lancaster and the capture of Rowlandson and her children. By the second passage, which indirectly chastises the slowness of the English army in pursuit of the Naragansett, readers recognize that instead of presenting examples of how God favored the Puritans, Rowlandson is expressing her anger at the considerable amount of time it took for her recovery, and at what appears to be the general incompetence of the English forces. The Indians are able to find sustenance while the English starve; the Indians (including women with papooses and the elderly) are able to ford a river while the English cannot. Scholars have described these passages in Rowlandson's narrative as moments when the Puritan belief in divine providence seems to break down, to be turned into an indirect critique against the considerable delay of her rescue.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Consider Rowlandson's contradictory portrayal of American Indians. Examine the language Increase Mather uses in his preface to describe American Indians in general and compare it to the particular stories contained in Rowlandson's narrative. What might account for these differences? How might Rowlandson and Mather differ in their treatment of Indians?
2. What role does Rowlandson's faith play in her narrative? What about "Praying Indians"? Contrast Rowlandson's view of converted American Indians to SAMSON OCCOM's autobiographical portrayal of himself as a minister.
3. How significant is the scene in which she receives a Bible? How prevalent are biblical passages and comparisons in her narrative? What of the passages and events that are without biblical or religious references?

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON ROWLANDSON AND HER WORK

1. Mary Rowlandson's tale is pivotal to our understandings of early American literature not only because she is one of the earliest female authors to have her work published, but also because she is a female captive in a genre perhaps made most notable by JOHN SMITH and his tale of captivity by Powhatan. How does Rowlandson account for herself as a woman and as a published author? How do her portrayals of herself provide contemporary readers with insight into 17th-century American culture?
2. For 17th-century readers, Rowlandson's tale of captivity, suffering, and deliverance was intended to be a moral tale. Comparing Rowlandson's tale to more contemporary captivity stories such as those of Pattie Hearst, Elizabeth Smart, and Jessica Lynch, consider the extent to which the genre is steeped in morality. Does the moral tale shift when the captive is male? If so, how or why? If not, why not?

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Susanna Haswell Rowson
(1762–1824)

A history which would tend to prove that retribution treads upon the heels of vice, and that, though not always apparent, yet even in the midst of splendor and prosperity, conscience stings the guilty.

(*The Trials of the Human Heart*)

Born on February 5, 1762, Susanna Haswell was the daughter of Susanna Musgrave Haswell and the British naval officer William Haswell. The two had married at the parish church of St. Thomas a Becket in Portsmouth, England, on March 3, 1761. Although Susanna Musgrave Haswell became ill only a few months after marriage, she was able to give birth to her only child. She died 10 days after childbirth, and parish records indicate that William buried his wife on February 5, 1762, and baptized his daughter a mere 10 days later. After his wife's death, William contracted with a nurse to look after Susanna as he departed for Massachusetts to work as a customs collector for the Royal Navy. Three years later, in 1765, William married his second wife, Rachel Woodward, in the port town of Hull, Massachusetts, at the entrance of Boston Harbor. In 1766, William returned to Portsmouth to retrieve five-year-old Susanna and her nurse. The three returned to Hull to join Haswell's new wife. In her autobiographical work *Rebecca,* Haswell describes her stepmother in the fictionalized figure of Mrs. Littleton. This less than matronly character professed "sentiments that are narrow and illiberal" as well as a "a kind of worldly knowledge which rendered her suspicious of the integrity of every human being" (9, reported in Parker 4). Although Rachel Haswell bore two sons, Robert and William, Jr., Susanna Haswell makes no mention of young or teenage boys in her fiction, so it is difficult to determine through her writing how she might have felt toward them.

What does appear quite prominently in Haswell's fiction, however, is an event that held substantial meaning for her and her family—the American Revolution. With the outbreak of the war, there were growing pressures for the Haswells to declare their allegiances. As the biographer Patricia Parker argues, this was no easy matter for William Haswell. He and his daughter were born in England, and he held a position with the Royal Navy; his second wife was American, as were his two young sons. Further, the family owned property in Massachusetts and had extended family residing in neighboring towns. In the hope of a compromise, William declared himself a neutral figure, neither a Whig nor a Tory. Given their geographical proximity to Boston Harbor, the Haswells witnessed many of the early signs of impending war, such as the destruction of a British schooner off the coast of Hog Island (Parker 6). Even more pressing and dramatic a scene played itself out within their very home as the Haswells tried unsuccessfully to tend to a wounded British soldier, who died within hours of his arrival. Susanna assisted her father in burying the soldier in their backyard.

Soon after William Haswell requested to return to England, the family was taken prisoner. They were held from October 28, 1775, to December 5, 1777, in a small home in the town of Hingham.

They were then moved by order of the Massachusetts General Court farther inland to Abington. Rachel's health, which had been failing during their imprisonment in Hingham, took a turn for the worse during the winter spent in Abington. Susanna's father also took ill and it was up to the eldest child, then 15, to gather firewood and keep the family warm during the brutal winter. In May 1778, William successfully petitioned the legislature for permission to leave for Nova Scotia in the hope of being exchanged with other prisoners. The Haswells were traded with the American captain of the *Rattlesnake* and recuperated in Hull-upon-Humber before moving to London.

Although biographers are without specific details of Susanna's life while her family lived in London, most believe that she became a governess (Parker 10; Smiley v). Her father's physical and psychological deterioration during their time of imprisonment rendered him unfit to continue his position with the Royal Navy. With the birth of a third son soon after the family settled in London, it became readily apparent that Susanna, then 16, would need to seek employment, if not to support the family, then at least to lessen her burden on them. In February 1786, William Haswell, along with other immigrants who had suffered similar fates in America, was granted compensation for his financial losses. He also was provided with a pension for his navy service, and this income enabled him to support his family once again.

In that same year, 1786, Susanna met and married William Rowson, a hardware merchant who also occasionally played trumpet, sang, and acted on stage. Parker seems to insinuate, through a reading of some of Rowson's writings, that her father forced the marriage and that it was loveless from the very beginning. Whatever the nature of their union, it is quite likely that her own work as a lyricist for Vauxhall may have been the occasion for their original meeting (Parker 10). Just as she had provided financially for her family before marriage, so she continued to provide for herself and her husband for the duration of their less-than-perfect union. Rowson never had any children with her husband, but she did raise his illegitimate son. Her career in the theater seems to have been the family's main source of income, and, given the mobile status of the theater, they must have moved quite often in accordance with her employment.

A good indication of Rowson's industrious nature can be seen in the list of her contemporaneous accomplishments. Because many of the smaller troupes of actors did not have casts large enough for all of the roles demanded in any given play, and because they typically staged new plays every night or every other night, Susanna was required to learn lines for up to 20 parts at a time (Parker 12). In 1786, the same year that she married, she published her first novel, *Victoria*. She quickly followed with two additional books, *The Inquisitor* (which was a collection of tales) and *Poems of Various Subjects*. Her knowledge of the theater was reproduced in a poem entitled *A Trip to Parnassus; or, the Judgment of Apollo on Dramatic Authors and Performers*. The following year, 1789, she anonymously published *The Test of Honour*. In 1791, she wrote *Mentoria* and *Charlotte*; the latter made her famous. It became a best seller in America. All of these publications occurred at a time when she was working primarily as an actress.

Although *Charlotte* was a success, Rowson did not reap the benefit of her pen. Because publishers did not pay women authors in accordance with the numbers of copies of their books sold, Rowson did not gain the large financial reward best sellers provide for contemporary authors. Joined by her sister-in-law, Charlotte, Susanna and her husband left for Edinburgh. In 1793, having failed to make a success on the English stage, the three eagerly signed on with Thomas Wignell and sailed on the *George Barcley* for Philadelphia. The outbreak of yellow fever in Philadelphia, which the author CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN suffered from and wrote about in his novel *Arthur Mervyn,* delayed the opening of Wignell's New Theater. After appearing in Hannah Cowley's *Who's the Dupe?,* which opened in Annapolis, Susanna embarked on a grueling career in American theater, beginning in January 1794. Her biographer Parker calculates that Rowson played 35 roles

in the first four-month season of the New Theater and 22 roles in the second (15). Wignell's partner at the New Theater, Alexander Reinagle, was also a musician and a collaborator with Rowson, who composed lyrics to his songs. She also began writing her first American plays: *Slaves in Algiers* (1794) and *The Volunteers* (1795). Despite her successful work as a lyricist and supporting actress for the New Theater, the Rowsons left Philadelphia for Boston in September 1796. William had been crossed off the list of actors and was quickly replaced when he proved too inept to work as a prompter.

When they arrived in Boston, Susanna was reunited with her two half brothers. Through their correspondence, Susanna learned that both brothers had pursued careers at sea. She also gained information about and employment from the Boston Federal Street Theatre, managed by John Williamson. Susanna continued writing songs, acting, and producing. Her next dramatic production was called *Americans in England*. The publication of her next book, *Reuben and Rachel,* would determine her next career move as the head of a boarding school.

The financial and political difficulties of the Federal Street Theater caused the manager, John Williamson, to leave for North Carolina, and Rowson, at the age of 35, to leave the stage and embark on a new career. In November 1797, she opened Mrs. Rowson's Young Ladies' Academy on the same street as the Theater, Federal Street. The school would have several locations during her 25 years as headmistress. In 1800, she moved the academy to Medford, a town northwest of Boston that provided a community of moneyed residents whose daughters became pupils at Rowson's school. Among her students were the daughters of Governor Claiborne of South Carolina and the daughters of New England's finest families (Parker 20, 21). Before returning to Boston, Rowson located her academy for four years (1803–07) in Newton, where she solicited the aid of her sister-in-law, Mary Cordis Haswell. When Mary learned that her husband, Susanna's brother Robert, had been lost at sea, she and her two baby girls took up permanent residence with Susanna. During that time, she published *An Abridgment of Universal Geography,* a textbook that perhaps reflected her own family's engagement with the sea. While living at what would be her final residence, the academy's address on Hollis Street in Boston, Rowson wrote and published most of her textbooks: *A Present for Young Ladies* (1811), *Exercises in History, Chronology, and Biography* (1822), and *Biblical Dialogues* (1822).

Because of financial problems, and the alcoholism of her husband, Rowson's final years were not happy ones. Her husband accrued a massive debt and took out a mortgage on their Hollis Street home (the site of her academy and her residence). Parker reports that he was prone to humiliate her publicly, in front of her pupils and colleagues (23). Her worry over money may have been the reason why, despite a lingering illness, she continued to teach at the academy and publish works of fiction and instruction. She died on March 2, 1824, and was buried in the vault of her close friend, Gotlieb Graupner, in St. Matthew's Church in Boston. A mere five months after her death, William Rowson married a woman from Pennsylvania named Hannah Smith.

The Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist Jane Smiley, in her introduction to the 2004 reprinting of *Charlotte Temple,* situates Rowson's most influential work within an 18th-century literary convention that contemporary critics dismissively cast as "melodramas of beset manhood" (xiii). Smiley notes how the subject of female vulnerability and exploitation was taken up by most of England's respected and renowned novelists, including Laurence Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy,* and Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe*. These authors tackled subjects like rape, incest, illegitimacy, false marriage, seduction, and child abandonment; Rowson's "tale of truth," by focusing on the ruin of its titular character, was very much in keeping with the literary trend of the time.

Charlotte Temple: A Tale of Truth (1791)

First published in England in 1791 and later in America in 1794, *Charlotte* (subsequently entitled

Charlotte Temple) became a best seller and overshadowed the publication of the rest of Rowson's works. Because of the novel's subtitle, *A Tale of Truth,* readers from the 18th century to the present have been searching for the historical identity of its main characters: Charlotte Temple and John Montraville. Rowson's own reference to her text by its subtitle and not by its genre, a novel, may have helped to foster this interpretation of the work as based on the real-life account of a young woman's seduction and betrayal.

Charlotte Temple begins with a brief encounter between the novel's two main characters and future lovers: Charlotte Temple and John Montraville. Although no words are exchanged between the two, a future meeting seems inevitable as Montraville presses a love letter for Charlotte into the hands of her corrupted and corrupting French teacher, Mademoiselle La Rue. Interestingly, Montraville also makes a present of five guineas to Charlotte's companion, "who promised she would endeavour to bring her young charge into the field again the next evening" (39). Thus, at the close of the first chapter, Rowson creates a correlation between money and corruption.

This connection will carry into the rest of the novel and appears immediately in the following chapter, which reviews the past history of Charlotte's mother and her family. When Lucy, Charlotte's mother, was younger, she was sought out as payment or compensation for the debt her father incurred with his son's dear friend, Mr. Lewis. When Mr. Lewis professes his love for her, Lucy, as a dutiful daughter, immediately reports the news to her parents and "cheerfully submit[s] [herself] to [their] direction" (45). Lucy's father, Mr. Eldridge, soon discovers that Lewis does not have honorable intentions toward Lucy but intends to abuse her as recompense for the money lent to her father. In rapid succession, Lewis has the father removed to debtor's prison; mortally wounds the son, his supposed friend; and indirectly causes the mother's death by sending her into a spiral of despair and mourning over her lost son. Reading this chain of events backward, the reader can easily identify Mr. Lewis's connection between money and corruption as the source of the family's demise.

Unlike the chaste and pure Lucy, whose virtue is rewarded by a loving and respectful marriage to Temple, Temple's own sisters and his stepmother readily sacrifice their honor on the altar of class position. Rowson describes the unseemly marriages of Temple's sisters in the following manner: "[They] legally prostituted to old, decrepit men, whose titles gave them consequence in the eyes of the world, and whose affluence rendered them splendidly miserable" (40). Rowson describes the sisters as having forfeited happiness and love for the empty and unfulfilling allure of money and status. Temple himself will not prove immune to a marriage prospect that would increase his pocket but empty his heart. In the figure of Miss Weatherby, Temple encounters the moral and social equivalent of "the old decrepit men" who married his sisters. Although blessed with beauty and fortune, Miss Weatherby has a deficient moral character that is outlined by Rowson with the following judgment: "her form lovely as nature could make it, but her mind uncultivated, her heart unfeeling, her passions impetuous, and her brain almost turned with flattery, dissipation, and pleasure" (53). It is worth noting that Miss Weatherby's abundant beauty and wealth seem to be the corrupting agents behind her insensible heart. Thus, it seems in keeping with her nature that she would prevail upon her father to make an alliance with Mr. Temple and would be incapable of "imagining he could refuse a girl of her beauty and fortune" (53). Indeed, Miss Weatherby seems to be usurping the traditionally masculine role of wooer and pursuer on the basis of her wealth.

Mr. Temple learns of her desire to marry him from his own father, the earl, who encourages his son to unite with Miss Weatherby and marry for money and quit his association with Lucy Eldridge, whom he wishes to marry for love (52). To ensure that his son will make the correct choice in a future bride, the earl suggests that his son's newfound wealth would enable him to "be more liberally a friend of Lucy Eldridge" (52). The language is pur-

posefully vague and thus could refer to Mr. Temple's position as a patron of Lucy's budding art career or to her position as his paramour. Ever mindful that "the most affluent fortune could bring no increase of happiness," Mr. Temple rightly chooses to marry Lucy (54). To prevent losing Miss Weatherby's fortune entirely, given his son's refusal to wed her, the earl courts her and proposes, thus exposing how valuing money over love can severely corrupt the most intimate of family relations. The earl "expatiated on the many benefits arising from an elevated title, painted in glowing colours the surprise and vexation of [his son] Temple when he should see her figuring as a countess and his [stepmother]" (54–55). By casting Temple's would-be bride as his stepmother, Rowson implores readers to recognize the corrupting power of money, which motivates the earl's proposal, and pride, which fuels Miss Weatherby's desire to accept the proposal to avenge her bruised ego.

In contrast to this union of revenge and greed, Rowson paints the idyllic picture of connubial bliss in the figures of Charlotte's parents. As models for their daughter's future marriage and sympathetic mourners to her tragic fall, the Temples present readers with a moral gauge by which to assess all other unions, as well as other characters' responses to Charlotte's fallen state.

One of the moral tenets forwarded in this novel is charity. Charlotte's father first distinguishes himself as morally sound by Rowson's description of his capacity to care for others: "He had a heart open to every generous feeling of humanity, and a hand ready to dispense to those who wanted part of the blessings he enjoyed himself" (40). His reputation for benevolence is what sends him to the aid of his future father-in-law and to his first glimpse of and meeting with his future wife. Because he eschews living above his means or casting his heart aside for the sake of his bank account, he is justly rewarded with a rich and fulfilling marriage. And, as a character sympathetic to the needs of others, he is the most fitting person to reconcile Charlotte to the readers and to her family after the birth of her illegitimate child.

Charitable feelings are drawn out along class lines, however. Although Mr. Temple does not marry Miss Weatherby and thus increase his standing, his position as the son of an earl clearly places him in the realm of British aristocracy. Similarly, Mrs. Beauchamp, who kindly befriends Charlotte and alleviates some of her despair and solitude while she lives outside New York, is the "universally beloved and admired" daughter of an officer of "large unencumbered fortune and elevated rank" (94, 95).

As further proof that charity only resides in those enjoying wealth and rank, Rowson depicts her antagonists, Mademoiselle La Rue and Montraville, as morally corrupt by way of their schemes to marry into money. While at sea and on their way to New York, La Rue, who initiated the chain of events leading to Charlotte's ruin by accepting Montraville's five guineas, endeavors to increase her own financial standing by pursuing Colonel Crayton. "La Rue easily saw his character; her sole aim was to awaken a passion in his bosom that might turn out to her advantage" (95). Sure enough, once they disembark, Crayton announces their engagement and invites the gentlemen who were fellow passengers to witness their marriage. When she has successfully entered society as Mrs. Crayton, she is envied and copied by other women for her fashion sense.

But even at this time of social triumph, when readers would imagine that La Rue has fulfilled her class-climbing desires, she turns a poor, destitute, and supplicating Charlotte out of her home and into the bitter cold. Rowson offers La Rue's motivation for "remain[ing] inflexible" before the "kneeling figure of Charlotte": "She could not think of having her reputation endangered by encouraging a woman of that kind in her house, besides she did not know what trouble and expense she might bring upon her husband by giving shelter to a woman in her situation" (150). Both excuses offered to explain why Mrs. Crayton (formerly La Rue) refused charity to Charlotte refer to the idea of cost, either the figurative loss of social position or the literal loss of domestic income. Thus, it is

only fitting that one of La Rue's servants, a member of the lower class and a character who operates outside the market economy, extends a charitable hand to the fallen Charlotte.

Similarly to La Rue, who consistently abandons Charlotte in pursuit of class-climbing opportunities, Charlotte's seducer, John Montraville, absolves himself of his responsibility to her and their unborn child so that he may woo and win the hand of a wealthy young woman, Julia Fairchild. Montraville's position in the army places him in an ambiguous social standing as clothing was generally a marker for class status and the uniform of an officer could easily elevate a person with no social history or family roots. Rowson expressly warns her young female readers not to be duped by the flattering detailed embellishments of army uniforms.

Clara M. Kirk and Rudolf Kirk, editors of the 1964 Modern Reader edition of *Charlotte Temple,* subscribe fully to the belief that Rowson modeled her novel on the real-life tragedy that befell Charlotte Stanley, the daughter of an English clergyman and the disinherited son of the earl of Derby, and John Montrésor, an officer of the British army (15–16). Kirk and Kirk insist that "Mrs. Rowson heard the story more than a dozen years after Charlotte's death, when the British Army had returned to England" (16). Because they "were actual people of such distinction . . . their identities were not revealed" (16). Moreover, the Kirks identify Montrésor as Susanna's cousin, noting that her younger half brother is his namesake (16). As additional proof that the character of John Montraville had its basis in reality, the Kirks offer a quotation from Rowson's 1795 autobiographical text, *The Trials of the Human Heart,* published the same year as the American edition of *Charlotte Temple.* Rowson avers, "I was myself personally acquainted with Montraville and from the most authentic sources could now trace his history from the period of his marriage to within a very few late years of his death—a history which would tend to prove that retribution treads upon the heels of vice, and that, though not always apparent, yet even in the midst of splendor and prosperity, conscience stings the guilty" (reported in Kirk and Kirk in Rowson 18).

The biographer Patricia Parker supports the Kirks' assumption that the novel was based on real events by pointing out that Rowson had never before insisted upon the truthfulness of her fiction (50). Further, she delineates the exact nature of the family connection between Montrésor and Rowson: "Lt. John Montrésor was the son of Susanna Rowson's father's sister, Mary Haswell, who married John Gabriel Montrésor" (Parker 51). Absent from her account of the family tie, however, is any mention or support for Kirk and Kirk's claim that Montrésor was indeed Montraville or that he had participated in an illicit affair. Parker also fails to support the Kirks' claim, and the popular belief, that Charlotte Stanley served as the historical model for Rowson's tragic heroine. Charlotte Stanley, Parker points out, was the daughter of the 11th earl of Derby, who eloped with John Burgoyne (51). Father and daughter later reconciled, as indicated by her substantial inheritance upon his death (51). Whether the novel derives from reality or not, it has certainly retained its standing in the United States, where it appeared as the first best seller, to be followed by Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Blythe Forcey notes Rowson's deliberate breaking of the traditional epistolary form in her telling of seduction and betrayal. Unlike HANNAH FOSTER WEBSTER in *The Coquette* or the second half of *The Boarding School,* both of which contain letters, Rowson departs from this conventional form of narration through epistles made popular by Richardson's *Pamela.* Forcey argues that the tumultuous nature of post-1776 America made this narrative shift a necessity as one could no longer rely on a homogeneous reading public conversant in the same idiom and literature in the same culture (226). Indeed, Forcey goes so far as to see *Charlotte Temple* as "a parable of this very struggle, as it is a tale of crossing that tears Charlotte Temple from her 'mother country' and brings her to a new world where homelessness and foreignness define the conditions of her life" (227).

To combat against the 18th-century readers' sense of dislocation and homelessness, following in the wake of the Revolutionary War and its heterogeneity in terms of nationalities, idioms, and cultures, Forcey believes that Rowson adopts a "motherly character [for her] narrative voice" (228). Not only does a maternal narrator soothe the frightening new political and cultural landscape, but it also mitigates against the potential for misreadings. In epistolary writing, the reader is forced to take a more active role rather than rely on the guidance or judgment of an outside narrative voice. "Writers of epistolary novels trust that they know their readers and that their readers know them; for the form to work properly, they must correspond." Forcey continues, "Knowing that they were writing in a time of rapid transition . . . they could no longer trust readers to interpret on their own" (229).

Not only does Rowson provide a "warm, motherly presence" with her narrator, who frequently employs direct authorial address to her imagined readers (young women and their mothers), she also does away with the content of the letters that her characters write to each other, with the exception of the morally sound notes, such as one Charlotte's mother sends to her requesting her presence at home to celebrate her 16th birthday. As Forcely observes, "These more forceful interventions usually occur when a potentially damaging letter has been delivered. Rowson replaces the text of the letter with an interpretive passage that neutralizes its potentially negative effect" (231). In other words, rather than subject the reader to the same trap of seduction ensnaring Charlotte (such as Montraville's first letter to Charlotte), Rowson summarizes the letter's content and thus shields her readers. Rowson writes rather matter-of-factly, "Any reader who has the least knowledge of the world can easily imagine the letter was made up of encomiums on her beauty and vows of everlasting love and constancy" (Rowson 58). Forcely believes "Rowson thus re-aligns the reader's potential identification with Charlotte through a distancing ironic stance—reducing a passionate letter . . . to an almost ironic cliché" (232). "She faints into a chaise in Chichester; she crawls into the bed where her seducer, the dashing Lieutenant Montraville, already sleeps; and she takes an afternoon nap that allows his even less scrupulous 'brother officer' in the British army, Belcour, to position himself beside her in time for her beloved to discover them together." "Given Charlotte's propensity for putting her feet up, it is no wonder that critics have taken the book bearing her name as an exemplar of the novel of seduction, a genre wherein the reader 'is asked to deplore the very acts which provide his enjoyment'" (Rust 99).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* with Foster's *The Coquette*. What difference does form make? Consider how the epistolary form of Foster's novel contrasts with the narrative form of Rowson's.
2. Rowson believed in retribution for her characters. Compare the fates of Montraville and LaRue, the two figures central to Charlotte's seduction and fall. What conclusions might you draw from their final outcomes that reflect their guilt in Charlotte's ruin?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON ROWSON AND HER WORK

1. Rowson lived during the volatile period of the American Revolution and its uncertainties regarding allegiances and codes of belief. How might you read politics into the seduction novel? Does Rowson promote American values or beliefs?
2. Rowson's novel delves into the history of tragic Charlotte's parents and their love affair ending in marriage. Are they culpable for the seduction and fall of their daughter? Is Montraville or LaRue more guilty of causing Charlotte's demise?

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Catharine Maria Sedgwick
(1789–1867)

Talent and worth are the only eternal grounds of distinction.

(*Home*)

Catharine Maria Sedgwick was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, on December 28, 1789. She was the third of six children born to Theodore Sedgwick and Pamela Dwight Sedgwick, who descended from a prominent family of the Connecticut River valley. Theodore gained national prominence as a member of the Senate and the House of Representatives, where he distinguished himself by serving as Speaker. Catharine wrote of her father's political career, "The Federal Party loved their country and were devoted to it as virtuous parents are to their children." Such a glowing sentiment about her own father would surely influence her sense of the connection between politics and the family, which would appear most prominently in her historical novels, *Hope Leslie* and *The Linwoods.* Her relationship to her mother, who critics conjecture suffered from mental illness, which Catharine referred to as "calamitous sickness," was markedly different. The mother's bouts with deep depression would prove hereditary, as Catharine herself would look to her own writing as a means of alleviating her depressive moods. As the renowned critic of American women's writing Nina Baym describes her, Catharine Maria Sedgwick distinguished herself as an early 19th-century author by writing for emotional rather than financial reasons. Through writing, Baym claims, Sedgwick could "alleviate boredom and severe depressions" (54). Her final novel, *Married or Single?,* was written to comfort her after the death of her surviving brother.

From her father and her brothers, Catharine "imbibed a kindred taste" for "their daily habits and pursuits and pleasures [which] were intellectual." Her father's Federalism initially influenced Catharine, who shared her father's views that the masses were not to be trusted with the nation's future, but rather the landed elite should exercise sway over the newly formed republic (Kelley xv). In "A Reminiscence of Federalism," Sedgwick works out her own former prejudices against the Democrats. Her father also instilled a love of reading in her and her siblings. Sedgwick recalls hearing portions of Cervantes and Shakespeare read aloud to her by her father when she was eight years old (Kelley xvii). Her father advised her to incorporate reading into her daily routine: "I hope my love you will find it in your power to devote your mornings to reading—there are few who can make such improvements by it and it would be lamented if this precious time should be lost."

As for the character Fanny Atwood in "A Reminiscence of Federalism," who is the product of her father's second marriage, Sedgwick was the daughter of Theodore Sedgwick's second wife. Unlike in her fictional account of Atwood's younger wife, critics comment on the emotional distance between mother and daughter. In 1807, when young Catharine was 18 years old, her mother passed away. The following year, Sedgwick's father married for a third time. Baym provides no more detail other

than to say that this third wife was "uncongenial" to Catharine (54).

Catharine spent her adult life moving between the households of her four beloved brothers, whose children all adored her as their favorite aunt and surrogate mother. Her decision to remain single was quite unusual for the 19th century, when historians remark that nine out of 10 women were wed. In her letters and journals, Sedgwick hints that the central reason for her resisting marriage resulted from observing the unhappiness of her married family members, especially her sisters. Her sister Eliza "had, I think, a rather hard life of it—indifferent health and the painful drudgery of bearing and nurturing twelve children." Sedgwick wrote of her sister Frances's heroic endurance of an uncongenial marriage. On the subject of marriage, Sedgwick told a favorite niece, "So many that I have loved have made shipwreck of happiness in marriage or have found it a dreary joyless condition."

Sedgwick's first novel was *A New England Tale*. Published in 1822, the novel grew out of a religious tract penned on her conversion from Calvinism to Unitarianism. With her brother Henry Dwight's suggestion that she turn it into a novel, she created a tale that presented in fictional form the challenges posed by Calvinist doctrine. Throughout her literary career, Sedgwick was greatly encouraged by her brothers, Henry, Robert, and Charles, who also, as lawyers, acted on her behalf in negotiating contracts with publishing houses. The novel would soon be followed by *Redwood* in 1824 and *Hope Leslie* in 1827. With each successive novel, Sedgwick proved herself to be a literary figure whose presence, a critic from *American Ladies Magazine* projected, would succeed her into the next century: "A hundred years hence, when other and gifted competitors have crowded into the field, our country will still be proud of her name" (reproduced in Kelley x). Indeed, the successful publication of *Hope Leslie* initiated a trend among critics, who began to rank Sedgwick with its central male authors: Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant. Her connection with Cooper was so great that during his tour of Europe, Cooper was surprised to learn that people assumed him to be the author of Sedgwick's *Redwood*.

Nina Baym best expresses the enduring and endearing aspect of Sedgwick's body of work. In Sedgwick's historical romance, she "establishes the tradition whereby, in the more fanciful setting of a remote time, women are endowed with heroic capacities unrestrained by probabilities" (53). The characters who are given life on the pages of her novels with contemporary settings, on the other hand, "display heroic traits within the limits of nineteenth-century social possibility" (53). Contemporary feminist critics applaud strong and independent female characters like Magawisca and the titular character Hope Leslie. In her lifetime, she was a best-selling author of several novels, short stories, and essays. Her third novel, *The Linwoods,* was published in 1835, and her final novel, *Married or Single?* appeared in 1857.

Hope Leslie, or Early Times in the Massachusetts (1827)

Sedgwick's tale, although published in 1827, is very much a product of 17th-century New England life and history as the novelist delves into "the character of the times" (5). By revisiting the events of the Pequod War, Sedgwick devises a portal for entry into founding history: "Are so far from being intended as a substitute for genuine history . . . but might stimulate [young countrymen] to investigate the early history of their native land" (6). By titling her novel after its central heroine and focusing on the domestic lives of her and her circle of friends and family members, Sedgwick squarely places the family and its pivotal figure, the true woman, within the scope of national history. Not only are "some liberties" taken in her recounting of the "chronology of the Pequod war," but Sedgwick also redefines what passes as history, and who should receive attention as a historical agent (5).

