Distancing English

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$\mathcal{N}$OTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Walter Channing, "Essay on American Language and Literature," *North-American Review and Miscellaneous Journal* 1, no. 3 (September 1815): 307–8.

2. David Cressy, *Coming over: Migration and communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 4.

3. *A Voyage into New England: Begun in 1623. and ended in 1624* (London: William Jones, 1624), 1.

4. *Sea Changes: British Emigration and American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46; emphasis added.

5. *To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 3, 4.

6. David McCullogh, *1776* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 77.

7. "Dallas' Reports," *The American Review and Literary Journal for the Year 1802* 2, no. 1 (1802): 27

8. Examples of what Mencken calls "surviving differences" can be found, for instance, in *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (New York: Knopf, 1967), 275–301.

9. Walt Whitman, *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* (New York: Library of America, 1982), 5.

10. "Hawthorne and His Mosses: By a Virginian Spending July in Vermont," *The Literary World* VII (July–December 1850): 147.

11. "The Man on the Dump," *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage, 1982), 203.

CHAPTER 1

1. Norman Pettit, "Subjects of the Crown: in Exile: Aliens in a Strange Land," in *Declarations of Cultural Independence in the English-Speaking World: A Symposium,* ed. Luigi Sampietro (Milan: D'Imperio Editore Novara, 1989), 27, 30. Pettit critiques attempts (by Sacvan Bercovitch or Patricia Caldwell, for instance) to construct emerging American "voices" in the colony because the examples point more notably, he says, to situations in which "*all* the speakers are English" (26). Cressy concurs, saying the "colonists referred to themselves as 'the English,' as distinct from the Dutch or the native Americans. It was to England that they looked for their history, their cultural lifeline, and for many of their future expectations." David Cressy, *Coming Over,* viii.

2. Pettit argues, "Few scholars of North American birth, it would seem, are able adequately to deal with the reluctance of English Puritans to sail for New England's shore" (24).

3. Stephen Fender adds that the complexities of this regard extend past the revolutionary period in self-debate "the very medium of which—the English language itself—originated in the metropolis from which young country had fought to be free." *Sea Changes: British Emigration and American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 95.

4. In an initial light of continuity with England, America finds its place among former British settler colonies, such as Australia and New Zealand, which in a recent symposium have been given attention. As Douglas Gray suggests for New Zealanders, for instance, "What has actually happened is rather a gradual realization of a separate identity—an identity still deeply involved with Britain and with British literary tradition, but different," 70. See "Sailing in Another Direction: Some Early New Zealand Writing," in *The Declarations of Cultural Independence in the English-Speaking World: A Symposium: Università degli Studi di Milano,* ed. Luigi Sampietro (Novara: D'Imperio, 1989). That slow separation is matched with a residual feeling of fear and potential irrelevance; Gray quotes from the writer Allen Curnow, "'our presence in these islands is accidental, irrelevant; . . . we are interlopers on an indifferent or hostile scene'" (69). So in "The Australian Declaration of Independence," John McLaren emphasizes Australia's early and long tradition of ties with England, ultimately fraught with terror and marginality as well. He writes of Australia's initial attempts to establish a "new Britain": "in this golden dream Australia did not so much declare an independence of Europe as provide a place where Europeans, and particularly English-men with their wives and children, could fulfil the hopes that Europe had frustrated" (*Declarations,* ed. Sampietro, 101). Even so, and at increased distances from England, the presence of savagery at the heart of the civilization, and especially colonization, inevitably takes hold, paradoxically pointing back again to the country's colonial history and to oppressive ties with England. The original prison colony and its political practices, where Australians "both as individuals and as a society, were at the mercy of forces outside themselves," continue to suggest "terror which lies at the heart of the colonial society" (106).

5. "American Poetry," *The Knickerbocker Magazine* XII, no. 5 (November 1838): 386.

6. "Lack of Poetry in America," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 1 (August 1850): 403. This is echoed in "American Poetry," *Littell's Living Age* VI (July 1845): 85.

7. Rev. Sidney Smith, *Edinburgh Review* 33 (January 1820): 79.

8. Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Ballantine, 1979), 468.

9. Walter Channing, "Essay on American Language and Literature," 309.

10. "A Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases Which Have Been Supposed to Be Peculiar to the United States of America," review by Sidney Willard, *North-American Review* III, no. 9 (September 1816): 355.

11. The debate emerges from a historical lineage grounded in Thomas Hobbes's "sense of connection between an ordered language and an ordered state" (33) traced by David Simpson in *The Politics of American English, 1776–1850.* Focusing on questions of language, social contract, and ideas of "improvement" of the English language (conventions that will be adapted to local debates on a self-translated English in America), Simpson cites Thomas Hobbes as well John Locke, David Hume, Adam Smith, Samuel Johnson, and Edmund Burke. Simpson concludes, "it was to prove more difficult to declare independence from Samuel Johnson than it had been to reject George III" (33). See *The Politics of American English, 1776–1850* (New York: Oxford, 1986), 3–51.

12. "A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America," *North-American Review* III, no. 9 (September 1816): 347.

13. "Lack of Poetry in America," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 1 (August 1850): 404.

14. Noah Webster, *Sketches of American Policy* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1785), 47.

15. Webster, Preface, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Converse, 1828), unpaginated.

16. For an analysis of the complexity of Webster's politics, see Simpson, 24, 52–56. For a detailed look at his complex and important position to the national language argument (48), noted here, see "Noah Webster" (52–90): "As 1776 did not usher in a new language, so neither did it invent a new literature or a new philosophy. It did, however, impose the demand that these prospects be examined and worked for, and it determined that the traditional Enlightenment preoccupations persisting or arising in the early years of independence should take on a consciously national resonance, whether for or against innovation and novelty. Thus, although ambitions for changing, fixing, or analyzing to its roots the quixotic spirit of language had been commonplace in the eighteenth century, they become focused as part of the *American* ideal after 1776" (24).

17. Fisher Ames, "American Literature," in *Works of Fisher Ames with a Selection from His Speeches and Correspondence by His Son Seth Ames,* vol. II (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1854), 430.

18. S. Willard, "A Vocabulary," *North-American Review* III, no. 9 (Sept. 1816): 355.

19. John C. McCloskey, "The Campaign of Periodicals After the War of 1812 for National American Literature," *PMLA* 50, no. 1 (March 1935): 262.

20. Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 2.

21. Walter R. Borneman, *1812: The War That Forged a Nation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 7–53.

22. Quoted by Hickey, *The War of 1812,* 15.

23. Attributable in the records to John Randolph of Virginia by Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky: *Annals of Congress,* House of Representatives, 12th Congress, 1st session, 459.

24. "A National Literature, 1837–1855," *American Literature* 8, no. 2 (May 1936): 125.

25. Hickey, *The War of 1812,* 3. As Harry L. Coles in an earlier work also notes, "Though each side was able to win minor victories on its opponent's soil, neither was capable of carrying out a large-scale, decisive offensive" (255). At the same time, he notes, "The War of 1812 has sometimes been called the Second War of American Independence and, rightly understood, this concept has merit . . . the war did mark the end of American dependence on the European system. . . . From the Revolution onward a basic aim of American statesmen had been to achieve freedom of action so that the United States could choose war or peace as its interests might dictate. With the settlement of 1815 this aim became a reality to a degree

that the early statesmen had hardly dared to hope" (270–71). Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). See also Borneman, *1812,* 304.

26. The journal, founded by William Tudor, Edward Channing, and Richard Henry Dana (the elder), known for its "enlightened conservatism," was grounded in an anti-Malthusanian bent toward America's civilization and its progress, and founded among many competing desires: a desire to resist the cultural dominance of England, along with a concomitant desire to resist radical French influences or emerging movements of "nature" in the United States by writers such as Henry David Thoreau.

27. Francis C. Gray, "An Address Pronounced Before the Society of Phi Beta Kappa," *North-American Review* III, no. 9 (September 1816): 301.

28. Simpson, *The Politics of American English,* 24.

29. Henry N. Day, "Taste and Morals:—The Necessity of Aesthetic Culture to the Highest Moral Excellence," *American Biblical Repository and Classical Review,* Third Series, 3 (July 1847): 525.

30. Simpson, *The Politics of American English,* 53.

31. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 48, 61–63. This subject continues to provoke debate. For another account of the public sphere and the "nation that imagined its inception as an effect of linguistic action," see Christopher Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

32. Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage, 2002), 30. This conclusion is part of the ongoing debate, referenced above.

33. Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), 2; emphasis in original.

34. Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 5, 11.

35. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Genuine Article: A Historian Looks at Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 251, 252. As Morgan notes, this creation of character is clearly sketched by Paul Longmore, who explores Washington's self-conscious development of reputation and roots in his English ideals: "He [George Washington] would never entirely let go of English ideals, but he *would* labor to redefine his identity in American terms. Ultimately, he would conduct that redefinition publicly in collaboration with his countrymen. They, in turn, would make him the exemplar of the new nation's values." See *The Invention of George Washington* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 10; emphasis in original.

36. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage, 1997), 10.

37. *Sea Changes,* 67, 66.

38. See, for example, Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity,* ed. A. D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), especially 35–39. See also Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997).

39. In a further twist, Cressy adds that such a view of New England was one "some New Englanders were happy to encourage, if it meant they would be left alone" (32).

40. Robert Pinsky, "Poetry and American Memory," *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 1999): 64.

41. Morgan, *Genuine Article,* 257. On the development of deportment in early America, see Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 61–99.

42. Charles Brockden Brown, Preface, *American Review and Literary Journal for the Year 1801,* First Edition (1802), iv.

43. *The Monthly Magazine and American Review* 1, no. 1 (April 1799): 1. In 1801, the journal became *The American Review and Literary Journal.*

44. Edward Cahill, "Federalist Criticism and the Fate of Genius," *American Literature* 76, no. 4 (December 2004): 687. Such an odd position of the Federalists looks ahead a few decades to the situation of the Whigs, well described by Simpson, echoing Arthur Schlesinger: "the whigs began to realize that Jackson's campaigns had profited considerably by a popular interest, or at least a populist rhetoric, that could no longer be ignored. The way to fight Jackson was not to stand forth on the explicitly argued doctrines of a necessary elitism, as the old Federalists had done, but rather to begin to claim that the whigs themselves were the genuine party of the people. Thus, an explicit recognition of class distinctions and differences of interest, in Federalist discourse, is replaced by a disingenuous rhetoric of equality in which there are no workers and no employers, and in which all have the same interests and the same opportunity for profit and progress" (145–46).

45. Ames, "American Literature," 432–33.

46. This study proceeds under the assumption well articulated by Benedict Anderson that "[i]n fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined." Anderson's emphasis on "style" has particular applicability to Whitman's poetics and strategies in the Preface, as will become clear. See *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 15.

47. See Fender, *Sea Changes: British Emigration and American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 60.

48. Cressy, *Coming Over,* 1–2.

49. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), 160.

50. Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose,* 25. The topos of the inexpressible is of course also relevant to Whitman's poems, a subject for another study.

51. Channing, "Essay," 307.

52. Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and Schools of the Ages* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), 247.

53. Philip Fisher, *Still the New World: American Literature in a Culture of Creative Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 56. Fisher relates "Song of Myself" to the Constitution, as an outline, and immediately links Whitman's poetics to "Lincoln's political idea," emphasizing "unity" (see 56–57).

54. *Poets Thinking: Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 37, 38. Vendler's descriptions of Whitman's "reprise-poem" (39) trace not only another important rebuttal to what she calls "Whitman's apparently 'spontaneous' language" (39), but also a map for framing: "Whitman repeats, in his second-stanza reprise, almost all the elements of the first scene. But this time those elements are named by a speaker who has placed himself in a markedly altered relation to the scene" (41). In his "process of thinking as a form of transmutation" (60), she points to Whitman's decisions of order in the reprise (59), along with the interrogations of his own "compositional impulses" (62).

