# Property and Inheritance in American Culture: Possession of Land in Nineteenth-Century American Literature

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Contents

# Introduction

In this dissertation, I will explore the diverse aspects of inheritance and land ownership in nineteenth-century American culture. In the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and Lydia Maria Child, different forms of inheritance, especially those linked to property are depicted. The notion of inheritance is based on a temporal dimension, that is, the time difference between one generation and the next. To inherit what an owner has, such as title, money, or property means to receive what is left from the death of the previous owner. As transferring the ownership from one person to another is the main aspect of inheritance, possession is the focal point of this dissertation.

I will discuss the works of nineteenth-century American writers, who were writing when a national movement of expansion was conspicuous. The expansionism of this period, triggered by the Louisiana Purchase (1803), is called the "Westward Movement" which is a successive act of land possession. I want to propose a fresh insight into the notion of inheritance by analyzing the cultural texts of these nineteenth-century writers.

First, I would like to quote one paragraph from the second novel of Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of Seven Gables*. In the preface of the novel, the writer talks about what one generation transfers through the generations as an inheritance.

> Not to be deficient in this particular, the author has provided himself with a moral, —the truth, namely, that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief; mischief; and he would feel it a singular gratification if this romance might effectually convince mankind—or, indeed, any one man—of the folly of tumbling down an avalanche of ill-gotten gold, or real estate, on the heads of an unfortunate posterity… (2)

It seems that this passage is about the unpleasant succession that falls upon all future generations. "An avalanche" here is used as an extended metaphor of the negative aspects of inheritance. An avalanche is "a large mass of snow, mixed with earth and ice, loosened from a mountainside, and descending swiftly into the valley below". In the quote above, it is a large mass of gold or real estate that is descending into the future. Hawthorne calls the inherited "wrong-doing of one generation" "the folly," which means a very stupid thing to do, especially one that is likely to have bad results as inheritance occasionally brings about a fatal outcome in the posterity. Subsequently, I explore the serious consequences of inheritance not only in Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables* but also in other works from nineteenth-century American literature.

I began my analytical journey with interest in the above passage, and I have broadened my perspectives to consider American history, the nature of a house itself, moving house, real estate, Native American title,

and a number of other related areas. In the process of undertaking this research, I have come to understand that the concept of ownership in America is based upon suppositions and precedents that are unstable and ambiguous. This is because the background of American settlement was complicated and unjust: when the settlers arrived on the new continent, Native Americans were already the owners of the land. Although the phrase "the Discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus" is still common in Westernized historical discourse, the rhetoric of the historical event itself reveals a strong European bias. From the perspective of Native Americans, it was rather an invasion, or an intrusion by Westerners. To whom does America belong? This question might take on increasing weight in my investigations.

If it were to be the case that ambiguity and unstableness with regard to the process of possessing land in America existed and exists presently, American land might be considered a vast negative legacy. Thus, this dissertation explores the process of possessing land, and how bequeathing and succeeding property is represented in American literature.

I have narrowed this research to focus on nineteenth-century literature. There are two reasons for doing so: first, it is impossible to cover all generations, and second, while I have researched writers of the American Renaissance such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, I have placed particular emphasis on their critical views of American Expansionism. By researching nineteenth-century American

literature, I can thus explore the diverse aspects of the system of inheritance and land ownership.

My dissertation explores how inheritance is depicted in American literature and analyzes relevant historical and political documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Presidents' addresses, and certain letters. One of the examples of the documents is *Common Sense*. Thomas Paine, who encouraged people in the Colonies to become independent of Britain in this pamphlet, refers to the "monarchy" and "hereditary succession," which imply inheritance is evil.

In his letter to James Madison in 1789, Thomas Jefferson wrote: "the earth belongs in usufruct to the living". His view of land might have influenced the Declaration of Independence.

I want to begin by dividing the system of inheritance into occupancy, possession, bequeathing property, and succession. There are diverse forms of inheritance; from father to son—primogeniture—, from father to a member of a family except for sons, inheritance without a blood relationship, renunciation of heirs, and loss of property. In each chapter, I focus on each stage of inheritance.

Chapter 1 explores possession in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick: Or, the Whale* and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. One should possess property, such as land, before bequeathing a fortune to descendants and succeeding the ancestral estate. Thus, I will investigate the process of possession before researching inheritance.