The tale of "early times in Massachusetts" begins with the emigration of its patriarch, in this novel a character named William Fletcher. His fiery affection for his cousin Alice, which should have led to a happy marriage and years of conjugal bliss, is cruelly extinguished by his uncle, Alice's father, when Fletcher refuses to abjure "the fanatical notions of liberty and religion with which [he] had been infected" (10). Despite Alice's attempts to elope with him on a ship bound for Massachusetts, Sir William arrives with armed men to capture her and, in "less than a fortnight," marry her to Charles Leslie (13). Disconsolate, Fletcher agrees to marry a ward of Mr. Winthrop and set sail on the famous 1630 voyage aboard the *Arbella* (14). Indeed, it is aboard this very vessel that JOHN WINTHROP delivered the speech that became *A Modell of Christian Charity.* In tying this moment in colonial history to the tragic tale of forbidden love between Alice and William Fletcher, Sedgwick provides readers with a scaled-down version of the impact of religious intolerance. Had his uncle practiced the model of Christian charity as detailed by Winthrop, the voyage to New England might have been more joyously attended by a couple very much in love rather than one thrown together by social convention. As it is, the prohibited union of the two presages the future tales of forbidden or unrequited love and presents a literary model in which what appears on the national scale is replicated, in miniature, in the lives of the novel's characters.

The figures of Alice and William Fletcher are reunited, albeit indirectly, after the deaths of both Alice and her husband as William becomes guardian of their two daughters, Hope and Faith (21). The extended Fletcher household also embraces the young wards' tutor, Cradock; an aunt, Miss Bertha Grafton, and "two Indian servants," Magawisca and Oneco (21). The reader quickly learns of the parallel tragedy suffered by the Leslies and the Mohawk siblings: Both sets of siblings have arrived at the Fletcher household, called Bethel, after the deaths of their mothers. The unnamed mother of Magawisca and Oneco died in captivity resulting from an English raid on their Mohawk village. During the same raid, their brother Samoset was also killed. As the domestic captives of the Fletchers, Magawisca and Oneco soon form strong bonds with Everell, the Fletcher's son, and Faith, respectively. These bonds prove their strength when the Mohawk chief and father, Mononoto, leads a retaliatory attack on Bethel. Mrs. Fletcher and her newborn baby are killed, while Faith, Everell, Oneco, and Magawisca are carried off into the forest.

The figure most conflicted by these sudden turns of events is Magawisca, who has begun to love Everell and to crave the maternal affections of Mrs. Fletcher, a surrogate for her own departed mother. Magawisca's first signs of discomfort caused by conflicting loyalties are reflected in her dejected and sorrowful countenance and her lament "I do not like to see any thing so beautiful, pass so quickly away" (63). She also provides both Everell and the reader with a retelling of the night the English attacked as a forewarning: "When the hour of vengeance comes, if it should come, remember it was provoked" (47). Such a statement not only gives readers a glimpse into the motivation for Mononoto's raid, but constitutes a means by which Sedgwick honors her initial "design" by providing readers with "the character of the times" (5). The very term Sedgwick uses, *character,* is telling as one must gather and sift through opinions of various people and eyewitnesses in order to arrive at the character of a person or event. And this embrace of a multiplicity of viewpoints seems to be precisely what Sedgwick had in mind when providing alternate histories or "characters," if you will, of the Pequod War. As Everell and Magawisca converse before her father's vengeful attack on Bethel, Sedgwick writes: "He had heard [the details of the Pequod War] in the language of the enemies and conquerors of the Pequods; and from Magawisca's lips they took a new form and hue . . . the new version of an old story" (53). Everell's willingness to listen to and honor a "new version of an old story" manifests itself in his ability to read and discern symbols and conversations of the Mohawk. He correctly identifies the eagle feather "as a badge of her tribe" and

the specific symbol of her father, their chief, in the token passed from the elderly woman, Nelema, to Magawisca (46). During his captivity, "though [Magawisca's] words were uttered in her own tongue," Everell understood that she was interceding on his behalf (75). Despite her love for him and his confession to Digby that he "might have loved her—might have forgotten that nature had put barriers between us," the couple remain one of several doomed relationships presaged in the sad tale of Alice and William Fletcher (214).

The novel does not altogether shun interracial couples, however, as Hope learns from Magawisca that her sister is Oneco's "white bird" and that the two are blissfully married (194). Against Everell's language of "natural barriers" separating races, Magawisca describes the harmonious union of Faith and Oneco: "She and my brother are as if one life-chord bound them together" (191). Sedgwick sanctifies the true romantic tenor of their marriage by contrasting it to the tragic and unsexing seduction of Rosa by Sir Philip Gardiner and the hopelessly one-sided relationship between Esther Downing, niece to Governor Winthrop, and Everell Fletcher.

To address the race question raised by the union of Oneco and Faith, Sedgwick literally removes Faith's mantle of whiteness. She prepares the reader for such a moment when she states quite plainly in the preface, "The difference of character among the various races of the earth, arises manly from difference of condition" (6). This very argument for the influence of environment on the formation of a person's character was a central tenet of the cult of true womanhood. The deep and abiding connection between family and nation, which sees the inner workings of the domestic writ large on the canvas of the nation, and vice versa, is a model that Sedgwick employs and promotes in her novel. It is also a cultural and political structure that provides women in their roles as wives and mothers with considerable power and influence. To follow the reasoning behind this theory of family and nation as mutually informing institutions, if women are entrusted with the sacred and national duty of inculcating their children with the set of morals and values held dear by the state, then their significance and influence are immeasurable. They are charged with the responsibility of creating a domestic environment for their children that will enable them to become forthright and worthy citizens of the nation. Conversely, if the mothers neglect their duties as outlined in the cult of true womanhood, the characters of their children will negatively reflect their formative years spent in a harmful environment.

By reintroducing readers, and Hope Leslie herself, to an entirely transformed Faith, Sedgwick assiduously applies this same theory regarding character and environment to the book's larger claims about race. In Magawisca's preemptive speech to Hope in which she attempts to prepare the latter for the dramatic change in Faith in her years with the Mohawk, she employs a simile taken from natural observations: "Some [people] are like water, that retains no mark; and others, like the flinty rock, that never loses a mark" (192). Because Faith has been "so far removed by habit and education," she is unable to speak to her sister (having forgotten English) and does not exhibit the same emotional response Hope does at their reunion. Thus, it would seem that Magawisca's simile of the relationship between environment and character applies to Faith's two cultural environments: She is "like water" and without any marks of her former life among the English, and she is "like rock" in that she "never loses a mark" of her current life among the Mohawk. Tellingly, Hope attempts to use some of the material markers of English domesticity—clothing and jewelry—as well as the language of domesticity, promising to care for her as mother and sister "in sickness and health" (229). Hope's very language resembles that of a marriage vow, and in overstepping the natural bonds between sisters, Sedgwick is perhaps arguing against the dangers of true womanhood, that it can unnaturally extend beyond its scope or its sphere of influence. Filial rather than conjugal love defines the current of feeling between Magawisca and Everell (330). In Oneceo, and in the Mohawk, Faith has created a

new domestic; it does not recognize or desire to be replaced by a former domestic scene that "retains no mark" for her.

Not only does Faith adhere to new and more natural bonds (those between partners naturally supersede those between siblings and parents), she retains the marks of her life as a member of the Mohawk tribe. Hope's vain attempts to restore her English dress, for which Faith expresses disdain, lead to the removal of her mantle and the appearance of the true extent of the influence of her environment on her character: "Mary threw [the mantle] aside and disclosed her person, light and agile as a fawn's, clothed with skins, neatly fitted to her waist and arms, and ambitiously embellished with bead work. The removal of the mantle, instead of the effect designed, only served to make more striking the aboriginal peculiarities" (228). Just as Faith's declaration, "No speak Yengees," reveals the extent of her environmental influence on her identity, so, too, does the removal of the mantle reveal the internalization of her life with Oneco and Magawisca. If an English girl can become totally transformed and linguistically and culturally removed from her very own sister, then surely one's environment matters. And, to take Sedgwick's point a step further, if Faith can be so transformed by environment, then the reverse—the acculturation of American Indians into English society—must also be possible. Finally, if both types of transformation are possible, then the only "barrier" separating the races is environment.

Environment's significance also plays into the novel's themes of captivity and release, which not only gloss the actual captivity of Magawisca and Oneco after the raid on their village, and the subsequent capture of Everell and Faith, but also apply to the oppressive social circumstances that characters endure such as forced marriages, education in tyrannical households, imprisonment, trials by religiously intolerant judges, and social conventions that would clip Hope's wings. It also relates to the dwindling wilderness inhabited by the American Indians. Early in the novel, William Fletcher and Hope scout future locations for their village (100). When all restrictions on the marriage of Everell and Hope are removed, including Esther Dowling's convenient voyage to England and release of Everell's proposal, the novel concludes with them as the central domestic sphere in New England, with all others as satellites.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Sedgwick's fictional accounts of captivity with Mary White Rowlandson's and Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's. How do they depict cultural difference? How do they recognize cultural similarities?
2. Sedgwick's novel is singular for the time in its sanctioning of an interracial marriage. Conjecture why Everell and Magawisca's union must be spoiled while that between Faith and Oneco is celebrated.
3. Sedgwick writes in the 19th century about the 17th century. Nathaniel Hawthorne also employed this historical glance backward. What allure do the Puritans have for 19th-century writers?

"Cacoethes Scribendi" (1830)

Sedgwick opens her tale by setting the scene—a "little secluded and quiet village of H"—that distinguishes itself because of the lack of male residents. As the critic Judith Fetterley imagines, the town is precisely the female version of James Fenimore Cooper's towns, abandoned by all men, who are off on adventures or living out extended boyhoods in the forest as does his titular character, Natty Bumppo (42–43). Further, Fetterley links the all-female population of the fictional village of H. to Sedgwick's own real-life social circles, which were often devoid of male companionship. In a letter written by Frederika Bremer, after her visit to the Sedgwick home during summer 1851, she writes: "I spent four-and-twenty hours with the excellent and amiable Catharine Sedgwick and her family, enjoying her company

and that of several agreeable ladies. There were no gentlemen—gentlemen, indeed, seemed to be rare in social circles of this neighborhood. But they were less missed here than is generally the case in society, because the women of this little circle are possessed of unusual intellectual cultivation—several of them endowed with genius and talents of a high order. . . . The scenery is beautiful; these ladies enjoy it and each other's society, and life lacks nothing to the greater number" (reported in Foster 36). Similarly, the all-female village does not experience many of the characteristic emotions governing women who find themselves as romantic rivals for the same man: "There was no mincing—no affectation—no hope of passing for what they were not—no envy of the pretty and fortunate—no insolent triumph over the plain and demure and neglected" (50). To readers familiar with Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own,* the argument is strikingly similar—in the absence of men who would pit women against one another, there are female companionship and friendship uncompromised by emotional barbs.

In such an ideal setting as H. Sedgwick can pursue the development of women as writers outside the concerns of the marriage market. It is not, however, that the women of H. will remain single forever and thus escape the marriage trap; rather, "most of the young men who had abandoned their native soil, as soon as they found themselves getting along, loyally returned to lay their fortunes at the feet of the companions of their childhood" (50). The certainty of future marriage, coupled with the absence of the social events structured by the marriage market, provided the female inhabitants of H. the opportunity to form true and lasting friendships, as well as the freedom of time and thought to pursue their own interests. Mrs. Courland, the mother of four sons and one daughter, discovers her passion for writing when she browses through an annual that her nephew Ralph Hepburn gives the family as a present from his recent visit to Boston. To give the influence of this single gesture epic proportions, Sedgwick likens the annual to a "Pandora's box" (52). Readers familiar with Greek mythology will recall that Pandora's box contains all of the evils that Zeus wishes to visit on mankind in punishment for Prometheus's overreaching of mortal powers as exemplified by the theft of fire from the gods. When Pandora's box was opened, greed, envy, vanity, and slander were unleashed upon humans. In terms of "Cacoethes Scribendi," these very characteristics, which were almost miraculously absent from the society, are suddenly unleashed after the publication of articles not only by Mrs. Courland, but by her three single sisters as well.

In describing the literary talent of Mrs. Courland, Sedgwick likens the budding author's views of the town of H. and its inhabitants to well-known figures from stories and poems: "A tall wrinkled bony old woman," for example, reminds her of the title character from John Keats's poem "Meg Merrilies." In the poem, Keats details the life of an old Gypsy woman who lives as one with nature, calling the "craggy hills" her brothers and the "larchen trees" her sisters. The town's schoolmaster turns into a figure like Ichabod Crane in WASHINGTON IRVING's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." However, her use of daily events in the village of H. becomes unseemly when she delights at the misfortunes of others because they afford her material for her writing: "that a sudden calamity, a death, a funeral, were fortunate events for her. To do her justice she felt them in a two-fold capacity. She wept as a woman, and exulted as an author" (55). The mother's divided sense of self—her role as writer and her role as mother—are finally reunited when her nephew Ralph writes a one-sentence marriage proposal to her daughter Alice. As Sedgwick writes, "She forgot her literary aspirations for Ralph and Alice—forgot she was herself an author—forgot everything but [being] the mother" (59).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Sedgwick's all-female setting with the all-male settings of Cooper's novels. Evaluate the degree to which the absence of the other sex is essential to characters or their development.

2. Sedgwick's setting is central to her story, for it is only in the absence of men that Mrs. Courland and her three sisters are able to pursue their passion for writing. Washington Irving, a contemporary of Sedgwick's, was thought to be the author of some of her works, perhaps because of her attentiveness to setting. Compare the role setting plays in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" with the role of village H. in "Cacoethes Scribendi."

"A Reminiscence of Federalism" (1834)

Sedgwick opens this short story with a backward glance at a human frailty "that should be met with a smile . . . rather than with harsher feeling": the divisive nature of political partisanship. Such contentious issues, whether a presidential election or "the position of a capital city," tend to follow the "common course of human passions": "A snag interposes, and the waters divide, and fret, and foam around it till chance or time sweep it away, when they again commingle, and flow on in their natural unruffled union." In using this metaphor of a stream, Sedgwick presupposes that the natural order is peaceful and free of discord. The snag, a symbol of tension and anxiety, might cause "fret and foam," but such reactions are temporary. Sedgwick's imagery omits human agency from the important task of eliminating the source of conflict as she assigns "chance or time" to fulfill this duty. Examined in light of her metaphor, the political strife between the Federalist and Democratic Parties seems reminiscent of the famous Shakespearean line from *Macbeth* "full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

With this moral lesson firmly planted in her reader's mind, Sedgwick begins with her tale of her personal acquaintance with the village of Carrington and its inhabitants. As "a very young child," Sedgwick was sent to Dr. Atwood's house to receive a proper education. She provides thumbnail sketches of the various occupants of the Atwood household, reserving her detailed description for Fanny, the youngest member of the family and the narrator's "little friend." In a moment of narrative rupture, Sedgwick second-guesses her decision in making Fanny Atwood the story's heroine, but it seems that the lack of artifice or pretense in this "little rustic favorite" accounts for her being cast into such a central and critical role in the tale. After all, if chance or time will be the agent that undoes the agony and strife brought on by hostile partisanship, a figure who stands in for consideration and who refreshingly lacks the self-aggrandizing personality would be the ideal character to "let nature take its course" and not attempt to interfere with or control the conflict's outcome.

As the character who embodies the antithesis of Fanny, Sedgwick's Squire Hayford possesses and is possessed by "the most unfounded and absurd vanity." His sense of self-importance is so great that he imagines himself "the sun of his system." This sense of grandeur applies to all aspects of Squire Hayford's life and informs not only whom he befriends or despises according to his own political beliefs, but also how the treats his only child when she marries a southerner named Mr. Gordon. Because Squire Hayford expressly refused to consent to such a union, the marriage was deemed an "unpardonable sin" in the squire's eyes, and he punished her accordingly by "permit[ting] his only child to encounter the severest evils, and languish through protracted sufferings, before he manifested the slightest relenting." After her husband's death, and that of all but one of their children, Mrs. Gordon returns to the village of Carrington, but because of her father's unreasonable partisanship, he refuses to speak to either his daughter or his grandson, Randolph, until his daughter is pleading with him on her deathbed to take care of her beloved son. Squire Hayford, in a motion to reverse his daughter's marriage to Mr. Gordon, agrees to care for Randolph on condition that "Randolph must give up the name of Gordon for that of Hayford." An anxious and grieving Randolph acquiesces to his mother's final request to agree to his grandfather's

proposal. Soon after her demise, Squire Hayford makes a second attempt to gain complete control over another family member, this time Randolph, by forbidding his grandson's marriage to his beloved Fanny because her father and her family are Federalists.

Squire Hayford's desire to keep the Democratic Party in power overrides his absolute control over Randolph, however, when he discovers that his grandson has been writing the newspaper pieces whose eloquent prose and tempered reasoning are publicly lauded, and Hayford concludes that he can entrust Randolph with the power of casting the village's deciding vote in the next day's election. If Randolph agrees to vote for the Democrats, Hayford promises to give his consent to Randolph's marriage to Fanny as well as to provide him the monies necessary for the establishment of his own law practice. Naturally, the young lover agonizes over his decision with his fiancée, Fanny, and it is she who recognizes their powerlessness in the situation. Randolph vows that he cannot "sacrifice the principles that [he] laid down to govern [his] conduct." Fanny shares Randolph's regard for the democratic process and further postpones their wedding in the belief that "providence will open a way for us." Randolph returns to town just in time to cast his vote, which he does without consideration for his grandfather's bribe. Despite Randolph's vote, the Democrats prevail at the polls, and Squire Hayford is swept up in the celebration. Just as he toasts the Democrats and condemns the Federalists, he suffers a stroke and dies within the next few hours. Providence has, as Fanny predicted, prevailed in removing the one obstacle standing between her and her true love, Randolph. He immediately proposes and changes his name back to *Gordon* to reflect his patrimony rightfully.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Sedgwick casts time or chance with the weighty business of removing the causes of political strife and turmoil, such as exist in the country between the Federalists and the Democrats. How might you interpret her solution to partisanship?
2. How does the story replicate the structure of the family as a microcosm for the nation that appears in *Hope Leslie*?
3. Compare Sedgwick's tale of family melodrama brought on by political differences with the characters representing the Tories and the Whigs in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." What does it mean to play out these political scenarios within domestic plots of love?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON SEDGWICK AND HER WORK

1. In *Hope Leslie*, Sedgwick writes of the love of Magawisca and Everell prohibited by the racial divide. In "A Reminiscence of Federalism," Alice and Randolph must overcome political partisanship. Compare these two tales of forbidden love, and consider why Sedgwick sanctions one but denies the other.
2. Everell Fletcher expresses a willingness to hear "a new version of an old story." Consider how he might represent the ideal reader or the ideal citizen. Offer a reading of him as one or the other, providing textual support from *Hope Leslie* in your response.

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John Smith (1580–1631)

Here every man may be master and owner of his owne labour and land. . . . If he have nothing but his hands, he may . . . by industrie quickly grow rich.

(*The Advantages of New England with Historical Reflections*)

Literary and historical critics have commented on the fantastical nature of the life and adventures of Captain John Smith. The biographer Everett Emerson admits that "from his own time at least until 1953, when Bradford Smith's biography appeared, Smith was usually seen as a liar and a braggart" (ix). Even beginning with tales of his early childhood, and his attempts to sell his schoolbooks and equipment in order to apprentice at sea, Smith looms larger than life on the page. We must consider him as a man who cultivated an image of himself, and though he may have exaggerated at times, historians have discovered corroborating evidence to support many of his claims. In *True Travels,* Smith narrates the tale of his own life in third person, and it is primarily from this source that biographers have pulled together the details of this extremely adventuresome man.

As Smith recounts, his desire for adventure on the open sea began at a young age, culminating in his extensive journeys through Europe and parts of Africa by the time that he was 20 years old (35). The deaths of his parents, coupled with the appointment of guardians of the estate "more regarding it than him," provided Smith with the liberty necessary to allow him literally to set the course for his own life at such a young age (35). Smith's father, who passed away when Smith was 15, was, according to an inventory of his house, "gentry in all but title." He had risen in social class to occupy his own farm, in addition to owning two significant pieces of land. Emerson believes that Smith's predisposition to be "class-conscious and ambitious" derived in large part from his father's status. Although his father could have claimed the position of a yeoman, by virtue of his ownership of the farm and lands, Smith referred to himself as "a poor tenant of Lord Willoughby, the lord of the manor" (24).

Although Smith's father permitted him to leave school at the age of 15, a common practice, he did not allow Smith to seek his fortunes on the high seas. Instead, Smith was apprenticed to Thomas Sendall, a merchant living 35 miles from Willoughby, where Smith was baptized, in King's Lynn. Smith was not satisfied with the potential for future journeys at sea but wanted them in the present moment. Thus, when his father died, Smith broke his apprenticeship and sought out the means to learn his trade at sea. He initiated his career as a soldier with his first voyage to the Netherlands, where he remained from 1596 until 1599.

When he returned to England in 1599, he was able to gain passage on a ship bound for France as the servant of Lord Willoughby's younger son, Master Perigrine Barty, who intended to tour the nation. While there, Smith met the Scotsman David Hume, and in exchange for some money, Hume wrote Smith letters of introduction to King James of Scotland, but he was unable to capitalize on the

letters and returned to England. He seems to have first practiced the art of cultivating a public persona when he returned from England. Smith writes of himself in the third person: "He retired himself into a little woody pasture, a good way from town . . . his study was Machiavelli's *The Art of War,* and Marcus Aurelius, his exercise a good horse, with his lance and ring" (36). Although Smith protests that he selected this secluded spot because of "being glutted with too much company," his careful detailing of the events that made up his daily activities, down to the food he consumed, makes it difficult to take his notions of seclusion as genuine. Instead, this scene works to craft a sense of Smith that will prevail throughout all of his writings: a man who operates under his own principles, who vocally shuns the very notoriety and fame that he most assiduously seeks, and who images himself to be singular, unlike any other.

Having acquired equestrian skills and a knowledge of arms, Smith desires "to see more of the world" and decides to "try his fortune against the Turks" (36). Accordingly, he gains passage on a ship but is soon thrown overboard once the Catholics sailing the vessel learn that Smith is a Protestant (38). Luckily, he survives by reaching a small island, where he is soon rescued and placed upon a ship engaged in fighting the Holy Roman Empire against the Ottoman Empire. For four years, as relayed in his autobiographical *True Travels,* Smith toured France, Italy, Greece, the Balkans, Austria, Poland, and Germany. He served in Hungary and Transylvania (41). It was in Transylvania that he earned a coat of arms, gruesomely decorated with the heads of the three Turkish soldiers whom he defeated in individual challenges, a feat he details in *True Travels.* He also proves himself a worthy gentleman soldier by devising a plan to create "false fires" that would draw the Turks' attention, make them believe that they were outnumbered, and thus cause them to retreat. His plan succeeds, and Smith is named captain of 250 horsemen under the command of Colonel Voldo (42). His journey ends with a yearly pension, along with the coat of arms, as just rewards for his services rendered to Sigismundus, king of Hungary.

In December 1606, Smith paid a nine-pound subscription to the Virginia Company of London and boarded one of three ships along with 105 colonists bound for what would become Jamestown. Although Smith was made prisoner by the leaders, presumably because of some disagreement, he arrived in America in April 1607 as one of seven members of a ruling body. He proved himself by undertaking explorations of the James River, in accordance with strict instructions presented to the colonists by the Virginia Company of London. After Ratcliffe's brief stint as president, during which Smith served as a supply officer, Smith himself was elected president. It was during his time as president that Jamestown suffered some of its most trying events. The additional colonists who were to have arrived from England, including women and children, were shipwrecked in the Bermudas and therefore arrived in the colony more as a burden and less as a source of assistance. Because the stored grain had been eaten by rats and had rotted, Smith was in charge of overcoming what would surely be a food shortage come winter. As Smith relates in *Proceedings,* "sleeping in his boat . . . one accidentally fired his powder bag, which tore his flesh from his body and thighs nine or ten inches square, in a most pitiful manner, but to quench the tormenting fire, frying him in his clothes, he leaped over board into the deep river, where ere they could rescue him, he was near drowned. In this estate, without either chirurgeon or chirurgery, he was to go one hundred miles to Jamestown." The gunpowder accident incapacitated him, and he was forced to return to England in October 1609.

Not much is known about Smith's time in England after his return except that he prepared and published *A Map of Virginia* in 1612 and a narrative of his times in Virginia from 1607 to 1610. He also became extremely frustrated and unlucky in his attempts to return to America. When the Virginia colony suffered, as it did immediately after Smith's departure, Smith became interested instead in the Maine coast. In 1614, Smith was given command over two ships bound for Maine, a journey that he chronicled in *A Description of New England,* which

was published in 1616. Surprisingly, Smith penned this 79-page book while held captive aboard a French ship during summer and fall 1615. He alluded to his difficult condition in the text: "To keep my perplexed thoughts from too much meditation of my miserable estate, I writ this discourse." Smith details the means by which he effected his own escape, after the men he had traveled with had abandoned him in the French pirate ship:

> In the end of such a storm that beat them all under hatches, I watched my opportunity to get ashore in their boat, whereinto, in the dark night, I secretly got, and with a half pike that lay by me, put adrift for Rat Isle, but the current was so strong and the sea so great, I went adrift to sea, till it pleased God the wind so turned with the tide that although I was, all this fearful night of guests and rain, in the sea the space of twelve hours, when many ships were driven ashore and divers split . . . at last I arrived in an oozy isle by Charowne [the Clarente River], where certain fowlers found me near drowned and half dead with water, cold, and hunger.

The detailed description Smith offers, of a hostile environment that he must navigate alone, even as other ships are forced to shore, is very much in keeping with the nature of Smith: As in his escape from enslavement by the Tatars, he seizes an opportunity and uses his skills to the best of his ability.

Of the value of *A Description of New England,* Henry F. Howe believes "neither Pilgrims nor Puritans would have reached Massachusetts when they did had it not been for Smith and [his book]. His was indeed the signal individual achievement in the founding of Massachusetts" (271). Philip Barbour contends that with this pamphlet, Smith "found his true métier [as] this work is in a sense Smith's first solid opus—the first book in which we see his character as explorer, narrator, and ethnographer merged with his vision, his propagandist bent, and his retrospective self-discovery" (295). Smith provided detailed maps of the coastline and exhaustive catalogs of flora and fauna and proposed two possible means for colonization: one involving the use of poor people, including children, as laborers in the colony; the other as colony built by soldiers and workmen. His lasting contribution is reflected in the naming of the region as *New England,* because it had previously been called Norumbega and the northern part of Virginia. He is also to be credited with naming Massachusetts, having taken the name from the American Indian tribe of that region.

His attempt to return to America in 1617 was frustrated by strong winds that kept the ships waiting for three months in Plymouth harbor. When the winds died down, as Smith explains, "the season being past, the ships went for Newfoundland, whereby my design was frustrate, which was to me and my friends no small loss." In the following years, Smith sought financial support for a colony in America, including an appeal to Francis Bacon. According to his biographer Everett Emerson, Smith published two pleas for support, in 1620 and again in 1622 (31).

That same year, 1622, Smith published his *Generall Historie.* Aside from this publication date, and those of his *Sea Grammar* (1627) and *Advertisements* (1631), little is known of Smith's life in the years leading up to his death. On June 21, 1631, Captain John Smith died. His epitaph, which is quite fitting for such a man, opens, "Here lies one conquered that hath conquered kings, / Subdu'd large territories, and done things / Which to the world impossible would seem / But that the truth is held in more esteem."

A True Relation of Virginia (1608)

The publication of John Smith's *A True Relation of Virginia* deserves some comment as it appears to have been significantly altered by a London press, which hastened to print it. Because it "was the first account of the Jamestown colony's first year to reach London," readers were eager for information and investors and potential investors were hopeful that this account from "one of the Counsell there

in Virginia" would dispel some of the disheartening rumors surrounding the colony (5, 24). Chief among those rumors were tales of colonists' splitting from the local government, including the execution of a colonist for treason; some suffering near-starvation; and John Smith himself being savagely attacked by Powhatan (Barbour 5). The press's level of haste to see Smith's letter in print quickly (Barbour reports it appeared six week after its arrival in London) led to a confusion over the very identity of the *Relation*'s author as well as the selected omission of material. As the editor I. H. writes in the foreword, "Somewhat more was by him written, which being as I thought (fit to be private) I would not adventure to make it publicke" (24). The editor of Smith's account, who appears only as I. H. in the preface, is thought to be John Healey, and in his foreword he notes that the printer initially believed the account to have been written by Thomas Watson, whom the scholar Philip Barbour identifies as the recipient of Smith's letter (5).

The full title of Smith's account is *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note, as Hath Happened in Virginia, Since the First Planning of That Colony, Which Is Now Resident in the South Part Thereof, Till the Last Return*. Within the first paragraph, Barbour notes several cuts made by Healey related to suspicion of Smith's attempts at mutiny aboard the HMS *Bounty,* and his exclusion from the council (98). Smith was interrogated to determine his part in the mutiny led by Fletcher Christian against Captain Bligh and found innocent. It is quite likely, and understandable, that the editors would wish to scrub this particular incident from Smith's account as it detracted from his authority, character, and trustworthiness.

Immediately after their landing in Chesapeake Bay, Smith reports of their "assault with certaine Indians" (27). This attack, even before "the Counsell for Virginia was nominated," forebodes future violence with the native population (27). Smith seems to temper this initial scene of violence with tales of "the people in all places kindly entreating us, daunsing and feasting us with strawberries, mulberries, bread, fish, and other of their country provisions whereof we had plenty" (29). He does not consider the natives' motivations to provide them with food, such as attempts to appease them and broker peace rather than render them bitter enemies. What follow are accounts of their surveys of the land and river, with guides provided by Powhatan. The peace is quickly broken again, however, when their guide, "King of Arseteck," "altered his resolution in going to our Fort," leaving the colonists with concern about "some mischief at the fort" (31). Sure enough, the men return to the fort only to learn that it had been attacked the day before by a large number of American Indians (31). Although Smith reports the number as 400, Barbour believes that Smith was not present during the attack and notes that another account, written by Gabriel Archer, places the count closer to 200 (99). Smith attributes the colonists' ability to fend for themselves and cause the American Indian attackers to retreat to their employment of their ships' ammunition as a sign of divine intervention (31).

Shortly after this attack, Captain Newport returns to England, "leaving provisions for thirteen or fourteen weeks" (33). Barbour notes that in Percy's account, Newport departed with the promise of supplies but abandoned the remaining colonists with "verie bare and scantie of victuals, further more in warres [among themselves] and in danger of the Savages" (99). Barbour attributes the amendment to Smith's account to the editors, who were loyal to Newport and wished to cast aspersions on Smith (99–100). These provisions, however, soon became a bone of contention among the Jamestown colonists, who were angered that they were only fed sturgeon while the president of the colony and "his few associates" received "the sack, aquavitae, and other preservations for our health" (33). With the death of the president, Captain Ratcliffe is elected (35). The gift of corn from the Indians "brought us great store," yet rather than express gratitude to the native inhabitants for saving them from starvation, Smith states, "It pleased God (in our extremity) to move the Indians to bring us corn" (35). Although these additional provisions improved in

the health of many of the ailing men, Smith reports that because of the continued sicknesses of Captain Martin and the colony's president, he was assigned the duty of "Cape Marchant," meaning that he was responsible for setting terms and bartering with the native population (35). This was the beginning of Smith's entry into a leadership role with the colony, and it would prove essential to its survival.