55. Kenneth M. Price, ed., *Walt Whitman: The Contemporary Reviews, American Critical Archives 9* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 8.

56. Price, *Walt Whitman,* 10.

57. Oscar Wilde, "The Gospel According to Walt Whitman," in Price, *Walt Whitman,* 321.

58. Williams, "An Essay on *Leaves of Grass,*" in *Leaves of Grass: One Hundred Years After,* ed. Milton Hindus (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1955), 22.

59. Charles A. Dana, "New Publications: *Leaves of Grass,*" in Price, *Walt Whitman,* 5; emphasis added.

60. Betsy Erkkila, "Introduction: Breaking Bounds," in *Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies,* eds. Betsy Erkkila and Jay Grossman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 8.

61. Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 292.

62. "Whitman's *originality* has less to do with his supposedly free verse. . . . " See Bloom, *Western Canon,* 248; emphasis added.

63. In the former, R. W. French also summarizes a common trajectory of reception (see above); the latter reflects his conclusions regarding the need to understand his still "elusive" (79) art. See "Reading Whitman," *Essays in Literature* 10.1 (April 1983): 78, 79.

64. An exceptional chapter, which discusses the Preface of 1855 directly, is Paul A. Bové's "*Leaves of Grass* and the Center: Free Play or Transcendence." See *Destructive Poetics: Heidegger and Modern American Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 131–79. "Whitman's 'Preface' to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* remains the most important single document in American poetics" (133), he writes. I will discuss this work later. Two other essays that directly address the Preface are Chaviva M. Hosek's "The Rhetoric of Whitman's 1855 Preface to *Leaves of Grass,*" *Walt Whitman Review* 25 (1979): 163–73; and Donez Xiques, "Whitman's Catalogues and the Preface to *Leaves of Grass,*" *Walt Whitman Review* 23 (1977): 68–76. More recent books and articles that follow ideas of reception, the performative element, and nationalism more generally in Whitman's body of work include the following: Kerry C. Larson, *Whitman's Drama of Consensus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); James Perrin Warren, *Walt Whitman's Language Experiment* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990); Mark Bauerlein, *Whitman and the American Idiom* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991); Vincent J. Bertolini's "'Hinting' and 'Reminding': The Rhetoric of Performative Embodiment in *Leaves of Grass,*" *ELH* 69 (2002): 1047–82, in which the "idea of intersubjectivity in lyric reading intended to have particular extratextual effects within the active, sensual subjectivities of readers and within the social and political worlds which they inhabit" (1048–49) is examined; and Scott MacPhail's "Lyric Nationalism: Whitman, American Studies, and the New Criticism" *TSLL* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 133–60, in which Whitman's broad, even literal appeal as an Adamic figure is critically traced and questioned: he writes that "we need to first acknowledge the powerful authority of Whitman to give national legitimacy to those to whom he speaks and who speak through him, and then we should begin to consider for whom he speaks in this instance, and how" (152).

65. Ferguson, "'We Hold These Truths,'" *Reconstructing American Literary History,* ed. Sacvan Bercovitch, *Harvard English Studies* 13 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986): 25.

66. For this quotation by Boucher in the context of competing English voices such as Henry Kett's, heard, for example, in "The United States of America cannot fail to perpetuate the language of their parent country," see Allen Walker Read, "British Recognition of American Speech in the Eighteenth Century," *Dialect Notes* VI, part VI (1933): 317–20. Read notes that although Boucher's comments appear in a Preface to his *Glossary* published in 1807, it appears from Boucher's editors that the preface was itself written in 1800.

67. William Ellery Channing, "National Literature," *The Christian Examiner* XXXVI, no. VI (January 1830): 270.

68. The historical juncture of the text is underscored by Paul A. Bové: "Considered historically, Whitman's 'Preface' faces a unique situation: he cannot directly call for a more creative understanding of the past since the habitual mode of then current American poetry, in fact, stands in an imitative, derivative relationship to old British forms. As a result of the paradoxical situation in which Whitman finds himself, a direct request for an authentic look at or interpretation of the past would be misinterpreted, misconceived as further support for the already entrenched conservatism of American letters which Whitman propagandistically attacks elsewhere." See *Destructive Poetics,* 143. Michael P. Kramer puts it differently: Whit-

man's "act of projection must also be seen to occupy a particular, adversarial position within the discourse on American English in mid-nineteenth-century America. . . . Whitman's denial is itself a mode of contestation. . . ." (92–93). In particular, he notes, Whitman can take on the "role of redactor, gathering passages and ideas from a variety of writers representing different discourses and assembling them into a whole intended to be more than the sum of its parts" (105). In this light, Kramer focuses more largely on Whitman's participation in the "complex history of American English and the difficult synthesis that faced the American linguist" (105). See *Imagining Language in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

69. "On American Literature," in *Essays by a Citizen of Virginia: Essays on Various Subjects of Taste, Morals, and National Policy by a Citizen of Virginia* (Georgetown, D.C.: Published by Joseph Milligan; Jacob Gideon, Junior, Printer, Washington, 1822), 42, 66.

70. "American Poetry," *The Knickerbocker* XII, 386.

71. Mary Thomas Crane records the history of the "frame" in the lyric, implying control but also carrying "connotations of shaping by experience, and even of fiction or feigning," potentially in a favorable light. *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 180.

72. See Fender, *Sea Changes,* 29.

73. Cressy, *Coming Over,* 10. Stephen Railton notes a similar action regarding rhetoric of literature authorship involving a combination of understatement, hyperbole, and self-consciousness predicated on statements of anxiety (rather than fear). See *Authorship and Audience: Literary Performance in the American Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 20.

74. "An Oration on American Literature" (January 1840), in *The Early Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Volume V: The Transcendentalist Years, 1840–1841,* ed. Patrick W. Carey, Marquette Studies in Theology No. 38, Andrew Tallon, Series Editor (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 201. See also "American Literature" IV (January 1839): 133–52.

75. Without discussing at length formal histories of framing, David L. Minter's work on "interpreted design" suggests an action tantamount to framing, with a focus on American prose and a "juxtaposition of two characters" (3); he writes that the first character, a "man of design," offers the "means of assuring success," while the second character, a "man of interpretation," offers a "means of taming unexpected and unacceptable failure" (6). His analysis focuses on what he calls a "defining problem of our time" (27), suggesting a "[t]ension between imagination and reality" (27). See *The Interpreted Design as a Structural Principle in American Prose* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

76. Stephen Fender notes a standing preoccupation with national character, originating in a narrative of emigrants, a narrative "by which the country has come to define itself—even the assumption of American exceptionalism and the recurrent image of American 'character' . . . ," 9. For an analysis of this standing preoccupation with national character and its early ties to emigration, see *Sea Changes,* 5–16.

77. Robert Weisbuch has described a related phenomenon as "actualism," by which "absences become virtues." He says, "actualism is confident, assertive, and programmatic; but a different, sometimes contradictory attitude develops alongside it, one that is nervous, exploratory, and fragmented. It is an ontological insecurity that, when capitalized upon, becomes an epistemological daring." *Atlantic Double Cross* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), xiv.

78. As explained by J. C. Furnas in "Don't Laugh Now," a surprisingly simple ending belies a common time shift in oral shaggy dogs: "by making normal reflex shortcuts between an opening situation and the sort of conclusion one would expect in normal life," a listener is "tricked," exploiting a non sequitur of logic to make room for real-time changes of expectations for survival. See "Don't Laugh Now," *Esquire* (May 1937): 237.

79. Ames, *Works,* 430.

80. Celia Britton, *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999); *Edouard Glissant,* 183.

81. *The Port Folio* 4, no. 22 (28 November 1807): 343.

82. This returns, sideways, to an early, and surprising, motive for emigration, as Fender explains: "Of all motives for emigration expressed or implied in the emigrant letters, the most surprising is their hope to find greater leisure in the United States," 60. For further explanation of this expectation, and a "myth" of agrarianism, see Fender, 60–63.

83. For a continuing discussion on inclusion of America in the debate on the "postcolonial," see Peter Hulme, "Including America," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 26, no. 1 (1995): 119. He says that the "'postcolonial' is (or should be) a descriptive, not an evaluative, term" (120). See Cathy N. Davidson for a perspective that looks at the usefulness of postcolonialism in promoting transnational American studies and the subtle workings of power: *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, Expanded Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13–24. On the place of postcolonialism in U.S. studies, see Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, "On the Borders Between U.S. Studies and Postcolonial Theory," in *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 3–69. For a consideration of postcolonial status and its relevance to the development of early American literature, see Lawrence Buell, "Postcolonial Anxiety in Classic U.S. Literature," in Singh and Schmidt, 196–219. For a look at how "U.S. imperialism is thus best understood as a complex and interdependent relationship with hegemonic as well as counterhegemonic modalities of coercion and resistance," see Donald E. Pease, "New Perspectives on U.S. Culture and Imperialism," in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 22–37. For a survey of how the idea of empire has often been left out of American studies, see Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in Kaplan and Pease, 3–21. For a study of how imperialism is "achieved textually" see Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from* The Tempest *to* Tarzan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10.

84. See Tucker, *Essays,* 42; emphasis added, and Royall Tyler, Preface, *The Algerian Captive, or, The Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill: Six Years a Prisoner Among the Algerine* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 6; emphasis added.

85. For resonance, see for example an attempted rhetorical question in *The Port Folio* (new series) 3, no. 25 (20 June 1807): 386–87: "Do the early accounts of any nation comprise more proofs of an ardent, persevering, and aspiring temper, incessantly struggling with difficulties and dangers, unwearied and undismayed; or an intelligence more prolifick in devices to overcome the embarrassments of infancy?" See also "Literary Prospects of 1845," *The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature Art, and Science* 1, no. 2 (February 1845): 149; emphasis added: "The beginnings are faint and scattered, but the elements *are here.*" In "American Letters: Their Character and Advancement" the editor of *The American Review* suggests that youth is to be overcome: "Our physical triumphs are acknowledged; and in most of the great departments of intellectual power, we need not hesitate to compare ourselves with other nations. But surely we ought to be wiser than to plume ourselves yet upon our literary position. We need have no doubts of our destiny in this respect; but we are young and can afford to wait a little for a reputation." See *The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature Art, and Science* (also cited as *The American Whig Review*) 1, no. 6 (June 1845): 575. And citing a lack of hope in the "rigor of our conventions of religion and education" and "only such a future as the past," Emerson also echoes disadvantages that critics noted; see remarks from "The Editors to the Reader," *The Dial* I, no. 1 (July 1840): 1–4, including twists and turns on "backwardness." Margaret Fuller edited the journal from 1840–1842.

86. *The Port Folio* 4, no. 22, new series (28 November 1807): 343.

87. Richard Shryock, *Tales of Storytelling: Embedded Narrative in Modern French Fiction* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 4. For a study of "foregrounding" in American narrative, see Tony Tanner, *City of Words: American Fiction 190–1970* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1971), 20. For a study of the "envoy" in English and American Literature, see Bernd Engler, "Literary Form as Aesthetic Program: The Envoy in English and American Literature," *REAL: The Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 7 (1990): 61–97.

88. See Charles Isenberg, *Telling Silence: Russian Frame Narratives of Renunciation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 143.

89. While there are often assumptions of popular speech in Whitman, more commonly Whitman's Preface, for example, structurally adapts "high" rhetoric, such as the inexpressible, or even "low" humor, such as the shaggy dog, rather than including popular terms: as H. L. Mencken points out clearly, "not many specimens of the popular speech ever got into his [Whitman's] writings, either in prose or in verse." See *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (New York: Knopf, 1967), 81.

