INTRODUCTION


2. See, for example, Rotundo, American Manhood; Smith-Rosenberg, “Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman” and “Sex as Symbol in Victorian Purity”; Nelson, National Manhood; Cohen, “Unregulated Youth”; Ditz, “Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled”; Gilfoyle, City of Eros; Newfield, The Emerson Effect; Thomas Augst, The Clerk’s Tale; Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood; Kimmel, Manhood in America; Stansell, City of Women; and Horlick, Country Boys and Merchant Princes. For a related and quite useful examination of later-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century manhood, see Bederman, Manliness and Civilization. For valuable overviews of the rise of the professional middle classes during this period, all of which have been useful to me here, see Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Classes; Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class; and Halttunen, Confidence Men and Painted Women.

3. Nelson’s work is, it seems to me, in closest conversation with Christopher Newfield’s The Emerson Effect, a study that reads the emergent form of liberal masculinity in the antebellum period through the lens of corporate relations, or what he terms “submissive individualism.”

4. For extended analysis of the panics of 1819, 1837, and 1857, see especially Sellers, The Market Revolution. On the relations between Jacksonian economic and social policy more generally, see Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Bank War; Watson, Liberty and Power; Rousseau, “Jacksonian Monetary Policy”; Fabian, “Speculation on Distress”; and Wilentz, Chants Democratic, 299–325. For insightful readings of nineteenth-century American and British literature in relation to the climate of economic panic, see David Zimmerman, Panic; and Gail Turley Houston, From Dickens to Dracula.

5. For a related though quite different reading of the “Money Diggers” sequence, see Jennifer Baker, Securing the Commonwealth, 157–67.

6. My thanks to Christopher Looby for suggesting Bird’s text to me.
7. In a related discussion, Franco Moretti suggests that the hoard of treasure that Jonathan Harker discovers in Dracula’s Transylvanian castle should be understood as old money that the Count has brought back to life in the form of capital. “This and none other is the story of Dracula the vampire,” he says. “The money of Dracula’s enemies is money that refuses to become capital” . . . “It must have . . . a moral, anti-economic end. . . . This idea of money is, for the capitalist, something inadmissible” (emphasis in original). Moretti, Signs Taken for Wonders, 93–94.

8. James Thompson also examines this passage in Models of Value, 8–9, and I owe my awareness of it to him.

9. There were occasional counters to this longing for gold. Thus Benjamin Franklin, writing in 1729 as the Busy-Body, critiques the “peculiar Charm in the conceit of finding Money” by quoting his friend Agricola, who leaves his son a plot of land with the following caveat: “I have found a considerable Quantity of Gold by Digging there; thee mayest do the same. But Thee must carefully observe this, Never to dig more than Plow-deep!” (Writings of BF 130; 132). For the Franklin of this narrative, in other words, labor is more important to success than even found gold.

10. For detailed histories of the fiscal crises and “bank wars” surrounding the panics of 1819 and 1837, see Sellers, Market, 103–201; 301–63; Mihm, Counterfeaters, 103–56; and Schlesinger, Age of Jackson.

11. Jack and the Beanstalk was first sold in America in 1809 as the title The History of Mother Twaddle, and the marvellous atchievments [sic] of her son Jack. For early American versions of the story aside from the ones I list in the text, see the collection at the American Antiquarian Society. Note that there are various spellings for “Beanstalk” (open, hyphenated, and closed) in the titles of different versions of the text and that I use these specific styles when discussing individual texts. But note as well that I use the closed style here and elsewhere when making generic reference to the story.


13. For a compelling Freudian reading of Jack and the Beanstalk, one that has been useful to me here, see Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment, 183–93. Bettelheim also discusses the related Jack and His Bargains, but I have been unable to determine whether this narrative was commonly read in antebellum America.

14. Listed in Works Cited under H.A.C.


17. Published by William Raine, and listed in the Works Cited under his name.

18. Here I am building on the capacious archival work conducted by David Reynolds in Beneath the American Renaissance. Reynolds argues that the pulpy sensationalism of the antebellum period was located “beneath” the more refined aesthetic work of writers such as Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville, who were able to draw on this raw material and provide more complicated and ultimately more compelling narratives out of it. I disagree with the general nature of this claim, and I will be seeking instead to show how high-culture works such as “Bartleby” are inextricable from the thick context of urban novels, short stories, plays, penny newspapers, and other materials that imagine the lives of professional men. But the value of Reynolds’s work is incontestable, and it has been of considerable use to me here.
19. Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere”; Schudson, “Was There Ever a Public Sphere?”; Ryan, Women in Public; Berlant, The Queen of America Goes to Washington City.

20. Other titles include the Sunday Flash, The Whip, and Satirist, the Libertine, and the New York Sporting Whip. The complete history of these interesting papers has yet to be written, but for excellent analyses of their cultural impact, see Horowitz, Rereading Sex, 159–93; Cockrell, Demons of Disorder, 92–139; and Gilfoyle, City of Eros, 92–116.

21. Hendler offers a related analysis in Public Sentiments of antebellum temperance narratives, suggesting that “Habermas virtually precludes consideration of the performative, theatrical, and spectacular forms that political discourse took in the Jacksonian era, and similarly militates against consideration of women’s participation in the public sphere” (47). I am suggesting that we understand the period’s sensationalism—and in particular the sensational public sphere—in the sort of “performative” and “spectacular” context that Hendler describes.


23. Reynolds argues that the penny news industry is crucial to the rise of a sensationalist aesthetic in nineteenth-century America, and I have benefited from this background in formulating my understanding of the penny presses and the sensational public sphere. See in particular chapter 6 of Beneath the American Renaissance, “The Sensational Press and the Rise of Subversive Literature,” 169–210. There is a wealth of historiography on the Jewett case, most of which I cite in chapter 4.