He distinguishes himself in his position of cape merchant by actively participating in the preservation of the colony, unlike "most of our chiefest men [who were] either sick or discontented, the rest being in such despair, as they would rather starve and rot with idleness than be persuaded to do anything for their own relief without constraint" (35). Smith both paints a picture of the discontent circulating in the colony as well as separates himself from these idle men, who would rather starve than labor for the good of themselves and the colony.

Smith details his bartering with the native population and his philosophy of ensuring the colony's survival through his brokering of peace through trade rather than through engaging in open warfare (37–39). One example of this method involves Smith's treatment of indigenous children: "But the children, or any that showed extraordinary kindness, I liberally contented with free gift, such trifles as well contented them" (35). He comports himself to match the reception he receives; if the Indians are kind, he "entertained their kindness and in like scorn offered them like commodities" (35). Thus, it appears that Smith has taken the metaphor of trade and applied it not only to the literal exchange of goods, but also to his demeanor toward the tribal members. He mentions a change in terms between him and the Paspahegh, on whose hunting ground the colony had unwittingly settled, which threatens Smith's system of trade as the Paspahegh attempt to wrestle the weapons away from Smith and his fellow traders (39). The scene presages his later meetings with Powhatan, which speak more deeply to the mutual distrust of colonists and native peoples.

After drawning lots over who should voyage to Powhatan and engage in trade, Smith writes that "the chance was mine," and he is soon fitted with a barge and a company of eight men to travel up the Chickahominy River. They exchange copper and hatchets for corn as they proceed on their way, but Smith notes that he continued upriver rather than persist in bartering for fear "they should perceive my too great want" (39). He fears that he will jeopardize the terms of his exchange if the natives discover how desperate the colonists are for food and thus terminates his trade rather than give them insight into the dire circumstances animating his travels. His further travels prove fruitful, not only for his geographical understanding of the surrounding area, but also for his acquaintance with additional tribes, who treat them very kindly. As a result, Smith reappears at the fort with "seven hogsheads of corn" to add to their store (41). His return to the Mamanahunt, whom he had described as the most kind and generous of the tribes he encountered, becomes yet another instance of the natives' demonstrating a real curiosity about the colonists' firearms. Smith relates their desire to "hear our pieces, being in the midst of the river, which in regard of the echo seemed a peal of ordinance" (41).

Despite Smith's return to the fort with another "seven or eight hogsheads" worth of corn, the discontent among the colonists had congealed into plans for mutiny. When the smith verbally abused the president and threatened physical harm, he was sentenced to be hanged and only in the moments when he was climbing the ladder to his death revealed a plot to overthrow the president (41). The leader of the conspiracy, Captain Kendall, was likewise condemned by a jury and ordered to be shot (41). Smith offers no comment on this conspiracy plot but proceeds with his third voyage up the river, where he discovers additional tribes and a significantly depleted amount of corn. Nevertheless, Smith returns again to the fort, "our store being now indifferently well provided with corn" (43). When plans for Captain Martin's return to England are reintroduced, Smith joins as a voice of dissent against such a voyage (43). With dissenting voices ruling, Martin remains with the colony, and Smith makes his most famous voyage upriver and finally meets with Powhatan. He admits that

he had postponed his visit in order to ensure that the fort's provisions were adequate. By engaging in his duty as cape merchant on the heels of Captain Martin's frustrated attempt to return to England, Smith indirectly situates himself as the more dutiful member of the colony.

In an uncharacteristic move, Smith directly addresses the reader's or another person's criticism of his behavior when he orders members of his party to remain with the barge and not return to Jamestown without him as he hires a canoe and two Indians to guide him farther up the river, whose shallowness makes the barge's further progress impossible. Smith explains:

> Though some wise men may condemn this too bold attempt of too much indiscretion, yet if they will consider the friendship of the Indians in conducting me, the desolateness of the country, the probability of some lake, and the malicious judges of my actions at home, as also to have some matters of worth to encourage our adventures in England, might well have caused any honest mind to have done the like, as well for his own discharge. (45)

Barbour interprets Smith's belabored language as his attempt to justify his actions in light of the deaths of three in his party (101). Shortly after this explanation, Smith, hearing "a loud cry, and a howling of Indians, but no warning [shot]," as he had instructed his seven comrades to fire in case of danger, grabs the guide with him and holds him as he fires with his French pistol (45). Although wounded in the thigh, Smith suffers no further injury from the 200 men accompanying Opeckankenough, second in line of succession after Powhatan (47, 102). When they discover that Smith is a captain, his life is spared, for the tribe had a law of not executing a captain, tribal chief, or *werowance,* a chief who owed allegiance to Powhatan (102).

Smith's first encounter with Powhatan occurs with his men dead, himself wounded in the thigh and without any weapons, and yet he appears to use his remaining technology and knowledge of astrology to create interest, even awe, in the chief. "I presented him with a compass dial, described by my best means the use thereof, whereat he so amazedly admired, as he suffered me to proceed in a discourse on the roundness of the earth, the course of the sun, moon, stars, and planets" (47). Barbour attributes Smith's scheme to his familiarity with Thomas Harriot, who reported in his narrative of items used to mystify the American Indians (102). Smith utilizes another bit of strategy when requested to discharge his pistol and fire at a target placed "at six score." He "broke [the pistol's] cock, whereat they were much discontented though a chance supposed" (51). Smith pretends to have disabled the gun accidentally while Barbour interprets this scene as a further example of the captive's attempts to use his wiles and technology to his advantage. If he were to shoot the pistol as requested, Barbour argues, Smith would have demonstrated the weapon's limitations since pistols at the time were capable of hitting a target only at short range (103).

The spectacle of Powhatan and his entourage, elaborately dressed, garners awe from Smith, who details the costuming of the chief and his high-ranking kinsmen and remarks that "such a grave and majestic countenance drove me to admiration to see such a state in a naked savage" (53). In Smith's description, perhaps, we see the notions of the noble savage at work, for his admiration is lessened, if not reversed, by his labeling of Powhatan as a "a naked savage." What is striking, then, is not Powhatan himself but a non-Englishman so bedecked and garnering so much respect from those around. Further, to Smith Powhatan's majestic affect seems at odds with the chief's racial identity. Such a moment reveals to readers the extent of Smith's culture shock as well as his uneasiness at being powerless in relation to such a figure. Conspicuously absent from Smith's tale of his four-day captivity by Powhatan and his adoption into their tribe is the famous rescue effected by Pocahontas. Because this tale appears in Smith's *Generall Historie* and not in *A True Relation of Virginia,* historians and critics alike have cast doubt on the veracity

of Smith's tale of deliverance at the hands of Powhatan's young daughter.

In its place, Smith offers a brief ethnographic account of the beliefs and customs of Powhatan and his people. This account involves Smith's recollection of a ceremony in which at 10 o'clock in the morning, three of four individuals began singing around a fire, each with a rattle in his hand. They laid down grains of wheat in three concentric circles around the fire. "One disguised with a great skin, his head hung round with little skins of weasels and other vermine with a crown of feathers on his head, painted as ugly as the devil, at the end of each song will make many signs and demonstrations with strange and vehement actions; great cakes of deer suet, dear, and tobacco he cast in the fire" (59). Critics conjecture that Smith was relating the ceremony of his own adoption into Powhatan's tribe. He provides further accounts of consulting a council about the following day's deer hunt, and the means by which they heal their sick and mourn their dead (59).

His next meeting with Powhatan affords Smith the honor of being a *werowance* of him, "and that all his subjects should so esteem us, and no man account us strangers nor Paspaheghans but Powhatans, and that the corn, women, and country should be to us as to his own people" (67). Note that the items listed as gifts or as Smith's entitled resources as *werowance* include land, food, and women. Smith does not comment on the offer of women, however, but alerts readers to the cultural significance of food: "Victuals you must know is all their wealth, and the greatest kindness they would show us" (67). Smith reports the generosity of Powhatan when he first meets Smith's "father," Captain Newport, and prepares for them a feast consisting of bread and venison. In exchange for these signs of friendship, the most crucial of them Smith's naming as Powhatan's *werowance,* Powhatan rightly inquires twice why Smith, Newport, and their fellow colonists appear at each meeting fully armed. In response, a rather cunning Smith refers to their arms as "the custom of our country" (69).

A sense of tentative trust between the Jamestown colonists and the native inhabitants of what would become Virginia is broken when members of a few tribes, the Paspahegh, Chickahamanian, Youghtanum, Pamunka, Mattapanient, and Kiskiack, ambush the fort (91). Smith had previously mentioned enmity among the Paspahegh and Kiskiack but had had favorable trading relations with many of the other tribes. He eventually releases the prisoners captured during the failed ambush, but not before Powhatan sends his daughter Pocahontas to plead for their freedom (93). In Smith's only reference to the famous chief's daughter, he describes her in terms that mark her as exceptional: "a child of ten years old, which not only for feature, countenance, and proportion, much exceedeth any of the rest of his people, but for wit, spirit, the only nonpareil of his country" (93). He treats her kindly, stating that he showered her with the gifts she deemed worthy and returned her to her father, along with the captives.

Smith concludes the narrative in a rather abrupt manner, but he seems to have considered the triumph of the colonists over this attempted ambush as a sign of their perseverance and a means of ensuring future peaceful relations with the land's natives. Smith writes assuringly, "We now remaining being in good health, all our men well contented, free from mutinies, in love one with another, and as we hope in a continual peace with the Indians" (97).

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Smith's position as cape merchant in charge of trading compare with ÁLVAR NÚÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA's assumption of the same role? How do they imagine themselves and those with whom they trade?
2. How does Smith's use of technology compare with OLAUDAH EQUIANO's narrative of wonder and awe in his autobiography? In what ways do the American Indians awe or inspire Smith?

Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles (1623)

Smith's "most important friend," Samuel Purchas, enabled Smith to publish his *Generall Historie,*

even allowing him access to material that was to appear in Purchas's *Pilgrimes* (Emerson 20). The critic Everett Emerson believes that Purchas's text, along with Richard Hakluyt's *Hakluyt's Posthumus,* served as models for Smith's *Generall Historie* (20). Despite Smith's ability to use these two texts as models, Emerson notes that "little is new" in the *Generall Historie*: Book 1 is a collection of travel accounts edited by Smith, book 2 borrows from *A Map of Virginia,* book 5 relies heavily on both *A Description of New England* and *New England Trials,* and book 3, "the most famous portion of the *Generall Historie,*" "is a revision of the account published in *The Proceedings*" (Emerson 21). An even more interesting fact distinguishes these two texts. Although *A True Relation* was specifically about Virginia and his experiences there, Smith does not draw upon it for his *Generall Historie.*

Emerson Everett traces the history of the publication, stating that it originated in April 1621 when a man from Gloucestershire who had invested in the Virginia Company of London requested a "fair and perspicuous history, compiled of that country, from her discovery to this day" (cited in Emerson 55). Although all who attended the meeting approved of John Smith's request, no action occurred until March of the following year, 1622, when American Indians killed roughly 400 colonists. Smith's hopes to be sent with soldiers and reinforcements was denied, but his interest in the cause of American colonization probably prompted him to take up pen and begin writing book 1 of his *Generall Historie,* which he completed by the end of 1623 (Emerson 56).

The massacre of 400 colonists was clearly still on Smith's mind when he compiled the histories necessary for the *Generall Historie,* in part because he felt assured of his own abilities to deal with the American Indians, and in part because he deeply desired to return to New England. For this reason, perhaps, his account of American Indians is significantly heightened in this book over his first account, *A True Relation of Virginia.* He revised his own version of an encounter with American Indians that he reported in *The Proceedings,* turning what was originally a rather peaceful account of gaining corn from the American Indians to feed the colonists in his care to a gun-filled battle in which they were either felled by bullets or else fled into the woods (cited in Emerson 71–72).

What follows next in book 3 is perhaps the most anthologized portion of any of Smith's works: his capture by Powhatan and rescue, supposedly at the hands of Pocahontas. Smith details the pageantry attending Powhatan: "He sat covered with a great robe, made of Raccoon skinnes, and all the tayles hanging by. On either hand did sit a young wench of 16 or 18 yeares, and along on each side the house, two rowes of men, and behind them as many as women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red: many of their heads bedecked with the white downe of Birds, but every one with something, and a great chain of white beads about their necks." The purpose of Smith's detailing the costumes of his captors is to help offset his own position as captive. After all, he describes a significant number of people attending Powhatan. After Powhatan's "feast . . . in their best barbarous manner they could," the decision seems to be made to brain Smith with "two great stones."

Pocahontas, "the King's dearest daughter," intercedes on Smith's behalf. Having exhausted all entreaties, "She got his head in her armes, and laid her own upon his to save him." Emerson notes how Smith's description of Pocahontas "has an amusing touch, an anticlimax that distracts the reader's attention from Pocahontas" (73). What is interesting is that Smith does not really comment on what occurs after his rescue: "The Emperor was contented he should live to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper." Scholars familiar with captivity narrative recognize that quite often, captives were adopted into the families who had initially captured them. The exchange of items Powhatan imagines, "hatchets, bells, beads, and copper," seems to point to Powhatan's decision to adopt Smith into his tribe. What is entirely absent from Smith's account is the romance between Pocahontas and Smith that has become the stuff of legend.

In the legend of Pocahontas, her actions become a heroic, romantic rescue, and the landscape is anthropomorphized into a highly sexualized, silent American Indian female. Her act of interposing her head for Smith's is supposedly animated by her young, impulsive love for him. However, Smith makes no claims about a relationship between the two. Indeed, Pocahontas married John Rolfe and traveled with him to England. The pervasive myth that she rescued Smith as an act of unrequited love prevails, despite its historical inaccuracy, because, as critics such as Annette Kolodny note, it perpetuates the gender dynamics of colonization in which the American landscape is feminized and symbolized by American Indian females while the British colonist is characterized as a virile male.

Subsequent interactions between Powhatan and Smith, who has been adopted and renamed *Nantaquoud,* reveal how politically expedient Powhatan considered this intertribal embrace of Smith to be. By drawing Smith into his tribe, Powhatan clearly anticipated that he would improve trade exchanges with the British colonists. Smith recognizes how clever Powhatan is in the terms he sets for exchanges (such as demanding that Smith and his men not go armed to their meetings since doing so symbolizes intent to invade and conquer). Smith recognizes Powhatan as a "subtill Savage." Despite this backhanded compliment, Smith maintains his same thematic argument throughout the text—he is well versed in the ways of the American Indians, and were he to return to America, he could prevent future events like the massacre of 400 settlers that transpired in his absence.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Smith's description of Pocahontas's deliverance appears in *Generall Historie*, but not *A True Relation of Virginia.* Consider why this most famous passage might appear in one version of his time in the Virginia colony and not in the other.
2. How does Smith's account of his captivity and release compare with those depicted in the works of Cabeza de Vaca and Mary Rowlandson?
3. Consider how the gender dynamics of Pocahontas are replicated in other early colonial texts such as THOMAS MORTON's "Rise of Oedipus" in *New English Canaan.*

The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captaine John Smith (1630)

Fully titled *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captaine John Smith, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America: Beginning in the Year 1593 and Continued to This Present 1629,* Smith's autobiographical text offers a sweeping sense of his life as an adventurous explorer. It is therefore no surprise that his first chapter only briefly details the death of his parents when he was 13, followed immediately by his earliest yearnings for life on the open sea. As the editor Philip Barbour terms it, *True Travels* is Smith's "only outright autobiographical work," but it is also his most "controversial" because of its similarity to the tall tale (125). The odd mixture of truth and fiction is not extraordinary for Smith, however, because of his public persona and his desire to cultivate an image of himself that was hyperbolically heroic. Barbour, however, does not agree with those readers who would dismiss the text whole cloth as a "sheer prevarication"; instead, he points to the fact that many of the claims Smith makes regarding his appearance and actions at various locations such as Venice, Vienna, and Budapest have never been investigated.

In chapter 2, Smith recalls how four "French Gallants" "well attended, feigning to him the one to be a great Lord, the rest his gentlemen" robbed him, leaving him aboard without enough money to pay for his own passage (he had to sell his coat) (157). He soon revenges himself on one of them, Curzianvere, defeating him in a swordfight and forcing him to confess that they had stolen from him (158). He immediately follows the earl of Ployer, who was going to war in France, where he finally embarks for Italy, only to be thrown overboard by a "rabble of pilgrims of diverse nations

going to Rome" who take him as a "Huguenot" and believe "they never should have fair weather so long as he was aboard [with] them" (159). Captain La Roche, also loyal to the earl of Ployer, rescues Smith and sails with him to Egypt, where they deliver their freight, and then on to the Adriatic Sea, where they encounter a sea fight against an argosy from Venice. Captain La Roche's superior artillery prevails, and they take aboard as spoils of the fight various silver and gold coins along with expensive materials (silk, velvet, and gold cloth) (161). When La Roche allows Smith to disembark in Italy, he provides him with ample funds, and Smith travels to Rome, where he briefly spies Pope Clement VIII ascending a flight of stairs, and then on to Naples and other cities along the coast.

Smith tells of the brilliant military strategy he employed in Olumpagh, which Philip Barbour has confirmed to be Lower Limbach in present-day Yugoslavia (130–131). As a result of his craftiness, which included not only developing a coded system for communication, but also deceiving the Turkish soldiers into believing they had an enormous army, Smith was named captain and given an army of 250 horsemen to command under Colonel Voldo (165). Another victorious battle for the Christians is also attributed to Smith's skilled use of explosives, this time "fireworks" composed of loose powder, turpentine, and other flammable materials set into earthen pots and fired onto the Turks' encampments (166). The tale of future battles and a long, brutal winter in which thousands of soldiers perished in the cold seems to deviate from Smith's own personal tale, as he does not figure as an active agent in any of the events. Barbour and other historians believe that Smith's narrative at this point drew heavily on the text of Ferneza (172).

In chapter 7, however, Smith does return as the hero and protagonist and recalls his three deadly challenges against Turkish soldiers. Smith provides wonderful detail: His opponent "entered the field well mounted and armed; on his shoulders were fixed a pair of great wings, compacted of eagle feathers with a ridge of silver, richly garnished with gold and precious stones, a janissary before him, bearing his lance." Against this opulent image of his opponent, Smith appears "with a noise of trumpets, [and] only a page bearing his lance" (172). Almost immediately after the "sound of the charge," Smith attacks the Turk through his beaver, the face guard of his helmet, and then swiftly decapitates the fallen soldier (172). Smith's victory riles a "vowed friend" of the dead captain, and he also challenges Smith to the same form of duel. This second Turkish soldier is wounded in the left arm and thus unable to "rule his horse"; as he falls to the ground and is instantly killed, Smith decapitates him as well and sends his body, "and his rich apparel," back to the town (173). The following day, Smith dispatches yet a third Turk, this time stabbing him between the plates protecting his back and loins (174). Interestingly, Smith attributes his victory in this last challenge to "God's assistance," a religious reference that had not appeared in his descriptions of the first two battles but would have seemed quite natural since the battles were traditionally described along religious lines. As a result of Smith's successive triumphs over his Turkish adversaries, he is made sergeant major and rewarded with a scimitar and a belt "worth three hundred ducats" (174). At the victorious termination of the battles against the Turks, the duke of Transylvania, Sigismundus Bathor, learns of Smith's accomplishments and rewards him with "three Turks' heads in a shield for his arms, by patent, under his hand and seal, with an oath ever to wear them in his colors, his picture in gold, and three hundred ducats yearly for a pension" (175).

Sigismundus's victory is short lived, however, as Transylvania is soon recaptured by the Turks in a series of bloody battles that leave Smith wounded and a prisoner of war. During their retreat, Smith is captured by the Tatars. He attributes his own survival to his "armor and habit," which his captors believed were indicators that Smith would fetch a high ransom (186). Shackled with another 19 prisoners, with chains around their necks, Smith was forced to march to Constantinople, where he would become the servant of the young Charatza Tragabigzanda (186). When she sends him to her

brother, a timariot in Tartaria, Smith is stripped, shaved, shackled about his neck, and dressed only in the wool of a big-horned sheep (189). His time among the Tatars is recounted in much the manner of an ethnographer, detailing such aspects of their culture as their diet, clothing, and religious practices (189–195). As Barbour notes, Smith's chapters noting the cultural practices, living conditions, and beliefs among the residents of Tartaria borrowed from Broniovius's "Description of Tartaria" as well as Friar William de Rubruquis's *Itinerarium* (191).

In chapter 17, Smith finally escapes captivity. Although he had strategized with other Christians who were also held as captive slaves, "they could not find how to make an escape, by any reason or possibility" (200). One day, when the bashaw arrived to visit the granges at which Smith was employed as a thresher, Smith "took occasion so to beat, spurn, and revile him, that forgetting all reason, he beat of the tymor's brains with his threshing bat . . . clothed himself in his clothes, hid his body under the straw, filled his knapsack with corn, shut the doors, mounted his horse, and ran into the desert at all adventure" (200). Luckily, Smith is not apprehended along his journey, as he encounters no one who would recognize the iron about his neck as a clear sign of his enslavement (201). Finally, he reaches what Barbour believes to have been Valuiki, where the governor takes pity upon him, removes his irons, and gives him money and food necessary to continue his journey through Russia. When he finally reaches his goal, reuniting with Sigismundus to ensure that his honors are received and that he be given 1,500 ducats to compensate for his losses, Smith leaves for Spain and then for Morocco.

Just as Smith has drawn on the published accounts of others when in new lands, so, too does he weave in John de Leo's *Geographical History of Africa* to augment his details of his travels there (204). Among the marvels he includes in his account are the three golden balls of Africa, which were erected by the daughter of the king of Ethiopia, who was engaged to marry the prince of Morocco, who suddenly died before their wedding. As a memorial to him, the Ethiopian princess "caused those three golden balls to be set up for his monument, and vowed virginity all her life" (204). He also includes tales of the previous king of Barbary (North Africa from Morocco to the Egyptian border), Mulai Ahmed IV, whose admiration for tradesmen and artisans resulted in the presence of a multitude of English skilled workman, including a watchmaker named Master Henry Archer (205–206).

It is the tale of Master Archer, and the subsequent tale of the lion, that contribute to historians' dismissing the accuracy of Smith's *True Travels*. Archer's craftsmanship is so revered by Mulai Ahmed IV that, when Archer mistakenly boxes the ear of a respected Moslem monk, a crime punishable by the removal of his hand and his tongue, the king intercedes on his behalf and has his guard of 300 men break Archer out of prison (206). Smith concludes his tales of northern Africa by recommending "many large histories of [Africa] in diverse languages, especially that writ by that most excellent statesmen, John de Leo" (207). Barbour believes that Smith relied so heavily on John de Leo's account of Morocco in order to pad this section of the text. "The account in the True Travels may consequently be assumed to have been based on Smith's presence in some parts of Morocco at the time. Yet the truth would seem to be that Smith found no opportunity there to enlist as a mercenary and thus filled up his narrative with more or less idle tales gathered on the spot, rounding it all off with an account of a 'piratical' skirmish" (134).

Indeed, the theory that material was used as filler or padding for Smith's *True Travels* seems to explain the abrupt shift that occurs immediately after his participation in a sea battle with Captain Merham against two Spanish men-of-war. Smith's next few chapters are borrowed from his own *Generall Historie of Virginia* (214–220). What holds these several chapters together, Barbour suggests, besides their reliance on Smith's own former work, is their subject matter: British colonization. Although Smith was older, he was still interested in the enterprise of colonization and may have been attempting to gain some position in a different locale by writing of British colonization efforts and thus demonstrating his knowledge of them.

True Travels ends on a rather odd note—the final chapter addresses, as its title suggests, "the bad life, qualities and conditions of pirates, and how they taught the Turks and Moors to become men of war" (238). Smith attributes the increase in the number of pirates to the shift in England's ruler, from Queen Elizabeth to King James. Because James had grown up in peaceful times, Smith notes, there was no need for the men-of-war who were so well employed under Queen Elizabeth. As a result, the men turned to piracy for a host of reasons: poverty, jealousy of those sailors who were wealthy, revenge, covetousness, vanity, or general ill will (239). The conclusion, however, makes clear why Smith included this account of pirates in his *True Travels.* It serves as a warning for those who do not well reward sailors and seamen with ample pay and thus serves indirectly to request just reward for Smith's incredible feats as a soldier and a seaman, as cataloged in the first two thirds of *True Travels* (240–241).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Smith's captivity among the Tatars with his captivity by Powhatan. What details does he give of his captors in each account? How does he imagine himself as captive?
2. Food is often an index of culture. How does Smith's detailing of the Tatars' diet compare with MARY WHITE ROWLANDSON's account of the diet consumed by the American Indians who captured her?
3. Smith incorporates tales of various lands that derive from other sources, and yet these histories are woven into what critics recognize as his "most autobiographical" of all works. Consider other autobiographical works, such as THOMAS JEFFERSON's or BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's. How do these modes of self-writing reflect a larger sense of the individual?

Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England, or Any Where (1631)

Smith's last publication is, according to the critic Everett Emerson, his most attractive work as it contains some passages that reveal his literary polish, and it is without the braggadocio that obscures many of his earlier works. Smith dedicates his final book to George Abbot and Samuel Harsnett, two archbishops, on the basis of the text's subject matter: "the Plantation of New England, for the increase of God's Church, converting Savages, and enlarging the King's Dominions." In his address to the reader, Smith introduces the idea of extrapolation: "Apelles by the proportion of a foot, could make the whole proportion of a man." The notion behind this conceit is that one can deduce a wider view or scope of vision about America based upon Smith's descriptions of the New England Plantation. Thus, Smith not only advertises for the colonization of America in general, but also squarely places this colony as emblematic of what future inhabitants might fashion themselves after in later years.

Chapter 1 addresses the specter of dissenters, or members of various religious organizations at odds with the Church of England: Anabaptists, separatists, papists, Brownists, and Puritans. Smith attempts to defuse the scandal and "rumor" associated with these settlers by comparing their dissent to the presence of a traitor among Jesus' 12 apostles. If there was one traitor among the 12 devout followers of Jesus Christ, Smith seems to argue, then "it is more than a wonder" that such dissemblers might exist among the plantation settlers. He warns against painting all of the settlers with the same broad brush, stating that they alone suffer from their own wrongdoing while the king and his kingdom are glorified in their triumphs (270).

In terms of his own experience in Virginia, Smith sarcastically contrasts the luxuries enjoyed by the members of the company still residing in England with the inadequate or scarce materials shipped to his company in Virginia. Smith chastises his successors, who are living off the fruits of his arduous labors. Chapter 1 concludes with Smith's returning to the familiar subject of the inexperienced tradesmen who formed the majority of the original party of settlers. Clearly, Smith argues, the occupations of the settlers made the company's single aim "nothing but present profit" (272). A desire for

financial gain not only distracts the colonists from laboring for survival, but it also endangers the Virginia Colony's future by diverting attention from what is best for their present and future. Indeed, Smith vows that "all the world could not have devised better courses to bring us to ruin" than the excessive "doting [over] mines of gold and [routes to] the seven seas" (272).

Chapter 2 continues Smith's defense of his initial venture in Virginia by characterizing the class factions inherent to English society as the culprit for their failure. "Most of them," Smith declares, "would rather starve than work" (273). If the settlers were willing to endure starvation, Smith had no incentive to induce them to labor for their own well-being, much less for the health and welfare of the colony. For those colonists like Smith who were willing to work, their lack of skills in catching fish or hunting game resulted in their subsisting for a time on corn. Those not killed by lack of food might have been among the "three hundred forty seven" slain by the massacre of March 22, 1622 (274). The disgruntled colonists, who returned to England after exhausting the colony's stock, "persuaded King James to call in [their charter]" (274). Smith mentions that these early steps in dissolving the colony transpired "without our knowledge or consent" (274).

Chapter 3 opens with a brief catalog of the abundance of livestock and food sources available in Virginia "since they have been left in a manner, as it were, to themselves" (274). A reversal of the previous conditions that brought about the starvation or near-starvation of some settlers unwilling to work has resulted in sufficient food resources. Smith expresses his hope that they will balance their cash crop, tobacco, with their staple crops needed to sustain life, lest, he seems to imply, they return to their previous circumstances. His desire for the prosperity of England's colonial enterprises in America is not narrowed to the Virginia Colony, but extended to its supposed rival colony, New England, and beyond. Smith wishes to arrest the growth of "the seed of envy and the rust of covetousness [that] doth grow too fast," causing some to pit the colonies against one another rather than recognize their ability to aid and support one another. Smith further broadens the scope of England's colonial enterprise by noting, "There is vast land enough for all the people in England, Scotland, and Ireland" (275). Because the landscape is so vast, Smith envisions it as large enough to accommodate all of the king's subjects. Further support of this vision of America is found in the series of three plagues in three years that have all but destroyed some native tribes. For details, Smith relies on Governor WILLIAM BRADFORD, thus absolving himself of any discrepancies between Bradford's account of native inhabitants who survived and the tallies of native survivors gathered by others (276).

Chapter 4 covers the "great question" of many good and religiously devout men: whether they may "possess those countries, which are none of theirs, but the poor savages" (276). By referencing God's will, Smith's response to this question anticipates manifest destiny and its justification of western expansion in the mid-19th century. He assumes a priori that "God . . . made the world to be inhabited with mankind." The colonization process enables the conversion of millions to Christianity. However, Smith does not immediately pursue the religious implications of colonialism but instead dwells on the availability of uninhabited land that will prove productive if "manured and used accordingly" (276). For those people in England who endure "such great rents and rates" for land, the promise of fertile soil, purchased for "a copper kettle and a few toys," becomes, as Smith imagines, "a reason sufficient to such tender consciences" (276).

Smith imagines colonization as a great tradition initiated by Adam and Eve, who cultivated the earth to provide for their posterity. Ancient civilizations such as the Hebrews, Lacedemonians, Greeks, and Romans, in their struggles to enlarge their territories and convert all the savages, followed the same pattern established by the first man and woman (277). Thus, Smith proposes that England imitate the virtues of its predecessors. Otherwise, they will not be worthy successors.

In his description of his first voyage to New England, Smith basks in the abundance of fish and fur pelts he and his men were able to acquire with seemingly little effort. "With fifteene or eighteene men at most," they caught "more than 60,000 in lesse than a moneth" (278). The number of furs taken from beaver, otter, and martin, which amounted to 1,500 pounds, would have been greater had they not had to "content [with] patents and commissions, with such fearfull incredulity that more dazzled our eyes than opened them" (278). In other words, British bureaucracy stymied the efforts to acquire the raw goods that were available. Smith does, however, applaud one gesture made possible by bureaucracy, and that is the naming of the land. Smith had written it on maps and in other documents as *New England,* but the "malicious minds among sailors and others, drowned that name with the echo of Nusconcus, Canaday, and Penaquid" until King Charles "was pleased to confirme it by that title" (278).