90. Jan Harold Brunvand, "A Classification for Shaggy Dog Stories," *The Journal of American Folklore* 76, no. 299 (January–March 1963): 44. For reference, a classic shaggy dog is recounted by J. C. Furnas in "Don't Laugh Now." Notice that it deals with the tension between American and English points of view, diction, and kinship. "An advertisement appears in a New York paper offering a £500 reward for the return of a certain large, white shaggy dog, marked thus and so, to an address in a London suburb. A New Yorker who has just picked up a big white shaggy stray with the indicated markings, immediately takes ship for England with the dog, goes to the advertised address and rings the doorbell. A man opens the door. 'You advertised about a lost dog.' 'Oh,' says the Englishman coldly, 'not so damn shaggy' and slams the door in the American's face." See J. C. Furnas, "Don't Laugh Now," 237.

91. Eric Partridge, The 'Shaggy Dog' Story: Its Origin, Development and Nature (with a few seemly examples) (Freeport, NY: Book for Libraries Press, 1953), 52.

92. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," in *On Metaphor,* ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 7.

93. Headnote for Peter Bulkeley, "The Gospel-Covenant," in *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology,* eds. Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 117.

94. Paul Crowther, "Literary Metaphor and Philosophical Insight: The Significance of Archilochus," in *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions,* ed. G. R. Boys-Stones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 99–100.

95. As many note, the work of naturalists in the eighteenth century, particularly with regard to degeneration and relocation in *Histoire Naturelle* by Comte de Buffon (Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon), following on the heels of growing taxonomies and quantification (including, for example, statistics such as those of Gregory King pointing in the late seventeenth century, as Bill Luckin argues, to "those incapable of securing 'self-sufficiency,'" 242), informed debates about America's self-sufficiency, regarding its separation from its roots in England, including the separation and possible degeneration of its language; Bill Luckin, like many others, also notes developing links between degeneration, Darwinism, eugenics, and what he calls "racially tinged urban tribalism" (243), focusing on the medical and environmental public sphere. For a reading of the complex interrelations, see "Revisiting the idea of degeneration in urban Britain: 1830–1900," *Urban History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 234–52.

96. See Looby, *Voicing America,* 4.

97. Robert Ferguson stresses that "[f]rom the beginning, the North American colonies were text-oriented cultures through written charters, responses to charters, covenants, compacts, and not least, biblical exegesis." He further admonishes that "[w]e have to keep

in mind the whole range of communication" issuing from this textuality. *Reading the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3, 50.

98. Channing, "Essay," 313.

99. "Essay," 314.

100. Here is another instance of the "complex and ambiguous case of America's postcolonial origins," which includes settler colonialism "based on confiscation of land from its inhabitants" as well as an edge of severed relationships with Britain through "violent revolution" after settler colonialism on behalf of that imperial power (14). Cathy Davidson argues for continuing investigations of postcolonial theory with regard to the United States. See *Revolution and the Word,* 13–24.

101. Edward Channing, "On Models in Literature," *North American Review* 3, no. 8 (July 1816): 208–9.

CHAPTER 2

1. William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 1.i.62, *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 1256

2. William Ellery Channing, "National Literature," *The Christian Examiner* XXXVI (January 1830): 277. All of this, if yet to be "proved," collapses once more into the sum total of what he calls the "condition of our literature" as it is framed to be, shorn of those inadequacies "which obstruct its advancement."

3. St. Augustine, "Book VIII: The Search for God by the Understanding," in *The Trinity,* trans. John Burnaby (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 55.

4. Robert Graves beautifully renders this in parodic form in *Claudius the God: And His Wife Messalina* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 132: "However, the point is that Augustus, whenever he got into a tangle, used to cut the Gordian knot, like Alexander, saying: 'Words fail me, my Lords. Nothing that I might utter could possibly match the depths of my feelings in this matter.' And I learned this phrase off by heart and constantly made it my salvation." The complex history surrounding the term "occupatio," including a possible and early mistaken reading of "occultatio," is outlined by H. A. Kelly. See "*Occupatio* as Negative Narration: A Mistake for *Occultatio/Praeteritio," Modern Philology* 74, no. 3 (February 1977): 311–15. Other common terms that mark this history include "praeterition," "paralipsis," "metalepsis," and "prolepsis."

5. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Squire's Tale," in *The Canterbury Tales,* V.34–41, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1957), 128.

6. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), 159–62.

7. See Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1972), 529–46. Baker's reference is to the opening scene of *A Farewell to Arms:* "In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains" (Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* [London: Arrow, 1994], 3). Hemingway also uses the device in *The Sun Also Rises* (1927) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1941).

8. On the connection between poetry and rhetoric in the Middle Ages, see Curtius, "Poetry and Rhetoric," in *European Literature,* 154–66.

9. Curtius's chapter on "Devotional Formula and Humility" shows how the "medieval formula of submission is dependent on pagan Roman prototypes." See *European Literature,* 411.

10. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 61.

11. André Kukla explains that the intersection of mathematics with the ineffable points to "relatively arcane foundational issues in set theory and metamathematics." See *Ineffability and Philosophy,* Routledge Studies in Twentieth Century Philosophy, vol. 22 (London: Routledge, 2005), 1.

12. Peter S. Hawkins, "Dante's *Paradiso* and the Dialectic of Ineffability," in *Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable from Dante to Beckett,* eds. Peter S. Hawkins and Anne Howland Schotter (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 5.

13. For this emphasis, see Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *Ineffability: The Failure of Words in Philosophy and Religion* (Albany: State University of New York, 1993), 51.

14. St. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana,* I.6, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (Indianapolis: Library of Liberal Arts, 1978), 11.

15. Schotter, "Vernacular Style and the Word of God: The Incarnational Art of *Pearl,*" in *Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable,* 24.

16. Scharfstein, *Ineffability: The Failure of Words,* 188.

17. Hawkins, "Dante's *Paradiso,*" 8.

18. Schotter, "Vernacular Style," 23.

19. Ibid., 32.

20. Book I. 32–35, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* 389–90; emphasis added. For excellent looks at secular and classical roots of the humility topos and their transformations, see Curtius, *European Literature,* 407–13, and Eric Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages,* trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 27–52.

21. Marjorie Garber, "'The Rest Is Silence': Ineffability and the 'Unscene' in Shakespeare's Plays," in *Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable,* 40.

22. Maureen Quilligan, "Milton's Spenser: The Inheritance of Ineffability," in *Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable,* 66.

23. Stanley E. Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 40.

24. In 1628 we find in a sermon by John Donne an appearance of the word "inexpressible": "Thou shalt feele the joy of his third birth in thy soul, most inexpressible this day." See "Inexpressible," *The Oxford English Dictionary,* vol. VII, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner: 913. Though the word describing the topos gradually moves in this direction, the gist of the topos remains intact. In practice, both terms continue to appear, as we will see, in primary and secondary texts, though the word "inexpressible" becomes the more common and colloquial choice.

25. For a full reading in the context of autobiography, see Nancy K. Miller, "Facts, Pacts, Acts," *Profession* 92: Presidential Forum, 12.

26. Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts,* 70.

27. Ibid.

28. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* lines 28–35 (London: George Routledge, Ryder's Court, 1843), 9; emphasis added.

29. Spenser's "thickest woods" (I.11.97) and "deepe darkness" (I.8.334) are classic allegorical methods for representing the unreadable, opaque signs to human eyes and the peril of an "Errours den" (I.13.114) around every corner of the earthly path. For "The Flower," see *The Works of George Herbert,* ed. F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 166.

30. Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts,* 75. He notes in more detail: "References backward are not, as in an Anglican sermon, complicating and unsettling, but clarifying and confirming, and repetitions, rather than expanding the area of reference, pin it down and make it manageable" (72).

31. Sacvan Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 23.

32. The more conventional rhetoric of ineffability, of course, exists on the spectrum for the American Puritans. In "The Augustinian Strain of Piety," Perry Miller notes, for example, Thomas Shepard's words: "we admire the luster of the sun the more in that it is so great we can not behold it" (Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939], 11). And he underlines at more length that Samuel Willard required "over a thousand folio pages" to "tell what man may comprehend, by declaring that all reason is too finite to comprehend the infinite" (11). Still, Miller adds that the Puritans, unlike their predecessors, leaned in general away from defeat and toward accomplishment; as he says, "they dilated continually upon the balance of the attributes and the impenetrable mystery of the Godhead" (14). Therefore, he writes, the Puritans "insisted that the attributes [of God] are modes of human understanding rather than of the divine nature" (13), though they also in effect "came close to identifying these [selected] conceptions with His essence" (14).

33. Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad,* 29; emphasis added.

34. Miller, *New England Mind,* 13. The point regarding the Puritan perspective pertains to a theological angle conducive to *expressing* the inexpressible. This expression was anything but univocal, to a degree self-persuading. Along these lines, Ann Kibbey emphasizes the Puritans' use of metaphor for generating "a social imperative, one that persuades them of the fixity and certainty of their own system of reference"; see *The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism: A Study of Rhetoric, Prejudice, and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 41. For a look at "a Puritan culture that is contested from within," challenging "the myth of consensus at the center," see Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 2, 4. For a look at "certain fundamental sources of tension within Puritan culture itself," especially "their flight from individualism even as they consecrated the individual in his unmediated relation to God," see Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 22. Delbanco stresses how "the story of seventeenth century New England communities is overwhelmingly one of a falling away from the transplanted ideals with which they were founded" (16). William C. Spengemann emphasizes that the communities of early American literature must be placed in a much larger context than they have been, including "writings from any part of the globe where the language confronted the New World—Shakespeare's London, Aphra Behn's Surinam, Sir Francis Drake's California, Captain Cook's Hawaii, Janet Schaw's Jamaica, Francis Brooke's Montreal." See *A New World of Words: Redefining Early American Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 50. In the same way, Bernard Bailyn cautions that "Puritanism, we now know, was no unified historical phenomenon, even in its New England form. Up close, it proves to be a range of beliefs, ideas, and attitudes, clustering into shifting and unstable groupings," what he calls "a socio-ecclesiastical program whose promoters gained a precarious ascendancy within a society boiling with 'dissident' beliefs and sects." See *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 48–49. Here he echoes Philip Gura in *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England,* 1620–1660 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984).

35. As the topos of the inexpressible crosses through a time line, so tropes such as "nature" can intersect with stages of their alterations. As Stephen Fender shows, rhetoric of settlement, for example, goes through stages of altering "convention to suit conditions encountered in the New World." See *Sea Changes,* 30. In particular he revisits the trope of "nature." In the period of discovery, he argues, "nature" is inscribed as Edenic, what Fender calls a "beneficent negative catalog of culture" (57), a (good) absence of an already corrupted culture in Europe. In subsequent stages of settlement, however, "nature" in the New World is rewritten in terms of *locus amoenus,* a positive catalogue of abundance for settlement and sales. (29–35). This is just an example of the continuous revisiting of a trope historically: here

one reconceiving nature opportunistically as "full" of raw materials for transport, rather than benignly "empty" of European corruption (29), as new conditions and contexts develop.

36. Richard Henry Dana, Sr., "Review of the Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon," *North-American Review* IX (September 1819): 323–24.

37. Kukla, *Ineffability and Philosophy,* Routledge Studies in Twentieth Century Philosophy, vol. 22 (London: Routledge, 2005), 135; emphasis added.

38. Kukla includes five categories of ineffability in the new taxonomy (135): "unrepresentability," "unabducibility," "unselectability," "unexecutability," and "unreportability. Three of them, including "unabducibility" and "unselectability," are what Kukla calls "species of *unspeakability*" (146).

39. Whitman, "A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads," *Walt Whitman Complete Poetry and Collected Prose,* 660.

40. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer* (Gloucester, MA: Fox, Doubleday, 1968), 50.