24. Various critics have argued that U.S. sensationalism often offers a counter to the aesthetics of sentimentality, in particular as the former is usually masculine in orientation, while the latter is usually geared toward a feminine audience. See, for example, Streeby, American Sensations; Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance; and Elmer, Reading at the Social Limit. But one of the things I hope to do here is show how the sensational public sphere designates a representational space in which these two discourses—the sensational and the sentimental—overlap, and perform a fairly specific kind of cultural work. Indeed, rather than trying to isolate the sensational, the urban gothic, or the gothic from the sentimental or the melodramatic, I will be tracing a range of texts that seek to produce a form of reading that responds affectively—“sensation-ally”—to the many crises of capitalist selfhood faced by the modern male of the mid-nineteenth century. For in fact, as Ann Cvetkovich puts it in her study of the British sensation novel of the 1860s, sensationalism is “not really a distinct genre” at all (Mixed Feelings 14). Rather, it is a discursive formation that informs a range of subgenres, most of them mass-produced, but some part of the now-canonical literature that bears an elitist or highbrow stamp. See also in this regard Christopher Looby, who suggests that the sentimental and the (urban) gothic are in fact thoroughly intertwined in antebellum sensationalism. As he puts it in a compelling discussion of George Thompson’s sensational fiction, “[Thompson] wants both to mount a powerful critique of the status quo and to endorse some of its fundamental values; he wants to affirm sentimental domestic norms even as he violates them, expose moral hypocrisy even as his fiction succumbs to it” (“Romance” 653).

25. Eric Lott has shown that the staged excesses of the minstrel show represent a similar instance of ambivalence for white male audiences. As he puts it in an analysis
that is also informed by Žižek’s notion of “theft,” white subjectivity “was and is . . . absolutely dependent on the Otherness it seeks to exclude and constantly open to transgression, although, in wonderfully adaptive fashion, even the transgression may be pleasurable” (Love 150).

**Chapter One**

1. In a related discussion, Plummer and Nelson suggest that Crane is “an intrusive male . . . representative of a bustling, practical New England who threatens imaginatively fertile rural America with his prosaic acquisitiveness” (“Girls” 175). I will be seeking here to extend this analysis, and I understand this story more accurately as an attempt by Irving to narrate the debt-based and frequently humiliated forms of masculinity emerging out of the new economy.

2. In *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Present Commercial Embarrassments in the United States* (1819), the aptly self-titled “Anti-Bullionist” argues that a currency supported by specie was dangerously unstable because cheaper labor elsewhere in the world would inevitably result in domestic supplies of specie being “drawn off” to those markets where labor, and hence commodities, were cheapest. Arguing instead that a national paper currency not backed by specie reserves would free the country from the fluctuating value of precious metals and hence from anxieties that specie would disappear from the country’s bank vaults, the writer insists that “[W]e must from necessity abandon the agency of the precious metals, as a check to our circulating medium; and . . . a well-regulated paper-money must be established in its stead” (*Enquiry* 2; 7). A creative variation of this argument was offered by James Swan, who argued in 1819 for a new form of “national paper” issued by a national loan office at three percent interest, one that would replace both specie and the current paper money in circulation. “Who can doubt the solidity of the bills proposed?” he asks. “The Banks which are now in a suspension of payment, have not the power to imprint on their bills the value of specie; but the United States by lending their bills will give to them the action of circulation, and spread at once over our county, a money really superior in value to the precious metals” (*Address* 13).


4. For a useful history of the ensuing Depression of 1819–22, see Rezneck, “The Depression of 1819–1822.”

5. In this sense *The Sketch Book* echoes Burke’s lament in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) over the fate of Marie Antoinette and, as Claudia Johnson puts it, “the fall of sentimentalized manhood, the kind of [chivalric] manhood inclined to venerate her” (Equivocal 4).

6. This vulgarity is even more evident in the depiction we receive of the citizen’s two sons, who seem to represent a posterity that is if anything further removed from Federalist masculinity. “They were arrayed in the extremity of the mode,” Crayon tells us of the man’s offspring, “with all that pedantry of dress, which marks the man of questionable pretensions to style. . . . Art had done everything to accomplish them as
men of fashion, but nature had denied the nameless grace [of the] true gentlemen” (SB 82).

7. In a compelling study of Irving’s use of the bachelor type in his negotiation of masculinity and an emergent form of American authorship, Bryce Traister contends conversely that Ichabod’s appetite is here “a metaphor for sublimated sexual desire,” wherein “the bachelor’s motivating sensuality is represented as appetitive and consuming, rather than sexual and procreative” (“Wandering” 118). For another discussion of Irving in relation to masculinity and bachelorhood (one that does not include “Sleepy Hollow”), see Banks, “Washington Irving,” 253–65.

8. For a reading of Arthur Mervyn as an allegory of anxieties over speculation (especially as related to the overseas slave trade), see Goddu, 31–51. For a more general analysis of early republican fiction in relation to concerns over speculation during the 1790s, one that includes an analysis of Dorval, see Weyler, “A Speculating Spirit,” 207–42.


10. Similar links between fiscal humiliation and male castration mark the early republican period. See for example Sara Wood’s 1801 Dorval. Here a gold advocate named Colonel Morely—whose virtue is reflected in his earlier decision to buy up the worthless paper scrip of revolutionary war soldiers for “gold and silver”—loses his entire estate when he is seduced by Dorval into speculating on the infamous Yazoo land scheme in Georgia (13). Unable to pay his creditors, Morely is arrested and sent to debtors’ prison, where, “unmanned” and humiliated, he soon dies (140). Morely’s real humiliation, however, comes when the widowed Mrs. Morely actually marries the speculator Dorval. After attempting repeatedly to seduce and then rape Morely’s daughter, Dorval eventually murders his new wife, stabbing her in Colonel Morely’s bed with his sword. With Dorval’s “naked sword” (244) standing in for the rapacious phallus of the speculator and the blood-soaked bedding violently mocking Mrs. Morely’s lack of virtue on her wedding night, the republican family romance is transformed rather decisively into something more closely resembling gothic horror—a sensational format overtly linking the evils of speculation with the humiliation and symbolic castration of men such as Colonel Morely.