Chapters 5, 6, and 8 are largely reworked from Smith's *Generall Historie,* and he acknowledges this debt to his previous work by referring readers to his "generall history" (278). In chapter 7, revised from *New England Trials,* Smith details some of the bounteous amount of fish caught by two ships from London that sailed to New Plymouth and relied upon "that poore company they found, that had lived two yeares by their naked industry, and what the country naturally afforded" (282). This "wonderfull industry" that Smith celebrates in enterprising colonists pales in comparison to his litany of sufferings and depredations he has endured in his "neere 37 yeares" (285). In a passage that the critic Everett Emerson calls a "vigorous expression" of Smith's viewpoint in 1631, he provides a spirited recitation of his various adventures and near-death experiences. It is quite unusual for Smith to indulge in retelling "how many strange accidents have befallen . . . [him]," but his point in this chapter seems to be the contrast between his own trials and "the fruits [his] labours thus well begin to prosper" (285). Unlike the settlers he terms the Brownists, who he believes are "pretending onely religion their governour," who have "most vanished to nothing," industrious colonists like him seem to prevail because God's "omnipotent power only delivered him" (286, 285).

Just as Smith contrasts his industriousness and success with the lack of success of the Brownists, he also pits his set of values that would guarantee a laborer rights to land he has improved over a nobleman who merely draws lots to determine which of 20 plots of land should be his possession. On the basis of his own maps of the area, Smith mentions how unfair this system of dividing up the land is because it leaves him with the uninhabitable island now called the Isles of Shoals, while nobles who have never left England's shores, nor risked their lives to figure the lay of the land, are given patents outright. His unsolicited advice is to encourage servants who leave England for America to "have as much freedome in reason as may be" (287). Specifically, Smith proposes that the patent holders provide 20 to a 100 acres of land after the passage of five or six years in which the laborer has proved that he "extraordinarily deserved" it (287).

When Smith details how the open land in New England might be used, either for farming or for planting trees, it is always with a mind toward utility, further trade, and exploration. He describes how the trees in New England are "commonly lower, but much thicker and firmer wood, and more proper for shipping" (289). He proceeds to offer the services of his own book, a Sea Grammar, which he deems "most necessary for those plantations" because it details to "an unskillful carpenter or sailer [how] to build boats and barks sufficient to sail those coasts and rivers" (289). He likens the instructions in his book to the detailed account God gave to Noah in the construction of the ark (290). Subsequent chapters also offer practical advice on how to build houses (detailing the kinds of stones and other raw materials readily available), how to preserve the grasses as hay for the cattle during winter months, and how to plant corn as the American Indians do between trees so that they will act as barricades against the wind (290–291).

Smith addresses the trials befalling JOHN WINTHROP and his colonists, arguing that the people were prone to complaining about the smallest inconvenience rather than working to improve their situation (such as set aside enough provisions of Indian corn to keep them fed during the winter months). On a practical level, Smith disapproves of their abuses of American Indians, comparing the slaughter of the native population in the West Indies by Spaniards, who were then forced to seek slave labor in Africa, to the mistreatment of American Indians by Winthrop and his followers. Smith suggests they take the same tact he took in Virginia and befriend the American Indians (294). At the very least, if the colonists will not heed Smith's advice, he hopes that of all "their mischances, misprisions, or what accidents may befall them . . . none is so malicious as attribute the fault to the country nor mee" (294).

Smith concludes his *Advertisements* by returning to "Turks, Heathens, and Infidels" (299). As they are subjects of the British Empire, he imagines that all eyes are on the colonists and the manner in which they treat their neighbors. In a passage that clearly expresses Smith's own values and principles, he writes, "Truly there is no pleasure comparable to a generous spirit; as good employment in noble actions, especially among [heathens] to see daily new countries, people, fashions, governments, stratagems, relieve the oppressed, comfort his friends, pass miseries, subdue enemies, adventure upon any feasible danger for God and his country; it is true, it is a happy thing to be born to strength, wealth, and honor, but that which is got by prowess and magnanimity is the truest luster" (299).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the advice that Smith offers for future colonists in New England with the advice Cabeza de Vaca promotes in his *Relación*. Are the explorers imagining the transplantation of their colonial ways of life into new climes, or are they projecting utopic civilizations?
2. How does Smith's treatment of Puritans, whom he terms Brownists, compare with Thomas Morton's treatment of the separatists in his *New English Canaan*?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON SMITH AND HIS WORK

1. Unlike other early colonists such as Winthrop and Bradford, Smith arrives in North America with a decidedly secular agenda—to gain financial profit and fame. And yet, when one reads through his works, one is perhaps surprised to note the numerous mentions Smith makes of God, Christianity, and the Bible. Does Smith reconcile the secular with the sacred in his writings? Select one of his books and make an argument, making sure to employ specific quotations in support of your view.
2. Smith was in England when he wrote several of his books about America. Is his view of it realistic or idealistic because of his physical remove from Virginia? Select one of his later works and base your response on the specific language of the text.

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Edward Taylor (ca. 1642–1729)

I am this crumb of dust which is designed
To make my pen unto Thy praise alone.

("Prologue")

In 1937 a scholar working in the Yale University Library made a monumental discovery that would forever alter our understanding of Puritan literature: a 400+-page bound manuscript book of poems by the Puritan minister Edward Taylor. Professor Thomas Johnson published a few of these previously unknown poems in an issue of the *New England Quarterly* that same year and edited the first collection of Taylor's verse in 1939. Eventually, scholars found over 40,000 lines of original verse, a total of 3,100 manuscript pages. Before the revelation of Taylor's poetry, even the most enthusiastic of literary critics were inclined to dismiss this era's literature. They could argue that Anne Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650) and Michael Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* (1662) were atypical of the Puritan mind. Until 1937, the common consensus among professors of American literature was that we should value the Puritans for their extensive theological and historical writings, but that they had little interest or talent in poetry. Yet suddenly there appeared in pre–World War II America a body of several hundred poems, rich in imagery and full of spiritual passion, that forced Americans to question their easy dismissal of Puritan poetry. The sheer number and range of Edward Taylor's poems and the mystery surrounding their 20th-century discovery revitalized studies in early American literature and demanded a reevaluation of the literary canon.

Until 1937, Edward Taylor was viewed as a minor figure in Puritan theological studies. He was notable for his connections to other key Massachusetts figures, the Mather family and Samuel Sewell, for example, and for his long service (1671–1729) as a frontier minister in Westfield, Massachusetts, who dared to attack Solomon Stoddard (1643–1729) for lowering communion requirements. But in studies of the Mathers, Sewell, or Stoddard, Taylor was a footnote figure. The discovery of his manuscript poems had people questioning, "Who was Edward Taylor? And, why didn't he publish these poems during his life?"

Edward Taylor was born in England, in Sketchley in Leicestershire in 1642, 1643, or 1644 to a family of five sons and one daughter. The first date is generally assigned by critics, but no documentation has yet been found. His parents were strictly nonconformist, and perhaps emotionally distant. There are few references to either in his collected writings. His mother (Margaret) died in 1657, and his father (William) followed her in 1658. Donald E. Stanford's research uncovered the fact that Taylor received £40 from his father's estate on his 21st birthday. Taylor acquired a solid education and may have even studied at Cambridge for a time. We know that by 1662 Taylor was teaching at a school in Bagworth, Leicestershire. In that year Charles II's Act of Uniformity was enacted, and Taylor was dismissed from his position for refusing to sub-

scribe to dictates antithetical to his nonconformist beliefs. We do not know how Taylor supported himself over the next six years; our next confirmed sighting of the future preacher-poet occurs on April 26, 1668, when he left England for the colonies, never to return. Taylor's destination was Massachusetts, site of the great Puritan experiment in the New World. It had been only 48 years since the foundation of the Puritan settlement at Plymouth Plantation, but since then, the communities of Salem (1626), Boston (1630), Sudbury (1638), Framingham (1650), and Lancaster (1653), among others, had been established.

Taylor apparently had some influential connections in England, for when he landed on July 5, 1668, he had letters of introduction to key citizens of Boston, including Increase Mather, the father of COTTON MATHER, and John Hull, a wealthy merchant. These men provided him an introduction to Charles Chauncey, president of Harvard College (founded 1636). Taylor was admitted to the school on July 23, 1668, and awarded the position of college butler. Over the next three years, Taylor studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, logic, rhetoric, and ethics. During these years, he met the prolific diarist, Salem witch trial judge and apologist, and abolitionist Samuel Sewell. These two men roomed together for two years and remained correspondents throughout their long lives. (Simon Bradstreet, the poet's son, was another of Taylor's classmates.) In fall 1671, Taylor had committed himself to remain at the college as a scholar when a leading citizen of Westfield, Massachusetts, Thomas Dewey, appealed to Increase Mather to recommend a minister for the new town. Mather directed him to Taylor. While Taylor was tempted to decline the call, his mentor was in favor of his protégé's leaving the confines of academia and entering the mission field. So, in November 1671 Taylor left Harvard and the intellectual stimulation of eastern Massachusetts for the frontier farming and trapping town of Westfield, founded in 1667.

Westfield, about 100 miles from Boston, was truly an outpost in the early 1670s. Given the distance, Taylor returned infrequently over the next 58 years. Eventually, Taylor gathered a personal library of 220 books plus hundreds of handwritten copies of other texts. But Westfield remained a rural farming community with few educated citizens throughout Taylor's life. This sense of exile is evident in the first sermon Taylor preached in the town on December 3, 1671, when he draws parallels between himself and John the Baptist calling out in the wilderness (Patterson 5). This isolation from other educated men may be partially responsible for Taylor's renewed poetic dedication. Taylor had been a "versifier" from an early age. Five poems from his youth in England survive, as well as five from his time at Harvard. Among these works is a verse declamation delivered on May 5, 1671, "My Last Declamation in the Colledge Hall." J. Daniel Patterson calls this work "a vigorous and complex defense of the English language as well as an early and modest critique of his poetic abilities" (3). But it is not until the late 1670s that we have any evidence of Taylor's crafting the poems upon which his contemporary reputation rests.

Taylor's first years in Westfield were a struggle. The town was small and consistently threatened. The Massachusetts winters were harsh, diseases were virulent, and the Native Americans were unwilling to relinquish their rights to the territory of central and western Massachusetts. After a series of confrontations, the members of the Wampanoag tribe and their allies declared war on the settlers (King Philip's War, 1675–76). According to Jill Lepore, "By August 1676 . . . twenty-five English towns, more than half of all the colonists' settlements in New England, had been ruined" (xii). Yet despite its isolated location, the community of Westfield was never attacked, and Taylor's leadership during the stressful time ensured his tenure as the town's minister. Taylor resigned himself to the daily life of a frontier minister, writing, "But at length my thoughts being more settled, I determined within [myself that] in case things could go comfortably on, to Settle with them" (cited in Patterson 7). Therefore on August 27, 1679, Taylor's church at Westfield was officially organized, and he was ordained as its first minister.

Edward Taylor's personal situation brightened considerably with his November 5, 1674, marriage to Elizabeth (called Elisa) Fitch of Norwich, Connecticut. The daughter of the Reverend James Fitch, Elizabeth appears to have been the object of Taylor's deep devotion. In fact, their love may well rival the other famous Puritan attachment between Anne and Simon Bradstreet immortalized in poems such as "To My Dear and Loving Husband" and "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment." Taylor's love for Elizabeth specifically prompted two poems. The first, a courtship poem in an elaborate alphabet acrostic form, was titled "This Dove & Olive Branch to You." The intensity of their affection can be seen in his wrenching elegy after her death on July 7, 1689, at age 39. This poem, one of a series of elegies Taylor composed, holds the distinction with his elegy for Samuel Hooker (d. 1697) of being Taylor's most mature and well-crafted examples of the genre. Elizabeth's elegy, "Funerall Poem upon the Death of My Ever Endeared, and Tender Wife," imagines the dead Puritan wife and mother scolding her husband for excessive mourning: "My dear, dear love, reflect thou no such thing, / will grief permit you not my grave to sing?" By the end of this three-part elegy; the poet's grief has been tempered by his gratitude for her memory and his conviction of her salvation.

In addition to his elegies, representative of 17th-century elegies and comparable to those by Anne Bradstreet, Michael Wigglesworth, John Danforth, and Thomas Shepard, Taylor began to write a series of paraphrases of the Hebrew Psalms in 1674. This project was instigated by his practical need to convey complex theological doctrine to his largely uneducated congregation as well as an admiration of the biblical poet David. This same motive may have instigated a series of occasional poems in the early 1680s. One of these poems, "Upon Wedlock, and Death of Children," was one of only two poems published in his lifetime; the other was the 1712 elegy for David Dewey of Westfield. Two stanzas of "Upon Wedlock" were included in Cotton Mather's *Right Thoughts in Sad Hours* (1689). Its topic is sadly obvious. From 1675 to 1688, Elizabeth and Edward Taylor had eight children (Samuel, b. August 27, 1675; Elizabeth, b. December 27, 1676; James, b. October 12, 1678; Abigail, b. August 6, 1681; Bathshuah, b. January 17, 1684; Elizabeth, b. February 5, 1685; Mary, b. July 3, 1686; and Hezekiah, b. February 10 or 18, 1688). All of the daughters, except Bathshuah, died in infancy. In "Upon Wedlock" (1682) Taylor celebrates their earthly beauty but protests their painful deaths. Yet the preacher-poet speaker ends the poem with cheerful resignation: "Grief o'er doth flow: and nature fault would find, / Were not thy will my spell, charm, joy, and gem, / That as I said, I say, take, Lord, they're thine."

Other occasional poems dated to this era include "Upon a Spider Catching a Fly," "Upon the Sweeping Flood," and "Huswifery." "Huswifery," one of Taylor's most frequently anthologized poems, is organized around a unifying conceit of the spinning wheel and weaving. His familiarity with this craft may be the result of working in this trade before leaving England. In the poem Taylor parallels the parts of a 17th-century spinning wheel with the physical and spiritual components of a man. The persona pleads with God, "Make me, O Lord, Thy spinning wheel complete." The simple, earthy imagery of these occasional poems may indicate that Taylor read all or parts of these works to his congregation, incorporating them into his sermons to these rural farmers.

Taylor's occasional poems, including the much later "A Fig for Thee Oh! Death" (ca. 1721), raise an interesting question of influence. The scholars who first had the task of integrating Taylor into existing conceptions of Puritan literature most frequently referred to him as the last metaphysical or baroque poet. There are connections between Taylor's verse—his extended metaphors and allusions to the emblem tradition—and the poetry of such British poets as John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, and Thomas Traherne. For example, Taylor's "A Fig for Thee Oh! Death" might be read alongside Donne's "Death, Be Not Proud." Death, the apostrophe of

both poems, is disparaged; neither poet quakes in fear as he addresses death and instead glories that death's approach will mean entry to heaven's joys. Many of the metaphysical writers also felt dual callings as ministers and poets, but despite Taylor's surface level affinities to the group, he should not be classified exclusively with these poets. He was undoubtedly influenced by their poetic techniques and their model of the preacher-poet, but he must be read within the emerging Puritan tradition. Taylor's work is imbued with an intense spirituality and a devotion to the New World project that place him firmly in the late 17th- and early 18th-century American literary tradition. Robert Hass, former U.S. poet laureate, reinforces this opinion. To him Taylor "seems—as Anne Bradstreet does in her private and unpublished poems—an early instance of the solitariness, self-sufficiency, and peculiarity of the American imagination" (46).

As we have seen, before the early 1680s, Taylor's writing falls into four categories: elegies, occasional poems of increasing spirituality, psalm paraphrases, and sermons. His elegies, with two notable exceptions, are typical of his age and largely forgettable. His occasional verses show the influence the British metaphysical poets probably had on his poetic development. Additionally, their simple language and earthy imagery permit us to hypothesize that he may have incorporated their lines, as well as those from his paraphrases, in the estimated 3,000 sermons he wrote over his ministerial career. (Of these, fewer than 100 have been recovered and published.)

The year 1680 was a turning point for Taylor's poetry; as Patterson explains, before this date, Taylor's poetry is often light and playful, but afterward, he demonstrates a "delight in complex poetic elements, such as the pun, the acrostic, and the extended conceit" (25). During 1680–81 he completed a project of passionate spirituality that comprised 35 poems titled *God's Determinations Touching His Elect.* Categorizing this project has presented a problem for critics. As Norman Grabo, Taylor's biographer, summarizes, it has been referred to as "a song cycle, chamber opera, morality play, or meditation," but he concludes that it "is finally an extended, ambitious literary work, bringing together in one artistic effort all of Taylor's techniques and concerns" (107). Taylor demonstrates his virtuosity in 11 different verse forms, which often use the rhetorical technique of rhyming dialogue. Some of the better-known poems from this project are "The Preface," "A Dialogue between Justice and Mercy," "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor," and "Christ's Reply." In the opinion of Thomas Davis, "*God's Determinations* is an uneven poem. The generally high quality of the verse and techniques is often undercut by quite pedestrian lines that are flat and dull and by a shaky development of individual sections of the poem" (32). Yet Taylor's success in constructing a long verse project of multiple parts appears to have given him the confidence he needed to conceive and write one of the most complex and extensive works in early American literature, *Preparatory Meditations before My Approach to the Lord's Supper.*

In May 1682, a few months before the death of his daughter Abigail, Taylor began the ambitious poetic project that would later astound readers in the 20th century. From 1682 to 1725, he crafted a series of 219 meditations, divided into two series, that can be dated with reasonable certainty. Taylor's stanzas generally fall into six lines with an *ababcc* rhyme scheme. They were prompted by the particular biblical verse Taylor took as the subject of the corresponding sermon delivered before the administration of the Lord's Supper. The meditative tradition, with its tripartite structure, was strong in the colonies; Increase Mather had recently published *Practical Truths Tending to Promote Godliness* (1682), a work that may have inspired Taylor to begin his own meditative series.

The shorter first series coincidentally ends in 1692, the year of his remarriage at the age of 50 to Ruth Wyllys of Hartford. Taylor left little information about this marriage; there are neither courtship poems nor love letters in existence. Presumably, the single father of three children remarried for expediency rather than love. Davis explains that the marriage to Ruth included a dowry of

money and property that greatly enhanced Taylor's finances (135). Both of Ruth's grandfathers had been governors of Connecticut; Karl Keller describes the Wyllys family as "for over 140 years the most prominent family in Connecticut government and one of the wealthiest" (47). Ruth and Edward eventually had five daughters and one son (Ruth, b. April 16, 1693; Naomi, b. March 1695; Anna, b. July 7, 1696; Mehetable, b. August 13, 1699; Kezia, b. March or April 1702; and Eldad, b. April 1708), all of whom survived childhood.

Before he began the second series in 1693, Taylor carefully transcribed and bound clean copies of the completed meditations. He may not have been interested in publication, but he clearly wished to preserve the poems. The persona of Taylor's meditations from both series maintains a consistent lowly position. Grabo provides a succinct list of the poet's identities: "He calls himself a dirt ball, a muddy sewer, a tumbrel of dung, a dung-hill, a dot of dung, a varnished pot of putrid excrements, drops in a closestool pan, guts, garbage, and rottenness" (30). The second series, written from 1693 to October 1725, is unified by an interest in Old Testament typology, or the belief that the events and figures in the Old Testament are types that prefigure New Testament events and people. The images and symbols are intentionally unvaried. A close reading of the series reveals the following groups: images of writing, warfare, metallurgy, treasures, gardens, feasts, and needlework (Grabo 93–98). Taylor was not interested in startlingly original imagery; he was concerned with exploring and maintaining a meditative state that would draw him closer to God. However, Karen Rowe credits Taylor with the development of a poetic innovation, the typological conceit that "unites theology with poetics, making spiritual meditation coterminous with poetry" (140). His choice of biblical texts also narrowed markedly; 50 of his last 54 meditations evolve from passages from the Canticles (or the Song of Solomon).

In addition to raising a growing second family, quelling factional disputes in the church, writing weekly sermons, and crafting the second series of the *Preparatory Meditations,* Taylor somehow found time to commence an ambitious historical work. We believe that from approximately 1690 to 1705 Taylor wrote the 20,000-line *A Metrical History of Christianity.* Comparable to Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1698), the *Metrical History* represents Taylor's only serious attempt to enter the spiritual and poetical debates of the early 18th century. Jane Donahue Eberwein hypothesizes that this work was circulated in manuscript form among contemporary ministers; such transmission might explain the missing first and last pages (350). Perhaps Taylor, now in his seventies, wished to be regarded as a guiding force in Puritan theology and poetics, but unfortunately, this work did not receive acclaim. It was eventually stored and rediscovered by 20th-century scholars.

Around the turn of the 18th century, Taylor rather stridently challenged the church policies of the more famous Solomon Stoddard (grandfather of JONATHAN EDWARDS) of Northampton. Stoddard believed the Halfway Covenant was not enough of a concession to the new generation of Puritan worshippers and began to permit people who had not offered a public confession of sins and faith to receive the Lord's Supper. Taylor was incensed at what he saw as apostasy. In 1694 Taylor preached a series of eight sermons, later collected as *A Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper* (1965), attacking Stoddard specifically and the degeneration of Puritan practices generally. It is interesting to speculate as to Taylor's reaction to the 1692 Salem witch trails given his strictly conservative brand of Puritanism and his connection to Samuel Sewell, a judge at the trials. It may be that only family and church commitments prevented him from journeying to Salem to participate in this famous inquisition.

Within the town of Westfield there were other challenges. Some of the small problems with which Taylor contended over these years were salary disputes, challenges to ministerial discipline, expansion of the meetinghouse, arguments over roads and rights-of-way, the hiring of a schoolmaster, and so on (Davis 169–170). At the onset of King William's War (1690–97) a smallpox epidemic killed

10 parishioners (Patterson 29); another smallpox outbreak in 1721 killed several more townspeople (Davis 171). British troops stationed in the town during Queen Anne's War (1701–13) introduced the influenza virus, and another 10 citizens died, including both of Westfield's deacons (Davis 171). During these outbreaks Taylor was often called upon to doctor his congregation, putting to good use the 500-page *Dispensatory,* a handwritten description of the medicinal uses of herbs and plants he compiled while at college. But this medical knowledge could not save his second son. In 1701 Taylor received word that James, a struggling merchant, had died of a fever in Barbados, a death Taylor refers to in Meditation 40 of the second series: "Under thy Rod, my God, thy Smarting Rod: / That hath off broke my James, that Primrose, Why?"

After he received an honorary master's degree from Harvard in 1720, the last decade of Taylor's life was fraught with illness. He suffered serious declines in both 1720 and 1721, writing "A Fig for Thee Oh! Death" and "A Valediction to All the World Preparatory for Death." He apparently began experiencing symptoms of a disease like Alzheimer's over his last four years. The congregation eventually called another minister, Nehemiah Bull, and installed him on October 26, 1726. Edward Taylor died on June 24, 1729. His most distinguished descendant, his grandson Erza Stiles, in 1778 became president of Yale University, the site of the now-famous discovery of Taylor's poetry.

The question all scholars must ask is why Taylor did not publish his poetry. We can speculate that the distance from Boston and its presses made the organization of such a project too arduous. Perhaps Taylor, the frontier minister, felt insecure about publishing his poems; he was no longer associated with intellectual circles. He may have assumed that the elite of eastern Massachusetts would mock his literary efforts. Perhaps, as Davis suggests, Taylor valued his poetry more as "process than product" (105). Or, as Grabo contends, "The writing of poetry was to Taylor a religious act" (56) and to profit financially or personally from its publication would have been sacrilegious. Conversely, Taylor may simply have been "indifferen[t]" to publication (Eberwein 350). Finally, it may just be that Karl Keller's explanation, that Taylor "simply seems to have lacked the vanity of desiring fame" (83), must suffice. We may never know why Taylor rejected publishing his 40,000 lines of poetry, but we can be grateful that he carefully transcribed most of these works into bound manuscripts and that his descendants donated the collection to the Yale Library in 1883.

Karen Keck

God's Determinations Touching His Elect (1680)

Taylor's text, most probably written in 1680 after his Westfield church was established, is a "series of poems, written in various lengths, meters, and voices, that depicts the gradual progress of several groups of elect souls through conversion and into church fellowship" (Morris 157). The 400-page book contains a number of poems that have been famous in their own right: "The Preface," "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor," "Christ's Reply," and "The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended." The pair of poems "The Soul's Groan" and "Christ's Reply" are considered together as one of several dialogues that appear within the volume. Another, "A Dialogue between Justice and Mercy," contains the dialogue form within one poem, rather than spread out over two. Taylor's unifying theme for these various poems was "prioritiz[ing] spiritual fidelity and identify[ing] this with the structures and teaching of New England Congregationalism" (Morris 157). Morris argues readers must recognize the historical context that animated Taylor's text, the debate raging between Increase Mather and Solomon Stoddard regarding the conditions for admission into the church covenant (158). Stoddard argued that a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit could render one speechless, incapable of discourse, and thus that parishioners should not be impelled to provide

a recitation of their spiritual experience. Taylor's *God's Determinations,* Morris believes, was written in direct contradiction to Stoddard's view (187).

As one reads through the various poems, most particularly the two that directly address this issue of church membership, "The Soul Seeking Church-Fellowship" and "The Soul Admiring the Grace of the Church Enters into Church-Fellowship," one discovers illustrations of Taylor's belief in the importance of the individual's verbal profession of faith and conversion. In "The Soul Seeking Church-Fellowship," Taylor follows the covenant order of the church:

> Whereby Corruptions are kept out, whereby
> Corrupters also get not in,
> Unless the Lyons Carkass Secretly
> Lies lapt up in a Lamblike Skin
> Which Holy seems yet's full of Sin.
> For on the Towers of these Walls there Stand
> Just Watchmen Watching day and night,
> And Porters at each Gate, who have Command
> To open onely to the right.
> And all within may have a sight.

According to the church records for Taylor's church in Westfield, candidates seeking membership had their names read aloud, and, if there were no objections, they were asked to provide their accounts of conversion, either orally (if men) or in written form to be read aloud by someone else (if women) (Morris 188–189). Taylor's poem adheres to this very procedure to ensure that "corruptions are kept out" and "corrupters also get not in." The other parishioners, who are called upon to object should they find justified means, function as the "just watchmen." Only those seeking membership who are admitted into the church and testify of their own conversions are the "right" who shall gain church fellowship.

Other works of poetry contained in *God's Determinations* include "Our Insufficiency to Praise God Suitably, for His Mercy," a 48-line poem, written in iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of *ababcc*. The poem considers the impact that science has had on religion, in the form of the discovery of atoms. In the first line, Taylor wonders, "Should all the world so wide to atoms fall." In his characteristic fashion, Taylor employs a pun in his use of *atom,* a symbol of science, and the first man, *Adam,* whose Fall affects all of mankind. The pairing of science with the Fall of mankind, detailed in the book of Genesis, seems to indicate Taylor's own sense of science, as perhaps a forbidden source of knowledge, like the reputed apple from the Tree of Knowledge, that does not confer true knowledge but instead keeps humans removed, cast out from their connection to God. The second line, "Should th'Aire be shred to motes," continues the idea proposed in the first that humans gain nothing from the microscope and its new way of seeing except to destroy, or "shred," the very air.

Taylor then compares the number of atoms that make up each man to the number of pious men who exist in the world. Rather than the numberless motes, Taylor wishes for numberless tongues in the mouths of pious men who might sing songs of God's praise. This multiplication would not end with the tongues but would include a host of numberless tunes "most sweet" and "unparalleled." Taylor describes the results of such multiplication as "Our Musick would the world of worlds out ring."

In the penultimate stanza, Taylor returns to the pun from the first line and describes the lowly status mankind holds by virtue of the doctrine of original sin: "Thou didst us mould, and us new mould when wee / Were worse than mould we tread upon" (37–38). Again, Taylor turns to puns, this time *mould* as a verb meaning to "create" or "structure" and as a noun, referring to an insignificant and odious form of life, a bacterium. Although man has discovered the smaller particles out of which objects in the material world are molded, Taylor defers to God as the ultimate creator of these very beings, motes, atoms, and molds. God's forgiveness for humans is characterized in the poem as the removal of the stings from humans, described as the "nettles made by sin."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the poems contained in this book with those from the *Preparatory Meditations.*
2. How does Taylor's treatment of science in "Our Insufficiency to Praise God" compare with COTTON MATHER's in the *Wonders of the Invisible World*? What relationship do the two authors imagine existing between faith and science?
3. Critics repeatedly comment on the various styles Taylor employs in his volume. Examine two poems that employ different poetic forms and consider why Taylor might use various styles to convey his meaning.

Rachelle Friedman

"The Preface" to *God's Determinations Touching His Elect* (1680)

Taylor begins his cycle of poems about the true Christian's journey of salvation by invoking the creation of the world. The 44-line poem is written in iambic pentameter, and its couplets frequently diverge from standard prosody by employing slant and eye rhymes. The nothingness of the world before God's creative word is metaphorically linked to the genesis of the soul, and this in turn serves as a justification for the poet to begin his creative work from the "Nothing" of his own imagination. Taylor uses the word *nothing* 12 times throughout the poem, and its repetition in different semantic contexts playfully demonstrates the range of meaning that this word of absence can contain: "Which All from Nothing felt, from Nothing, All: / Hath All on Nothing set, lets Nothing fall" (ll. 35–36). The first 20 lines of the poem contain numerous rhetorical questions regarding the identity of the world's Creator. Creation is described through a series of similes that liken the earth to a majestic home furnished with "Pillars" (l. 8), "Curtains" (l. 13), and a "Tapestry" (l. 17). By this means, Taylor emphasizes the domestic concern of the Creator as he constructs a home for humanity.

Taylor's playfulness is expressed primarily through wordplay, such as when he repeats the same word in different forms so as to exploit both its sound and multiple meanings; however, he also uses metaphors that humorously deflate the grandeur inherent in the act of creating the world. Besides likening rivers and oceans to handicrafts, the poet asks, "Who in this Bowling Alley bowled the Sun?" (l. 14). The power of "Might Almighty" (l. 27) is thus made less terrifying. The poem ends by contrasting how "Nothing man" has power to "Glorify" God (l. 38), but instead "Nothing man did throw down all by Sin" (l. 41). Man defaces the "Brightest Diamond" (l. 43) within himself and is left with the darkness of a "Coalpit Stone" (l. 42). This darkness symbolizes a return to the nullity out of which Creation began and suggests that humanity's reduction through sin to nothing will be redeemed by the same process of creative play and domestic familiarity.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Taylor uses the word *nothing* eight times in lines 35–41. What are the different meanings used in these lines? Apart from individual uses of the word, what message is conveyed through the rapid repetition of the *nothing*? How does this repetition illuminate the point from which Taylor intends to begin his cycle of poems?
2. Compare this poem by Taylor with "The Prologue" by ANNE BRADSTREET. How do these two Puritan poets face the challenge of explaining their qualifications for undertaking the work of poetic creation? What role does humility play in their self-understanding?
3. Taylor's mix of stern theology and linguistic playfulness can make reading his poems a disjunctive experience as the reader's mind attunes itself first to one aspect and then to the other. How does this experience affect your view of Puritans? Which aspect of the poem seems more significant to you: the image of God as home decorator or that of sinful humans as a lump of coal?