41. Jeffrey Richards writes that "*Letters* offers a picture of the good life grounded in liberty and individual autonomy, where personal and familial independence are maintained by honest labor, property ownership, civil rights, mutual respect, peace, and the institution of marriage." As he says, however, the enemies are not outsiders but neighbors—the very whigs whose political doctrine embraces the liberties that the Farmer James undogmatically affirms. "For Crèvecoeur, whig practices defeat whig principles (285–86). So, Richards explains further, Crèvecoeur is the Frenchman, posing as Farmer James, "who gave Americans for many generations the picture of themselves they *most wanted to see*—the tolerant prosperous, land-holding, peaceable, and domestic people outlined in Letter III . . ." (296; emphasis added). In counterpoint, Richards also argues that in the "landscapes" Crèvecoeur gave "the image of its opposite, a nightmare of popular cruelty and personal despair" (296), an image that would take many years to unfold. Jeffrey Richards, "Revolution, Domestic Life, and the End of 'Common Mercy' in Crèvecoeur's 'Landscapes,'" *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3rd Series, LV, no. 2 (April 1998). Similarly, in *Sea Changes* Fender observes in particular Farmer James's "problematic value of leisure" (94), negotiating values of a "rambler" juxtaposed with the hard and often brutal work of settlement (see 92–93). And Eric P. Kaufmann writes regarding the roots and posture of Crèvecoeur's "American": "Notwithstanding the effusiveness of his rhetoric, Crèvecoeur's enthusiasm for the new mixed-origin American was a posture conditioned by both romantic millenarianism and Crèvecoeur's outsider status in his adopted homeland." See *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 39

42. Webster, Preface, *American Dictionary,* no pagination.

43. Benjamin Franklin, "Proposals and Queries to Be Asked the Junto" (1732), in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin,* eds. Leonard W. Labaree, Whitfield J. Bell, Helen C. Boatfield, and Helene H. Fineman, vol. 1: 1706–1734 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 261–62.

44. Marginalia in a Pamphlet by Matthew Wheelock" (1770), in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin,* eds. William B. Willcox, Dorothy W. Bridgwater, Mary L. Hart, Claude A. Lopez, C. A. Myrans, Catherine M. Prelinger, and G. B. Warden, vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 380.

45. Joseph Addison, "The Vision of Mirzah," *The Spectator,* No. 159 (Saturday, September 1, 1711), in *Addison and Steele: Selections from* The Tatler *and* The Spectator, 2nd ed., ed. Robert J. Allen (New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970): 323.

46. Catherine Gore, *Sketches of English Character* (London: Richard Bentley, 1846), 163.

47. Philosophers pick up the thread: Immanuel Kant, Søren Kierkegaard, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Martin Heidegger, to name a few. Philosophers and critics like Heidegger and George Steiner are noted for linking ideas of the topos especially to poetic language. For

Steiner, light, music, and, more recently, silence epitomize a search for primordial unity. In a reading of *Paradiso,* he writes: "The circle is complete: at its furthest reach, where it borders on light, the language of men becomes inarticulate as is that of the infant before he masters words. Those who would press language beyond its divinely ordained sphere, who would contract the *Logos* into the word, mistake both the genius of speech and the untranslatable immediacy of revelation." See "Silence and the Poet," *Language and Silence,* 41.

48. Steiner, "Silence and the Poet," *Language and Silence,* 51.

49. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms,* 8th ed. (Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005): 1; final emphasis added.

50. See *Poetry & Pragmatism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 134.

51. *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems, Complete and Unabridged,* ed. Edward Connery Lathem (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1969), 120.

52. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams,* intro. James Truslow Adams (New York: The Modern Library, 1918 by the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931 by the Modern Library), 382, 389.

CHAPTER 3

1. There are of course many kinds of frames that are not covered here, especially frames that draw less directly from the topos of the inexpressible (praise and humility), and more directly from the traditional search in frames for human wisdom. A tenuous cohesion and didactic emphasis derived from the frame structure can be seen to vary throughout the world. For example, in contrast with the more indefinite Arabic framing, the Indian inner tales of the *Panchatantra* exhibit greater moral certitude, as in "Grateful Beasts and Thankless Man" or "Ape, Glow-Worm, and Officious Bird." For a collection of the original Hindu tales, see *The Panchatantra,* edited in the original Sanskrit by Dr. Johannes Hertel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1908). In these frames, the search for human wisdom remains, but that quest is not so much unreachable as it is, more simply, flexibly endless, as stories can be moved around or added or deleted. Yet, in common with its counterpart in the topos of the ineffable, human inadequacy is identified through a search for even higher wisdom, indicated by the included quotations from sacred texts (see Katherine Gittes, *Framing the Canterbury Tales: Chaucer and the Medieval Frame Narrative Tradition* [New York: Greenwood Press, 1991], 16–17). In the inner, more completed Indian stories, the various forms of wisdom suggest, still, a tension of perpetuity and discovery.

Historically, then, frames are often concerned with the pursuit of wisdom. Like many medieval "framing fictions" the chanson d'aventure, offers for example, as Judith M. Davidoff points out, a "signal marker pointing the way for all men toward an enlightening experience." See *Beginning Well: Framing Fictions in Late Middle English Poetry* (Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), 59. This holds true for the structures upon which these chansons are based; for example, the exemplum, which includes the vision-core *moralitas* (63). Poems such as John Lydgate's "Fall of Princes" or Thomas Hoccleve's "Regement of Princes" or "Floure and the Leafe" include imperatives to educate the speaker in faith or learning. In the quest for enlightenment, conventions and formulaic openings of medieval frame structures permit many "signals" for expansions. This predictability, as in oral situations, allows what Davidoff calls "presuppositions about categorizing and making sense of literary works" to move into the foreground (18). The rigid self-referencing of frames, as she notes, allows, then, room for surprising reorganizations of perception. As she explains, the framing fiction "is comprised of a rather fixed structural pattern and is typically cast in predictable diction; and yet, paradoxically, this very conventionality and predictability permitted particularly able writers to anticipate audience recognition of that

pattern and . . . to manipulate audience response in quite subtle ways" (Davidoff, 35). When Kirsten H. Powell writes about emblem artists and visual frames for literary texts, her views about reinventing an audience's perspective, or even updating material, easily accommodate the didacticism and enlightenment of the ineffable; François Chaveau puts new frames, she explains, around Jean de La Fontaine's fables, "to instruct and please the reader." See *Fables in Frames: La Fontaine and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 12.

In "Seeing through Screens: The Gothic Choir Enclosure as Frame," Jacqueline E. Jung unifies the choral function of the screen in the gothic cathedral. Medieval stories have actually included a literal frame around a text box. Surrounded by marginalia, a story inside a manuscript can have its attention shifted from the content to how the story is presented or told or understood. "Seeing through Screens: The Gothic Choir Enclosure as Frame," in *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West,* ed. Sharon Gerstel (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006), 185–213. The variations on this are wide, including dream visions of the fourteenth century (notably in Chaucer), love visions drawing from *Le Roman de la Rose* that frame a debate or a complaint in the fifteenth century, the commonplace book of the sixteenth century, or popularized gothic tales of transformation.

2. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* ed. Heather Glen (London: Routledge, 1988): 119. For a close study of the story within a story and the "embedded narrative," see William Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

3. For an analysis of how "the whole subject of tragedy exists to cope with human nervousness at the fact of indefinition" and further how it puts the audience "through an actual experience of the insufficiency of our finite minds to the infinite universe," see *King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition, and Tragedy* (New Haven, Yale University Press), 85, 86.

4. From Davidoff, *Beginning Well,* 92.

5. "The Seafarer,"*Old and Middle English Poetry:* based on *Old and Middle English: An Anthology* edited by Elaine Treharne, ed. Duncan Wu (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 17 (lines 1–2) and 21 (lines 88–89).

6. *Achilles' Choice: Examples of Modern Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 7–8.

7. Geoffrey Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* 2nd ed., ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), V.1803–4, 479.

8. Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5.

9. Writing of medieval English poetry Dana M. Symons notices that the "emphasis on the trickiness of mediation raises the perennial anxiety . . . about the status of literary language" (8). See "A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe," *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints,* ed. Dana M. Symons (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, College of Arts & Sciences, Western Michigan University, 2004), 71–147.

10. *On Christian Doctrine,* I.6, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1978), 10–11.

11. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

12. Randall Jarrell, "The Woman at the Washington Zoo," *The Woman in the Washington Zoo: Poems & Translations, Selected Poems: including The Woman at the Washington Zoo* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), 2–3.

13. Margaret Atwood, "Siren Song," *Selected Poems: 1965–1975* (London: Virago, 1991), 195, 196.

14. Dante's silences, tied to glory and vision, for example, are marked in contrast to feeble speech: "Thenceforward my vision was greater than speech can show, which fails at such a sight, and at such excess memory fails" (55–57), he writes. "Now will my speech fall short," he continues, "even in respect to that which I remember, than that of an infant who still bathes his tongue at the breast" (106–8). He concludes, "O how scant is speech, and how feeble to my conception! and this, to what I saw, is such that it is not enough to call it little" (121–23). See *The Divine Comedy,* trans. Charles S. Singleton, *Paradiso 1: Text,* Bollingen Series LXXX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991): 375–79.

15. Edmund Blunden, "Forefathers," *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 1139.

16. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy,* trans. Charles S. Singleton, *Paradiso, 1: Text,* Bollingen Series LXXX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), Canto I.70–1, 7.

17. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot,* trans. Samuel Beckett (New York: Grove Press, 1982): 10.

18. For a look at this lineage and its transformations, with an emphasis on the work of Eugenio Montale, see Clodagh J. Brook, *The Expression of the Inexpressible in Eugenio Montale's Poetry: Metaphor, Negation, and Silence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002): "An issue central to Montale's poetry is the place of language in creating something quite different from and perhaps independent of any original state of mind during the process of linguistic expression" (15).

19. The traditionally editorial use of "gathering" and "framing" in sixteenth-century England, for example, in the commonplace book and throughout the texts of this period, is covered in Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England.* In particular, she notes in this discursive practice an "uncertainty" (182) of the line between authorship and editing. See especially chapter VIII, "Bend or Frame: Lyric Collections and the Dangers of Narrative, 1550–1590," 162–96. She notes that the "twin discursive practices of 'gathering' these textual fragments and 'framing' or forming, arranging, and assimilating them created for English humanists a central mode of transaction with classical antiquity and provided an influential model for authorial practice and for authoritative self-fashioning" (3).

20. Shryock, *Tales of Storytelling*, 13.

21. A major adversary around the seeming problem of a self-same, English-language exclusion is defensive self-perception. Most "adversaries" are not critics attacking American literature (though there was just enough criticism to feed impatience: "the states of America can never have a native literature any more than they can have a native character." See Inchiquen's "Favourable View of the United States," *Quarterly Review* 10, no. 20 (1814): 494–530 for a favorable take disputing the unfavorable views of the United States.

22. "Original Review," *Analectic Magazine* 1, 2nd ed. (1813): 266; emphasis added.

23. See Theophilus Parsons, "Comparative Merits of the Earlier and Later English Writers," *The North American Review* X, New Series–Vol. 1 (January 1820): 32.

24. To review, André Kukla defines this category of ineffability in this way: "We may, under certain circumstances, come to entertain the possibility of saying an unselectable sentence; but we always decide against it in the end." See *Ineffability and Philosophy,* Routledge Studies in Twentieth Century Philosophy*, vol. 22 (London: Routledge, 2005), 146.

25. Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Prose,* 25.

26. Parsons, "Comparative Merits," 32; emphasis added.

27. Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Prose,* 5; emphasis added.

28. This effacement of the middle distance is registered from a different angle when Fender writes of a recurring feature of the literature of initiation; he says that "it tends to elide, or even efface, the middle distance between the individual and the horizon. . . . " See *Sea Changes,* 15.

29. "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Towards a Cognitive Narratology," *Poetics Today* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 448.

30. For a similar take of building "readings" or frames degree by degree around character, see Barbara Johnson's analysis of *Billy Budd:* " . . . the confrontation between Billy and Claggart is built by a series of minute gradations and subtle insinuations. The opposites that clash here are not two *characters* but two *readings.*" See "Melville's Fist: the execution of *Billy Budd," Deconstruction: Critical Concerns in Literary and Cultural Studies,* ed. Jonathan Culler, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2003), 230.