Chapter Two

1. This image is not pictured here. Noah was frequently derided for his pro-Bank sympathies and close ties to Bank president Nicholas Biddle, but he was also the target of various anti-Semitic slurs. See, for example, the 1828 lithograph “City of New-York. Mordecai M. Noah.” Arranged as a parody of a public notice, the image depicts Noah as being beaten (“cow-skinned”) by a rival news editor, Elijah Roberts. A playbill on the wall behind them advertises “The Jew,” “I Act of the Hypocrite,” and “End with the face of The Liar.”

2. Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow; see in particular chapter 1, “William Shakespeare in America,” 11–82. Harap’s The Image of the Jew in American Literature provides an
especially capacious body of research on representations of the Jew in early American culture, and has been invaluable to me in laying the groundwork for this chapter.

3. The closest we get is the Wandering Jew of Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* (1860). For an extended discussion of *The Marble Faun* in this context, see Harap, 107–18.

4. See also Jones’s *The City Merchant; Life and Adventures of a Country Merchant*; and *The Western Merchant*.

5. Consider the concerns voiced by popular political economist Edward Kellog in his 1841 *Remarks upon usury and Its Effects*. Beginning ominously with an epigraph quoting Shylock’s famous lines about his hatred for Antonio—“I hate him for he is a Christian / But more, for that in low simplicity / He lends out money gratis, and brings down / The rate of usance here with us in Venice” (1.3.42–45)—Kellog complains as follows:

   [T]he money-lenders predict approaching scarcity of money, and begin to draw their deposits from [the] bank; perhaps even draw a few hundred thousand dollars in specie, which creates some little alarm; the banks begin to call in their loans on stocks, and stocks fall in the market. They curtail their discounts, and an unusual demand for money, and a depreciation in the means of procuring it, ensure, and again the usurer begins to exact his own treble compensation for the temporary loss of interest he chose to submit to; and now, again, he becomes a competitor at bank for discounts, and, by the same means as before, a usurious system of plunder worse than robbery is begun and maintained, to the utter destruction of hundreds otherwise prosperous men. The predictions of the usurers have been verified. Money is, indeed, exceedingly scarce, and is worth (upon the usurer’s rule of value “what it will bring”) what it will destroy any class of business men to pay. (32)

For Kellog, the usurer is a danger not simply because he might ruin America’s many unwise debtors. More importantly, he is a danger at the level of the general economy; this because he is able, by withholding specie during periods of fiscal “scarcity” and then raising rates on it, to control the actual supply of money in circulation, and thus provoke economic crisis—“the utter destruction of hundreds otherwise prosperous men.”

Edward Palmer offers a similar view in a sermon pamphlet entitled *Usury, the Giant Sin of the Age* (1865). As he puts it in words that echo Kellog’s, “[Usury] is a system which is subversive of all true and equitable commerce, and wholly incompatible with permanent commercial prosperity. . . . [U]nder its operation there comes a time every few years when the interest due to capitalists upon obligations then maturing, amounts to more than all the money in circulation. Then, of course, there is a great revulsion in commercial affairs. The crisis is sometimes temporarily postponed by financial maneuvering, but only to be the more disastrous when it comes, as come it must. Then the ‘money market is tight,’ and rates of interest are enormously increased. *The Shylocks must have the amount of their bonds*” (16; emphasis added).

Like Kellog, Palmer views usury as exerting a choke hold on the nation’s money supply, and thus precipitating economic panics. For both authors, in other words, it is usury that is at the heart of the nation’s economic woes. And what this suggests is that
the image of the Jewish usurer so common to the period’s sensationalism is in fact the virtual embodiment of the much more prevalent and insidious form of high-interest lending practiced by the nation’s banks and other “capitalists,” and thus the screen against which to project both anxiety and anger about the scarcity of money circulating within the unsteady economy. This is why both Kellog and Palmer are able, almost in passing, to offer the figure of the capitalist Jew (“the Shylocks”) as a stock stand-in for high interest rates, and for usury more generally. For again, what this figure represents is a negative form of political economy, one that acts as a direct threat to the nation’s economic health.


7. Jonathan Freedman provides a similar argument in his discussion of later-nineteenth-century authors such as Anthony Trollope, George du Maurier, and Henry James. As he explains in outlining what he terms “literary versions of economic anti-Semitism,” “The passions ascribed to the Jew in the culture of capitalism . . . may serve as a powerful way of distancing the affects unleashed by this system from the normative life of Christian culture and gentile commerce. Indeed, the affect-drenched, passionate, lascivious Jew becomes a literal embodiment of all the irrationalities, the perversities, the greeds and lusts, that are arguably the motor, and undoubtedly the consequences, of an economic system that presents itself as a self-correcting and rational mechanism for the maximally efficient delivery of goods and services” (*Temple* 73; 69). Freedman’s work—easily the most nuanced of the many valuable studies of Jews in America and the American imagination—has been especially influential to me here as I have sought to understand the antebellum period’s obsession with a population of Jews that historians suggest was no more than fifty thousand. The return form of Gentile “theft” that I describe below is thus an attempt to build on Freedman’s study.