Liam Corley

"The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor" (1680)

This poem concerns central themes of Taylor's collection *God's Determinations*: the Christian's psychological struggles on the path to salvation and the personal experience of a relationship with God. Moreover, Taylor's deft wordplay reflects his adoption of some of the techniques of metaphysical poetry. In the opening line, the speaker calls upon God to defend him from a "dreadful enemy" (l. 1) that is at once Satan and the speaker's own fallible soul ("I confess my heart to sin inclined" [l. 12]). The speaker is thus the "Poor Doubting Soul," a common figure in religious literature of the period (Haims 89). Satan encourages the Christian to doubt God's grace, and the rift in the speaker's soul between the inherently corrupt humanity so often emphasized in Puritan theology and the human's genuine desire for redemption results in a tormented response: "In my soul, my soul finds many faults" (l. 4). "And though I justify myself," Taylor writes, "I do condemn myself" (l. 5), punning on the two poles of the Puritan spiritual cosmos: justification (or God's salvation of the sinner) and condemnation (damnation). As this division of the "I" versus the "I" also illustrates, Taylor represents the speaker's painful confusion in repetitions of crucial terms, which often change their meaning; thus, the speaker refers to Satan's prompting to dismiss "Thy grace" and thus "maketh grace no grace but cruelty" (ll. 13, 15).

Taylor also employs pastoral metaphors (understandable, given his church was located in rural Massachusetts), as well as conventional biblical images for God's mercy. The speaker questions, "Is graces's honeycomb a comb of stings?" (l. 16) as he experiences the fear generated by a mistaken perception of God as merely cruel. Scholars, however, have disagreed about the extent of Taylor's agreement with orthodox Puritan beliefs. In this poem, the individual "Soul's" control over his choice to "accept" salvation in contrast to the "grace" imparted by God in a predeterministic manner are not clearly delineated; Taylor tells us, for instance, that the speaker's fear "makes him ready leave Thy grace and run" (l. 17). One way of mitigating this confusion might be to recall the conventional Calvinist perspective that understands all goodness to be the province of God while humans are solely responsible for sin and inherently corrupt (Maddux 16).

By the final stanza, however, the speaker recognizes God from a conventionally Puritan perspective, as absolutely sovereign. He submits to a Christ whom he sees in biblical terms as the shepherd of lost souls. The speaker understands himself as a sheep in "Thy pasture" while Satan is "Thy cur," Christ's dog, who "barks" (l. 21) at the sheeps' heels to frighten them into remaining with the herd. Satan is not an agent independent of God but entirely within the Lord's power. This final metaphor also demonstrates Taylor's deft use of literary art to communicate theology; the pun that refers to Satan as a "cur that is so cursed" establishes an imaginative connection between the earthly (the lowly herding dog) and the spiritual (the theological condition of damnation), reminding readers of the perpetual interaction of the visible and invisible worlds in Puritanism.

For Discussion or Writing

1. According to Taylor, what specific threats are made to the speaker's confidence in God's mercy? Then, compare Taylor's discussion of the human soul's torment and fear with that of Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."
2. Edward Taylor's poetry is often compared to that of his Puritan contemporary Anne Bradstreet. Read Bradstreet's poem "The Flesh and the Spirit" and compare its portrait of a divided self with the one depicted in Taylor's "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor."
3. Create an analysis of this poem in which you argue that the speaker either has or does not have the power to choose to accept God's "grace." Which stanza of the poem do you believe is most important for advancing your argument?

William Etter

Christ's Reply" (1680)

The pretext for the 21 stanzas of "Christ's Reply" is given in an earlier poem entitled "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor." In this poem, a human soul is trembling before the accusations of Satan, who is figured in the poem as a barking dog. The dog's attack implants two fears: First, the Soul has sinned more than God is willing to forgive, and second, those actions of the Soul that appear like graces are also spoiled by sin. It is to these doubts that Christ responds in "Christ's Reply." In the poem, Taylor adopts the voice of Christ, who speaks tender words of comfort to the downcast Soul, addressing him as "my Honey" (l. 1), "My Little Darling" (l. 2), "my Pretty Heart" (l. 15), and in numerous other terms of endearment. The use of terms like "my Dove" (l. 4) and "my Chick" (l. 21) raises the question of whether Taylor is representing Christ as a mother or husband to the imperiled Soul. Both relationships are commonly used in the biblical tradition as metaphors of a Jewish or Christian adherent's connection to God, though Puritan discourse more frequently treats God as an all-powerful father figure. In either case, the tone of the poem's first 13 stanzas is primarily reassuring.

Christ reframes the "Yelper fierce" (l. 8) of "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor" as a "broken-toothed, and muzzled" (l. 14) sheepdog who serves to "make thee Cling / Close underneath the Savior's Wing" (ll. 16–17). Christ proclaims that the Soul's sins are not too many for his grace; nor does the Soul's predilection toward sin mean that he is sundered from a merciful God. In the 14th stanza, Christ's tone becomes more triumphant as he begins to press the Soul toward greater endurance in the struggle against sin. Christ boasts that nowhere in the world is there "a God like Me, to anger slow" (l. 80) who "frowns with a Smiling Face" (l. 84). The mingled elements of severity and mercy build in the latter portions of the poem as Christ exhorts the now-comforted Soul to "repent" (l. 88), "decline" (l. 104) to sin, and eventually "fight" (l. 121) Christ's battles. The Soul who at the beginning of the poem was bidden to "wipe thine eye" (l. 2) of tears is now challenged to "defy the Tempter, and his Mock" (l. 124). The poem thus enacts the manner in which a Puritan believer could justify moving from depravity and depression to energetic devotion.

For Discussion or Writing

1. In the eighth stanza of the poem, Taylor uses the metaphor of a "Beagle" (l. 44) engaged in hunting "games" (l. 45) to describe how the senses can draw the Soul to sin. This use of a traditional English pastime to illustrate the process of sin and temptation is part of a pattern in Taylor's verse in which the social contexts of his imagery are invested with theological significance. Are there other metaphors or comparisons in the poem in which you can see an implied social critique stemming from Puritan political or sumptuary ideals?
2. When describing the various temptations the Soul faces, Taylor mentions "a wandering mind" (l. 98) during prayer and "Spirits dull" (l. 99) during sermons. These and other descriptions in the poem of spiritual laxity call to mind the many perplexities and doubts regarding her faith that Anne Bradstreet describes in her letter "To My Dear Children." Why are Puritans so explicit about the ups and downs of their faith life? What is the psychological effect of their frank engagement with seasons of apathy and doubt?
3. In this poem, Taylor imbues Christ with an emotional intensity and language that allow him to speak directly to the fears and experiences of parishioners in Taylor's Westfield congregation. How do you think it would have affected a discouraged Puritan who heard Taylor read the poem from the pulpit? How do you think it affected Taylor to adopt the voice of his God?

Liam Corley

"The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended" (1680)

The concluding piece of Taylor's collection *God's Determinations,* this poem is a joyful celebration

of Christ's salvation of human sinners. Standard interpretations of this poem envision the speaker in heaven watching new souls approaching. An alternative reading might see the poem as depicting a speaker in heaven looking down to a concrete congregation in one of the Puritan churches in Massachusetts; indeed, the repetition of the final two lines of each stanza acts as a refrain, giving the poem a hymnlike quality, as though the congregation were actively engaged in Sunday worship. Regardless, the poem is directed toward the hope of future redemption, expressed by a speaker whose enthusiasm is barely contained in the frequent exclamations of the poem's first two stanzas: "Oh! joyous hearts! enfired with holy flame!" (l. 7). The dominant image of the rushing "coach" implies progression toward the divine after release from the threat of perpetual damnation. At the same time, this image is yet another example of Taylor's preference for using commonplace objects as metaphors for complex spiritual concepts; to the New England Puritan, even the commonplace could be a reflection of God's work upon the world (Murphy 11).

Of particular interest is the reference to humans' continued proclivity to sin, depicted so creatively in the third stanza, "And if a string do slip, by chance, they soon / Do screw it up again" to produce "a diviner harmony" (ll. 13–14, 16). (It is also worth noting that in his prose work *Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper,* Taylor refers to the soul as a "glorious Musicall Instrument" played by God when he exercises saving grace upon it.) Though redeemed by God's grace, these individuals retain their inherent human corruption; however, unlike the speaker of "The Soul's Groan to Christ for Succor," whose sins cause him to fear God, the celebrants of this later poem rejoice in their confidence that God will continue to help them remain on "the road that gives them right" (ll. 28).

Assurance of salvation is also a significant theme of the fourth stanza, where Taylor notably imagines these heaven-bound church members as entirely sincere in their religious convictions: "In all their acts, public, and private, nay / And secret, too, they praise impart" (ll. 19–20). Such a deep and earnest faith was not always so confidently assumed in Puritan culture of early America. Many of Taylor's fellow Puritan writers and ministers worried about hypocritical Christians and sought ways of using external behavior, such as the sacraments, to determine whether or not a church member was truly in a covenant with God, while recognizing that absolute assurance of an individual's internal spiritual condition was impossible for anyone other than God (Maddux 13). Taylor's poem is therefore an ideal vision of pure and sincere faith.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Look up the words *melody* and *melodious* in the dictionary. Why might Taylor have chosen to use this musical terminology to describe souls being led to heaven by Christ?
2. In the second stanza Taylor refers to "speech thus tasseled with praise." Consider how we might see Taylor's own poetry as using literary art to glorify God.
3. Write an essay in which you analyze the title of this poem. Who is "rightly consider[ing]" church fellowship? What does it mean to understand this fellowship "rightly"? You may wish to read JOHN WINTHROP's sermon *A Model of Christian Charity* when formulating your response.

William Etter

Preparatory Meditations before My Approach to the Lord's Supper (1682–1725)

Taylor wrote these meditations over a series of years, from 1682 to 1725, whenever he ministered the Eucharist to his congregation. Given the sporadic nature of the publication dates, it is certain that Taylor performed this sacrament at irregular intervals. He used his own ruminations on the Lord's Supper to create sermon series and poems to accompany them. In the prologue, Taylor refers to himself humbly as "a crumb of

dust," who implores God to inspire him, guide his pen, in his attempts "to prove thou art, and that thou art the best" (27–28). Taylor envisions himself as "designed / To make my pen unto thy Praise alone" (13–14). Indeed, Taylor locates his very being in his ability to praise God in poetic verse: "Inspire this Crumb of Dust till it display / Thy Glory through't, and then thy dust shall live" (21–22).

Lest readers mistake this gesture of humility in his prologue as a symptom of self-deprecation, the critic Parker Johnson reminds us that Taylor did not suffer from doubt about his own election. Instead, Johnson reads these moments that recur in *Meditations* as "a rhetorical strategy emphasizing a fact of Calvinist theology, that humans are sinful and unworthy. That Taylor doubted his spiritual condition and expressed this doubt in his poems contradicts certain tenets of covenant theology" (85). As proof of Taylor's recognition of his own certainty regarding the fate of his soul, Johnson notes that Taylor's *God's Determinations Touching His Elect* goes to great lengths to argue against needless doubt and fear regarding election (85).

The source of Taylor's notions of inadequacy in the *Meditations* is language itself. The critic Ursula Brumm agrees with Johnson, noting, "His frequent arguments about language, his despair, repeated in almost every meditation, at the inadequacy of human language, springs from his conviction in an ideal correspondence between the name and the thing. That sinful man is unable to achieve this correspondence in regard to God is the crucial point in every meditation" (201). The following opening stanza from Meditation 43 is a good example of the argument made by Brumm and Johnson:

> When, Lord, I seeke to shew thy praises, then
> Thy shining Majesty doth stund my minde,
> Encramps my tongue and tongue ties fast my Pen,
> That all my doings, do not what's designd.
> My Speeche's Organs are so trancifide
> My words stand startld, can't thy praises stride.

God's majesty proves too much for the poet, whose mind is stunned, tongue cramped and tied. His very means of communication, his pen, his tongue, and this "speeche's organs," are all rendered inadequate to the task of singing and praising God's glory. Similarly, Taylor laments, "My tongue wants words to tell my thoughts, my Minde / wants thoughts to Comprehend thy Worth, alas!" As a result of these failings, Taylor fears "little praise is brought."

The source for a perfect language is found in the biblical verses that are the occasions for each of the poems. The critic William Scheick argues quite directly, "Taylor found in Scriptures the art he sought to imitate" (106). Johnson views the language of the Bible as a bridge for the two extreme movements that mark all of Taylor's meditations: They all begin with a lament about the limitations of language to praise God truly but conclude with visions of heavenly praise. Taylor employs biblical language, Johnson argues, to move the poem "from the depravity of human rhetoric to a vision of the perfected, transfigured rhetoric of heavenly praise" (89). Whenever a biblical passage offers a metaphor, such as "If any man sins, we have an Advocate," Taylor examines the various implications of this comparison by considering attorneys, and others whose roles are central to a judicial system.

Another pattern that develops in Taylor's meditations on biblical verse is the use of typology, which is a theological practice dating back to medieval times in which aspects of the Old Testament were viewed as prefiguring aspects of the New Testament. One classic example of typology is the belief that the four main prophets of the Old Testament, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel prefigure the four main prophets of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The doctrine of typology is said to have originated in Paul's letter in the Book of Colossians: "These are a shadow of things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." Taylor compares King Solomon, who appears in the Old Testament, with Christ, in the New Testament:

Did He Gods Temple Build, in glory shown?
Thou buildst Gods House, more gloriously bright.
Did he sit on a golden ivery Throne
With Lions fenc'd? Thy Throne is far more White
And glorious: garded with Angells strong.
A streame of fire doth with the Verdict come.
Did he his Spouse, a glorious Palace build?
The Heavens are they Palace for thy Spouse.
Gods house was by his pray're with Glory filld.
God will for thine his Church in Glory house.
Did Sheba's Queen faint viewing of his glory?
Bright Angells stand amazed at thy Story.
(2.13, 5–6)

The formula that Taylor follows is like a question and answer, where he asks a question of Solomon only to answer it with a surpassing quality held by Christ. In this example, Solomon is the type, and Christ is the antitype. Every quality that Taylor addresses in Solomon (such as the details of his throne) is paralleled to similar qualities in Christ, and Solomon (the type) is used to contrast the glory of Christ, which is far superior.

The critic Michael North sees in Taylor's meditations a metaphorical expression of the Lord's Supper, which Taylor describes as "a seal of the covenant of grace." North contends, "This language of signs and seals is the answer to the covenant theology to the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation" (2). Transubstantiation, which is a doctrine promoted by the Roman Catholic Church, views the bread and wine of Communion as the literal Body and Blood of Christ. After the Protestant Reformation, the doctrine of consubstantiation, that Christ is present during the Eucharist but is not the wine and bread, originated. Thus, North is arguing that a central question of theology—how to interpret the wine and bread of the Lord's Supper—is also a central question of Taylor's poetry, which takes the Eucharist as its occasion and subject. For Taylor, the spiritual meal acts as a binding promise between man and God. It is the visible sign of this promise of God's grace:

It's Churches banquet, Spirituall Bread and Wine.
It is the Signet of the Kings right hande,
Seale to the Covenant of Grace Gods bande.
(2.108.34–36)

In this stanza from Meditation 108, second series, Taylor describes the Eucharist in metaphorical terms, as "the signet of the King's right hand." A signet is a ring worn by a king bearing his royal seal. On royal documents or decrees, the signet would be impressed into hot wax, where it would cool and become a permanent marker of the king's voice. In this line, the Eucharist is likened unto another symbol, one that creates binding laws. Thus, Taylor views the Eucharist as a metaphor of the bond or covenant between humans and God, "God's band."

Another recurring metaphor in Taylor's meditations derives from the Books of Genesis and Revelation and involves the Tree of Life. The critic Cecelia Halbert argues that Taylor's use of the tree in Meditation 29 from the first series stems not only from his use of biblical text, but also from his knowledge of the works of the British poet George Herbert. The critic Samuel Eliot Morison agrees with Halbert, arguing that Taylor's Meditations "owe their style as well as their conception to George Herbert" (cited in Halbert 24). It is not surprising that Taylor would be familiar with Herbert's poetry since his school curriculum in Leicestershire included the famed poet. It is Herbert's use of knots in "The Flower" that appears as a recurring image and metaphor for the tree of life in Taylor's *Preparatory Meditations* (Halbert 23).

Taylor's own signature use of the tree of life image, however, also stems from what the critic Roy Harvey Pearce refers to as Ramist influence: "Ramist logic with its stress upon correlating the facts of day-to-day reality with the facts of Revelation was consciously practiced by Puritan writers. This Ramist-Puritan method of discovering, or laying open to view (through meditation), fostered a tightly woven and logically ordered literature, be it sermon or poetry" (Halbert 25). One of these earlyday images was that of a tree. Around this image, Taylor created "clusters," which would

contain more than one referent or meaning and thus render the image complex and more adept at addressing the complexity of God. In Meditation 29, the only poem in which Taylor's image of the tree is complete, he likens God unto a "golden tree" and places "saints and angels bright" along its "branches strong." Lower on the divine hierarchy, Taylor locates himself as a "withered twig, dri'de fit to bee / A Chat Cast in thy fire, Writh off by Vice." He imagines himself as cast off, the most menial part of the tree, which is only fit as kindling for a fire. This image of his own lowly state has been addressed earlier in the entry, and it anticipates God's deliverance, which appears in subsequent stanzas. Taylor pleads with God to "graft mee in this golden stock, thou'lt make mee." The hope expressed with the metaphor of grafting is an incorporation of the lowly twig with the divine and golden tree:

> I being graft in thee am grafted here
> Into thy family, and kindred Claim
> To all in Heaven, God, Saints, and Angells there.
> I thy Relations my Relations name.
> Thy Father's mine, thy God my God, and I
> With Saints, and Angells draw affinity.

This union with God disrupts the hierarchy mentioned in prior stanzas and recognizes how God's grace creates a seamless union between humans and God, a common theme of God's covenant with humans, which pervades Taylor's sense of the Lord's Supper. As in all of his meditative poems, Taylor concludes Meditation 29 with the union of God and man producing the poet, who is then dedicated to singing God's praise in his poetry: "Make mee thy graft, by thou my Golden Stock. / Thy Glory then I'le make my fruits and Crop."

Taylor's sermon associated with the implantation image appears in *Christographia,* where he complements his poem by stating, "Let then the awful Consideration that you are in by nature stir you up to endeavor after an implantation into Christ. . . . Christ himself passeth over all unto all that are implanted into Christ. The upshot all life lieth in the United Essentiall harmony of the Same in the person. . . . O! what then should our endeavours be that we may obtain an Implantation into Christ Jesus that this may be ours?" (reported in Halbert 30).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Recalling the definition of typology provided, search through your book's selections of Taylor's *Meditations* and discover another instance of this theological doctrine, identify the two types, and explain the nature of the correspondence between their parallel features.
2. Consider the Ramist influence in Taylor's poetry compared with that of other Puritan poets such as Anne Bradstreet. Compare the everyday images that Taylor employs in his *Preparatory Meditations* with the images that appear in Bradstreet's poetry.
3. Write your own version of a meditation based on a passage from a religious text in the style of Taylor, remembering to consider the various possible interpretations of the metaphor presented in the religious text and to develop them to their fullest extent.

A Metrical History of Christianity (ca. 1695)

The 19,890 lines of this poem, untitled in the manuscript version, constitute nearly half of Edward Taylor's 40,000 lines of poetry, and the religious subject and themes of this verse narrative are consistent with Puritan thought. The poem, probably written in the late 17th century, relates Christian history from the persecutions and martyrdoms in the first century through the internal and external troubles Christians faced and God endured in succeeding centuries; church history before the Protestant Reformation ends at the 12th century. The poem also recounts the persecutions and martyrdoms of Protestants from 1555 to 1558. Its language, structure, and theology follow closely similar elements in Taylor's sources, *Ecclesiastica Historia Integrum Ecclesiae* (The ecclesiastical history of the whole church; literally, The Magdeburg Centuries, familiarly) by Matthias Flacius

associates and *Actes and Monuments* by John Foxe. Taylor's history in verse was not published in his lifetime, and his descendants preserved the carefully corrected manuscript until the 20th century, when they donated it to the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, Rhode Island. Donald E. Stanford transcribed the manuscript in 1953 for his doctoral dissertation and in 1962 made other copies of *A Metrical History of Christianity* available because its subject and length seemed to preclude publication as a book. He gave the composition its current title.

Although the poem is consistent in its themes, it features nine types of versification. The most used is the heroic couplet: This form seems to suggest the grandeur of his subject, the history of Christendom, and the range of his narrative, which is not limited to the Christian Church in Europe but includes the history of the church in Asia and in Africa. The main narrative sections of the book-length poem are in heroic couplets. Other forms are generally used in the transitional stanzas, such as those praising churchmen such as Augustine and others who have done or written great things. The ballad stanza also occurs in Taylor's poem; both the epic and the ballad are narrative forms that relate extraordinary events. Seven other unnamed verse types are present in the poem. One of them features two sets of quatrains in which the first three lines have an iambic tetrameter with a final line of iambic dimeter; the rhyme scheme for the octave is *aaab cccb.* A second is also eight lines long, divided into two stanzas of four lines, and the first three lines of each quatrain are iambic pentameter with a last line of iambic dimeter. Its rhyme scheme is the same as that of the previous form. A third is a variant of the ballad stanza with the first and third lines of the four-line stanza in iambic pentameter, while the second and fourth are in iambic tetrameter. A fourth is a five-line verse with a rhyme scheme of *ababb*; the first and third lines are iambic pentameter with the remaining lines in iambic tetrameter. A fifth type of versification is almost identical to the previous form: The difference is that the first, fourth, and final lines are iambic pentameter, while the second and third are iambic tetrameter. A sixth verse form is simply five lines of iambic pentameter with a rhyme pattern of *ababb.* Finally, *A Metrical History* includes stanzas of six iambic pentameter lines rhymed *ababcc*. Stanford suggests that the use of several forms shows his interest in exploring new possibilities in stanzaic formulas and is consistent with versification in Taylor's other longer works.

The primary structure of *A Metrical History* is not metrical but narrative. After six lines in praise of Christ's victorious and salvific death, the poem describes the martyrdom of Stephen and proceeds to retell the fate of Jesus' disciples; the poem also includes accounts of natural wonders and disasters, such as the eruption of Vesuvius, with commentary that shows how God has worked through them. The history of the Christian world before the advent of Protestantism is organized by centuries, as is *The Magdeburg Centuries,* and the stories proceed chronologically. The narration covers not only European history and figures but also those of the Middle East and northern Africa; the British Isles sometimes receive separate treatment and sometimes are included as a part of Europe. Within the tales of martyrdom, heresies, evangelism, and papal malfeasance are comments on the way that God's mercy and justice shine through the events. The history of the church before the Reformation ends abruptly with the 11th century (possibly because Taylor owned only six volumes of the *Centuries,* whose Latin he paraphrases in verse), and a short section about the reign of Mary Tudor introduces a shorter history of Protestant martyrs, whose stories are presented in as much detail as were tales of early martyrs. The break in the narrative may be an artifact of the manuscript, from which pages are missing, or may suggest that Taylor was writing two poems with parallel subjects and structures.

Taylor's sources include material that is now dismissed as legend, most notably the story of Pope Joan (ll. 13343–13388), which Taylor reports with Puritan invective and a sort of metaphysical wordplay. The illegitimate offspring of an English priest, Joan is renamed *Gilbert* and sent to Fulda, where another monk notices that she is female. Sent to

Athens, the woman gains fame as a teacher and a disputant; no one uncovers her secret. She then goes to Rome, where, not surprisingly, she is unanimously elected pope. She fulfills the duties of the papal office and receives the honor due her office: Even the English king kisses her foot. Near a statue Nero erected, she delivers her "Egg and Spawn." Such diction in *A Metrical History* is a sign that the event is contrary to nature, and passages about negative developments often say ideas or actions are hatched from evil eggs or the eggs of pride. The section about the female pope begins, "Good morrow, Madam! thou art found at last" and ends with the narrator's wondering whether one should call Pope Joan "dad or Mam." Taylor uses similar punning in the poem when the speaker relates the story of Hildebrand (Gregory VII), who is figured as Hellbrand who flees to his homeland, hell, a place the pope's keys will unlock.

Papal lust and corruption are standard themes in Protestant literature, and Taylor's poem is replete with stories of the evils of the Roman Church. Taylor and his sources condemn the materialism of the Roman Catholic Church, not only because they see it in the greed of bishops and popes but also because it puts too high a value on the physical. Deusdedit, for example, adorns wooden dishes (plain, natural, and good) with gold (ornate, unnatural, and worldly) and encourages people to put holy water on objects as charms against storms. Later popes promulgated similar errors, and men who are supposed to show the truth are practicing deceit and promoting superstition instead of faith. The poem also indicts Roman Catholics for expressing their materialistic desires in adorning churches and using expensive chalices. The Roman Church promotes the worship of statues, not the veneration of saints, and the superstition of intercessory prayer. The poem further condemns the Roman Catholic insistence on clerical celibacy and the forbidding of marriage during Lent as acts that oppose marriage. In spite of these negative departures from the truth of Christianity, the narrator is able to see in them God's patience and mercy evident in this life because God permits these men to persist in their ways, although he does occasionally send an earthquake or a comet as an expression of justice.

An additional Puritan theme in *A Metrical History* is that of degeneracy and regeneration. The martyrs of the early church follow Christ's example and willingly give their lives during the 11 persecutions narrated in the poem. Pope Fabian, who was chosen pope because a dove landed on him as he was handling a dung cart, was a martyr and so is an example of a good pope. John Chrysostom is praised for his bravery in condemning the morals of Eudoxia, but he is a rare example of an upright patriarch of Constantinople. (The poem details fewer stories of their wickedness, but they usually come off little better than their Roman counterparts.) Methodius and Cyril, the ninth-century missionaries to the Slavs, are praised for having created the Cyrillic alphabet and for translating the gospel into a language that people could understand. They seem to be proto-Protestants. The poem also commends the monks of Lindisfarne, although it usually condemns monks, for standing up for the practices of the Celtic Church, which Scots Calvinists saw as similar to the practices of the Protestants, against the encroachments of the Roman Church. Aidan of Lindisfarne is singled out as a man who preaches the gospel in a language common men can understand and who cares for the poor. The Roman Church punishes Cyril and Methodius and triumphs in the British Isles. Eventually, however, the blood of the Protestant martyrs and the reforms of Protestant theologians restore the church to its original fervor and purity.

Scholars find in the poem a typical Puritan fascination with the negative and an excess of gory detail in the descriptions of martyrdom. The poem, nevertheless, follows the example of much hagiography, in which the detailed images of physical suffering emphasize the extent and intensity of the martyrs' love for Christ. They follow his example in suffering in the flesh, in spite of the fact that their sacrifice can never equal his, and thus become examples of faith for others to follow. Their endurance further underlines the lack of value Christians are supposed to place on the impermanent flesh

and the value that Christians are supposed to place on the permanent soul since martyrs lose life in the body and gain the eternal life of the soul. A less edifying reason for including such horrors is that hagiography was the popular, violent literature of its time.

While Taylor's desire to keep his poetry out of print may seem to belie these as reasons for the brutal imagery in *A Metrical History,* the poem may have circulated in manuscript. Scholars of Renaissance culture have studied the continuation of manuscript culture into the 17th century and have suggested that poets such as John Donne and Katherine Philips controlled access to their works through manuscript circulation and that the colonists maintained the practices of English culture longer than the English did. Taylor would fit that profile. Eberwein suggests that the narrator's apologies for weak versification indicate Taylor thought he had an audience beyond himself and God, as did his careful binding and correcting of the poem's text to preserve it for future generations of his family.

However impressive the scope of Taylor's narrative poem is, its poetic value is doubtful; the poem lacks the metaphysical conceits and lyric intensity of his shorter works. Its language and imagery, the epic form notwithstanding, seem uninspired to people not interested in its reworking of church history. Some suggest its value lies in its expression of Puritan thought or in its being a key to greater understanding of Taylor as a religious thinker. Even so, the poem is an interesting example of cultural translation, the creation of an epic of Christendom, and of the translation of Latin prose into English poetry. The text, as do many Protestant poems, shows both continuity with and departure from Christian tradition.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Taylor's poem is characterized as Puritan invective. How does his diction suggest denunciation?
2. Compare and contrast the descriptions of the eruptions of Vesuvius in 81 (ll. 296–311) and 513 (ll. 8829–8833).
3. In line 671 the poem refers to evil birds hatched from the eggs of Simon Magus. In ll. 7135–7136, monasteries are hatched in several countries; the poem describes Adrian III as having been hatched (l. 13501). Bruno hatched the Carthusians (l. 17320), and Maurice hatched intercessory prayer (l. 7645). What connection(s) does the use of this word imply?
4. Taylor is often criticized for his negativity. Look at a description of a martyrdom or a passage about God's patience. What is positive in it?
5. How does Taylor's recitation of church history compare with COTTON MATHER's sweeping history of New England, *Magnalia Christi Americana*?

Karen Keck

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON TAYLOR AND HIS WORK

1. Taylor's *A Metrical History of Christianity* offers readers an impressive catalog of early Church history. How does Taylor's text of the past imagine a specific kind of future for America?
2. Throughout his extensive collection of poetry, Edward Taylor uses terms that carry multiple meanings. Examine two of his poems and argue for his use of such selected language. How do the poems hold more than one definition for certain words?

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Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784)

In every human breast, God has implanted a principle, which we call love of freedom; it is impatient of oppression and pants for deliverance.

(letter to Samson Occom, 1774)

At the age of seven or eight (her exact birth date is unknown), a young girl arrived in Boston harbor on July 11, 1761. Her age was determined "from the circumstance of shedding her front teeth" (17). She traveled aboard the *Phillis,* a schooner that had sailed to Senegal, Sierra Leone, and off the coast of Guinea to pick up slaves and deliver them to the colonies along the eastern seaboard. The young girl would soon take on the name of the very slave ship that transported her to Massachusetts. Her surname would also be determined on the same day as Mrs. Susanna Wheatley, the wife of a wealthy merchant named John Wheatley, purchased her "for a trifle" and took her home to become a house servant. Susanna and John's daughter, Mary, began educating the young slave in reading, writing, Latin, and the Bible.