31. "Nationality in Literature," *The Democratic Review* XX (March 1847): 266.

32. "Defence of Poetry," *North-American Review* 34, no. 74 (January 1832): 74–75.

33. Channing, "Essay," 312, 309.

34. Channing, "Reflections," 36.

35. For an excellent article on the "overdetermined ways" in which national identities take shape, especially in relation to Native Americans, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's essay "Surrogate Americans: Masculinity, Masquerade, and the Formation of a National Identity," *PMLA* 119, no. 5 (October 2004): 1325–35. This article clearly illustrates the European Americans' anxiety regarding "their loss of a centuries-old British identity" (1329) as it pertains to their mimicry of Native American practices of song and dance; these exhibitions belied, as explained by Smith-Rosenberg, performances both of power (colonization) and admission of need (for images of nature and virility): "part gentleman, part savage" leaving "an actor without a center, playing a role with no internal coherence" (1332). Interestingly, Smith-Rosenberg calls the European Americans' "desire to incorporate . . . coexisting with a nationalistic need to differentiate themselves from Europe" an "*introjection*" (1330), an emotional self-contradictory state of performance by European Americans that echoes my readings of an equally insatiable desire both to incorporate and differentiate—that is, translate—oneself from within oneself in terms of the shared or "imported" English language.

36. Channing, "Essay," 308.

37. "American Letters—Their Character and Advancement," *The American Whig Review,* 579. The writer E. W. Johnson is identified by Benjamin T. Spencer, who in turn attributes the identification to Dr. F. L. Mott. See "A National Literature," *American Literature,* 153. Again, ironically, many of the classic statements of American literary deficiency come from those who most resisted—and at the same time most craved—an inner dynamic of privilege in America, preserving a much greater connection to the British and often an equally great fear of a misstep toward their own letters. John C. McCloskey implicitly captures the fear (and desire) when he cites a report, from an article in the *North American Review,* of how Federalists, compared to Democrats generally, "believed that American letters 'must wait for decision on its [literature's] merits or demerits, from the higher authorities of London.'" See "Campaign of Periodicals," 262.

38. Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (London: Vintage, 2004), 14. Hemingway's reference is of course to the Transcendentalists, but he remarks with equal force on what he considers to be "writers of rhetoric" (14), Edgar Allan Poe and Herman Melville.

39. The state of insufficiency has a long history of being grounded paradoxically in what Fender has called, again, a "beneficent negative catalog," one of "nature unforced" (60) aimed in counterpoint to a perceived absence of culture, that is, a view of "nature [a perceived *absence* of culture] unforced"; as he notes further, it has derivation in the "classical trope for the Golden Age and the happy country gentleman's enclosed garden, and a utopian *satire* on the complexity, cupidity and violence of contemporary life," 57 (emphasis added; see also *Sea Changes,* 57–60). Or, as Cressy puts it from another angle, adjectives like "'excellent' and 'abundant' flowed freely" (*Coming Over,* 10) as acts of persuasion back to England for potential emigrants and investors, in counterpoint to the hardships of the New World. This cultivation of letters and tropes around, again, "nature unforced" among what Fender calls

this early "vast middle class" (46) situates a writerly flow of correspondence (54–60), later also prone to attack for inhibiting nature's course in literature. It establishes an early preponderance of written preoccupations with hyperbolic expectations framed both by doubts of insufficiency and commercial enterprise. There are, of course, extensive written accounts of the earlier explorations and settlements, for instance at Roanoke and Jamestown, and the reason for the settlement was not essentially religious but commercial. "The Jamestown colony was an entrepreneurial effort, organized and financed by the Virginia Company of London, a start-up venture . . . ," writes David A. Price. See *Love and Hate in Jamestown: John Smith, Pocahontas, and the Start of a New Nation* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 3. Annette Kolodny adds to this discussion what she identifies as an effectively gendered discourse: "By the time European women began to arrive on the Atlantic shores of what is now the United States, the New World had long been given over to the fantasies of men." She also adds, in the litany of promotional rhetoric, that "[a]t the end of the fifteenth century, Christopher Columbus remained convinced that the biblical Garden of Eden lay further up the Orinoco River than he had been able to explore. . . . By the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was relatively commonplace for colonial promoters to promise prospective immigrants 'a *Paradise* with all Virgin beauties.'" See *The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers: 1630–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3.

40. Webster, *Dissertations on the English Language with Notes, Historical and Critical, to Which Is Added, by way of Appendix, an Essay on a Reformed Mode of Spelling with Dr. Franklin's Arguments on that Subject* (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1951), 20.

41. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 1 (August 1850): 403–4.

42. "A Conversation," *The Knickerbocker Magazine* II, no. 1 (July 1833): 4.

43. This statement occurs inside a larger enterprise, toward a Christian and democratic literature. See "Prognostics of American Literature," *The American Biblical Repository and Classical Review,* Third Series, III (July 1847): 506.

44. For a reading of Margaret Fuller that echoes the self-consciousness and performance of hyperbole and speciousness, see Railton, *Authorship and Audience,* 20–21.

45. Tucker, *Essays,* 6; emphasis added.

46. "American Poetry," *The Knickerbocker Magazine,* 385.

47. "Defence of Poetry," *North-American Review* 34, no. 74 (January 1832), 67.

48. Of course, in this context, even the import of books took the stage in Irving's comment—"who would pay a half eagle for American poetry, when they could get English, equally as good, for half of the price." See "American Poetry," *The Knickerbocker Magazine,* 385.

49. Channing, "Essay," 309, 311.

50. See Shoshana Felman, *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J. L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages,* trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 15. While Austin eventually modified his distinction between performatives and statements, he concludes that the "doctrine of the performative/constative distinction stands to the doctrine of locutionary and illocutionary acts in the total speech-act as the *special* theory to the *general* theory"; see J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 148.

51. Jacques Derrida, "Declarations of Independence," *New Political Science* 15 (1986): 9.

52. "Declarations of Independence," *New Political Science* 15 (1986): 9.

53. Ferguson, "'We Hold These Truths,'" 9. For a study of the theory and practice of performative conditions surrounding the American Revolution, see Jay Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993).

54. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (I.7), trans. W. F. Trotter (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1938), 12.

55. "An Examination," *The Port Folio* III, no. 25, 385.

56. Samuel Miller, "Nations Lately Become Literary," *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century; Part First; in Two Volumes Containing A Sketch of the Revolutions and Improvements in Science, Arts, and Literature During That Period,* vol. 2. (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1803), 394.

57. Preface, *American Review and Literary Journal for the Year 1801,* from first edition (1802), iv.

58. See "Literary Prospects of 1845," *The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art, and Science* 1, no. 2 (1845): 150.

59. *Writings of Melville 5* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 150.

60. Ames, *Works,* 430.

61. See Karl J. R. Arndt, "Introduction: German as the Official Language of the United States of America?," *Die deutschsprachige Presse der Amerikas/The German Language Press of the Americas* 3 (München: K. G. Saar, 1980), 33–35, and, more largely, 19–42.

62. Edward Channing (crying against the "imitator," 204), 205, and Royall Tyler (in his preface to *The Algerian Captive*) set the tone. See the following: "A country then must be the former and finisher of its own genius. It has, or should have, nothing to do with strangers," Channing, 207. From another perspective, Royall Tyler says: "There are two things wanted, said a friend to the author: that we write our own books of amusement, and that they exhibit our own manners." Royall Tyler, Preface, *The Algerian Captive, or, The Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill: Six Years a Prisoner Among the Algerine* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 6.

63. Tucker, for example, calls out for a change of behavior: "Though this habitual veneration for the English name is very much diminished, it is far from being extinguished. We still continue to adopt their fashions in dress, their customs and manners, and follow them through all their capricious changes." Tucker, *Essays,* 52.

64. Trying to restore the slide against classical learning, an editor from *The Port Folio* argues rhetorically, "To the puny objections which have been urged against Classical learning, we mean not to reply." *The Port Folio* (new series) 4, no. 23 (5 December 1807): 357. Other projects in language between the Revolution and the Civil War include, in Thomas Gustafson's words, "projects to guard or renovate the language," projects "that range from John Adams's proposal for an 'American Academy for refining, improving, and ascertaining the English language' and Noah Webster's labors on his spellers and dictionary to Ralph Waldo Emerson's condemnation of 'rotten diction' in *Nature* and the efforts of James Fenimore Cooper in *The American Democrat* and of Abraham Lincoln to rectify the meaning of such key political words as 'liberty' and 'equality.' See *Representative Words: Politics, Literature, and the American Language, 1776–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.

65. "Comparative Merits," 29.

66. "Preface to the First Edition," *Poets and Poetry of America,* ed. Rufus Wilmot Griswold (Philadelphia, 1851, 1st ed.1842), 6–7.

67. "Hawthorne and His Mosses: By a Virginian Spending July in Vermont," *The Literary World* VII (July–December 1850): 126. His ideas of authorship, on the one hand suggesting a culmination of literary nationalism (written after Melville was known), of course also harbor under the umbrella of the inexpressible the "death" of the author, that is, under the "ever-eluding spirit of all beauty," in which "all fine authors are fictitious ones" (125). Yet, this topos also traditionally makes room for the trope of "failure" as the "test of true greatness" (146); along these lines, it allows, therefore, a refusal of any single identification of authorship that opens all the more reconsiderations, for example, of Hawthorne's inclusion in the catalogue of authors in this review, and self-inclusion in that lineage.

68. "Editor's Address," *The Massachusetts Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (December 1847): 3.

69. Tucker, *Essays,* 42–43.

70. Ibid., 43.

71. Ames, *Works,* 437.

72. This quest for originality has also been seen by historian Edmund S. Morgan in the life of George Washington. Detecting the impulse, Morgan goes as far as to remove altogether the more naive phrasing attached to Washington, "original thinker" or "creative genius," in an effort to identify Washington's strategy of self-recasting as something more practical, in his words, "something much more mundane but at the same time *so elusive, so difficult to define,* that when it emerges in one situation after another, we begin to see what his contemporaries saw and to be overwhelmed by it as they were" (emphasis added). Morgan, *Genuine Article,* 251. Gordon Wood reviews the practice of *recasting* that Bernard Bailyn suggests in his books on the founders. He notes in particular Bailyn's interest in the "recasting of the world of power, the re-formation of the structure of public authority, of the accepted forms of governance, obedience, and resistance, in practice as well as in theory" (38), although Wood adds that, again, "these aspirations had no certain outcomes" (38). See Gordon S. Wood, "Creating the Revolution," *The New York Review of Books,* February 13, 2003, 38.

73. A similar cycle has been recognized by Longmore: "All of this, the imitation the sense of inferiority, the resentment, and finally the assertion of superiority based on native standards marked the social and cultural maturation of colonial America." See *The Invention of George Washington,* 10.

74. Co-authorship entails many ancillary techniques. It, moreover, innately refuses to draw a clear line between editing and authoring. The traditionally editorial use of "gathering" and "framing" in sixteenth-century England, in the commonplace book and throughout the texts of this period, is covered in Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

75. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Our Native Writers," *Every Other Saturday* I (April 12, 1884): 116; emphasis added.

76. Ibid.

77. "Nations Lately Become Literary," *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century. Part First; in Two Volumes: Containing a Sketch of the Revolutions and Improvements in Science, Arts, and Literature, during that Period,* Vol. II (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1803) [actually published in 1804]), 405.

78. George Steiner leads into this statement, explaining that "it is decisively the fact that language does have its frontiers, that it borders on three other modes of statement—light, music, and silence—that it gives proof of a transcendent presence in the fabric of the world." See "Silence and the Poet," *Language and Silence,* 39.