8. The form of projection Žižek describes might also help explain the contradiction one encounters in realizing that the penchant for hoarding gold ascribed to the sensational Jew mirrors the faith in gold so often voiced by Jacksonian Democrats, and just as frequently mocked by anti-Jackson detractors. From this perspective the sensational Jew is in many ways a dramatic extension of these hard-money Jacksonians: like the Jew hoarding his cache of gold bullion, Jackson and his followers adhered to a strict mercantilist gold policy that bordered on the obsessional. But the mirrored reflection of Jacksonian fiscal policy provided by the sensational Jew clearly went unrecognized. Instead, the Jew remained an uncanny figure that haunted antebellum culture with the very image of its own quite repressed relationship to gold bullion, even as—or precisely because—he acted as the figure who had stolen that money in the first place.


10. See for one of many examples John Todd’s “The Jew” in *Simple Sketches*. Here a sick Jewish daughter beseeches her father to convert to Christianity as she lies on her deathbed, the implication being that she herself has converted. One might note, however, the various tales in which the Jewess refuses, even in the face of death, to convert. See for example “Myrrah of Tangiers” by “Caroline C—.” In this story, Myrrah, “the daughter and sole heiress of the wealthy and excellent Raguel” (125), is accused by a jealous Muslim man of religious infidelity, and is burned at the stake.
11. On castration in *The Merchant of Venice*, see in particular Penuel, “Castrating the Creditor.”

12. A similarly overt moment appears in Ned Buntline’s *Morgan; or The knight of the black flag. A strange story of by-gone times.* (1861). Here a group of “brawny ruffians” (20) storm the home of Solomon the moneylender after he has refused to loan their leader a large sum of money (“he called me a cursed Jew,” Solomon explains, “and swore he would raise a mob to pull the roof down about mine ears!” [19]). The goal of the raid is to seize Solomon’s gold, but in the ensuing scenes we see that the men are just as intent on raping Solomon’s daughter, Miriam. As the libertine leader of the crew puts it in explaining why he doesn’t wish to burn down the Jew’s home, “I do not wish to melt his gold, and there is a fairy within whose ebon tresses I would not scorch for a thousand sovereigns” (21). The “ruffians” are driven off by the “black knight” Morgan, but the mob’s desire for both the Jew’s gold and his daughter underscores the collective belief in the Jew’s hoarded riches as well as the link between the nation’s missing gold bullion and the alluring figure of the Jewess.

13. Tellingly, Miriam’s father goes on to inform her that her love for a Gentile repeats the sin of her own mother, who, he explains, had an affair with a Christian years before (“a Gentile, unclean dog as he was” [Agnes 44–45]).

14. This anxiety is also evident in Buntline’s “Miriam” narratives. For example, in *Agnes; or, the beautiful milliner*, Miriam is locked into a sealed-off attic room where, in what is perhaps Buntline’s sensational zenith, she finds her mother’s skeleton. Miriam thus realizes that she has entered her mother’s death chamber, as well as her own. At first she believes that she will be left to starve, but soon a perfumed gas begins to fill the room, and she understands that her father intends to poison her. Paired with her mother in this makeshift tomb, the horrified Miriam highlights the Jew’s perverse (and perhaps, given the link with her mother, incestuous) desire. But she also underscores the more general form of cultural work performed by the Jewess in antebellum culture. And that is to act as an image of excess, one that, at least in the sensational world constructed by Buntline, is simply too volatile for entrance into Gentile culture. Thus, rather than imagining Jessica’s conversion, Buntline, like various other antebellum authors, depicts her as stolen from Gentile culture, but apparently irretrievable from the clutches of the Shylock figure. Simultaneously fascinating, desirable, and fearful, she embodies the very qualities that antebellum culture—and antebellum manhood in particular—has disavowed in itself. In yet another narrative, *Rose Seymour; or, the Ballet Girl’s Revenge* (1865), the Miriam character is violently whipped for attempting to escape from her father’s home. “Naked to her waist, the lovely young Jewess was fastened up against the wall,” we are told. “A hideous old hag was flogging her with savage ferocity” (46). See also *Miriam; or, the Jew’s daughter* (1860s–70s[?]).

15. This narrative was substantially expanded from the 1828 version of the text, entitled “Judith Bensaddi, a Tale Founded in Fact,” and appearing in *The Souvenir* in 1828.


17. Beginning with an epigraph from *The Merchant of Venice*—“Antonio and Shy-
lock, stand forth!"—Abednego tells the story of a young man named Basil Annesley who owes money to Abednego Osalez, a Jewish moneylender who seems to have in his debt nearly every wealthy person in the city of London. Basil’s goal in borrowing this money is to lend financial support to a poor young Jewish woman named Esther, with whom he has fallen in love. Unbeknownst to Basil, however, Esther is the niece of the childless Abednego—she is, that is to say, a kind of daughter substitute in the Jessica genre.

18. As with the death of the Shylock figure, the looting of the Jew’s home is fairly common to this material, so much so that we might read the depiction of mob violence as reflecting a latent—and here displaced—desire within Jacksonian America for collective Gentile action against the nation’s mercantile Jews.

19. This passage is also cited in Harap, and it is to his scholarship that I am indebted for this passage.

20. A similar anxiety over the linked categories of Jewishness and blackness is displayed in Edgar Allan Poe’s famous short story “Ligeia” (1838). As Joan Dayan has discussed, Ligeia is marked throughout the text by signs of “black” blood. But, and importantly, Ligeia is also described in terms of Jewish characteristics. As Poe’s narrator puts it, “I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose—and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit” (“Ligeia” 63–64). As with Hawthorne’s description of the Jewess he sees in London, or Robert Byng’s racist description of the villain Densdeth, blackness and Jewishness seem to serve as referents for one another, and blackness lurks menacingly behind Jewishness as a kind of fearful and only indirectly named presence, one that, especially in “Ligeia,” threatens to emerge and overwhelm the unsuspecting Gentile male (Dayan, “Amorous Bondage” 239–73).