In 1772, Wheatley's master wrote to testify of Phillis's intellect and to support her during an inquiry into her capacity to author poems:

> Phillis was brought from Africa to America in the year 1761, between seven and eight years of age. Without any assistance from school education, and by only what she was taught in the family, she, in sixteen months time from her arrival, attained the English language, to which she was an utter stranger before, to such a degree, as to read any, most difficult Parts of the Sacred Writings to the great Astonishment of all who heard her. As to her Writing, her own Curiousity led her to it; and this she learnt in so short a time, that in the year 1765, she wrote a letter to the Reverend Mr. Occom, the Indian Minister, while in England. She has a great Inclination to learn the Latin tongue, and has made some progress in it. This Relation is given by her Master who bought her, and with whom she now lives. (reported in Gates 19–20)

The critic Terence Collins remarks on John Wheatley's statement, "The tone of this letter as well as the indication that she was admitted to the inner circle of family education and religion suggest that hers was not a life typical of American slavery" (148). Wheatley's experience as a slave was hardly typical, and this fact alone seems to have contributed to the negative criticism regarding her literary representation of a black experience in early America. The abolitionist biographer Matilda Odell wrote that Wheatley was "not allowed to associate with other domestics of the family, who were of her own color and condition, but was kept constantly about the person of her mistress" (reported in Collins 148).

In 1765, four years after her arrival in America and her introduction to the English language, Phillis Wheatley had written her first poem. Her most anthologized and popular poem, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," was penned

when Phillis was only 14 years of age. Two years later, in 1767, she published a poem in the *Newport Mercury* (20). With the publication of her elegy to the Reverend George Whitefield, who was a popular evangelical preacher who died while on a speaking tour, Phillis Wheatley gained fame, both in the colonies as well as in the motherland of England. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., writes, "Wheatley shrewdly apostrophized the Countess (Selina Hastings) in the Whitefield elegy, and sent a letter of condolence with the poem enclosed" (22). Wheatley's familiarity with the countess of Huntingdon deepened the following year, when Wheatley traveled to England to attend to the publication of her first book of poetry, a collection of 28 poems. Gates attributes the publication of Wheatley's book of poetry in England rather than America to the former country's more receptive climate toward black authors. The publication of "one of the earliest slave narratives by James Gronniosaw" in England with the aid of the countess of Huntingdon had already paved the way for Wheatley's book (30). As a result of the efforts of the countess and Susanna Wheatley, Phillis Wheatley's book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral,* appeared in print, making Wheatley the first author of African descent to publish a book in the English language.

When attempting to solicit an American publisher for her book of 28, poems, Wheatley faced skeptics in America who convened in autumn 1772 to interrogate her and determine whether she had indeed authored the poems. Eighteen gentlemen, who identified themselves only as "most respectable characters in Boston," met with Wheatley and over the course of their questions put not only Wheatley on trial, but the whole African race. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr., argues in *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley,* American views of Africans were greatly influenced by the philosophies of David Hume and Immanuel Kant (23). These two philosophers, among others, published works investigating the true nature of Africans. Hume wrote in 1753 that he believed Africans to be another "species of men." He deemed them incapable of producing any of the markers of civilization such as the arts or the sciences. Hume directly addressed the question of African slaves in the British colonies and those in other parts of the Western Hemisphere: "There are Negro slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity" (reported in Gates 24). Wheatley's poetry directly challenged these theories on Africans and their incapacity to produce "anything great in art or science of any other praiseworthy quality," as Kant wrote in 1763.

Although there are no records of the proceedings or the actual questions put to Wheatley during that October meeting in 1772, we do know for certain that she emerged from the inquiry triumphant. The various members of Bostonian society were satisfied that Wheatley had indeed penned the poems whose authorship she claimed, and they would be published the following year in England. The final formal conclusion of the inquiry took the form of an attestation:

> We whose Names are under-written, do assure the World, that the Poems specified in the following Page, were (as we verily believe) written by Phillis, a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since brought an uncultivated Barbarian from Africa, and has ever since been, and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in this Town. She has been examined by some of the best Judges, and is thought qualified to write them.

Note that the attestation, which was deemed critical and essential to Wheatley's finding a publisher for her poetry book in America, was not sufficient to fulfill her wish. The prevailing notion of Africans as uncivilized barbarians was too pervasive to be overcome by the signed statement of 18 of Boston's greatest minds.

While in England, Wheatley met several key figures, whose opinions of her were all positive, even if they revealed the predisposition of some people to discount the young poetess as an erudite, educated black woman. As mentioned previously, Wheatley gained an acquaintance with the countess of

Huntingdon, who was instrumental in the publication of her book of poetry in 1773. She also was introduced to the earl of Dartmouth, who gave her a tour of the Tower of London as well as money to purchase the works of Alexander Pope, whose literary influence has been commented on by several critics in both positive and negative ways. Wheatley's poem "To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth" was written in October 1772 upon her return to Boston and her learning that William Legge had been appointed as secretary for the North American colonies. Thomas Wooldridge, an emissary who met and interviewed Wheatley, delivered her poem and brief introductory letter to the earl of Dartmouth. In his letter to the earl, Wooldridge reveals a predisposition to the theories of Hume and Kant, for he interrogated her to determine that "she was no imposter." Wooldridge describes how he "was present when she wrote [a rough copy of the poem and letter addressed to the earl] and can attest that it is her own production" (reported in Gates 28; Robinson 20–21). Wooldridge expresses his own "astonish[ment]" on discovering Wheatley's natural, seemingly effortless, talent and in so doing places himself squarely with the group of 18 who interrogated before she set sail for England.

Among those key American figures whom Wheatley met were BENJAMIN FRANKLIN and George Washington. In a letter to his nephew, Jonathan Williams, Franklin includes a brief account of his visit with Wheatley: "Upon your Recommendation I went to see the black Poetess and offer'd her any Services I could do her. And I have heard nothing since of her" (reported in Gates 34). Although she did not write a laudatory poem in praise of Franklin, Wheatley's advertisements in 1779 for a second volume of poetry all included the fact that she intended to dedicate the volume to Franklin. Wheatley did meet and write about General George Washington, however. On October 26, 1775, she sent a letter as well as a poem written in honor of Washington to his headquarters in Cambridge. He responded on February 28 of the following year, 1776, having been understandably delayed by the events of the Revolutionary War that had begun six months prior to her correspondence. In his response, Washington "apologize[d] for the delay" and expressed sincere gratitude for "the elegant lines." He praised her "poetical talents," citing "the [poem's] style and manner" (reported in Gates 37–38). Washington attributes the absence of the poem from newspapers to his own humility, writing, "had I not been apprehensive, that, while I only meant to give the world this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of vanity. This, and nothing else, determined me not to give it place in the public prints" (38). Washington ends his epistle by inviting Wheatley to Cambridge, adding graciously, "I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the Muses, and to whom nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations" (38). The biographer Benson J. Lossing reports that the meeting of George Washington and Phillis Wheatley did take place in Cambridge just days before the evacuation of Boston. In March 1776, Washington had Wheatley's panegyric poem published in the *Virginia Gazette*.

Some critical figures who formed opinions on Wheatley, however, were not so impressed. The central critic, whose opinions on the young poetess continue to appear in criticism but who never met her, was none other than THOMAS JEFFERSON. Gates believes that Francois, the marquis de Barbé-Marbois, occasioned Jefferson's criticism of Wheatley's poetry when he requested statistical information on the various states in the republic, which became Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (40). Marbois read Wheatley's book of poetry in 1779 and wrote in his journal about "read[ing] [her poems] with some surprise." In her writing, Marbois discovered "imagination, poetry, and zeal" (reported in Gates 42). Jefferson vehemently disagreed with Marbois's praise, stating, "The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism." In his response, Jefferson alludes to the commonly held belief made popular by Hume and Kant that Africans were incapable of producing the cultivated arts. His response even calls into

question Wheatley's authorship by referring to her poetry as "published under her name" rather than "published by her."

Jefferson does seem to concede her authorship, however, when he writes more specifically of her lack of love, which kindles the imagination rather than merely the senses. In his most famous and often cited critique of Wheatley, Jefferson avers, "Religion, indeed, has produced a Phillis Whatley [*sic*]; but it could not produce a poet." The argument Jefferson makes is that Africans like Wheatley have souls and are capable of being converted to Christianity, but their imbibing of biblical verse results in merely imitative and wooden poetry rather than verse capable of inspiring higher thought or finer feeling in her reader.

Upon her return to America, the Wheatleys manumitted Phillis Wheatley. Critics attribute the Wheatleys' granting of her freedom to both her time in England and the passage of an English law in 1772 that made it illegal for slaves to be forcibly returned to the colonies after their stay, however brief, in England. It would be a wonderful ending to her life to say that Wheatley's freedom improved her daily living, but the truth is sadly different. When she returned to America, she was faced with the daunting task of having to make a living. As an indication of the tenuous financial position she held as a freed slave in Boston, critics point to her letter written in mid-October 1773 to the customs collector in New Haven, David Wooster. In her letter, Wheatley poignantly refers to her dependence upon book sales to put food on her table: "Use your interest with Gentlemen and Ladies of your acquaintance to subscribe also, for the more subscribers there are, the more it will be for my advantage as I am to have half the Sale of Books. This I am the more solicitous for, as I am not upon my own footing and whatever I get by this is entirely mine, and it is the Chief I have to depend upon. I must also request you would desire the Printers in New Haven, not to reprint that Book, as it will be a great hurt to me, preventing any further Benefit that I might receive from the Sale of my Copies from England" (reprinted in Gates 35–36). As indicated in the letter, Wheatley relied upon the sale of her book to make a living, and she feared that reprints of the English edition, for which she would receive no payment, might ruin her financially.

Shortly after the death of Susanna Wheatley in spring 1774, and the British occupation of Boston in anticipation of the Revolutionary War, Phillis moved to Providence, where Mary, the Wheatley daughter who provided Phillis with an education, was living with her husband, the Reverend John Lathrop, who was known as "the Revolutionary Preacher" and the pastor of the Old North Church, a position that both Increase and COTTON MATHER had previously held. The outbreak of the Revolutionary War in April 1775 diverted people's attentions from the African prodigy, and her prospects seemed rather bleak. Phillis returned to Boston in late 1776, and it was there, two years later, that she met and married her husband, a free black named John Peters. Not much is known of Peters, but we do know from records of his petition to sell spirits in his store that he was a grocer and sometimes functioned as a lawyer, an indication that he was well educated. The couple had three children, all of whom died in infancy. During her pregnancy with her third child, Peters abandoned Phillis. She died alone at the young age of 30 with her fatally ill child lying next to her. Her third child passed away a day after Phillis's death.

Her literary legacy has been somewhat uncertain as she was treated unkindly or forgotten by black nationalists as early as the 19th century. Cultural critics of her work point to her use of neoclassical style, the absence of rage or protest against the institution of slavery in her prose, and her poor imitation of the style of the British poet and essayist Alexander Pope. Gates sees the criticism launched against Wheatley from the late 19th century to the present as a continuation of the trial Phillis Wheatley endured in 1772 when 18 preeminent men of Boston interrogated her to determine whether she was capable of writing poetry. He also sees the reemergence of Thomas Jefferson's demeaning statements against Wheatley "recuperated and recycled by successive generations of black writers

and critics. Too black to be taken seriously by white critics of the eighteenth century, Wheatley was now considered too white to interest black critics in the twentieth" (Gates 82). Terence Collins believes that Wheatley's difficult status of living in between races was reflected in her life. "She was not in any real way a part of the dominant culture: although she mixed with white society, it was always as an exception, as a guest, as a showpiece novelty. As a result, one must guess that she lived in a neutral zone, neither black nor white—and her poems stand as a record of this ambivalence, as an indication that the slave mentality went deeper than the surface of her life" (149).

"On the Death of Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, 1770" (1773)

This poem, widely reprinted in Boston, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia in 1770, also appeared in newspapers in London and provided Wheatley international recognition. The critic Carla Willard believes "the elegy was perhaps the most widely circulated of the poet's newspaper poems" (244). Within the poem, Wheatley's elegy of this popular evangelist serves two purposes: It re-creates, through use of apostrophe, the strong, heroic figure and fashions him into the ideal speaker for the abolition of slavery on the basis of the savior's impartiality as well as egalitarianism purchased through the sacrament of baptism.

In Wheatley's poem, Whitefield appears as a "happy saint" whose "music of thy tongue" produced powerful effects on his audiences by "inflam[ing] the heart, and captivat[ing] the mind" (8). His eloquence and oratory skills were capable of enrapturing the confirmed deist Benjamin Franklin, who recalls his own experience of attending one of Whitefield's sermons and finding himself entranced by the evangelist (reported in Willard 244–245). The persuasive and penetrating reach of Whitefield's sermons that appear here, hyperbolically represented as "in unequal'd accents" capable of making "ev'ry bosom with devotion glow," will be harnessed by Wheatley in the latter half of the poem to lobby on behalf of the equality of Africans. This message of freedom for all, spoken as if from beyond the grave by a popular and widely respected man of the cloth, gains even further cultural authority with Wheatley's hyperbolic representation of his religious and psychological effect on all who hear him speak.

The democratic sweep of Wheatley's hyperbole appears again in the pivotal second stanza, in which she casts Whitefield as an advocate of the belief in an "impartial Saviour" (35). Wheatley sets up a parallelism: Just as Jesus reaches out to save all humans regardless of race, so too did Whitefield himself reach out to save all his parishioners. "Wash'd in the fountain of redeeming blood," Africans gain not only equality with Anglo Americans, but also the ability to achieve positions of equal and greater social status than currently available (36). Wheatley declares, "You shall be son, and kings, and priests to God" (37). Because Wheatley has employed the rhetorical strategy of apostrophe, she can boldly make statements for the emancipation of Africans that she can only hint at in more subtle ways when writing in her own voice. The irony of having Whitefield as a strong voice for the emancipation of slaves most undoubtedly was a shock to Wheatley as well as to supporters of Whitefield, who learned by reading the newspaper that owned 50 slaves at the time of his death whom he did not free but willed to the countess of Huntingdon.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare Wheatley's praise of Mr. Whitefield and her poem dedicated to George Washington. What qualities does she revere in these two figures? On the basis of these qualities, what larger issues does she address in their poems?
2. Consider Wheatley's treatment of the liberating effects of baptism on Africans and the legal status that baptized persons held, as evidenced in Olaudah Equiano's autobiography. Explore how this sacrament might aid abolitionists in their call for the end of slavery.

"To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth" (1772)

During her trip to England, Wheatley was introduced to William Legge, the earl of Dartmouth, who was to assume a position in America as secretary for the North American colonies. Legge's emissary, Thomas Wooldridge, personally interviewed Wheatley, who composed both an introductory letter as well as this laudatory poem in October 1772. In her letter, Wheatley identifies herself as "an African," signaling a racial self-consciousness that was common in her writing in general. Wheatley does not see her status as "African" as being mutually exclusive with her identity as an American, however, as she writes collectively of the "(now) happy America, [that] exults with equal transport in the view of one of its greatest advocates."

In the opening stanza of the poem, Wheatley imagines a personified Freedom, a goddess who accompanies the earl of Dartmouth on his much-anticipated arrival in America. His appearance is transformative: "Each soul expands, each grateful bosom burns" (6). These references to finer feelings are due to the earl's proclivity to rule in America with "silken reins" (8). In other words, because he will be a kind secretary of state, Americans will respond positively to his rule. The "silken reins" are contrasted two stanzas later when Wheatley writes of the "iron chain" of former rulers.

The connection between America and Wheatley is deepened in the fourth stanza when the poem's focus shifts to her personal story of kidnapping and enslavement. "I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate / Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat" (24–25). America does not appear in this particular line as a site of freedom but rather as a kidnapper who snatches children from a happy life. As this has been her own experience, which she recites for both the earl of Dartmouth and all other readers, she poses the rhetorical question "And can I then but pray / Others may never feel tyrannic sway?" (30–31). The inherent argument laid out in this stanza is that Wheatley's status as a slave, precisely the condition that would place her outside American society and culture, becomes the very means by which she gains an authority to speak out on behalf of the need for freedom in America. Who would love freedom and pine for it more than a slave who has been denied it?

The critic Carla Willard argues, "Wheatley's praise, which takes the names of the most powerful political and religious figures of her age, does not attempt to give a 'true' picture of the hero at all" (239). Instead of imagining the earl of Dartmouth as a lifelike figure with foibles and flaws, she creates a hyperbolic version of him that makes him more heroic and calls upon him to live up to the praise immortalized in her verse.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the other poems Wheatley dedicates to living persons such as George Washington. Does she see similar traits in these figures? Is her language of praise similar?
2. How does Wheatley's description of her own kidnapping and enslavement register in a poem of praise to the earl of Dartmouth? Does it change the poem's tone? How does it compare with her poem "On Being Brought from Africa to America"?

"To Maecenas" (1773)

Wheatley dedicates her poem to the dear friend and patron of Horace, author of famous odes, and Virgil, author of the *Aeneid,* and in doing so creates a poetic occasion on which she can both display her extensive knowledge of classical literature and mythology and carve out a tradition for her own voice.

She opens the poem with praise for the strength of poets and shepherds, whose lines generate a sympathetic response in their readers. Homer's epic tale of the Trojan War, its tragic characters such as Patroclus and Pelides, and even its descriptions of natural phenomena like thunder and lightning all reflect a direct connection between the poet's lines and the emotional realities experienced by his readers. They

are moved to tears "when great Patroclus courts Achilles' aid" and "feel the pangs of love" when Achilles mourns the death of Pelides, a great man and warrior. Even phenomena as banal as lightning and thunder, which served as signs or messages from the Greek gods but seem less emblematic in Wheatley's day, produce a "deep felt horror . . . through all [her] veins" (14).

And yet, even within this second stanza that turns its grateful eye in adoration of Homer, Wheatley provides readers with an introduction to her own poetic talent. In the rhyming couplet "When gentler strains demand thy graceful song / The length'ning line moves languishing along," Wheatley reveals her ability to produce the very pacing she praises in another. The word *languishing* draws out the line and slows the reader's pace.

Not surprisingly, Wheatley turns in the following stanza to the subject of her own poetry and its place in this classical tradition: "O could I rival thine and Virgil's page" (23). The grand hope expressed in this line seems, at the stanza's close, to be sadly in vain: "But here I sit, and mourn a grov'ling mind / That fain would mount and ride upon the wind" (29–30). The syntax of the first line renders the "grov'ling mind" an obstacle to the poet's wishes but does not clearly identify the person possessing this mind. It seems, on a metatextual level, to be a veiled complaint against those who prevent her from attaining the poetic and actual freedom akin to riding on the wind.

Similarly, the final two lines of the subsequent stanza contain a double meaning: "But I less happy, cannot raise the song, / The fault'ring music dies upon my tongue" (35–36). The rhetorical ambiguity of the phrase "but I less happy" lends itself to two different but not incompatible interpretations: that the poet's unhappiness can be attributed to her failure at meeting the task or that the poet's unhappiness, which stems from an unknown but easily guessed cause, prevents her from raising her song. The second interpretation is in keeping with that provided in "grov'ling mind." The second line of this couplet likewise provides for more than one meaning. It may be that Wheatley's tongue is better suited for another genre of poetry, and thus the attempts at classical form die on her tongue, or it may be that the larger forces, such as slavery and racism, that prey upon her cause the music, or inspiration, to falter.

Wheatley concludes the poem by noting the immortality of Maecenas and requesting that such a worthy reader, who recognized and was moved by the greatness of Horace and Virgil, will "hear [her] propitious, and defend [her] lays."

For Discussion or Writing

1. Wheatley references Terence in her poem, providing her contemporary readers with a note that he was an African by birth. Consider his placement in a poem that praises Greek and Roman poets. How does he stand in for Wheatley herself?
2. The poets praised are all male. In what manner does gender make a difference in Wheatley's ability to enter into this genre of poetry?

"On Being Brought from Africa to America" (1773)

Perhaps the most anthologized and reprinted of all of Wheatley's poetry, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" turns Christians' view of Africans and biblical sanctioning of the institution of slavery on their heads in very subtle and indirect, but nevertheless powerful ways. Wheatley was 14 years old when she wrote it.

The notion expressed in the first line, "'Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land," contains the two strands of meaning that are interwoven throughout the poem. When one considers the circumstances of Wheatley's kidnapping and sale into slavery that characterize her movement from "pagan land" to America, it is difficult not to read her use of *mercy* with a bitter irony. Her reference to Africa as a "pagan land," however, tempers this tone of bitterness as she contrasts the land of her birth with the predominant Christian belief lauded in America. America is personified in the second stanza as an able religious guide who "taught [her] benighted soul to understand" (2). Wheat-

ley's choice of the adjective *benighted* is especially apt as this term maintains the double movements of praise and critique introduced in the preceding line. Wheatley expresses appreciation for this knowledge of God and Christ, yet her use of the word *benighted* to define herself belies Anglo Americans' racially charged notion of Christianity. The term means "characterized by night," but an alternate definition is "lack of enlightenment." In this single word, then, Wheatley encapsulates the racist thought of some Christians in America: that blackness equates with ignorance or, in the context of the poem, paganism.

Wheatley directly addresses this topic of racist Christians, which has appeared in indirect and subtle form in the first four lines, in the fifth line of the poem: "Some view our sable race with scornful eye." Wheatley's use of the first-person plural pronoun *our* might seem insignificant, but it creates a weighted version of the binary between races that favors Africans over Anglo Americans. Those who view "with a scornful eye" effectively become "them," a group whose members include neither Wheatley nor her readers. This distancing of reader and narrator from the white Christians who hold racist views is made even more evident in the following line, "Their colour is a diabolic die" (6). Wheatley employs quotation marks effectively to set off this other belief in a visible manner, which is itself ironic since this prejudice is based on a skewed reading or interpretation of skin color, or what is visible. Wheatley indirectly alludes to the mark of Cain, a passage from the Book of Genesis in which God places a visible mark on the sibling who murdered his own brother and punishes his sin of fratricide by condemning his progeny to serve those of his slain brother. Slave-owning Christians frequently referred to this biblical passage as sanctioning the institution of slavery.

Wheatley concludes this short but compelling poem with a firm tone and a direct address to her readers that seems to be a reminder and a rebuff.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Wheatley's tale of arriving in America compare with Olaudah Equiano's?
2. Consider the role that religion plays in Wheatley's poem and compare it to Jupiter Hammon's. Is it the same? Are there differences in their treatment of the institutions of Christianity and slavery?

"To the University of Cambridge in New England" (1773)

Wheatley opens her poem by expressing an "intrinsic ardor to write," but she does not immediately identify either the source of her desire or the direct recipient of the message she wishes to convey. Rather, by describing the ardor as "intrinsic," Wheatley allows herself a bit of an indulgence not common in her poetry. The first stanza ends with the conventional reminder present in most of her verse that she is African: "I left my native shore / The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom" (3–4). Africa appears disparagingly as a "land of errors," a continent that Wheatley was delivered from by the "Father of mercy," and in this version of her journey to America, she deals only with her conversion to Christianity and not with her enslavement (4–5). In defining herself in such a manner, Wheatley is able to be both an African and a poet. And in crafting herself as a muse-aided poet, Wheatley creates a position of authority from which she can launch her real purpose—to chastise the privileged students of Harvard College for not capitalizing on their opportunities.

Because the first stanza ends with God's deliverance of Wheatley from "those dark abodes," the responsibilities and types of knowledge available to Harvard students can refer to astronomy and a reckoning of the celestial bodies but can also pertain to a higher calling of religious study. Students are given the ability to "scan the heights / above, to traverse the ethereal space / and mark the systems of revolving worlds" (7–9). The outer reaches of space are available for study and mastery by Harvard students. The transcendent nature of academic investigation is not only the purview of these students, however, as Wheatley has already established herself in the first stanza as a poet, a voice inspired

and supported by a muse. Her conversion to Christianity, afforded by her transplantation from Africa to America, provides her with the opportunity to explore ethereal spaces in her verse and with additional authority by which to offer advice to the Harvard students.

Her final stanza is written in the tone of a Christian woman offering the sage advice of an elder to the young. She commends them to perform good acts, to rebuke sin, and to remain on their guard against temptations and possible moral fall. When Wheatley writes, "Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg," she acknowledges that humans have sin or evil within them that needs to be suppressed; this theory of man's fallen state equalizes all the figures who appear in the poem, most especially those from Africa's "land of errors" and those with the "privileges" of a Harvard education.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Wheatley equates Christianity with academic endeavors. How does her notion of a moral education relate to COTTON MATHER's definitions of education expressed in *The Christian Philosopher* and *Bonifacius*?
2. Compare Wheatley's concept of an education with that of HANNAH FOSTER WEBSTER in *The Boarding School*. What impact does gender have in each writer's definition of a commendable education?

"A Farewell to America" (1773)

Wheatley's poem is occasioned by both her personal retreat to England for health reasons and the more politically charged reason why a journey to England might allow her to escape from the bonds of slavery.

The poem begins with the dissonance between the new life of spring in America and Wheatley's own lack of health. America is filled with "smiling meads" and "flow'ry plain," whose charms appear in vain for Wheatley. Although she records these signs of new life in New England, they remain in contrast to the poet's own feelings and physical disposition, which are never fully expressed in the poem. Instead, Wheatley connects her hope for renewed health to classical Greek notions of dawn, referring to health itself as a "Celestial maid of rosy hue" (9). The "rosy hue" describes the ruddy complexion often reflected on the face of a healthy and natural figure. Wheatley opines that she may "feel thy reign" (10). The language of being ruled by a monarch or a goddess, someone who can "reign," is particularly telling as the despotic rule of either is usually the cause for Americans to cry out for their freedom. In the context of Wheatley's journey from America to Britain, the return to a monarch's reign, in this case, that of George III, seems counterintuitive, a movement not toward liberty but to the very chains that imprisoned America. Because Lord Mansfield had recently provided asylum for all Africans forced to leave England, Wheatley's phrase "feel thy reign" might easily apply to her desire to enjoy the privileges of freedom afforded under England's recent law. Mansfield was involved in passing such a proposal only months prior to Wheatley's journey.

The next two stanzas are dedicated to the emotional turmoil created by Wheatley's departure from her mistress, Susanna Wheatley, who purchased her in Boston when she was roughly seven years old and released her from the bonds of slavery upon her return from England in late 1773. Wheatley does not dwell lightly on the feelings of mourning that pervade her mistress's frame on her departure. It is in these two stanzas, in which she not only remarks upon her mistress's grief and mourning at her departure from New England but also expresses hope that Susanna Wheatley "let no sight, nor groan for me / Steal from her pensive breast," that Wheatley's conflicted emotional response to her journey rests and her references in the final two stanzas to temptation make sense (19–20).

London itself constitutes a temptation for Wheatley for the reason that her time there might afford her rights and privileges denied her in America. And yet one would imagine the prospect of freedom to be less a temptation than a promise, a reward for years of toil and loyal service to the

Wheatleys. Her conflicting response to the journey to London is indicative of the paradoxical feelings held by many slaves who grew up in conditions that made family of slave masters.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Wheatley's depiction of America compare to that in her poem "On Being Brought from Africa to America"?
2. The classical references to Aurora, Apollo, and Hebe appear early in the poem when Wheatley refers only to the restoration of her health. By the poem's end, when she indirectly explores the possibility of freedom, all classical references disappear. How might you account for the absence of classical references?

"To the King's Most Excellent Majesty" (1773)

Wheatley altered the title of this poem, "To the King's Most Excellent Majesty, On His Repeal of the Stamp Act," for English audiences, making the reference to the Stamp Act a mere footnote rather than the occasion for the poem (Willard 239). Created in 1765 to raise money for England by taxing all printed paper in the colonies, the Stamp Act appeared to the colonists the first in a series of actions in which they were taxed without their consent or legislative consultation. Without a direct reference to the act's repeal in 1768, Wheatley's poem seems to call indirectly for the king's compassionate rule. The only reference to the act's repeal in her poem is in line 8, when she writes, "thy favours past."

As in her panegyric to George Washington, Wheatley's poem in praise of King George III makes no reference to the poet's African identity. She appears instead to be one of the nameless "subjects" of the king; and in so identifying herself with American colonists in general, Wheatley creates a chorus of people pleading in the most gentle of terms for their own emancipation (1). "It is through her celebration as a 'common' subject that the speaker . . . gathers an audience to the poet's own emancipatory cause" (Willard 240). Only those familiar with Wheatley would recognize the paradox presented in the poem's final line: "A monarch's smile can set his subjects free!" (15). Wheatley celebrates a freedom that she herself does not enjoy.

Rather than provide portraiture of King George or follow the Puritan genre of "occasional" poetry, the critic Carla Willard believes, Wheatley "avoided the perspective that would frame the king in the material world" (240). King George appears as an amalgam of parts: crown, brows, arm, smile, and head. They do not compose the whole of him; nor are they specific to him alone. In this manner, Willard believes that Wheatley maintains the pattern of her celebratory poetry and constructs an ideal and abstract image of a leader such as George III so that readers and the subject of the poem himself will be forced to compare the stark contrast between the ideal figure of the poem and the fallen figure of real life.

In her appeal to God to "direct and guard him from on high / And from his head let ev'ry evil fly," Wheatley undermines both her praise of George III as well as his authority. "On high" might refer to either God's position of authority over George III as well as the king's throne. The benediction in line 13 both blesses him with a head without evil thought and assumes that the king is prone to such thoughts and may only be rid of them by God's divine intervention.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Compare the two panegyrics for George III and George Washington. How does Wheatley subtly distinguish between the two leaders?
2. How does Wheatley balance the two types of power at work in her poem: monarchy and God?

"Thoughts on the Works of Providence" (1773)

In this devotional poem, Wheatley compares God to the Sun, for its dazzling radiance, its ability to

control the weather and the tides, its enormous presence in the sky, and its position as the celestial body that centers and orders the planetary system. The 18th-century sublime poet John Dennis employs the same metaphor of the Sun and God: "The Sun occurring to us in meditation gives the idea of a vast and glorious body . . . and the brightest material image of the divinity" (reported in Shields 193). To compare the "solar rays" with God's love and benevolence, Wheatley imagines the effect of their absence: "Without them, destitute of heat and light, / This world would be the reign of endless night" (33–34). "Endless night" refers not only to the literal consequence of the Sun's absence but also to a metaphorical result, a state of spiritual depravity. In the absence of God and the Sun, Wheatley considers cataclysmic results: "What pestilential vapours, frought with death / Would rise, and overspread the lands beneath?" (39–40). The "limitless vision" of Wheatley's extended metaphor parallels Joseph Addison's definition of *grandeur* expressed in the *Spectator*: "Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its capacity" (reported in Shields 190).