79. It is necessary to pause here on the crucial word "character." A critical perception of "character," is often construed in relation to a perceived overlapping English, as is "originality," as we have seen. Critics often hold the language to be responsible for the absence of what Walter Channing precisely calls the "national character" ("Essay," 311). Appearing in *The North-American Review* and *The Port Folio* and other early nineteenth-century periodicals, the word "character" is repeatedly and literally linked to the missing ingredient that is absent in the new nation. See Gray, "Address," 289–305. Fender muses about the preoccupation with "character": "If subjects of the United Kingdom wished to refer to themselves in this way [concerning character], they would have to decide which adjective to use. . . . 'British' is a nationality, not a trait." See Fender, *Sea Changes,* 7. Unlike Aristotle's definition of "character," in which characteristics are ascribable—whether to "bravery, temperance, generosity, magnificence, magnanimity, honor, mildness, friendliness in social intercourse"—this use of "character" is of a different sort. It is made-to-order, a matter of performance, something that designates success or failure. For Aristotle on character formation see "Nicomachean Ethics," in *Aristotle's Ethics,* ed. J. L. Ackrill (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 61–66.

80. Brown, "The Rhapsodist, *No. II," Columbian Magazine* 3, no. 9 (September 1789): 537

81. See "*The Rhapsodist, No. III," Columbian Magazine* 3, no. 10 (October 1789): 600.

82. Ibid., 598.

83. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Wakefield," in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Tales and Sketches,* ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (New York: The Library of America), 290. It is well known that Hawthorne's planned collection "The Story Teller" was a frame narrative. Similarly Poe uses the frame narrative as a device in his early work *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838).

84. Edgar Allan Poe, "Critical Notices: Drake-Halleck" (review of Joseph Rodman Drake's *The Culprit Fay, and Other Poems* and Fitz-Greene Halleck's *Alnwick Castle with Other Poems*), *Southern Literary Messenger* 2, no. 5 (April 1836): 326; emphasis added.

85. Brown, "The Rhapsodist," No. I, *The Columbian Magazine* 3 (Philadelphia: printed for James Trenchard, August, 1789): 466; emphasis added.

86. Early literature unsurprisingly is full of footnotes, lengthy introductions, long afterwards, and dedications. For example, Charles Brockden Brown includes an "Advertisement" in *Wieland; or The Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3–4. James Fenimore Cooper opens *The Prairie* with a geological treatise on the great plains (New York: Signet, 1964, v–vii). Herman Melville includes a preface called "EXTRACTS SUPPLIED BY A SUB-SUB-LIBRARIAN" to *Moby-Dick* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 7–8. In *Revolution and the Word,* Davidson notes in relation to the American novel, a "truism" that "individual action is inseparable from the national." Thus, she argues, there exists "the abundance of prefaces, dedications, and other overt addresses in early novels that underscore the collective (or even national) significance of seduction, picaresque aimlessness or gothic horror. . . . She summarizes, "Novelists continued to 'amend' the idea of the nation throughout the early national period" (6). She adds, "Understanding how the genre [fiction] defined itself and reached its readership parallel with the creation of the United States helps us to delineate contending forces in the early Republic that are often erased in the heroic historiography of nation building" (8). I would amend and broaden this statement historically, again, to include the established and contested lineage of "gathering" and "framing" practices of the sixteenth century in England informing the lyric, "even as it countered it." It participated, as Crane notes, in a "version of authorship that was collective instead of individualist" and was associated with social mobility "within the changing hierarchies of the early modern state" (*Framing Authority,* 4). All of these are kin to framing. Indeed, Washington Irving's most well-known American tales, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," are doubly framed—first, introduced by a gentleman named Geoffrey Crayon (whose name is notably the image of a bold if underdeveloped writing implement), and further framed in a collection where these two stories are the only American ones that appear (the other twelve are British folk tales).

87. "*The Rhapsodist, No. III," Columbian Magazine* 3, 600; emphasis added.

88. Stephen Railton, "The Address of *The Scarlet Letter," Readers in History: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Contexts of Response,* ed. James L. Machor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 158–59.

89. "*The Rhapsodist, No. I," Columbian Magazine* 3, no. 8 (August 1789): 467.

90. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," *On Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 7. He explains further, "The sense of close community results not only from the shared awareness that a special invitation has been given and accepted, but also from the awareness that not everyone could make that offer or take it up," 7.

91. Whitman, *Complete Poetry,* 5.

92. Barbara Johnson notices a similar effect of oscillations within the text of *Billy Budd:* "The effect of these explicit oscillations of judgment within the text is to underline the *impor-*

tance of the act of judging while rendering its outcome undecidable." She adds, "Judgment, however difficult, is clearly the central preoccupation of Melville's text . . . Melville's seems to be presenting us less with an *object* for judgment than with an *example* of judgment" (235).

93. Stanley Fish, "Authors-Readers: Jonson's Community of the Same," *Representations* 7 (Summer 1984): 52.

94. Discoveries and contentions of pluralities also play a part here. As Anderson argues, utopias are underwritten by the discovery of "irremediable human pluralism," and in particular a thinking of Europe as "only one among many civilizations, and not necessarily the Chosen or the best" (67, 68). A utopian and solitary underpinning of the inexpressible, a single human being attempting to express what cannot be expressed except by God, is in these terms comparably fanned out by its base in a response to the pluralities of human existence. In this sense the inexpressible is a utopian gesture because at its root is human plurality. And in turn here we hear the drive, again as noted above by Cathy Davidson, of the inseparability of the individual action from the national, especially as its pluralities compromise imagined ideas of a community that is "Chosen or the best."

95. W. B. Yeats, "Per Amica Silentia Lunae," *Mythologies* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 331.

CHAPTER 4

1. Preface by editor, "American Letters: Their Character and Advancement," *The American Whig Review,* 575; emphasis in original.

2. James Russell Lowell, "Longfellow's *Kavanagh:* Nationality in Literature," *The North-American Review* 29, no. 144 (July 1849): 211.

3. *The Port Folio* 4, no. 23, new series, 5 (December 1807): 357.

4. Edward Channing, "On Models in Literature," 207.

5. William Cobbett, *A Year's Residence in the United States of America,* 56.

6. *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse,* ed. Deborah Tannen (Advances in Discourse Processes 12) (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984), 24. Tannen uses this phrase to define the term "frame." See pages 24–25 for a linguistic analysis of frames in spoken and written narratives.

7. N. P. Willis, "To The Public (the Editor's Preface)," *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (1829): iii.

8. "Sculpture and Sculptors in the United States," *American Monthly Magazine* 1, no. 2 (May 1829): 125.

9. Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "Some of My Favorite Writers Are Literate: The Mingling of Oral and Literate Strategies in Written Communication," in *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy,* ed. Deborah Tannen (Advances in Discourse Processes 9) (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1982), 241.

10. "American Poetry," *The Knickerbocker Magazine,* 387.

11. "Defence of Poetry," *The North-American Review,* 66.

12. G. M. Wharton, "Literary Property," *The North American Review* 52, no. 111 (April 1841): 403.

13. "American Poetry," *The Knickerbocker Magazine,* 385–86.

14. Spencer, "A National Literature," 131.

15. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Editor's Address," *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* I (December 1847): 2–3.

16. Tannen, *Coherence,* 29.

17. Ernest J. Smith in his archival work on *The Dream Songs* found this comment from 1955–56 notes by Berryman in the Berryman Papers, Box 5, folder 5, labeled "Published

Poetry: *77 Dream Songs,*" University of Minnesota Libraries Manuscripts Division. See his article: "John Berryman's 'Programmatic' for *The Dream Songs* and an Instance of Revision," *Journal of Modern Literature* 23, nos. 3–4 (Summer 2000): 430.

18. From the Preface to Dryden's translation of *Ovid's Epistles,* 1680, rpt. in *Essays of John Dryden,* ed. W. P. Ker, vols. 1 and 2 (New York: Russell, 1961), 237; emphasis added.

19. "The Task of the Translator," *Theories of Translation,* eds. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 74.

20. D. S. Carne-Ross, "Translation and Transposition," in *The Craft of and Context of Translation: A Symposium,* eds. William Arrowsmith and Roger Shattuck (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1961), 6.

21. Edward Channing's phrase is "borrowers and imitators." See "Models in Literature," 205.

22. Gábor Bezeczky, "Literal Language," *New Literary History* 22, no. 3 (1991): 609.

23. Channing, "Models in Literature," 208.

24. John Berryman, *The Freedom of the Poet* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1976), 328.

25. *John Berryman: Collected Poems: 1937–1971,* ed. Charles Thornbury (New York: FSG, 1989), 133. (I will refer to this edition in the text as *CP.*)

26. The inexpressibility topos, by contrast, is noteworthy here as well. As Ann Chalmers Watts says, "Defined in its pure form inexpressibility centers on language, not the speaker: the point is not that the speaker fails, though the speaker does, but that any tongue fails." She adds that "it acknowledges a struggle between word and not-word"—which is obviously a relevant but different struggle between word and word. See Ann Chalmers Watts, "*Pearl,* Inexpressibility, and Poems of Human Loss," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 99, no. 1 (1984): 27.

27. Pascal Covici, Jr., *Humor and Revelation in American Literature: The Puritan Connection* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 3.

28. "The Editor's Table," *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (January 1830): 730.

29. Berryman, *CP,* 135.

30. Berryman, *The Dream Songs* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), vi.

31. *The Literary World: A Journal of Science, Literature and Art* VII (July–December 1850): 146; emphasis added. (Original publications appeared on August 17 and August 24, 1850.)

32. Berryman, *CP,* 133.

33. Lowell, "Nationality in Literature," 202–3.

34. Joseph Mancini, Jr., "A Hearing Aid for Berryman's *Dream Songs,*" *Modern Language Studies* 10, no. 1 (1979–80): 58.

35. Berryman, *CP,* xxxv.

36. Henry B. Wonham, *Mark Twain and the Art of the Tall Tale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 27.

37. Evert Duyckinck, "Authorship," *Arcturus* 1, no. 1 (December 1840): 23.

38. Wonham, *Mark Twain,* 24.

39. Ibid., 24. See also Jennifer Andrews, "Reading Toni Morrison's *Jazz:* Rewriting the Tall Tale and Playing with the Trickster in the White American and African-American Humor Traditions," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 29, no. 1 (1999): 3.

40. Roger L. Welsch, "Of Light Bulbs and Shaggy Dogs," *Natural History* 102, no. 2 (1993): 20.

41. Jan Harold Brunvand, "A Classification for Shaggy Dog Stories," *The Journal of American Folklore* 76, no. 299 (January–March 1963): 68. Shaggy dogs are sometimes cited in the category of "dialect humor," but especially so when related to regional tall tale humor. While drawing from regional detail, the emphasis, however, in the shaggy dog, continues to

be on a combination of verbal effusion with boiled-down inclusion of every listener, as the tale in its fundamental inconsequentiality resists the punch line that commonly separates "insiders" and "outsiders." As Walter Blair writes about "Hezekiah Bedott" in the *Widow Bedott Papers,* "it merits reprinting chiefly because it is a fine example of what today would be called a shaggy-dog story, still a favorite among American humorists. Max Eastman admiringly described tales of this sort as "loose, rambling, fantastically inconsequential monologues" whose appeal derives in part from their "'total want of structure,' 'a mess, the messier . . . within the limits of patience, the better'" (xiv–xv). For a look at how "dialect humor" in the antebellum period generally played up the "incongruity" between "'ideals of freedom'" and "'ordinary people who speak, think and act in ordinary terms,'" see *The Mirth of a Nation: America's Great Dialect Humor,* eds. Walter Blair and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), xi. For a collection of humor, including jokes, tall tales, and selections from Mark Twain, from colonial to modern times, see *America's Humor: From Poor Richard to Doonesbury,* eds. Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). For a study of humor and Mark Twain, focusing on the gaps between his early idealism and America's imperial directions, see James M. Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002).