21. Garame’s anxieties about Judith’s racial makeup are further suggested on the day he and Judith depart for what is supposed to be a short separation before their planned marriage. At this point Garame has already begun to experience misgivings about the engagement, all of which revolve around his understanding of Judith as racially distinct. Such feelings emerge as he climbs into his coach, and looks up to see Judith watching him from her bedroom window. As he explains, “On taking my seat I looked up at Judith’s window—it was lighted—her sadly declining form was distinctly shadowed forth upon it. . . . ‘Shade of my beloved,’ said I in my full heart, ‘shade of my beloved, fare thee well, fare thee well.’ The whip cracked, the wheels rattled over the pavement, and I no more saw even the shade of my beloved” (Benasaddi 119; emphasis added). Marking Judith with racially suggestive terms such as “shadow” and “shade,” Garame—much like Hawthorne in his journal entry—negotiates the vexed terrain of race and desire into which he has entered by transforming Judith into a sort of two-dimensional figure of blackness, one that stands in for the racial miscegenation with a Jew that he both longs for and abhors. Indeed, this is the last time Garame sees Judith in the novel, leading one to suspect that the subsequent revulsion he experiences at the thought of marrying her is at least partially informed by this haunting image of her racially distinct shadow-presence.
Chapter Three

1. There is a wealth of information available on the Webster-Parkman case. The most comprehensive text is Bemis, Report of the Case of John White Webster (1850). For an extremely compelling analysis of the case, one that links it to changes in conceptions of liberal selfhood in the nineteenth century, see Karen Halttunen, Murder Most Foul, 126–32.

2. It’s worth noting that although American newspapers were almost uniformly moved by Webster’s confession, the London Times was much more cynical. Referring to Webster’s “insincerity,” the paper described the text as “written with a vast deal ofunction and sentiment,” and went on to state that “it is difficult to see how the writer could have regretted its [the Confession’s] publicity, before his fate was finally sealed” (7-8-1850).

3. See also Colt, Life, Letters, and Last Conversation (1842).

4. Joseph Fichtelberg provides a similar perspective in his discussion of Emerson’s response to the debt he incurred following the 1837 Panic. “For many conservatives, the lesson of the panic was quite clear: retrench, repent, reform,” he explains. “But other writers, both men and women, sense a more powerful change in these circumstances that no mere assertion of reason could forestall. With insolvency, these writers saw, an older vision of the autonomous self was also waning, and newer conceptions of a more plastic, deft, market-molded individual were demanded” (Critical 117–18).

5. See also Jackson’s A Week in Wall Street (1841).

6. The main pamphlet for Robinson’s trial is Trial, Confession, and Execution of Peter Robinson (1842). I would like to thank Peter Molin for calling my attention to this text, and for sharing with me his unpublished paper on the Robinson murder and Sedgwick’s novel, “‘Genteel Crime Fiction’: The Case of Catherine Sedgwick’s ‘Wilton Harvey.’”

7. For similar advice to young men from moral reformers, see William A. Alcott, A Young Man’s Guide (1833), and Catherine Sedgwick, The Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man (1836).

8. The well-known phrase “structure of feeling” comes from Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (1977). I am also drawing on Hendler’s use of this notion in Public Sentiments. See especially his introduction, 1–26.

9. On the rhetoric and ideology of male submission in antebellum culture, see Christopher Newfield, “The Politics of Male Suffering,” and The Emerson Effect.

10. For a more detailed history of events surrounding the issuance of the Specie Circular, see Sellers, Market, 332–63.

11. The Quaker City sold 60,000 copies its first year of publication, and 10,000 per year for the next decade. The novel went through twenty-seven American printings, and was pirated in Germany and England, under slightly altered titles. For more on Lippard and the publication of The Quaker City, see Reynolds, introduction to The Quaker City, i–xvi.


13. Nelson argues that this novel reflects the “gynecological projection onto women’s bodies” of male anxieties about class and gender (National 137). For her full discussion of this dynamic, see 143–60.

15. Lori Merish provides a similar point in suggesting the influence of Scottish enlightenment philosophers such as Adam Smith on narratives of female submission within the period’s domestic sentimentalism. As she explains, “[T]he objectification of women as male property is internalized as a psychic mechanism through which men managed their feelings of powerlessness and their developmental dependence on women” (*Sentimental* 39–40).

16. My information on these early American counterfeiters comes from Mihm, *Counterfeiters*.


**Chapter Four**

1. The Helen Jewett case is often mentioned in histories both of prostitution and of journalism, but the only sustained analysis is Cohen’s *The Murder of Helen Jewett*. See also by Cohen the following: “The Helen Jewett Murder,” and “Unregulated Youth.” For a briefer analysis that places the murder more specifically in the context of antebellum prostitution, see Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 92–102. For a discussion of the case in relation to the history of journalism, see Stevens, *Sensationalism in the New York Press*.

2. To the best of my knowledge, virtually all editorial material in the *Herald* is, unless otherwise indicated, authored by Bennett. I have therefore consolidated all *Herald* references under Bennett’s name in the Works Cited. Each of these references is cited parenthetically within the text.

3. For readings of the various female reform movements and auxiliary publications proliferating in reaction to the perceived problems posed by the newly mobile “Jacksonian male” and the prostitution industry in general, see Christine Stansell, *City of Women*; and Smith-Rosenberg, “Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman,” and “Sex as Symbol in Victorian Purity.”

4. For a useful and provocative reading of the cult of the female corpse in America and Europe in the nineteenth century, one that revolves largely around the work of Poe, see Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*.