Chapter 2 investigates the concept that occupancy conquers the law

in Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scribner: A Story of Wall Street". In this story, Bartleby forces a lawyer to leave his office by occupying the premise despite the lawyer owning the title to that space. However, Bartleby himself is also removed to the Tombs. Through this, in this chapter, I explore the meaning of occupancy in America and the setting of this work, Wall Street.

Chapter 3 outlines most of the general aspects of inheritance of a house passed from father to son, in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher". However, in this work, it is of special interest that the inherited house vanishes in the end. I explore the significance of losing property in the context of the society of the 1830s.

Chapter 4 examines the more complicated issues of inheritance in Lydia Maria Child's *The Romance of the Republic*. Switching babies leads to a convoluted inheritance process, and I focus particularly on one of the characters, King, who is involved in the switching of the babies, and examine how he acts as an agent in the subsequent restoration of property.

Chapter 5 looks at the renunciation of inheritance in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. The main character, Arthur Gordon Pym has high expectations of his wealthy grandfather, who is expected to bequeath his fortune to him. However, Pym's plan to board a whaling ship enrages his grandfather, resulting in Pym's resigning his right to inheritance. I consider the meaning of his renunciation, analyze the concepts of hegemony within the context of a

ship, and discuss the authorship of this work.

Chapter 6 explores the idea that primogeniture does not function and the hereditary property negatively affects the descendants in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*. This is also used to advance the argument that American land is usurped by the settlers from Native Americans unrightfully.

# Chapter 1

## Possession in Nineteenth-Century American Novels of the Sea: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and *Moby-Dick*

### 1. Nineteenth-Century Expansionism

Edgar Allan Poe published his only novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* in 1838 (I use *Pym* in Italics for the title of the story to distinguish the title from the character, Pym). It was 13 years later, in 1851 that Herman Melville published his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick* and there is a strong possibility that Melville read Poe's *Pym.* As Richard Kopley points out, "Many scholars agree that *Pym* influenced Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick"* (Kopley, Introduction, XXVIII). Both *Pym and Moby-Dick* take place on Nantucket whaling vessels and in both novels, the color white is charged with symbolic meaning.

My concern is not with the symbolic connotation of whiteness, but rather with the concept of possession that underlies both works. The nineteenth century was the age of expansion in American history, and territorial expansion was accomplished through the acquisition of land, that is, through the act of possession.

It is possible that we can see both *Pym,* published in 1838, and *Moby-Dick,* published in 1851, as cultural texts produced during the period when American continental expansion reached its zenith. Rapid expansion trebled the country's territory between the date of her foundation and the

mid-point of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the concept of possession might be expected to form during this formative age of land acquisition. Assuming that the political process of expansion affects writers and their literary texts, there is a possibility that we can thus gain an insight into the thoughts of individual writers on imperialism.

The expansionism of nineteenth-century America most commonly meant land acquisition from Mexico, England, Spain, Russia, and so on. However, we cannot ignore the expansion that also ranged over the ocean. As Van Zandt notes, "Alaska was purchased from Russia in accordance with a convention signed on March 30, 1867, and proclaimed on June 20, 1867, and was made a Territory by the act of August 24, 1912" (29). Subsequent to the Alaska Purchase, "the Republic of Hawaii was formally annexed to the United States by the voluntary action of its citizens, and a joint resolution of Congress approved on July 7, 1898. The transfer of sovereignty took place on August 12, 1898. The area was constituted a Territory by the act of April 30, 1900" (Van Zandt 33). During the nineteenth century, the expansion of America occurred on the American continent, but the desire to expand was also directed toward spaces across the seas such as Alaska and Hawaii.

In the same period, the whaling industry also reached its peak. In terms of the number of vessels, after steadily growing for fifty years, American whaling vessels reached their all-time peak with 199 ships in 1858[1]. The peak whaling period occurred at the time of the expansion of America, which targeted territories beyond the sea.

I want to examine how the concept of land ownership was formed in America and make a proposition that the writers of the day were affected by the American spirit of expansion of this period. Considering that expansion in the North American continent and the peak of whaling industry coincided during the same period, I argue that nineteenth-century American novels of the sea, especially those dealing with whaling, are capable of offering an insight into the critical attitudes of writers regarding their expanding nation.