42. Welsch, "Light Bulbs," 20.

43. Brunvand, "Shaggy Dog Stories," 44.

44. Shaggy dogs come in many breeds: one kind exploits punning; another, the logical non sequitur; another large category, stories about animals, to name three. Six major categories have been expertly identified by Brunvand in his classic 1963 summary "A Classification for Shaggy Dog Stories."

45. Eric Partridge, *The 'Shaggy Dog' Story: Its Origin, Development and Nature (with a few seemly examples)* (Freeport, NY: Book for Libraries Press, 1953), 43.

46. Of course, the no-point shaggy dog, like its umbrella of the tall tale, has other important facets besides its audience that account for its longevity. For example, the core, though inconsequential, is different in each tale. Even synopses or titles make this clear: a shaggy dog about a dog that is shot in the bar is more grotesque than a more silly groaner about a Man Who Walked on the Walls and Ceiling. The listener's role, however, remains fundamental. Regardless of perspective on the shaggy dog story, whether Partridge's classical emphasis or Rapkins's homespun leanings or Welsch's angle on humor, the teller's drawn-out embellishment, a mix of bravado and smallness, increasingly constituted the "shaggy dog" and its meaninglessness; specifically, the final "groan" depends on the pull in a local audience to ape relevancy, only to defuse it and dismember it for redistribution of self-applause throughout the listeners.

47. Brown, "The Rhapsodist, No. I," *Columbian Magazine* 3, no. 8 (August 1789): 467.

48. Wonham, *Mark Twain,* 8. We hear a reverberation of Nancy K. Miller's reading of the autobiographical impulse, which, as she argues, "stages a meeting with the symmetrical desire in the other constituted by readers." If "autobiography" can be said to name an aspect of the nationalist discourse, then this line of interdependence offers an interesting direction to pursue. See "Facts, Pacts, Acts," *Profession* 92: Presidential Forum, 12.

49. André Gide, "The Value of Inconsistency," in *The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature,* eds. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 699.

50. Washington Irving, "Desultory Thoughts on Criticism," *The Knickerbocker Magazine* 14 (August 1839): 175.

51. Richard Poirier, in his studies on the "vague" (chapter 3, 129–168) in a line of Emersonian pragmatism, notes how "language itself remained the one unavoidable cultural inheritance . . . the one that could not be dispensed with. However, a felt need to dispense with it became, for those of an Emersonian inclination, unremitting, not to be assuaged. . . .

Why then was it not possible to escape from language? Because it remained the necessary medium by which to talk about efforts to get out of it or beyond it. . . . It could be said, then, that insofar as America is represented by Emersonian pragmatists it has always been what is called postmodernist. That is, Emerson's America is a place that from the outset recognized the contingency of all institutions and recognized language as a form of knowledge that was also a form of repressive power." See *Poetry & Pragmatism*, 134–35.

52. See Ann Chalmers Watts, "*Pearl,* Inexpressibility, and Poems of Human Loss," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 99, no. 1 (1984): 27.

53. Theodor W. Adorno, "Trying to Understand *Endgame,*" in *Notes to Literature,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 242.

54. Eliot, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 40.

55. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Wakefield," in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Tales and Sketches,* ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (New York: The Library of America), 290.

56. *The Massachusetts Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (December 1847): 3.

57. "Wakefield," 290–91.

58. Raymond Carver, "Cathedral," *Cathedral* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 209.

59. Augustine Okereke, "The Performance and the Text: Parameters for Understanding Oral Literary Performance," in *Across the Lines: Intertextuality and Transcultural Communication in the New Literatures in English,* ed. Wolfgang Klooss (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 41.

60. Wonham, *Mark Twain,* 24.

61. *The Port Folio* 4, no. 22 (28 November 1807): 344.

62. Henry James, *The Figure in the Carpet, and Other Stories,* ed. Frank Kermode (London: Penguin, 1986), 397.

63. Judith M. Davidoff, *Beginning Well: Framing Fictions in Late Middle English Poetry* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), 18.

64. Todd F. Davis, "The Narrator's Dilemma in 'Bartleby the Scrivener': The Excellently Illustrated Re-statement of a Problem," *Studies in Short Fiction* 34, no. 2 (1997): 183–84. See also William Vaughn, "Moving from Privacy: 'Bartleby' and Otherness," *Centennial Review* 43, no. 3 (1999): 535–64.

65. Herman Melville, *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces, 1839–1860,* ed. Harrison Hayford (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, Newberry Library, 1987), 13.

66. Davis, "Narrator's Dilemma," 184.

67. Doreen Innes, "Metaphor, Simile, and Allegory as Ornaments of Style," in *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions,* G. R. Boys-Stones, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11. A "safe" metaphor, with reference here to Demetrius, only seems the proper term in relation to "customary speech"; the lawyer's English is a point of reference to such relations, even to the point of his self-description as a "safe" man. What is called a "necessary" metaphor, in contrast, looks as an alien to migrate, according to Cicero, "'into its own'" place (Innes, 7); so Bartleby as necessary, and as an "alien" to such "safe" ground, looks to migrate (in the case of self-distancing) by *staying* in his "own place."

68. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Minimal Art: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 166.

69. Innes notes metaphor's roots in relocation, "'carrying across,'" what Aristotle calls the "'the introduction of an alien term.'" "Metaphor, Simile, and Allegory," 7.

70. Karsten Harries, "Metaphors and Transcendence," *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1, *Special Issue on Metaphor* (Autumn 1978): 84.

71. Don R. Swanson, "Toward a Psychology of Metaphor," in *On Metaphor,* ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 162.

72. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1, *Special Issue on Metaphor* (Autumn 1978): 10.

73. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 87. Cohen's essay on the figurative, the literal, and jokes provides a good general background. See Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," in *On Metaphor,* 1–10.

74. Welsch, "Light Bulbs," 20.

75. Terence Martin, "The Negative Structures of American Literature," *American Literature* 57, no. 1 (March 1985): 22.

76. Martin's conclusion for Bartleby's existence, however, moves from rhetoric and takes a thematic turn toward something he calls "pure existence": "His [Bartleby's] death in prison signals Melville's concern with the fate of pure existence as well as society's increasing failure to acknowledge it at all." See "Negative Structures," 19.

77. Philip Fisher, *Still the New World: American Literature in a Culture of Creative Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 157.

78. On the point regarding character, Alan Singer suggests that the "aesthetic enterprise" of "Bartleby" is made "into a practicable métier of human character—one that outstrips the devices of characterization. . . ." See this argument embedded in *Aesthetic Reason: Artworks and the Deliberative Ethos* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003), 171. More largely, David S. Reynolds has a good sense of the formal admixture of elements of character and plot in "Bartleby": "None of the elements in "Bartleby, the Scrivener," therefore, were new to American fiction—they were a direct inheritance from the dark city-mysteries fiction of the late 1840s. What is new about Melville's story is its formal innovations: the skilful use of the flawed narrator; the symbolic setting; the psychological and metaphysical suggestions." See *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 296.

79. Melville, *Piazza Tales,* 20.

80. J. Russell Reaver, "From Reality to Fantasy: Opening-Closing Formulas in the Structures of American Tall Tales," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1972): 372.

81. Melville, *Piazza Tales,* 13.

82. Ariane Dewey, "Comic Tragedies/Tragic Comedies: American Tall Tales," in *Sitting at the Feet of the Past: Retelling the North American Folktale for Children,* eds. Gary D. Schmidt and Donald R. Hettinga (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1992), 196.

83. Okereke, "Performance," 44.

84. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 36.

85. "Bartleby was one of those beings . . . ," Melville, *Piazza Tales,* 13.

86. Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 22,* eds. Peter Burke and Ruth Finnegan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 67.

87. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 43.

88. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 59.

89. The anticipatory complexity of frames toward what Jürgen Wolter calls twentieth-century "metafictional narrative" ("metafiction as self-conscious narrative," 67), is relevant, and he has written, for example, "Brown and Irving were among the first American writers to pave the way toward twentieth-century metafictional narrative." See Jürgen Wolter, "'Novels are . . . the most dangerous kind of reading': Metafictional Discourse in Early American Literature," *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate* 4, nos. 1–2 (1994/95): 78. While I do not agree on the emphasis by which they "paved the way," I think that the practice, if founded in different contexts, is important to recognize.

90. Ames, *Works,* 431.

91. 1 Peter 1.8–9 Authorized King James Version. There are many other views to this

position. For an earlier and excellent review and analysis, see Dan McCall's *The Silence of Bartleby* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). Also see Gillian Brown's *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Brown looks at "Bartleby" in contemporary literary contexts, while anticipating "contemporary accounts of both agoraphobia and anorexia" (8); she writes, "By maintaining the integrity of the private sphere, this opposition [between home and market] sustains the notion of a personal life impervious to market influences, the model of selfhood in a commercial society. In his propinquity to walls and his preference for his own wall-like impenetrable postures, Bartleby presents an extreme version of such a model. . . . " (174). Alan Singer sees Bartleby's "character" as a site of knowledge without intelligibility, putting the "reader" and the narrator in terms of interpretation on a "continuum of action." See *Aesthetic Reason,* 153–59. In Jane Desmarais's look toward an "understanding of his [Bartleby's] character" (26), there is "a story about the failure of modern social life" (30) in which she uses "political and psychological notions of stoicism" (35) to examine the state of democracy and rights of the individual. See "Preferring Not To: The Paradox of Passive Resistance in Herman Melville's 'Bartleby,'" *Journal of the Short Story in English* 36 (April 2001): 25–39. For a look at a "'sublime' ethics" in "Bartleby," in which the text effectively, like the character Bartleby, "says more than it seems" (558), see William Vaughn, "Moving from Privacy: 'Bartleby' and Otherness," *Centennial Review* 43, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 535–64.

92. Along the same lines of framing, Barbara Johnson argues about the ending of *Billy Budd* that it "problematizes the very *idea* of authority by placing its own reversal in the pages of an 'authorized' naval chronicle" (215).

93. Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 207.

94. John Miles Foley, "The Impossibility of Canon," *Teaching Oral Traditions,* ed. John Miles Foley (New York: Modern Language Association, 1998), 22.

95. Melville, *Piazza Tales,* 13.

96. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1985), 3.

97. Elizabeth Hardwick, from "Bartleby in Manhattan," in *Melville's Short Novels,* ed. Dan McCall (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 261, 262; emphasis added.

98. Kukla, *Ineffability and Philosophy,* xii.

99. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 277.

100. Melville, *Piazza Tales,* 14.

101. Frye, *Anatomy,* 277.

102. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 87.

103. Ibid., 51.

104. Brunvand, "Shaggy Dog Stories," 44. Evan Esar suggests "the most plausible guess" for origins of shaggy dog jokes as "verbal transference, since drunks and tramps were often described as shaggy, and sometime called ragshags, shagnasties, etc. The shift from shaggy to shaggy dog resulted from the popularity of one of these 'alcohological' stories which actually dealt with a shaggy dog." See *The Humor of Humor* (New York: Horizon Press, 1952), 255–56. But Brunvand suggests the still problematic nature of shaggy dog jokes, including Esar's theory of origins, which he believes still remains "insufficiently documented" (45).

105. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 52.

106. The following two examples point toward redemption. "In the moment when the blind man and the narrator share an identical perception of spiritual space, the narrator's sense of enclosure—of being confined by his own house and circumstances—vanishes as if by an act of grace. . . . " Mark A. R. Facknitz writes. See "'The Calm,' 'A Small, Good Thing,' and 'Cathedral': Raymond Carver and the Rediscovery of Self Worth," *Studies in Short Fiction* 23 (1986): 295. The symbolism continues to follow lines of revelation and the ineffable:

"The confrontation with language has led him [narrator] into the realm of the ineffable 'something' beyond a linguistic register, beyond the power of words to inhibit, to the point at which they shatter" (38–39), Nelson Hathcock writes. This tracing of the ineffable still connects to the more traditional and symbolic search beyond words for "meaning." As Hathcock says, "The nihilism that many readers have faulted Carver for espousing is successfully deflected by these two narrators; through language, through the engaged imaginative act of 'telling,' they are granted a new vision of their lives and, in the process, a re-vision of meaning" (31). See *Studies in Short Fiction* 28 (1991): 31–39.