5. In addition to the *Herald*, full proceedings were published in the New York *Sun*, the New York *Courier and Enquirer*, and the New York *Tribune*. The transcripts were also published in *The Trial of Richard P. Robinson*, 1836.

6. The pamphlets are as follows: *The Thomas Street Tragedy* (1836); *An Authentic Biography of the Late Helen Jewett* (1836); *The Life of Ellen Jewett* (1836); *A Sketch of the Life of Richard P. Robinson* (1836); *Sketch of the Life of Miss Ellen Jewett* (1836); *Trial of Richard P. Robinson* (1836). For a detailed reading of these pamphlets, which I do not go into here, see Cohen, “The Helen Jewett Murder.”

7. See, for example, *NYH* 5-14-1836; and the New York *Sun* 5-6-1836.

also provides a description by David O'Meara of David Broderick, a local Irish political leader, wearing a “Helen Jewett mourner” hat as a symbol of anti-Whig political sympathies when he led a delegation of New York Democrats to meet President Polk during a visit to Perth Amboy (Rise 208).

9. My information on Bennett and his career as a journalist comes from three main sources: Crouthamel, Bennett's New York Herald; Carson, The Man Who Made News; and Stevens, Sensationalism. The information below on the early history of the penny presses comes from the above titles, as well as from Schiller, Objectivity and the News (1981); and Saxton, Rise and Fall of the White Republic, 95–108.

10. Owned and edited by Benjamin Day, the New York Sun began publication September 3, 1833, with the aim of providing a form of news from which mercantile and trade information, as well as partisan politics, would be absent. By all accounts the Sun enjoyed immediate success: within four months it equaled the most popular mercantile papers in circulation, and by 1834, with the aid of increased print technology, its circulation was up to ten thousand. Created in imitation of the Sun in 1834, the Transcript was the most successful of the penny copycats until the Herald was started. For more on the early history of the Sun see Crouthamel, James Watson Webb, 69–81. Note that I have listed the Sun under Day's name in the Works Cited section.

11. The cash-and-carry policy was crucial to the success of the newly emergent penny papers such as the Herald and the New York Sun. Instead of having to subscribe to a newspaper, customers were able for the first time to buy editions by the copy. The young boys selling the papers so aggressively on the street would purchase a bundle of one hundred papers for sixty-two and one-half cents, which left them a fairly decent profit margin, provided they sold all of their copies (Crouthamel, James Watson Webb 67–81).

12. As with Bennett and the editorials in the Herald, Webb seems to have been the author of most if not all of the editorials in the Courier and Enquirer during this period. I have therefore listed the Courier and Enquirer under Webb's name in the Works Cited section. For a fuller account of the “Moral War” waged against Bennett, see Crouthamel, Bennett's New York Herald, 34–38; and Crouthamel, James Watson Webb, 84–86.

13. The most famous such encounter occurred in 1842, when Webb fought in a duel with Congressman Thomas F. Marshall of Kentucky. Following a series of barbed exchanges over the national bankruptcy act (which Webb himself had made use of and defended vehemently), the two met in the woods outside of Washington to settle their differences. Both men missed their first shot, Webb firing intentionally into the air; but on the second shot, though Webb again fired into the air, Marshall hit Webb in the hip. Webb was not seriously injured, but he was indicted by the New York District Attorney for violating an ordinance against leaving New York State to fight in a duel. Webb was sentenced to two years in prison for his crime but pardoned not long afterward by New York governor William Henry Seward. For more on this duel and various other confrontations between the city's newsman, see Crouthamel, James Watson Webb, 67–94.

14. For Bennett's description of his encounter with Townsend, see NYH, October 8, 9, 17, 1836; for an account of his beating by Leggett, see NYH 1-5-1836. For a very general contextualization of these fights, see Crouthamel, Bennett's New York Herald, 26.
15. For a useful biographical account of Poe’s many rivalries in the publishing world, see Silverman, *Edgar A. Poe*.

16. As Bennett put it in one of many such entries on Townsend, “Mrs. T., I understand, had borrowed money of Ellen—and yet it is said she intends to administer on her property. Ellen had many valuables about her—she had a large amount of jewelry—her wearing apparel was splendid, and worth probably $1,500. What has become of all this property?” (*NYH* 4-14-1836).

17. This claim was never pursued or proved; the following day Bennett reported that Chancellor, though in fact an ex-lover of Robinson’s who had been enticed by him to run away from her parents, was sent by her parents to South Carolina when the affair was discovered. Bennett further reported that Chancellor had later returned to the city, even visited Robinson while he was in prison, and perhaps left the city with him after his acquittal in June.


19. Chichester’s reputation as a ruffian involved in the politics of the city’s brothels is something Bennett takes advantage of in his early coverage of the murder, when he provides an ironic depiction of a conversation between Robinson and Chichester while the two were supposedly housed next to one another the first few days of Robinson’s incarceration (*NYH* 4-18-1836).


21. In one of the most significant moments for labor politics in the antebellum period, Judge Edwards, immediately following the Robinson trial, ruled against twenty-five journeyman tailors for conspiring to strike, a decision that resulted in days of mass demonstration and violence throughout the city. For a history of the strike and Edwards’s verdict, one that provides interesting commentary on Bennett’s role in the events, see Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 255–96.


23. In an 1843 fictionalization of the Jewett story, Joseph Holt Ingraham echoes Bennett’s narrative, explaining that “She was the seducer, not he. . . . Her beauty was her power, and she triumphed in it. She felt a sort of revenge against the other sex, and used every art to tempt and seduce and ruin young men.” *Frank Rivers*; cited in Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 151. For more on the sensational story of the revengeful prostitute as it evolved in the years following the Jewett case, see especially Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 150–57; and Keetley, “Victim and Victimizer.”