The critic John C. Shields believes that "Thoughts on the Works of Providence" participates in the 18th-century notion of the religious sublime, "the expression of the enthusiastic passions in predominately Christian language and images" (189). The means to attempt an understanding or knowledge of God occurs in the poem through the power of reason: "As reason's pow'rs by day our God disclose" (83). "As she construes them, the faculties of imagination and reason are virtually synonymous" (Shields 196–197). It is Wheatley's definition of imagination that provides her with the faculty of perceiving the sublime, in this case, the overwhelming power and presence of God. Shields makes careful note of Wheatley's separation of "imagination" from "fancy," which appears in the poem in the speaker's dream state "when action ceases and ideas range / licentious and unbounded o'er the plains" (86–87). Because the stuff of dreams is mundane and taken up with earthly rather than heavenly love, it is relegated to "Fancy."

To train the mind to contemplate the religious sublime, Wheatley recommends that upon waking from Fancy's "giddy triumph," one should "let thy first thoughts be praises to the skies" (98). This act of devotion might lead one to a more profound contemplation of God. Shields compares Wheatley's use of the sublime to Immanuel Kant's, stating, "Both in Kant and in Wheatley, the inexorable attempt of the human mind to grasp totalities and the equally inexorable failure to do so incites the feeling of the sublime" (197).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Wheatley writes "Ador'd for ever be the God unseen" in the first stanza of her devotional poem. Consider why an unseen God contributes to the poem's sublime quality.
2. How does the absence of any self-identifying line or phrase in the poem contribute to or impede the poem's sublimity?
3. Compare Wheatley's devotional poem to those of Anne Bradstreet, who likewise professes her religious faith in her poetry.

"To S. M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works" (1773)

Critics and historians alike have identified the subject of this occasional poem, S. M., as Scipio Moorhead, the slave of the Reverend John Moorhead. Moorhead, who was pastor of the Church of the Presbyterian Strangers, was one of the reputable men of Boston who held the investigation of Wheatley that ended in an attestation of her authorship of the poems that were subsequently published in England. Encouraged by his mistress, Sarah Moorhead, who taught art and drawing, Scipio Moorhead pursued art and was commissioned to draw the likeness of Phillis Wheatley that appears on the frontispiece of her book of poetry. This poem appears in Wheatley's 1773 publication *Poems on Various Subjects.*

What differentiates this occasional and celebratory poem from others that Wheatley penned is its subject, a fellow African. As Carla Willard has deftly argued, Wheatley employs praise in a paradoxical manner when her subject is an Anglo-European or Anglo-American figure of authority such as George III or the earl of Dartmouth. How does one consider a poem written to a fellow African in light of Mary McAleer Balkun's theory that Wheatley was keenly aware of her reading audience and had "designed [rhetoric] to manipulate this audience in very specific ways"? (122). One can either imagine that this structure breaks down once she creates the specter of an African audience (presumably Scripio Moorhead would read the poem written to him, or else would hear it from his master or mistress) or that it adheres, and the intended white audience is, perhaps for the first time, excluded from the poem's collective pronoun, *we*.

Wheatley praises Moorhead for creating life with paint and pencil and generating an emotional stir in those like Wheatley whose "soul[s] delight" on viewing his "new creation" (3, 2, 5, 6). She seems to suggest that if Moorhead maintain an "ardent view" on "deathless glories," he will continue to receive inspiration, or "fire" for his artistic endeavors, both as a painter and as a poet (8–10). In the poem's fusing of arts, poetry and painting, Wheatley creates a conspiracy of "we," who will join together in heaven, "landscapes in the realms above," and throw off classical references to Aurora and Damon for "nobler themes" (26, 31). As Wheatley's own poetry is heavy with classical allusions, especially poems like "To Maecenas," it is tempting to read a complaint about the constraints placed upon her own artistic expression. The joining of the two artists in heaven supports this reading, as Wheatley imagines them for most of the poem. She imagines Moorhead's receiving "immortal fame" that he can enjoy in "that splendid city" of heaven (12, 16).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Although Wheatley identifies Scipio Moorhead as an African painter in the title of the poem, nowhere in the poem itself does she mention race or ethnic identity. How might you locate other images or references to race in the poem?
2. Wheatley ends the poem with a hope for "purer language." How might one interpret this desire? Does it have political implications? Does it have artistic implications?
3. Compare Wheatley's poem to a painter with William Cullen Bryant's praise of another artist in "To Cole, the Painter, Departing for Europe." How do the two poets imagine the duty of painters? Are their expectations for painters patriotic or religious?

"Letter to Samson Occom" (1774)

Phillis Wheatley's 1774 letter to her longtime friend the Reverend Samson Occom, a Mohegan who converted to Christianity and became a minister, first appeared in the *Connecticut Gazette* on March 11, one month after it was initially sent. Its historic significance might be demonstrated by its republication in nearly a dozen newspapers in New England. Critics familiar with Wheatley's body of literature recognize its literary significance as the source of her "most scathing criticism" (Williard 236). Within the brief but nevertheless powerful epistle, Wheatley argues for the "natural rights" of "negroes," employing a language rife with revolutionary portent, as the Whigs would argue for their separation and independence from Britain in terms of the very same principle.

Indeed, the pleas of Wheatley and others for deliverance from the oppression of slavery, which they meant quite distinctly to refer to the enslavement of Africans, were coopted by revolutionary thinkers and editors as an apt metaphor for their own experiences under George III's despotic rule. The critic Carla Willard reminds readers, "Phillis Wheatley lived in a time when the most fervent advocates of individual freedom—as well as many of the Royalists lambasting the 'tyranny' and 'slavery' of the Continental Congress—were slave owners themselves" (236). The paradox of freedom-seeking slave owners was not lost on Wheatley, who closes her letter

with the following: "How well the cry of liberty, and the reverse disposition for the exercise of oppressive power over others agree—I humbly think it does not require the penetration of a philosopher to determine." Within her statement she notes ironically how these two incongruous beliefs appear in Whigs advocating political separation from Britain and Tories complaining of the undue power exercised by the Continental Congress, because both parties, despite political differences, maintain their "rights" to own slaves. Indicative of the pervasive practice of slave owners' employing metaphors of enslavement in reference to their own political positions, Wheatley's letter "elicited enthusiastic applause, not denunciation, from *both* sides of the revolution" (Willard 236).

The letter also draws upon the biblical tale of slavery in Exodus in which the Israelites were released from bonds held by the Egyptians. To make this biblical reference pertinent to her day, Wheatley labels contemporary slave owners as "our modern Egyptians." Biblical precedent for the abolition of slavery aside, Wheatley invokes God, proclaiming that "in every human breast God has implanted a principle, which we call love of freedom." In her use of Christianity, readers familiar with Wheatley's poetry would recognize the voice that spoke less directly but no less fervently for the end of slavery.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Wheatley's bitingly ironic statement appears in a letter to Samson Occom, a friend. How does this form influence the letter's content?
2. Compare Wheatley's argument of the paradoxical use of slavery metaphors by slave owners with the appearance of this trope in PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU's political poems such as "On the Causes of Political Degeneracy" and his antislavery poem "To Sir Toby."

"To His Excellency General Washington" (1775, 1776)

Wheatley's celebratory poem to General Washington, written in 1776 at the height of the Revolutionary War, is prefaced with a conventional note expressing the poet's humility and her sincere hope that the subject and intended reader of her poem, George Washington himself, would forgive her for "tak[ing] the freedom to address your Excellency" and for producing "inaccuracies" in the poem, which can be accounted for by the sensations generated by Washington's own accomplishments. While it is true that Wheatley's prefatory note follows literary convention, her employment of the term *freedom* certainly carries a double meaning that presages the poet's more earnest aim—to turn the very symbol of America's romantic and worthy fight for freedom into a figure who might also champion the cause of emancipating the slaves of this land. Wheatley's employment of revolutionary rhetoric of freedom places her in the paradoxical position that W. E. B. DuBois stated was that of all African Americans: to be in but not of American ideology.

As a nod to the neoclassical convention of the time, Wheatley invokes the muse's assistance in describing the epic battles between armies. Within this stanza, she offers two metaphors for the armies: "refluent surges [that] beat against the shore / Or thick as leaves in Autumn's golden reign" (18–9). Both images naturalize the bodies of soldiers, yet neither bears an emotional charge. It is striking to note that it is not until line 23 that Washington himself appears as the singular subject set into relief against the waves of armies clashing on the battlefield. Tellingly, at this moment of his magnificent arrival in the poem, with an ample military backdrop already detailed, Wheatley hesitates and wonders, "Shall I to Washington their praise recite?" (23). The question is, naturally, rhetorical, as Wheatley proceeds to praise his "valour, for thy virtues more" (27). And yet, the moment's hesitation might make readers take pause in considering what on the surface appears to be a rather conventional poem in honor of Washington.

The critic Carla Willard argues that Wheatley's use of the convention of praise in her poetry has traditionally been misunderstood as "a blundering choice of heroes: colonial men praised for heroic acts instead of blamed for ominous or ridiculous ones"

(234). On the contrary, Wheatley creates ideal images of the subjects of her poetry and, as her preface to Washington's poem suggests, "does not attempt to give a 'true' picture of the hero at all" (Willard 239). Thus, the Washington of the poem is not a reflection of the real man, but rather the image of a "great chief" deserving of "a crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine / With gold unfading" (41–42). The hyperbolic nature of the gifts that should be bestowed on Washington, such as a throne with unfading gold, gives credence to Willard's interpretation of the nature of Wheatley's praise. Further, the items all represent the very symbols of British imperialism that America is fighting.

For Discussion or Writing

Compare Wheatley's idea of rewarding Washington's efforts in the Revolution with a crown and a throne with Philip Morin Freneau's interpretation of these symbols in his poetry, most especially "On the Causes of Political Degeneracy."

"Liberty and Peace" (1784)

In contrast to her other poems, even those written in praise of living and dead figures, Wheatley's "Liberty and Peace" distinguishes itself by appearing after the Revolutionary War and thus addressing the achievement of the freedom that the republic longed for in her prior poems. Written in 1784, this poem celebrates the achievements of the Revolutionary War and praises France for assisting America in its struggle to overcome "the Tyrant's Law" (38). In prior poems, Wheatley was able to draw upon the double sense of freedom that referred both to her personal desire for freedom from the bonds of slavery and to America's desire for political freedom from British rule. After 1776, however, this double sense of freedom no longer registered in her poetry. Many critics attribute the lack of interest in a second volume of her poetry, which would have included "Liberty and Peace," to the triumphant termination of the war. No longer clamorous for liberty from England, American readers did not envision themselves in the soulful pleas for freedom that echoed from the pages of her verse.

In the poem, Wheatley makes no reference to herself or to her former status as a slave (she had been manumitted in 1773). Critics like Angelene Jamison who are prone to see Wheatley as "an eighteenth century poet who supported, praised, and imitated those who enslaved her and her people" examine this particular poem and take note of the absence of slavery or the plight of slaves in its celebration of America's independence. Jamison writes, "Phillis saw the very country which enslaved her and other Blacks as one deserving some heavenly protection. How could she be so removed from the plight of her people and the attitude towards her people as to glorify those who were responsible for that wretched condition of slavery?" (133). The critic Carla Willard sees the omission of Wheatley's own racial identity as well as any direct reference to slavery as another indication of the poet's subtlety. "There is no reference to the speaker's African identity; it must be drawn from outside the poem" (239).

Within the poem, Wheatley and Columbia mourn the "mutual deaths" of Americans and Frenchmen who fought "on hostile fields" (40, 39). She compares the peace resounding in the land to the rising sun, "as from the East th'illustrious King of Day / With rising Radiance drives the Shades away" (53–54). *Shades* is an interesting term as it implies both those who have died during the war and the absence of light, or the darkness that existed during and before the war. The poem concludes triumphantly with "Heavenly Freedom spread[ing] her golden Ray" (64). Perhaps this final line is, as some critics have suggested, a capitulation to America after Wheatley gained own freedom, or perhaps it is, as others have argued, a ray of hope for the slaves who yearned for their freedom after the war.

For Discussion or Writing

1. How does Wheatley's depiction of the Revolutionary War compare with that offered by Philip Morin Freneau? How do the two poets envision a future for America? How do they imagine Britain?

2. As Wheatley's final published poem before her death, "Liberty and Peace" might demonstrate either a growth or a shift in her poetic voice. Compare the poem with one of her earliest and make an argument for either the change or growth you recognize in Wheatley.

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FURTHER QUESTIONS ON WHEATLEY AND HER WORK

1. One of the distinguishing factors of several of Wheatley's poems is their panegyric quality, or their high praise of someone. Select two such poems from Wheatley's body of work and make an argument both for the kind of person she deems worthy of praise and for the way those qualities have further implications that might be political, moral, or both.
2. Unlike other early writers of color, Wheatley received the freedom she so desperately sought. She was manumitted in 1773, just years before the rebellious colonies that would form the United States won their war against Britain. To what extent is Wheatley's poetry revolutionary or democratic? How might you argue that Wheatley, rather than Freneau, is the poet of the American Revolution?
3. Compare Wheatley's treatment of Christianity and slavery with those offered by Jupiter Hammon, Olaudah Equiano, and Harriet Jacobs.
4. Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Religion, indeed, has produced a Phillis Whatley [*sic*]; but it could not produce a poet." Consider Jefferson's criticism of Wheatley in light of her use of Christianity to argue for the emancipation of slaves.

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John Winthrop (1588–1649)

. . . men shall say of succeeding plantations "the lord make it like that of New England." For wee must consider that wee shall be as a City upon a Hill.

(*A Modell of Christian Charity*)

On January 22, 1588, John Winthrop was born. The year that witnessed his birth was also the year in which England defeated the greatest naval power in Europe, Spain, clearing the way for England to begin colonizing the New World, Winthrop's future home. This was just after the time in England when the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism, occasioned by Henry VIII, created a new class of landowners, who purchased estates that were formerly the property of Catholic monasteries. John Winthrop's paternal grandfather purchased the manor of Groton, formerly the Abby of Bury St. Edmunds, and his father, Adam Winthrop, added to the family's landholdings so that by the time of young John's infancy, the Winthrops occupied a position among the elite.

He entered Trinity College at Cambridge when he was 15, having been trained for the previous four years by John Chaplyn. He seems to have ostracized himself from his fellow classmates, however, because of his religious devotion, which caused him to draw attention to the mundane sins of his classmates such as cursing. In his papers, Winthrop first mentions his "notions of God" when he was 10 years old. Such devotion was uncommon at such a young age, and it is quite likely that Winthrop's conscientiousness was rather off-putting to young students more interested in pranks and nightly visits from a prostitute. Two years after his entrance at Cambridge, Winthrop returned home to Groton.

In 1605, when he was merely 17 years old, Winthrop married Mary Forth in a union arranged by his father and hers, John Forth (3). As the only heir to the Forth estate in Great Stambridge, Mary, who was four years older than her husband, guaranteed the future prosperity of their family. Through Mary, Winthrop met the Puritan minister Ezekiel Culverwell and forged a lifelong devotion to the religion that would shape his sense of the New World and his role as governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. During their 10-year marriage, Mary bore six children, four of whom survived past infancy. She died in June 1615 at the age of 31. Six months later, in December, Winthrop married his second wife, Thomasine Clopton, who died in childbirth after only one year of marriage. Their infant girl, who was Winthrop's seventh child, perished two days later. In April 1618, Winthrop wed his third wife, Margaret Tyndal, who would follow him to the New World.

Unlike the separatists whom William Bradford followed, Puritans like Winthrop did not seek to leave England or its church, but rather to effect its reform. In his daily dealings in London as a lawyer, Winthrop wrote to his brother-in-law of his repulsion at the moral corruption he witnessed there, referring to it as "this sinful lande" (6). He expressed his desire for national and religious reform in 1624 when he drew up a list of "Common Grievances Groanings for Reformation" (7). From January 1627 to June

1629, Winthrop worked as an attorney at the Court of Wards and Liveries. At that time, Winthrop wrote to his wife, "My office is gone." Critics do not know whether he resigned his position as a lawyer or he was forced to leave because of his religious beliefs. It is clear, however, that he had been considering emigration to New England at the time, for he wrote to his wife, "The Lorde hath admonished, threatened, corrected, and astonished us, yet we grow worse and worse. . . . He hath smitten all the other Churches before our eyes. . . . I am very persuaded, God will bring some heavye Affliction upon this land, and that speedylye" (2:91–92).

Soon afterward, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was formed, and in October of the same year, Winthrop was elected as their governor. He wrote of his own responsibility in this role: "The welfare of the plantation depends upon my assistance: for the maine pillars of it beinge gentlemen of highe qualitye, and eminent partes, bothe for wisdome and godlinesse, are deteremined to sitt still, if I deserte them" (reported in Schweninger 8). Winthrop, accompanied by his son Henry, set sail for the New World in spring 1630 aboard the *Arbella*. Because his wife, Margaret, was far along in her pregnancy, she remained temporarily behind to see to the sale of the estate at Groton and to deliver her child before sailing with Winthrop's eldest son, John, Jr., who also remained behind (9).

As detailed in his journal, Winthrop's 19 years in New England, ending in his death in 1649, were challenging, physically, fiscally, and spiritually. The severity of New England weather, coupled with the need for good, wholesome food, were early threats to the colony, but these were followed by theological divisions that threatened to tear the young colony apart. The separatist Roger Williams, who did not believe in Winthrop's notion of reform within the Church of England but, as did Bradford, lobbied for the Colony's separation from the nation and its corrupt church, was the first outspoken figure to threaten the colony's peace. His call for the colony to break from the Church of England, following the need to replace Pastor Wilson at Boston's church, caused him to be banished from the colony in October 1635. He also faced political threats to his authority as governor from the young colonist Thomas Dudley, father of ANNE BRADSTREET, who would challenge Winthrop during the election in 1634 and defeat his bid for governor. From 1634 to 1637, Winthrop remained outside the political sphere in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but he was soon back in the thick of it after the next election.

Dudley served as deputy governor during the first years of settlement, and it is quite likely that Winthrop's decision in locating the colony might have initially sparked friction between the two. Dudley built his home in Newtown (present-day Cambridge) with the impression that it would be the center of the colony. However, he was alarmed to discover that Winthrop chose to settle on the peninsula, on the other side of the Charles River, in Shawmut (present-day Boston). The river became both a physical and a symbolic barrier between the two. As the historian Edmund Morgan suggests, "Dudley, as deputy governor, was close enough to the throne and piqued at not occupying it" (104). Dudley's ire over the governor's powers was made public in a series of complaints lodged against Winthrop for overstepping his bounds. In addition to an incident with the fishing weir, Dudley accused Winthrop of assuming too much authority in erecting a fort, sending gunpowder to Plymouth, and not forcing two banished men from the community (73).

Winthrop's second term as governor saw him facing his greatest threat—Anne Hutchinson. Supported by John Wheelwright, a radical minister, and Henry Vane, Hutchinson was an outspoken proponent of antinomianism, which challenged Winthrop's political and theological authority. Although she emerged as a threat prior to his return to the governorship, Hutchinson was supported by the then-governor, Henry Vane, and was only banished once Winthrop took office again and had the authority to remove her and Wheelwright (12). Winthrop described Hutchinson as having "ready wit and bold spirit," claims that indicate, albeit in a negative light, her articulateness and intelligence (11).

Personally, Winthrop's devotion to matters of the colony took his attention away from the affairs of his own household. And 10 years after settling in New England, Winthrop learned that Thomas Luxford, whom he had hired to manage his property and business, had run the governor into such debt that he was forced to sell off much of his land and live in a more modest home. The critic Lee Schweninger considers the amount of time it took Winthrop to become apprised of the dire state of his finances under Luxford's mismanagement as indicative both of the governor's devotion to colonial affairs and of his naive trust in Luxford (12).

In addition to Thomas Dudley, Winthrop faced other figures and charges that undermined his authority as governor. His first term as governor ended in part because of an event like that which occurred in 1632. When fishermen appealed to the governor for the construction of a fishing weir, Winthrop decided to act, instead of defer, as he should legally have done, to the decision of the General Court. He defended his overstepping of the court's authority by arguing that since they only met once a quarter, and the fishermen needed permission to construct the weir in a timely fashion, he decided for their benefit. Similar charges of the governor's exceeding his authority would emerge again when he attempted to exercise a veto in the case of ownership of a sow. Winthrop, who detested the notion of democracy, believed that the deputies might exercise their authority together and overthrow the governor, whom he believed most qualified to govern.

Winthrop's beliefs regarding rule and obeisance were fundamentally shaped by his Puritan faith. Once elected to the position of governor, Winthrop believed that whoever occupied the position was operating with an authority from God. Prior to the birth of his first son, Winthrop began keeping a journal to record his religious experiences, as was customary for Puritans such as COTTON MATHER and Anne Bradstreet. The original document was destroyed by his ancestor, Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., who recorded sections of the spiritual diary and published them as *The Life and Letters of John Winthrop.* Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., readily admits that he purposefully deleted a list of sins that Winthrop included in his journal, stating that they were written in cipher, were abbreviated, and were thus "quite unintelligible to any eye but his own" (1:16). A common theme that emerges from the journal is the author's worldliness: "Worldly cares thought not in any grosse manner outwardly, yet seacretly, together with a seacret desire after pleasures and itching after libertie and unlawful delights, had brought me to waxe wearie of good duties and so to forsake my first love, whence came muche troble and danger" (1:161–162). In addressing his first love, Winthrop is referring to his love of Christ and confessing to the various desires he has for things of the world that prevent him from attaining a true covenant with God.

Winthrop wrote of the dangers inherent in being too much of this world, "The love of the worlde even in a small measure, will coole, if not kill, the life of sinceritye in Religion, and will abolishe the verye memorye of heavenly affections" (1:212). As an indication of Winthrop's sense of his own sins, he includes such activities as using tobacco, hunting, sitting up late, eating for pleasure rather than sustenance, and being impatient (17). He resolved in his spiritual journal to give up the sport of hunting, having offered up a list of various reasons why it was sinful and a practice not to be pursued (17–18). He further worried over his own propensity to overeat and to be lazy or indolent (18). To assist him in ridding himself of these sins, Winthrop forms a covenant with God, which includes a list of resolutions on his part (18). Schweninger considers the personal covenants Winthrop forges with God in his spiritual journal to adumbrate his call for a covenant with the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which bound them to a moral code (19).

Originating as a fishing and trading company, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, organized in 1623, had become defunct. When the company's governor, John Endicott, petitioned the Crown for a new royal charter, King Charles I responded with a document that created the Massachusetts Bay

Colony, which, like its predecessor, was intended to be a trading company (31). Winthrop believes that the omission of England or London as the place for the company to hold its quarterly meetings, which made the charter unique, allowed them to erect their entire government in New England and thus afforded the colonists unbounded freedom (31).

In justification for his membership in the colony and his departure from England, Winthrop began writing and editing "Arguments for the Plantation of New England." The document, which had five sections, opens with religion as the first reason for emigration: "propagacion of the gospel to the Indians." Thus, Winthrop foregrounds his Calvinist faith, and his national desire for the colony, as subject to the British Crown, to rival Spain's spread of Catholicism (33). Winthrop follows the Elizabethan promotional tracts in the second section, where he lists the abundance of flora and fauna to be found in the New World as reason for their emigration to New England (33). Schweninger believes Winthrop availed himself of Captain JOHN SMITH's *Description of New England* in writing the text's second section (33). He calls for skilled craftsmen to emigrate, as well as saints, as the Puritans referred to themselves, believing that they could not accomplish their goal of religious conversion of New England's native population without "persons meete for such a worke" (2:133).

Winthrop also addresses possible criticisms of his emigration, chief among them the encroachment on natives' land, the need for such stellar individuals to remain in England during its theological crisis, and the tangible rewards being forfeited for the unknown climes of the New World. Reflecting the feeling of the times, Winthrop believes that the natives, who do not have a crop-based living, are not using land that would be made more profitable in the hands of the colonists. Further, he argues that the colonists' presence as Christians who can convert the heathens also justifies their occupation of native lands. Finally, Winthrop mentions the plagues that have recently killed a significant number of natives, reading such a disaster as a sign from God that American Indians are not favored by God. In response to his own friend, Robert Ryece, who argues that the nation needs Puritans to remain in England and effect positive reform within the nation, Winthrop anticipates his own famous sermon preached aboard the *Arbella,* that the colony would be a model for others to turn away from their wickedness (38).

Winthrop's own justifications for emigration were also enhanced by other documents and sermons that commended the colonists to God and acknowledged their risks in leaving the motherland for New England. One of these documents was the "Agreement at Cambridge," which was drafted in summer 1629 and signed by all those who boarded the 12 ships headed for Massachusetts. This document afforded the colony its economic independence by turning over the stock to 10 underwriters, with Winthrop as one (39). He reiterates his belief that the colony will serve as an example for other Christian societies to follow: "Consider your reputation, the eyes of all the godly are upon you, what can you do more honorable for this Citye, and the Gospell which you profess."

The biographer Lee Schweninger believes that Winthrop best expressed his views on government in his "Little Speech on Liberty," a response to accusations by the people of Hingham that he had once again exceeded his authority by appointing a military captain unpopular with the people (113). Despite Winthrop's initial position of humility, confessing that he is a person and therefore subject to making mistakes as all people are, he goes on to justify his authority as proceeding from God himself. In Winthrop's reasoning, since the people are Christians and they elected him to the position of governor, then his authority is from God: "It is yourselves who have called us to this office, and being called by you, we have our authority from God." Further, in regard to their accusations against him, Winthrop seems to evoke the well-known biblical passage from John, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone" (John 8:7). Winthrop states that any "infirmity" they witness in him should occasion their own reflection on their frailties. Thus, Winthrop argues, the colonists will be less likely to complain about their leaders

when they recognize that they, too, commit similar errors (113–114).

On the issue of liberty, Winthrop distinguishes between natural liberty and civil or federal liberty. The first category he likens unto beasts: "By this, man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists; it is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority, and cannot endure the least restraint of the most just authority" (2:238). Thus, the notion of democracy, in which the people decide by a majority, would fall under the category of natural liberty for Winthrop as it stands in direct opposition to authority. The notion of civil or federal liberty, however, is morally sound as it refers to "the covenant between God and man." Civil liberty is exercised in complete subjection to authority. He ends his speech by summarizing the essential difference between the two concepts of liberty: "If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke; but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then will you quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you" (2:238–239).

These concepts of authority and civil liberty were key elements in Winthrop's own life, as well as his reign as governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They were leading principles of the Puritan faith that so guided and directed his life and his decisions, such as abandoning his wealth and position in London to set out for the New World and the creation of a colony that would be a beacon for England and other societies worldwide. Winthrop died in his colony on March 26, 1649.

A Modell of Christian Charity (1630)

Winthrop's lay sermon, which contains the most famous of all lines, "a city on a hill," was delivered aboard the *Arbella* and outlines his hopes for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It opens with a justification of the class structure inherited from England: "Some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie, others means and in subjeccion." These apparent differences in class and character were ordered by God and are thus inherent. Because these differences are organic and sanctioned by God, Winthrop argues, it is necessary for those in power to practice "love, mercy, gentleness, and temperance" while those of the "poore and inferiour sorte" should be ruled by "faithe, patience, and obedience." Winthrop concludes that divine providence has ranked humans in these two categories so that they might knit together as a colony in their mutual need and affection for one another. In other words, rather than that these divisions in wealth create divisiveness among the settlers, Winthrop considers the hierarchy to unite them as "every man afford his help to another in every want or distress." The concept seems similar to noblesse oblige, whereby the wealthy members of the aristocracy are morally bound to aid those who are less fortunate than they in rank and material possessions. Winthrop's family status as landed gentry would certainly have predisposed him to maintain the social ranking system inherited from England when traveling to the New World. Schweninger disagrees with the view that Winthrop perpetuates England's hierarchical social structure, believing instead that he "was willing to circumvent the conventional class structure insofar as the success of the plantation depends on all men and women working together, rich and poor alike" (42).

Winthrop advocates the golden rule in guiding the encounters among colonists, quoting from Matthew: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you" (5:43). Although on the surface, this concept appears to advocate a democratic blurring of class lines with all treating each other as equals, Winthrop has already dispelled the accuracy of such an interpretation from the opening lines of the sermon in which he deems these class differences to be innate and ordained by God. Later, when he likens the colony unto a body with its

various parts, he maintains the concept of difference, for each part has its own labor to perform for the good of the whole. For Winthrop, difference should be accepted among the colonists and instead of attempting to surmount it, the settlers should unite as Christians against nonbelievers. Yet even this difference does not endure, for Winthrop's sermon, which is on the topic of charity, calls for the Christians to give food to the enemies who hunger and love to the enemies who hate. Withholding charity, even under trying times, is not excusable, Winthrop argues, because it might "tempt God, in putting him upon help by miraculous or extraordinary meanes."

The "bond" or "ligament" holding the various parts together and knitting them into a functioning whole is, Winthrop believes, love. By way of defining the binding characteristic of this love, he references the love of Christ for mankind and the one body formed by all Christians and the church. He then moves from the scriptural references to the body to project the dynamic that he hopes will prevail among the colonists. "All the parts of this body being thus united are made soe continguous in a speciall relacion as they must needes partake of each others strength and infirmity, joy, and sorrowe, weale and woe." Again, Winthrop cites a scriptural passage, from Corinthians, echoing the same sentiment. The relationship of the part to the whole follows a pattern established by Christ and his disciples where those called "servants of the Churche" performed their labor out of love.

Winthrop next addresses the source of this love, stating that Adam "in his first estate was a perfect model of mankinde . . . and in him this love was perfected in regard of the habit." Thus, Winthrop traces the history of love within humans back to the original human described in the Book of Genesis. Adam's fall from grace does not only occasion his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, but, more to Winthrop's purpose, creates in him, and thus in all subsequent generations, a desire "to love and seeke himselfe onely." In other words, the uniting and selfless love that defined mankind in its perfect and innocent state turns to the dividing and selfish love of mankind in its fallen state. The love of self and a pursuit of self-interest defined humans in the postlapsarian world until the coming of Christ. For Winthrop, Christ's works were in taking possession of the soul and infusing it with love of God and love of one's fellow human being. The love between and among Christians is continually supplied by Christ. Thus, for Winthrop, acts of charity that exhibit love, mercy, and kindness toward another human being are made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ and are thus reaffirmations of the bond that humans have with Christ. In Calvinist thinking, acts of charity do not guarantee one's redemption after death, but they are nevertheless visible signs of one's faith and devotion.