107. Carver, "Cathedral," 209.

108. Wonham, *Mark Twain,* 31.

109. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 52.

110. Welsch, "Light Bulbs," 20; Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 22.

111. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 52.

112. Stephen Belcher, "Framed Tales in the Oral Tradition: An Exploration," *Fabula* 35 (1994): 1; Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Traditional Referentiality: The Aesthetic Power of Oral Traditional Structure," in *Teaching Oral Traditions* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1998), 137.

113. Wonham, *Mark Twain,* 19.

114. Alan Paton, *Too Late the Phalarope* (New York: Scribner, 1953), 1.

115. "The Frame Tale East and West," *Teaching Oral Traditions,* 391.

116. *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 137; emphasis in original.

117. "The Future Is better Than the Past," *The Dial* 2, no. 1 (July 1841): 57–58, line 2.

118. *The Dial* 2, no. 1 (July, 1841): 57–58.

CHAPTER 5

1. Robert Pogue Harrison, "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself," *New Literary History* 30, no. 3 (1999): 668. See Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage, 1982).

2. "*The Port Folio* 3, no. 26 (27 June 1807): 401.

3. "Lack of Poetry in America," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* 403.

4. The religious and choral roots of the inexpressible I have already covered in chapter 1, note 6. Commercial, promotional, and rhetorical roots of the inexpressible are also crucial and longstanding. As Cressy in *Coming Over* writes of this rhetoric of unreachable perfectibility, the "reports of their [the sea captains'] voyages, often written to gain funding for future expeditions, presented America as a land of . . . immeasurable promise. The stony reality was often obscured in these first flickerings of the American dream" (2). He explains, further, how John Smith "actually coined the name 'New England' and did everything in his power to promote 'this unregarded country,'" emphasizing that rhetoric: the "potential of New England lay as much in its *mystery* as in its proven resources" (Cressy, 4; emphasis added). Thus, although the English had made several probing voyages, according to the words of Smith, "'The coast is yet still even as a coast unknown and undiscovered. . . .'" (Cressy, 4).

5. Ezra Pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly,"1.1–6, *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems, 1908–1959* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 98.

6. Further evidence of this common ground can be heard in Fender's comment regarding T. S. Eliot, who "applying the sense of loss to the condition of being modern rather than American, would express something of [Washington] Irving's anxiety in his essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'" (97). David S. Reynolds in *Beneath the American Renaissance*

notes how Horace Bushnell, in his "Dissertation on Language" (1849), can sound "like a precursor of Jacques Derrida" in that he "multiplied paradoxical, figurative expressions of a truth that remains forever indecipherable" (444–45). Regarding Whitman, he notes that "'The Sleepers' might indeed be described as presurrealistic, but, far from being unusual for its day," it employs "common devices of the American Subversive Style" (518). He suggests resistance to "oppressive literary influence" in the importance of "popular culture" and especially "a large variety of popular cultural voices" (5).

7. "Literary Prospects of 1845," *The American Review,* 149; emphasis added.

8. "American Letters: Their Character and Advancement," *The American Review,* 575.

9. "Nationality in Literature," *The Democratic Review,* 269.

10. William James, *Principles of Psychology,* vol. 1 (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1890), 238.

11. *The Monthly Magazine and American Review* 1, no. 1 (April 1799): 3.

12. Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 13.

13. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Minimal Art,* ed. Gregory Battock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1998), 146.

14. Joseph Frank, *The Idea of Spatial Form* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 14.

15. Richard Poirier names this resonance in relation to James's program of "vagueness," an aspect of what he calls "Emersonian pragmatism": "to a wholly unusual degree it [Emersonian pragmatism] never allows any one of these terms [such as "nature" or "action"] to arrive at a precise or static definition." See *Poetry & Pragmatism,* 129.

16. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *Collected Poems: 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 16.

17. David Spurr, *Conflicts in Consciousness: T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Criticism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), xviii–xix.

18. "Prufrock," 16–17; emphasis added.

19. Denis Donoghue, "T. S. Eliot and the Poem Itself," *Partisan Review* 67, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 20.

20. Hugh Henry Brackenridge, "Introduction," *Modern Chivalry,* rpt., gen. ed., Harry Hayden Clark (New York: American Book Company, 1937), 3. As Davidson notes, this "ambiguous voice" in Brackenridge's comic epic points to compromised insiders in postrevolutionary America, inclusive of the new democracy and its defects. See *Revolution and the Word,* 20.

21. Brown, "The Rhapsodist, No. I," *Columbian Magazine* III, no. 8 (August 1789): 466.

22. Robert Crawford, *The Modernist Poet: Poetry, Academia, and Knowledge since the 1750's* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 170.

23. Charles Isenberg, *Telling Silence: Russian Frame Narratives of Renunciation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 143.

24. "Literary Prospects," 149.

25. Whitman, "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," *Complete Poetry,* 661.

26. "Not in the Least American," in *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: A Critical Reader,* ed. Karen L. Kilcup (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 20.

27. *The Port Folio* 3, no. 25 (June 20, 1807): 386.

28. William Dunlap, "Preface," *André: A Tragedy in Five Acts,* 1st ed. (New York: B. T. & J. Swords, April 4, 1798), iii.

29. Samuel Miller, "Nations Lately Become Literary," 409–10.

30. "National Literature," *The Christian Examiner* (January 1830)*,* 286.

31. Editor in a preface to the following: E. W. Johnson, "American Letters: Their Character and Advancement," *The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art and Science,* 575.

32. Dunlap, "Preface," iii; emphasis added.

33. Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," 126.

34. Isenberg, *Telling Silence,* 17.

35. *The Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family's Progress* (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995), 782.

36. "The Oven Bird" is one of Frost's most anthologized poems.

37. Joseph N. Riddel, "The Contours of Stevens Criticism," in *The Act of the Mind: Essays on the Poetry of Wallace Stevens,* eds. J. Hillis Miller and Roy Harvey Pearce (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 273.

38. Michael Heller, "Oppen and Stevens: Reflections on the Lyrical and Philosophical," *Sagetrieb* 12, no. 3 (1993): 26. The essay "What's Historical About Historicism?" importantly tracks more largely the critical reception of Stevens in relation to historicism: "More than a decade ago, then, it seemed necessary to assume that historical approaches to Stevens doubtless led to the conclusion that Stevens was apolitical," Alan Filreis writes. He concludes, "As you will see, I am equally concerned about the reversal of the trend: the assumption that to historicize Stevens is to find him enabling a 'revolutionary' poetic context" (211). See *The Wallace Stevens Journal,* "What's Historical about Historicism?" vol. 28, no. 2 (October 2004): 210–218.

39. Helen Vendler, "The Qualified Assertions of Wallace Stevens," in *The Act of the Mind,* 175–76. According to Schotter the poem suggests "the kingdom of heaven" by using "various analogical devices, while at the same time using a naive dreamer as a warning against taking them literally." She analyzes two theological possibilities for conveying the ineffable: the "positive" method which proposes "analogies for God," and the "negative" which denies "that any analogies are valid." Vendler concludes, "The two ways tend to work in a dialectical manner, the latter continually warning against the idolatry that the former might encourage." See Schotter, "Vernacular Style," 23.

40. Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 513.

41. Ibid., 196.

42. Jacqueline Brogan, "The 'Form/And Frame' of 'As If' in Wallace Stevens," *American Poetry* 3, no. 3 (1986): 48.

43. Paul A. Bové, "Discourse," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study,* eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 55.

44. Clive Bloom, "Preface," *American Poetry: The Modernist Ideal,* eds. Clive Bloom and Brian Docherty (London: Macmillan, 1995), 7.

45. Filreis, *Modernism from Right to Left: Wallace Stevens, The Thirties & Literary Radicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.

46. Samuel French Morse is one of the few critics who tries to address directly this question of point of view. About "The Comedian as the Letter C," he says, "The most surprising thing about this poem is its point of view." Although Morse's emphasis is a deflection of autobiographical readings—"No poem by a writer of such great detachment is likely to be purely autobiographical"—his recognition of the tendency of Stevens's critics to allow for only a single, if self-countering, voice remains important. See Samuel French Morse, "Some Ideas about the Thing Itself," in *Critics on Wallace Stevens,* ed. Peter L. McNamara (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1972), 24, 25. The poem "The Comedian as the Letter C" has often been the focus for those who look politically and thematically at postcolonial issues; for a direct pairing see J. E. Elliott in "What's 'Post' in Post-Colonial Theory," *Borderlands: Negotiating Boundaries in Post-Colonial Writing,* ed. Monika Reif-Hülser (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1999), 50, or for a look at Crispin and more widely at Stevens's "postcolonial imagination,"

see Anna Boyagoda's "'Being There Together': Stevens and the Postcolonial Imagination," *The Wallace Stevens Journal* 29, no. 1 (April 2005): 62–71.

47. Austin's definition sets the stage:

> To name the ship *is* to say (in the appropriate circumstances) the words "I name, &c." When I say, before the registrar or altar, &c., "I do," I am not reporting on a marriage: I am indulging in it. What are we to call a sentence or an utterance of this type? I propose to call it a *performative sentence* or a performative utterance, or, for short, "a performative." . . . The name is derived, of course, from "perform," the usual verb with the noun "action": it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action—it is not normally thought of as just saying something.

See *How To Do Things With Words,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 6–7.

The words "just saying something" mark one major ambiguity, as they are considered more recently, and even by Austin himself at the end, also "discourse-specific." The links, however, between the aggregate of terms that Austin applies to the performative and a comparable action of frames will be explored further.

48. Daniel R. Schwarz, *Narrative & Representation in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens: 'A Tune Beyond Us, Yet Ourselves'* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 3.

49. Mark Halliday observes that "we can credit Stevens with a kind of interactive power beyond . . . the capacity for interpersonal caring whose effects I have described in this essay. We can thus acknowledge that there seem to be moments in reading Stevens when 'difference disappears' (*CP* 454) and indeed *we* become the interior paramour" (166), if "moments are only moments" (167), he qualifies. See Mark Halliday, *Stevens and the Interpersonal* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991). Shoshana Felman puts succinctly one of Austin's precepts of *act* and participation in "performatives": the function of the performatives is "not to inform or describe, but to . . . accomplish an *act* through the very process of their enunciation" (15).

50. For one good reading of Stevens in the ironic mode, see Marjorie Perloff, "Irony in The Rock," in *Critics on Wallace Stevens,* 101–12.

51. If it does so, it is at the expense of fictions that are often described as autotelic, able to assimilate the ruptures.

52. See Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 54. For a type index of the shaggy dog story, see Brunvand, "Classification," 47–67.

53. Partridge, *'Shaggy Dog' Story,* 13.

54. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 29.

55. *The American Whig Review* 1, no. 2 (February 1845): 147.

56. Ibid., 149.

57. Margaret Fuller, "American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future," *Papers on Literature and Art* (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), Part II, 123–24.

58. Amy Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1917), v.

59. Interestingly, Stephen Booth, in a more general context of "nonsense" writes, " . . . I celebrate the poem's ability to deafen us to the illogic of its assertion about the sheep, the poem's ability to let us understand something that does not make sense as if it *did* make sense. . . . " See Stephen Booth, *Precious Nonsense: The Gettysburg Address, Ben Jonson's Epitaphs on His Children, and Twelfth Night* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 5.

60. *The Port Folio* (new series) 4, no. 23 (5 December 1807): 385.