24. This quote, as well as most of Bennett’s coverage of the murder from April 11 and 12, is reprinted in *The Thomas Street Tragedy*.

25. Bennett’s strategy here was not an isolated one during the period. As critics such as Nancy Cott have discussed, the ideologies of female “passionlessness” and purity were frequently invoked within middle-class Victorian culture, specifically as a means of maintaining a masculine sense of security against the contaminating influences of the “public” spheres of economic competition (Cott, “Passionlessness”). Perhaps the most famous example of such a representation is Hiram Powers’s *The Greek Slave*, a statue that toured the United States in the late 1840s to the fascination and possibly the sexual titillation of an estimated one hundred thousand paying patrons. Depicting
a young Greek woman standing naked as she is about to be sold into slavery to the Turks, the statue was hailed by critics as a model image of sexual purity and chastity, in particular because of the way the figure’s expression suggested an otherworldly detachment that lifted her beyond the sordid realities of her present situation. For a particularly insightful reading of the cultural politics surrounding the reception of this statue, see Kasson, “Narratives of the Female Body.”

26. Brown, Domestic Individualism, 96–132; Goddu, Gothic, 105–16; and Merish, Sentimental, 172–90. Further citations to Brown are parenthetical within the text. Goddu’s market reading is closest to my own here, and I have benefited greatly from her insightful analysis.

27. For a compelling reading of Blithedale that places the novel in the context of female celebrity and antebellum mass culture more generally, see Brodhead, Cultures of Letters, 62–82.

28. See especially Brown, Domestic, 96–132; and Bronfen, Dead Body, 241–49.

29. Brown refers to Coverdale’s anxiety about bodily contact as “self-protective consumerism” (Domestic 113–14).

30. Russ Castronovo, for example, argues that like the consumptive and increasingly spiritual body of Little Eva in Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Priscilla offers “the airy insubstantiality of an adolescent girl” (Necro-Citizenship 118).

Chapter Five

1. For a related and compelling discussion of this image, see Sandage, Losers, 198.

2. The City Merchant is yet another text that follows the romantic career of the Jew’s daughter. Here, though, we see a fascinating variation of the Jessica narrative that I outline in chapter 3. In this version of the story, we see that Rachel, the daughter of the Jew Ulmar, is married to Billy Grittz, the son of the broker Grittz. The union links the families of the two Jewish brokers, but it has the effect of thinning, or dissipating, Jewishness nevertheless. This is most overt with Rachel, who “being born and bred in the city, had none of the Jew-German thickness of speech, nor any of their avaricious cunning” (City 94); the implication here is that her children will assimilate fairly easily into the world of sensibility ruled over by the racially “pure” Edgar Saxon. This is also true of Billy, who is described as “a descendant of Japhet, as well as of Canaan,” in whom “the blood of both races mingled harmoniously” (235). Billy’s Jewish ancestry helps explain the almost reverential attitude he displays toward hard money when working at Saxon’s counting house. “The boy could not help feeling exceedingly proud when accompanying a dray load of gold and silver,” we are told. “[A]s if by instinct, which seemed to be innate, his eyes and ears were open to observe and hear everything which passed among the revenue officers” (214). At the same time, however, the “Japhet” portion of his blood promises that the avariciousness of his father will also fade out in future generations. Thus, even this substory of Jones’s racial romance demonstrates how the crises both of the Jew and the unstable economy of the Jacksonian moment are defused, the result being that Saxon’s own masculine selfhood and integrity are retained intact.
3. For an excellent discussion of the rhetoric and politics of miscegenation during this period, one that includes examination of Clay’s “Racial Amalgamation” series, see Lemire, “Miscegenation.”

4. Hawthorne’s reliance on a metaphoric slippage between blackness and whiteness in relation to issues of class and labor also informs several of his comments about manual labor in his letters and journal entries from the 1840s and 1850s. This is particularly true of his descriptions of his work as a surveyor in the Salem Custom House, a position that often placed him aboard cargo ships bearing loads of coal. Complaining that his “coal-begrimed visage” or the “sable stains” of his profession give him qualities in common with “chimney sweepers,” or with “the black-faced demons in the vessel’s hold” (he also describes the longshoremen as looking “like the forgemen in Retsch’s Fridolin” [American 296]), Hawthorne seems drawn to the ways in which the coal dust he encounters provides metaphoric connections between manual labor and the racial markings of blackness—markings that he seems quite willing to ascribe to the white working-class men along Salem’s waterfront. This is also evident in letters Hawthorne writes from the Custom House to his wife, in which he expresses how unsuited she is to visit the working-class world of the waterfront. As he puts it in one such letter when informing her that the day’s shipment will be salt rather than coal, “Sweetest Dove, fly hither sometime, and alight in my bosom. I would not ask my white dove to visit me on board a coal vessel; but salt is white and pure—there is something holy in salt” (American 345). Though certainly playful, Hawthorne’s comment also reflects his desire—similar to that in his description of the “sordid stain” left by Ned Higgins’s money—to keep the “pure” categories of upper-class “whiteness” clear of the debasing marks of labor, marks that Hawthorne seems willing to discuss in ways that suggest a relation to racial difference.

5. For contemporary commentary on the perceived threat of upper-class degeneracy at mid-century, see Beecher, Letters to the People on Health and Happiness; and Greeley, An Address Before the Literary Societies of Hamilton College.

6. As Todd and other reformers made clear, the only cure for this disease was heterosexual intercourse within the bounds of marriage. But as Hawthorne explains, Clifford, “who had never quaffed the cup of passionate love[,] . . . knew now that it was too late” (Gables 141)—a fact that highlights the reproductive crisis facing not only the Pyncheon family but, at least symbolically, upper-class white men in general. For readings of antebellum culture in relation to male moral reformers addressing masturbation, see Bertolini, “Fireside Chastity”; and Smith-Rosenberg, “Sex as Symbol.” My thanks to Professor Rosenberg for pointing out to me the connections between Clifford’s enfeeblement and the rhetoric of male sexual purity advocated by moral reformers.