## 2. The Definition of Possession

Before examining both *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and *Moby-Dick*, I plan to confirm the definition of land ownership and the process of acquiring it with the help of an essay written by the French political scientist, Alexis de Tocqueville. In 1835, Tocqueville published *Democracy in America*, which he wrote after his nine-month visit to America in 1831. Isaac Kramnick, an American historian, evaluates the influence of Tocqueville on politicians, journalists, and scholars in America:

> If the number of times an individual is cited by politicians, journalists, and scholars is a measure of their influence, Alexis de Tocqueville—not Jefferson, Madison, or Lincoln—is America's public philosopher. (ix)

As Kramnick states, many presidents and politicians cited Tocqueville in their speeches and even today, "Tocqueville is everywhere in the United States, pervading its public discourse" (ix). Tocqueville considered the prospering democratic system in America as a possible model for post-revolutionary France, while he also explored the possible dangers of democracy. To Tocqueville, America is "the only continent in which we have been able to watch the natural and peaceful development of a society and define the influence exerted by the origins upon the future of the states" (38).

According to this French political thinker, the power that "ruled over the people" was "landed property" (12), which is explained as follows:

> I turn my thought back for a moment to the France of seven hundred years ago [about nine hundred years ago from now] which I discover was split between a small number of families who owned the land and ruled over the people living there; the right of governing at that time moved down the generations along with the family inheritance; men had only one method of acting against each other, and that was landed property. (12)

Tocqueville further explained how European aristocracy "takes root in the land, attaches itself to the soil from which it derives its power; it is not established by privileges alone, it is not founded on birth but upon the

ownership of property handed down through the generations" (40). In Europe, land was the foundation of aristocratic strength, having been inherited over generations.

In America, as the land "was inhabited by countless native tribes, it is justifiable to assert that, at the time of its discovery, it formed only a desert. The Indians took up residence there but did not possess it" (Tocqueville 36). Tocqueville who came to the New World from Europe believed there to be a fundamental difference in the idea of land ownership between the two regions on both sides of the Atlantic.

In European countries, land is a fundamental element forming the foundation of an aristocratic power structure. On the other hand, according to European settlers in America, nobody possessed American land. To the eyes of Tocqueville, America was a no man's land when European settlers landed on the shores of the New World. Tocqueville used the expression, "the empty cradle of a great nation" to describe North American land but, in reality, it was not empty (36). Although most of the land was a desert and empty, the rich soil of North America had been occupied by Native Americans when Europeans entered the unsettled space.

The process of the possession of the land, according to Tocqueville, was that "it is through agriculture that man takes ownership over the soil and the first inhabitants of North America lived off the products of hunting" (36). Fishing and hunting were important activities for Native Americans who relied heavily on the meat of wild animals and fowls and fish for their food. According to Tocqueville, land ownership proceeds

from agricultural activities, which are practiced by cultivating the land. People who attain the land, clear it, and farm it for food are agriculturalists. This is a process for which "nothing short of the persistent and committed efforts of the owner himself was needed" (Tocqueville 40). This is why the Homestead Act of 1862 is considered one of the most progressive social movements of the late nineteenth century[2]. As Walter Benn Michaels remarks: "At the heart of the homestead movement was the conviction that the land should belong to those who worked it" (94).

I will discuss the Native Americans' concept of possession by comparing it to the definition of land ownership in America. Native Americans never developed a system or culture of private land ownership like the European settlers, and for Native Americans, land is not owned by individuals. Even Native American chiefs cannot buy and sell land as it belongs to the whole community. According to Claudio J. Katz:

> Hunting and gathering over extensive territory dictated a casual attitude toward ownership. Native American families in southern New England, for example, enjoyed exclusive access to their planting fields and the land on which their wigwams[3] stood. (3)

William Cronon also suggests that "neither of these were permanent possessions. Wigwams were moved every few months, and planting fields were abandoned every few years" (62). Mother Earth was considered a

spirit and formed part of the bounty given to all by the Great Spirit. Nobody possessed America; it belongs to no group or no individuals.