In further exploration of the dynamics of love as a uniting principle drawing Christians together through Christ, Winthrop considers the importance of sameness or recognized similarity. He likens the love that a mother has for her child "because shee thoroughly conceives a resemblance of herselfe in it" to God's love for those privileged few who are members of the elect. Winthrop returns again to the prelapsarian scene of Adam and Eve to reiterate his point that a sense of similarity fosters love, and a desire to aid and care for "flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone."

Readers might glimpse Winthrop's own idealized sense of a Puritan wife in his portrayal of Eve's demonstrations of love for Adam: desiring to be near him, confessing the "inmost closet of her heart," sighing and moaning in sympathy, and rejoicing in his happiness. Further, to reiterate to readers the selfless nature of the love motivating these actions and emotional responses, Winthrop states, "She finds recompence enoughe in the exercise of her love towards it." Other biblical examples of people's hazarding their own lives to remain with those whom they love include David and Jonathan, and Ruth and Naomi. Winthrop hastens to clarify lest this form of love be mistaken for unrequited love. He returns to his prevailing metaphor of a body and its various parts and focuses specifically on the mouth. Although the mouth is taxed with receiving and mincing the food that

will provide nourishment for the entire body, Winthrop argues, "it hath no cause to complaine" and presents two reasons: The mouth enjoys the pleasure, and contentment of performing this function exceeds the pains of labor. He seems quickly to abandon this metaphor to return to the scenario of Christians' loving fellow Christians. The mere discovery of an object of affection "that which it may love fervently" is in itself a source of "pleasure and content." The mutual aspect of love, of loving and being loved, is deemed "a soul's paradice both heare and in heaven."

Having secured the specific principles and definitions of this form of love, Winthrop proposes to apply "this discourse by the present designe which gave the occasion of writeing of it." He begins by defining the people who compose the Massachusetts Bay Colony through their mutually shared identities as Christians and advocates following the model of an early French reformer, Peter Valdes, in loving one another as Christians even before they have become acquainted with one another. It is telling that Winthrop would look to Peter Valdes as a figure worthy of emulation since this wealthy man dedicated his life and his material possessions to denouncing the Catholic Church. In the 12th century, Valdes founded the Society of the Poor Men of Lyons and the followers, whom Winthrop refers to as "Waldenses." A wealthy man, Peter Valdes gave away his riches to the poor, dedicated himself to the Gospels, and generated a group of proselytes to travel the world and denounce the Catholic Church. This sense of Christian love, then, unites the disparate members of the colony, for as Winthrop writes, they have lived and worked apart from each other prior to their membership in the colony.

Building on this foundation, Winthrop stresses that "for the worke wee have in hand," it is essential for the colonists to seek out a settlement where they may all live under a government that is "both civill and ecclesiasticall." In other words, their religious identities, and their religious goals, necessitate that the government formed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony address not only civil policy, but ecclesiastical matters as well. The greater good is the ultimate goal of the colony, and thus every member is called to sacrifice private gain willingly for public good. In his third point, he continues his argument for acting in concert. If the colonists "doe more service to the Lord [to] the comforte and encrease of the body of Christ," then they will not only improve their lives but also provide for their posterity a society that has preserved itself from the corruptions of the evil world. Further, they will have increased the body of Christ through their efforts in converting American Indians.

Charged as the colonists are, Winthrop believes, they must devote themselves to their task not "with usuall ordinary meanes," but with "familiar and constant practise" and "without dissimulation." The tension Winthrop creates here is plainly between England and the New World, between "theire Churches" and "ourselves." Although he does not necessarily denigrate the Church of England, and unlike separatists like Bradford he does not openly express a desire to leave the church, Winthrop nevertheless makes clear his position on the superiority of the religious beliefs and practices of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Indeed, Winthrop lists three principles explaining why the pressure for the colony to keep their covenant with God is more intense than for those in England, "among whome wee have lived."

The first reason he offers is a parallel of the special dynamic the colonists have with God and the biblical example of God's targeting the Israelites especially for punishment because they are the only people he has known "of all the families of the Earthe." The second reason, similar to the first, is to distance themselves from others who "corrupted the service of the Lord" by using incense and offering a "strange fire." Winthrop offers the tale of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, who, as depicted in Leviticus, made such offerings to God and were devoured (Leviticus 10:1–2). The principle behind these two biblical references seems to be the same: Chosen people suffer a greater punishment from God for flouting his principles or their covenant with him. Third, Winthrop recites

the tale of Saul, whom God charged with the task of destroying the Amalekites. Saul disobeyed God by sparing the sheep and oxen, and for this reason, he was not made king (1 Samuel 15:1–34). As Winthrop advises, "When God gives a speciall commission he lookes to have it stricktly observed in every Article." Thus, the colonists will need to be mindful of every aspect of their covenant with God and ensure that they are obeying them.

Winthrop applies the promises or contracts existing between God and the various figures cited from the Bible to himself and his fellow colonists. Similarly to these other people, Winthrop writes, the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony "are entered into Covenant with him," and in exchange for God's "favour and blessing," they must strictly adhere to the articles that they themselves composed. What is worthy of comment is that Winthrop gives himself and the colonists the power to negotiate their own behavior in the form of their own articles. Following the "Counsell of Micah," Winthrop proposes a strict adherence to this biblical passage: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Humility is a central principle that Winthrop stresses, and it introduces a point of tension because at the same time that the colonists wish to receive God's special blessing and favor, they must also be mindful not to seek out greatness for themselves or their posterity. In other words, although Winthrop and his colonists enter into a covenant with God in the hope of differentiating themselves from others, they must not gloat about their privileged state.

The articles Winthrop proposes also include many of the central themes of his lay sermon: to care for the good of the whole and sacrifice personal gain for the community, to act together in concert, and to share in suffering, labor, mourning, and rejoicing. The Lord will be among them, and they will "see much more of his wisdome, power, and goodness, and truthe then formerly wee have beene acquainted with." Fortified with God's favor, Winthrop writes of how the colony will be viewed in the future: "Men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for wee must consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill." Thus, Winthrop concludes his sermon with the most famous and enduring image of Puritan colonialism: the notion that the colony will endure in people's minds as a shining example of God's elect. The Massachusetts Bay Colony is destined for greatness, to be "made a story and a byword through the world." Others are thus expected to look to the plantation as a model to follow. Winthrop warns that all of this glory and praise can just as easily be undone if the members do not obey and are seduced by the pursuit of earthly pleasures and profit.

For Discussion or Writing

1. Keeping in mind that Winthrop delivered this sermon sometime aboard the *Arbella* before they reached New England, consider how it gives insight into Winthrop's vision for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Why begin with a discussion of class structures?
2. Winthrop's phrase "We shall be as a city upon a hill" created an enduring image in American literature and culture. Consider other authors and images that are similar to Winthrop's.

The Journal of John Winthrop (1630–1645)

With his first entry dated Easter Monday 1630, John Winthrop began his journal while aboard the *Arbella,* making its way to New England. What would follow, in his 19 years of faithful and sporadic entries on the events concerning the Massachusetts Bay Colony, would become invaluable primary material for historians and subsequent colonists in North America. Cotton Mather, William Hubbard, Thomas Prince, Ezra Stiles, Jonathan Trumbull, and Jeremy Belknap all had access to Winthrop's three-volume journal, courtesy of the Winthrop family. Currently, the first and third volumes of the original journal are housed in the Massachusetts historical society, but the second, in its original form, is lost forever, having been consumed in a fire at James Savage's office while the

librarian of the historical society was reading and transcribing it. For all of the figures who recognized the importance of Winthrop's journal as an early account of colonial life in North America, it is surprising that it was not published until 150 years after Winthrop's death (Dunn 186). The critic Richard Dunn remarks that the journal takes on different levels of detail and subject matter depending upon a variety of factors including whether Winthrop was in a position of power. When he was functioning as governor, the entries are tempered, so that controversies are easily remedied, and evidence of dissent is silenced. Gathering materials from other documents and comparing them to Winthrop's journal, Dunn notes that the governor does not mention the 200 people who died within the first year, or the additional 200 who departed from the colony and returned to England (194). Further, when Winthrop remarks on the joyous return of the *Lyon* carrying much-needed food and other supplies to the settlers, he omits that the ship returned to England carrying more than 80 unhappy colonists (195). Dunn attributes these calculated omissions or silences to Winthrop's sense of the journal as a "semipublic statement by the leader of the colony" (194). Editors of the journals also participated in the removal or silencing of certain topics addressed by Winthrop such as the tale of Anne Hutchinson's monstrous birth or the charges of bestiality filed against the colonist William Hatchet (Dunn 187).

Winthrop seems to have looked to William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and the Old Testament tales of backsliding and divine punishment as models for his journal (Dunn 196). Further, Dunn believes that the early entries detailing specific nautical information were modeled after Francis Higginson, who penned a sea journal when he crossed the Atlantic for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Winthrop sent for Higginson's journal and requested that his son Forth make copies of certain passages, which would then be distributed to neighbors interested in emigration to the New World (191–192). Thus, Winthrop's journal provides future colonists with assurances about the relative safety of the ocean voyage. In this respect, one might see the early sections of the journal performing a similar function to Captain JOHN SMITH's promotional tracts. It is a public document that is made by a private man who assumes a public persona, as evidenced by his use of the third person pronoun *we* and his limited reference to himself in the first person. In fact, he refers to himself in the third person as "the governor."

The tension between the intended public nature of the journal and the private man who was writing its entries becomes most apparent in years of strife and controversy. After the return of more than 80 settlers to England, Winthrop developed a strategy to treat all instances of colonists' departing from Massachusetts or quarreling with the government as people destined to suffer God's wrath for their wickedness and their departure from the covenant outlined in *A Modell of Christian Charity* (Dunn 195). Such a strategy proves key to the sentencing and banishment of Anne Hutchinson and the removal of THOMAS MORTON, two of Winthrop's most threatening neighbors. As justification for his actions, Winthrop draws upon the Old Testament tales of figures who incur God's wrath for their wicked acts. He does not hesitate throughout the journal's three volumes to document tales of hardship and death visited upon those who defy the Massachusetts church-state system, such as Anne Hutchinson, John Humfrey, and Dr. Child.

Beginning in late October 1636, Winthrop makes his first entry on the figure whom Richard Dunn believes to have been "an even more dangerous adversary than the Pequots" (201). Winthrop calls Hutchinson a "woman of ready wit and bold spirit" and thus in his own indirect manner recognizes the attributes that might call others to listen to her speak, as many did. Hutchinson, Winthrop reports, "brought over with her two dangerous errors: 1. That the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified person. 2. That no sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification." Such theories are radically dangerous because they challenge the foundations of Winthrop's own religious beliefs

and, in doing so, threaten his authority over the colony and his vision for its destiny. In the first statement, Hutchinson sees the elect as having the spirit of God within them. This anticipates Quaker belief regarding an "inner light" that allows every person the ability to communicate with God, without the intervention of priests or ministers. Thus, it rids the colony of its central structure, the Calvinist church. It differs from Calvinist thinking, in which the elect commune with the Holy Spirit only after their death, when they alone are given entry into heaven while all others suffer eternal damnation in hell. Taken to its extreme, Hutchinson's first theory of the divine's existing within humans would, naturally, lead to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit dwells within everyone, and thus all are destined for heaven. This belief confronts the Calvinist concept of predestination, in which a select few are among the elect, or "justified," people. Winthrop's vision for the colony as a "city upon a hill" is based on the Calvinist doctrine of predestination by asserting that the colonists are God's chosen people. Hutchinson's statement leads to an egalitarianism that is spiritually and politically offensive to Winthrop.

Further, Hutchinson's beliefs might have led Puritans to dispense with the Bible and other tools of learning about God since they were filled with the Holy Spirit and were thus endowed with enlightened minds. Hutchinson herself proclaimed that she had received a message from God telling her the veracity of her theories, and, most important, that she was destined for heaven. The Puritan culture revolved around ministers and other officials interpreting signs from the Bible and from events in everyday life as divine revelations. To have a layperson, and a woman at that, declare her own salvation as assured through a direct message from God dismantled the patriarchal order of the church and challenged the central tenet of the religion.

Hutchinson's second point is that "no sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification." This concept also directly challenges Calvinist thought regarding the signs God provides in the world of his favor or disfavor. Winthrop has written, as has William Bradford, of signs that he witnesses that demonstrate God's favor on the colonists. Similarly, the two early settlers recite numerous tales in which their enemies' hardships or deaths are considered to be signs of God's harsh judgment. When John Humfrey deserted the Massachusetts Bay Colony for the West Indies, Winthrop considers the fire that burned his barn and its contents, hay and corn, as just punishment for breaking the covenant with God. Similarly, when Hutchinson suffers a miscarriage, what Winthrop describes in his journal as "a monstrous birth," he writes of it as a sign of "her error in denying inherent righteousness." Thus, ironically, he views her miscarriage as God's punishment specifically for her second theory that the elect cannot look to the world for evidence of their election, or "justification."

Given Winthrop's predisposition to abide by God's laws and to read the tragedies or triumphs of others in terms of God's judgment, it is understandable that he would engage in a 20-year debate with the deputies over the creation of judicial power in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and a code that would prescribe specific punishments for a variety of crimes. Key to the freemen's attempts to create a set of laws was the fear that magistrates held too much power and could use it at their own discretion to create harsh and uneven punishments for individuals who committed the same crimes but who were held in strong contempt by the magistrates on a personal level. To Winthrop, "God have provided all the rules that were needed to govern" (Cahn 108). Further still, the Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company provided magistrates with legislative and judicial functions to "make laws and ordinances for the good and welfare of the said company" (reported in Cahn 112). In his journal in 1639, Winthrop wrote, "The people had long desired a body of laws, and thought their condition very unsafe, while so much power rested in the discretion of the magistrates." His fear was that this "body of laws" would become a public declaration by the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony that they were not, as he had so powerfully projected en route to the colony, a "city upon a hill."

When Winthrop was on trial for overstepping his rightful powers in 1645 by intervening in a militia election held in Hingham, his defense, recorded in his journal, provides insight into his view of Puritan political philosophy (Schaar 495). Winthrop wrote of the reciprocal nature of magistrates: "I entreat you to consider that when you choose magistrates, you take them from among yourselves, men subject to like passion as you are. Therefore, when you see infirmities in us you should reflect upon your own and not be severe censurers of the failings of your magistrates when you have continual experience of the like infirmities in yourselves and others." In his statement, Winthrop reminds his critics that he not only is one of them, in that both are human and thus subject to failings, but also that he was chosen from among them to represent them. A magistrate is thus a reflection of his constituency, and any failure perceived in the magistrate should be balanced with self-examination on the colonists' own part.

In 1645, Winthrop imagined the purpose and function he intended his journal to have: "It may be of use to leave a memorial of some of the most material, that our posterity and others may behold the workings of Satan to ruin the colonies and churches of Christ in New England, and into what distempers a wise and godly people may fall in times of temptation; and when such have entertained some false and plausible principles, what deformed superstructures they will raise thereupon, and with what unreasonable obstinacy they will maintain them" (2:240).

For Discussion or Writing

1. Winthrop's journals have been the primary source for early histories of colonial life in New England. Consider Winthrop's parable of the mouse killing the snake, which is an instance in nature of God's prevailing over Satan. How does this religious image of struggle contribute to early American history?
2. Other authors besides Winthrop have mixed the personal with the public. Consider how Winthrop weaves these two threads together in comparison with William Bradford. Are there moments when, even if they are discussing historical events, it is possible to learn something personal about the authors?
3. How does Winthrop, as do Thomas Morton and John Smith, create a promotional tract in his writing, with the aim of enticing others to make the difficult and dangerous journey to the colonies?

FURTHER QUESTIONS ON WINTHROP AND HIS WORK

1. In his journal, Winthrop devises a list of resolutions by which he will seek to improve himself. His list, however, is imagined to be a covenant with God. Consider how Winthrop's notions of self-improvement compare and contrast with Benjamin Franklin's, as famously outlined in his autobiography.
2. Look through Winthrop's writings for other similes besides the "city upon a hill" and devise an argument in which you uncover the central ideals Winthrop wished to expound in the New World. Do these values still hold currency in the United States today? Do you see them reflected in other authors after Winthrop?

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Appendix I

Alphabetical List of Writers Included in All Volumes of the *Student's Encyclopedia of Great American Writers*

Adams, Henry	1838–1918	Volume 2
Adams, John, and Abigail Adams	1735–1826 1744–1818	Volume 1
Albee, Edward	1928–	Volume 4
Alcott, Louisa May	1832–1888	Volume 2
Alvarez, Julia	1950–	Volume 5
Anaya, Rudolfo	1937–	Volume 5
Anderson, Sherwood	1876–1942	Volume 3
Angelou, Maya	1928–	Volume 5
Baca, Jimmy Santiago	1952–	Volume 5
Baldwin, James	1924–1987	Volume 4
Bambara, Toni Cade	1939–	Volume 5
Baraka, Amiri (Leroi Jones)	1934–	Volume 5
Bellow, Saul	1915–2005	Volume 4
Bierce, Ambrose	1842–1914?	Volume 2
Bishop, Elizabeth	1911–1979	Volume 4
Bonnin, Gertrude Simmons (Zitkala-Ša)	1876–1938	Volume 3
Bradbury, Ray	1920–	Volume 4
Bradford, William	1590–1657	Volume 1
Bradstreet, Anne	1612–1672	Volume 1
Brooks, Gwendolyn	1917–2000	Volume 4
Brown, Charles Brockden	1771–1810	Volume 1
Bryant, William Cullen	1794–1878	Volume 1
Cabeza de Vaca, Álvar Núñez	1490–1556	Volume 1
Capote, Truman	1924–1984	Volume 4
Carver, Raymond	1938–1988	Volume 5
Cather, Willa	1873–1947	Volume 3
Champlain, Samuel de	1570–1635	Volume 1
Cheever, John	1912–1982	Volume 4
Chesnutt, Charles	1858–1932	Volume 2
Child, Lydia Maria	1802–1880	Volume 2
Chopin, Kate	1850–1904	Volume 2
Cisneros, Sandra	1954–	Volume 5
Cofer, Judith Ortiz	1952–	Volume 5
Collins, Billy	1941–	Volume 5
Columbus, Christopher	1451–1506	Volume 1
Cooper, James Fenimore	1789–1851	Volume 1
Crane, Hart	1899–1932	Volume 3
Crane, Stephen	1871–1900	Volume 2
Crèvecoeur, J. Hector St. John de	1735–1813	Volume 1
Cullen, Countee	1903–1946	Volume 3
Cummings, E. E.	1894–1962	Volume 3
Davis, Rebecca Harding	1831–1910	Volume 2
Dickinson, Emily	1830–1886	Volume 2
Dos Passos, John	1896–1970	Volume 3
Douglass, Frederick	1818–1895	Volume 2
Dove, Rita	1952–	Volume 5
Dreiser, Theodore	1871–1945	Volume 3
DuBois, W. E. B.	1868–1963	Volume 3
Dunbar, Paul Laurence	1872–1906	Volume 2
Edwards, Jonathan	1703–1758	Volume 1
Eliot, T. S.	1888–1965	Volume 3
Ellison, Ralph	1914–1994	Volume 4
Emerson, Ralph Waldo	1803–1882	Volume 2
Equiano, Olaudah	1745–1797	Volume 1
Erdrich, Louise	1954–	Volume 5
Faulkner, William	1897–1962	Volume 3
Ferlinghetti, Lawrence	1920–	Volume 4
Fern, Fanny (Sara Willis Parton)	1811–1872	Volume 2
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	1896–1940	Volume 3
Forché, Carolyn	1950–	Volume 5
Foster, Hannah Webster	1758–1840	Volume 1
Franklin, Benjamin	1706–1790	Volume 1
Freeman, Mary Eleanor Wilkins	1852–1930	Volume 2
Freneau, Philip Morin	1752–1832	Volume 1
Frost, Robert	1874–1963	Volume 3
Fuller, Margaret	1810–1850	Volume 2
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins	1860–1935	Volume 2

Stein, Gertrude	1874–1946	Volume 3
Steinbeck, John	1902–1968	Volume 3
Stevens, Wallace	1879–1955	Volume 3
Stowe, Harriet Beecher	1811–1896	Volume 2
Sui Sin Far (Edith Maude Eaton)	1865–1914	Volume 3
Swenson, May	1913–1989	Volume 4
Tan, Amy	1952–	Volume 5
Taylor, Edward	ca. 1642–1729	Volume 1
Thoreau, Henry David	1817–1862	Volume 2
Toomer, Jean	1894–1967	Volume 3
Twain, Mark (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)	1835–1910	Volume 2
Updike, John	1932–2009	Volume 4
Viramontes, Helena María	1954–	Volume 5
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr.	1922–2007	Volume 4
Walker, Alice	1944–	Volume 5
Warren, Robert Penn	1905–1989	Volume 4
Washington, Booker T.	1856–1915	Volume 3
Welty, Eudora	1909–2001	Volume 4
Wharton, Edith	1862–1937	Volume 3
Wheatley, Phillis	1753–1784	Volume 1
Whitman, Walt	1819–1892	Volume 2
Wilbur, Richard	1921–	Volume 4
Wilder, Thornton	1897–1975	Volume 3
Williams, Tennessee	1911–1983	Volume 4
Williams, William Carlos	1883–1961	Volume 3
Wilson, August	1945–2005	Volume 5
Wilson, Harriet E.	1825–1900	Volume 2
Winthrop, John	1588–1649	Volume 1
Wright, Richard	1908–1960	Volume 3

Appendix II

Chronological List of Writers Included in All Volumes of the *Student's Encyclopedia of Great American Writers*, by Birth Date

Note that authors are placed in the volume that covers the period during which they published their most important works. Some authors published their works relatively early or relatively late in their lives. This explains why, for example, certain authors placed in volume 3 were actually born before certain authors placed in volume 2.

Christopher Columbus	1451–1506	Volume 1
Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca	1490–1556	Volume 1
Samuel de Champlain	1570–1635	Volume 1
Thomas Morton	1579–1647	Volume 1
John Smith	1580–1631	Volume 1
John Winthrop	1588–1649	Volume 1
William Bradford	1590–1657	Volume 1
Anne Bradstreet	1612–1672	Volume 1
Edward Taylor	ca. 1642–1729	Volume 1
Cotton Mather	1663–1728	Volume 1
Jonathan Edwards	1703–1758	Volume 1
Benjamin Franklin	1706–1790	Volume 1
Jupiter Hammon	1711–1806	Volume 1
Samson Occom	1723–1792	Volume 1
J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur	1735–1813	Volume 1
Handsome Lake	1735–1815	Volume 1
John Adams	1735–1826	Volume 1
Thomas Paine	1737–1809	Volume 1
Thomas Jefferson	1743–1826	Volume 1
Abigail Adams	1744–1818	Volume 1
Olaudah Equiano	1745–1797	Volume 1
Judith Sargent Murray	1751–1820	Volume 1
Philip Morin Freneau	1752–1832	Volume 1
Phillis Wheatley	1753–1784	Volume 1
Hannah Webster Foster	1758–1840	Volume 1
Susanna Haswell Rowson	1762–1824	Volume 1
Charles Brockden Brown	1771–1810	Volume 1
Washington Irving	1783–1859	Volume 1
James Fenimore Cooper	1789–1851	Volume 1
Catharine Maria Sedgwick	1789–1867	Volume 1
William Cullen Bryant	1794–1878	Volume 1
Lydia Maria Child	1802–1880	Volume 2
Ralph Waldo Emerson	1803–1882	Volume 2
Nathaniel Hawthorne	1804–1864	Volume 2
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	1807–1882	Volume 2
Edgar Allan Poe	1809–1849	Volume 2
Margaret Fuller	1810–1850	Volume 2
Fanny Fern (Sara Willis Parton)	1811–1872	Volume 2
Harriet Beecher Stowe	1811–1896	Volume 2
Harriet Jacobs	1813–1897	Volume 2
Henry David Thoreau	1817–1862	Volume 2
Frederick Douglass	1818–1895	Volume 2
Herman Melville	1819–1891	Volume 2
Walt Whitman	1819–1892	Volume 2
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	1825–1911	Volume 2
Harriet E. Wilson	1825–1900	Volume 2
Emily Dickinson	1830–1886	Volume 2
Rebecca Harding Davis	1831–1910	Volume 2
Louisa May Alcott	1832–1888	Volume 2
Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)	1835–1910	Volume 2
Bret Harte	1836–1902	Volume 2
Sarah M. B. Piatt	1836–1919	Volume 2
William Dean Howells	1837–1920	Volume 2
Henry Adams	1838–1918	Volume 2
Ambrose Bierce	1842–1914?	Volume 2
Henry James	1843–1916	Volume 2
Joel Chandler Harris	1848–1908	Volume 2
Sarah Orne Jewett	1849–1909	Volume 2

Kate Chopin	1850–1904	Volume 2
Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman	1852–1930	Volume 2
Booker T. Washington	1856–1915	Volume 3
Charles Chesnutt	1858–1932	Volume 2
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	1860–1935	Volume 2
Edith Wharton	1862–1937	Volume 3
Sui Sin Far (Edith Maude Eaton)	1865–1914	Volume 3
W. E. B. DuBois	1868–1963	Volume 3
Edwin Arlington Robinson	1869–1935	Volume 3
Stephen Crane	1871–1900	Volume 2
Theodore Dreiser	1871–1945	Volume 3
Langston Hughes	1871–1967	Volume 3
Paul Laurence Dunbar	1872–1906	Volume 2
Willa Cather	1873–1947	Volume 3
Gertrude Stein	1874–1946	Volume 3
Robert Frost	1874–1963	Volume 3
Jack London	1876–1916	Volume 3
Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Zitkala-Ša)	1876–1938	Volume 3
Sherwood Anderson	1876–1942	Volume 3
Carl Sandburg	1878–1967	Volume 3
Wallace Stevens	1879–1955	Volume 3
William Carlos Williams	1883–1961	Volume 3
Ezra Pound	1885–1972	Volume 3
H. D. (Hilda Doolittle)	1886–1961	Volume 3
Marianne Moore	1887–1972	Volume 3
Eugene O'Neill	1888–1953	Volume 3
T. S. Eliot	1888–1965	Volume 3
Claude McKay	1890–1948	Volume 3
Katherine Anne Porter	1890–1980	Volume 3
Zora Neale Hurston	1891–1960	Volume 3
Nella Larsen	1891–1964	Volume 3
Edna St. Vincent Millay	1892–1950	Volume 3
E. E. Cummings	1894–1962	Volume 3
Jean Toomer	1894–1967	Volume 3
F. Scott Fitzgerald	1896–1940	Volume 3
John Dos Passos	1896–1970	Volume 3
William Faulkner	1897–1962	Volume 3
Thornton Wilder	1897–1975	Volume 3
Hart Crane	1899–1932	Volume 3
Ernest Hemingway	1899–1961	Volume 3
John Steinbeck	1902–1968	Volume 3
Countee Cullen	1903–1946	Volume 3
Ayn Rand	1905–1982	Volume 4
Robert Penn Warren	1905–1989	Volume 4
Richard Wright	1908–1960	Volume 3
Theodore Roethke	1908–1963	Volume 4
Eudora Welty	1909–2001	Volume 4
Elizabeth Bishop	1911–1979	Volume 4
Tennessee Williams	1911–1983	Volume 4
John Cheever	1912–1982	Volume 4
Robert Hayden	1913–1980	Volume 4
May Swenson	1913–1989	Volume 4
Randall Jarrell	1914–1965	Volume 4
Bernard Malamud	1914–1986	Volume 4
Ralph Ellison	1914–1994	Volume 4
Saul Bellow	1915–2005	Volume 4
Arthur Miller	1915–2005	Volume 4
Robert Lowell	1917–1977	Volume 4
Gwendolyn Brooks	1917–2000	Volume 4
Shirley Jackson	1919–1965	Volume 4
J. D. Salinger	1919–2010	Volume 4
Ray Bradbury	1920–	Volume 4
Lawrence Ferlinghetti	1920–	Volume 4
Richard Wilbur	1921–	Volume 4
Alex Haley	1921–1992	Volume 4
Jack Kerouac	1922–1969	Volume 4
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	1922–2007	Volume 4
Denise Levertov	1923–1997	Volume 4
Joseph Heller	1923–1999	Volume 4
James Baldwin	1924–1987	Volume 4
Truman Capote	1924–1984	Volume 4
Flannery O'Connor	1925–1964	Volume 4
Malcolm X	1925–1965	Volume 4
Harper Lee	1926–	Volume 4
Allen Ginsberg	1926–1997	Volume 4
John Knowles	1926–2001	Volume 4
Edward Albee	1928–	Volume 4
Maya Angelou	1928–	Volume 5
Anne Sexton	1928–1974	Volume 4
Paule Marshall	1929–	Volume 4
Adrienne Rich	1929–	Volume 5
Martin Luther King, Jr.	1929–1968	Volume 4
Chaim Potok	1929–2002	Volume 4
Gary Snyder	1930–	Volume 5
Lorraine Hansberry	1930–1965	Volume 4
Toni Morrison	1931–	Volume 5

Sylvia Plath	1932–1963	Volume 4
John Updike	1932–2009	Volume 4
Cormac McCarthy	1933–	Volume 5
Philip Roth	1933–	Volume 4
N. Scott Momaday	1934–	Volume 4
Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones)	1934–	Volume 5
Mary Oliver	1935–	Volume 5
Ken Kesey	1935–2001	Volume 4
Larry McMurtry	1936–	Volume 5
Rudolfo Anaya	1937–	Volume 5
Joyce Carol Oates	1938–	Volume 5
Ishmael Reed	1938–	Volume 5
Raymond Carver	1938–1988	Volume 5
Toni Cade Bambara	1939–	Volume 5
Maxine Hong Kingston	1940–	Volume 5
Robert Pinsky	1940–	Volume 5
Billy Collins	1941–	Volume 5
Simon J. Ortiz	1941–	Volume 5
Pat Mora	1942–	Volume 5
Nikki Giovanni	1943–	Volume 5
Alice Walker	1944–	Volume 5
August Wilson	1945–2005	Volume 5
Tim O'Brien	1946–	Volume 5
Yusef Komunyakaa	1947–	Volume 5
Leslie Marmon Silko	1948–	Volume 5
Julia Alvarez	1950–	Volume 5
Carolyn Forché	1950–	Volume 5
Joy Harjo	1951–	Volume 5
Jimmy Santiago Baca	1952–	Volume 5
Judith Ortiz Cofer	1952–	Volume 5
Rita Dove	1952–	Volume 5
Gary Soto	1952–	Volume 5
Amy Tan	1952–	Volume 5
Sandra Cisneros	1954–	Volume 5
Louise Erdrich	1954–	Volume 5
Helena María Viramontes	1954–	Volume 5
Barbara Kingsolver	1955–	Volume 5
Chang-rae Lee	1965–	Volume 5