7. Brown makes a related point in discussing Hepzibah’s cent shop, observing that “Miserliness, the preoccupation with hoarding and holding money, highlights the role of the hands in trade, the fact of burst physicality in the touch and love of money, and this is also emphasized in Hawthorne’s depiction of the grasping hand of the organ-grinder’s monkey, noted as well for its ‘too enormous tail’ and ‘excessive desire’” (Domestic 83).

8. Lott argues something similar about Zip Coon and the period’s other black dandy characters. “The black dandy literally embodied the amalgamationist threat of
abolitionism,” he says, “and allegorically represented the class threat of those who were advocating it; amalgamation itself, we might even say, was a partial figuration of class aspiration” (Love 134). Here, in an analysis that certainly reflects usefully on a novel such as The City Merchant, the locus of anxiety is the upwardly mobile white man, whose aspirations are projected onto the dandy character. But again, the Pyncheon family experiences these concerns from the top, down; they are the ones who are threatened with a form of racial tainting that is itself understood in relation to actual contact with class struggle and, *inter alia*, contact with actual money.

9. One version of a less troubling form of racial difference is offered by Hawthorne in a journal entry from 1838, one suggestively similar to his depictions of Hepzibah’s Jim Crow cookies and the Italian boy’s monkey. Describing a variety of working-class members of a crowd outside of a commencement ceremony at Williams College, he turns to a description of a group of black men who are also part of the crowd. Here is his description of one of the men: “I saw one old negro, a genuine specimen of the slave-negro, without any of the foppery of the race in our parts; an old fellow with a bag, I suppose of broken victuals, on his shoulders; and his pockets stuffed out at his hips with the like provender—full of grimaces, and ridiculous antics, laughing laughably, yet without affectation—then talking with a strange kind of pathos, about the whippings he used to get, while he was a slave—a queer thing of mere feeling, with some glimmering of sense” (American 112). More direct than his representation of the Italian boy’s monkey, Hawthorne’s depiction of the “genuine specimen of a slave negro” reflects a cartoon version of black male subjectivity. Here, this image seems intended to counter concerns of the sort raised by the figure of the black dandy (whose type is referred to in Hawthorne’s mention of black “foppery”). “Laughing laughably,” with pockets clownishly overstuffed, and engaged in a stock routine of “ridiculous antics,” the man is depicted in terms of a two-dimensional aesthetic that seems designed to provide Hawthorne with a kind of security about his own, more interior form of white self-possession—one perhaps challenged by the sometimes raucous festivities of the working-class members of the crowd at the Williams commencement. Perversely, this form of assurance comes most powerfully in the “strange kind of pathos” the man is said to display over “the whippings he used to get.” For though on the one hand the description seems to suggest a sympathy extended across lines of race to one whose feelings might signal an internal—and perhaps shared—form of suffering and pain, it should more accurately be read as a sentimentalized and nostalgic return to the plantation South, perhaps of the sort imagined in “Plantation Melodies” by Stephen Foster such as “My Old Kentuckey Home, Good-Night!” (1853), or “Massa’s in de Cold Ground” (1852)—products of mass culture in which the body of the black male acts as a reliable space of difference in the efforts of men such as Hawthorne to make their own relation to class and whiteness cohere.

10. As Gilmore points out, the slaves remind us that the Pyncheon fortune seems to have been derived at least in part from slave labor (Genuine 133; 225n19).

11. For more on the relation between Jacksonian politics and blackface minstrelsy, see Lott, *Love and Theft*; and Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 165–82.

12. Of course, this exchange between Maule and Scipio also suggests once again that white America’s racial imagination is circumscribed by basic tropes of minstrelsy and racial performance. It may be true that Maule’s comment to Scipio about a shared
“blackness” is motivated by the theft of his family’s property by the Pyncheons. But his comment also signals a rather profound act of racial appropriation. Claiming blackness, Maule appropriates the absolute victimage of this category for its affective resonance; there is simply no more powerful metaphor for pain, abjection, and dispossession in antebellum culture. Indeed, Scipio’s very name, which is repeated throughout Holgrave’s magazine story, is rarely offered without the race-fixing prefix “black” (as in “black Scipio”), a fact that has the double function of taking away what it enforces: Scipio is Other because he is “black,” but his “blackness” is appropriable in ways he is unable to control. Scipio, meanwhile, does not have the option of choosing whether to wear the sign of his abjection. And as suggested by the description of Scipio showing the “whites of his eyes” (Gables 192) when Maule arrives at the Pyncheon front door, Scipio too is rendered in terms of a performed, minstrelized blackness: for Holgrave (and probably for Hawthorne), there is no real difference between the real and the represented of race.

13. Gilmore argues similarly: “Race, rather than class, or, perhaps more properly, race understood in terms of middle-class morality, now defines respectability, so that the historical class differences separating Phoebe and Holgrave no longer matter” (Genuine 146–47).

14. For excellent analysis of the multiple tensions in this novel between surface and depth models of selfhood, see Davidson, “Photographs of the Dead.” Focusing on the new technologies of photography Hawthorne foregrounds, Davidson suggests that the novel represents Hawthorne’s meditation on the status of representational art at mid-century, one that led him to pose often anxious-making questions not only about the distinctions between “high” and “low” art but also about subjectivity in the age of mechanical reproduction.

15. As Oliver Wendell Holmes put it in the Atlantic Monthly in 1859, the photographer was a “great white hunter” who gathered the images of his quarry like the head and skins of his prey (“The Stereoscope and the Stereograph”).