Here, one can see the contradiction of the process of land acquisition in America. There were indigenous North Americans when the settlers arrived, but this does not mean that Native Americans had taken possession of the land. According to *the Oxford English Dictionary [OED]*, the verb "possess" has eleven entries, and the first entry describes it as "to own, to have or gain ownership of; to have (wealth or material objects) as one's own" possession. The noun "possession" is "the action or fact of holding something (material or immaterial) as one's own or in one's control; the state or condition of being so held". The secondary meaning is defined as a legal term: "Law. Visible power or control over something (defined by the intention to use or to hold it against others) as distinct from lawful ownership; spec. exclusive control of land". That is, "possession" is sometimes used as a legal term to claim the right to have an ownership "against others".

## 3. Diverse Possession on the Islands in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*

*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* is set mainly at sea. At the beginning of the novel, Pym describes his property and its worth: "I owned a sailboat called *the Ariel*, and worth about seventy-five dollars" (7). Aboard this sailboat, Pym and Augustus go out into the sea.

Shipwrecked by stormy weather, but fortunately rescued by a large whaling ship, *the Penguin*, Pym loses his vessel, his seventy-five dollar property, at the beginning of the novel. Her end is depicted as follows:

> *The Ariel* was slightly put together, and in going down her frame naturally went to pieces; the deck of the cuddy, as might be expected, was lifted, by the force of the water rushing in, entirely from the main timbers, and floated (with other fragments, no doubt) to the surface—Augustus was buoyed up with it, and thus escaped a terrible death. (15)

Eventually, a fragment of his lost boat saved both Pym and Augustus.

The novel begins with the loss of property and, before the wreck of *the Ariel*, Pym shows an interest in property in Chapter 1:

> My maternal grandfather was an attorney in good practice. He was fortunate in everything and had speculated very successfully in stocks of the Edgarton New-Bank, as it was formerly called. By these and other means he had managed to lay by a tolerable sum of money. He was more attached to myself, I believe, than to any other person in the world, and I expected to inherit the most of his property at his death. (7)

Although Pym expects to inherit the property as an heir, his desire to go to

sea is not dampened after the shipwreck of his boat:

> It might be supposed that a catastrophe such as I have just related would have effectually cooled my incipient passion for the sea. On the contrary, I never experienced a more ardent longing for the wild adventures incident to the life of a navigator than within a week after our miraculous deliverance. (18)

Pym has an urge to go to sea, and at just the right moment, Augustus's father, Barnard is appointed commander of a whaling vessel, *the Grampus*, and Augustus plans to go with him (19). Pym intends to accompany Augustus to fulfill his desire to return to the sea. However, his grandfather becomes angry when he hears about Pym's plan to board a whaling ship.

> …my grandfather, from whom I expected much, vowed to cut me off with a shilling if I should ever broach the subject to him again. These difficulties, however, so far from abating my desire, only added fuel to the flame. (19)

Boarding a whaling ship means not only the abandonment of family but also leaving Nantucket. According to the definition of the possession of land in America, it was necessary for Pym to clear, settle, cultivate, and remain in a certain area of land to possess it. However, he intends to discard the land to travel far from the mainland. He loses the opportunity

to cultivate the land, which means that he has no eligibility to acquire land ownership.

His grandfather's opposition only stirs Pym's ambition more. Pym renounces his inheritance by going on a whaling voyage with his friend, Augustus. He does not insist on his rights as his grandfather's heir, as he does not have a strong attachment to his inheritance. His renunciation of the rights to his inheritance and his subsequent departure meant an escape from his family. Being a son in his family is associated with the possession of property.

In the latter half of the novel, the plot develops into mutiny, butchery, famine, and then, cannibalism. Only Pym and Dirk Peters, who is "a half-breed Indian" (3) on *the Grampus*, survive these events and are rescued by a British schooner, "*the Jane Guy*, of Liverpool, Captain Guy, bound on a sealing and trading voyage to the South Seas and Pacific" (133). As the captain intends to make his first stop at Kerguelen's Land, Pym accompanies him by way of some islands in the Antarctic Ocean.

On the islands Pym visits, he encounters various islanders and perceives how the possession of land has brought imperial expansion to the islands. This is the case with the islands of Tristan da Cunha as depicted in the novel[4]. The islands consist "of three circular islands ... discovered by the Portuguese, and ... visited afterward by the Dutch in 1643, and by the French in 1767" (144). "Owing to the ease with which these various animals were here formerly taken, the group [the islands] has been much visited since its discovery. The Dutch and French frequented it at a very

early period" (145). In 1790, Captain Patten's party tried to remain for some months on the islands:

> In 1790, Captain Patten, of the ship Industry, of Philadelphia, made Tristan d'Acunha, where he remained seven months (from August 1790 to April 1791) for the purpose of collecting sealskins. In this time he gathered no less than five thousand six hundred and says that he would have had no difficulty in loading a large ship with oil in three weeks. (145)

Subsequent to Captain Patten's stay:

> Captain Colquhoun, of the American brig *Betsey*, touched at the largest of the islands for the purpose of refreshment. He planted onions, potatoes, cabbages, and a great many other vegetables, an abundance of all which are now to be met with. (145-46)

Although Captain Colquhoun cleared and cultivated the islands, the sailors did not stay long in one place. A small group of Americans later settled on the islands and remained there for some years:

> In 1811, a Captain Heywood, in *the Nereus*, visited Tristan. He found there three Americans, who were residing upon the island to prepare sealskins and oil. One of these men was named Jonathan Lambert,

> and he called himself the sovereign of the country. He had cleared and cultivated about sixty acres of land, and turned his attention to raising the coffee plant and sugar cane, with which he had been furnished by the American Minister at Rio Janeiro. (146)

Here, we can see the typical process of possession in America that Tocqueville indicated in his book; to clear and cultivate. However, this is not the only process of possession we can recognize at work on Tristan da Cunha: "This settlement…was finally abandoned, and in 1817 the islands were taken possession of by the British government, who sent a detachment for that purpose from the Cape of Good Hope" (146). In this case, the British Government was temporarily deprived of the possession of the islands. They "did not retain them long; but, upon the evacuation of the country as a British possession, two or three English families took up their residence there independently of the government" (146). Thus, at that time, although the British Government evacuated Tristan da Cunha, a small number of English families still resided on the islands independently. Although the British Government's legal possession of the islands was not recognized at the time, the English families continued their occupancy. As a result, the community increased.

In 1824, Captain Jeffrey from London arrived at the islands and met an Englishman, named Glass:

> He [Glass] claimed to be supreme governor of the islands, and had

> under his control twenty-one men and three women….The population occupied themselves chiefly in collecting sealskins and sea elephant oil, with which they traded to the Cape of Good Hope, Glass owning a small schooner. At the period of our arrival the governor was still a resident, but his little community had multiplied, there being fifty-six persons upon Tristan, besides a smaller settlement of seven on Nightingale Island. (146)

It seems that Glass continued the occupancy of the island. When Pym and the others arrive on the island, the population of this community had increased by nearly two-fold. The circumstances that developed on Tristan da Cunha agreed with the diverse processes of land acquisition in America. In *Pym,* one can see various uses of land on the islands: as residences, land for cultivation, and space of occupation.

The example of Glass, who created a community and settled land to increase its population, recalls the spiritual motivation labeled "manifest destiny". In 1845, a journalist named John O'Sullivan, who coined the term "manifest destiny" to promote expansionism in America, wrote two articles: "Annexation" in the *Democratic Review*, and "The True Title" in the *New York Morning News*. In "Annexation," he wrote:

> Why, were other reasoning wanting, in favor of now elevating this question of the reception of Texas into the Union, out of the lower region of our past party dissension, up to its proper level of a high and

> broad nationality, it surely is to be found, found abundantly, in the manner in which other nations have undertaken to intrude themselves into it, between us and the proper parties to the case, in a spirit of hostile interference against us, for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions. (O'Sullivan) [5]

O'Sullivan demonstrated that the population was increasing year after year, spreading over the continent.

America in the 1830s, in which Poe had written *Pym*, saw many Native American Wars, the Native American Removal Act in 1830, the Black Hawk War in 1832, and the First and Second Seminole Wars. It was in 1832 that President Monroe delivered his speech, later called The Monroe Doctrine. Poe witnessed political expansionism in this socially and politically turbulent America.

## 4. The Possession of Whales in *Moby-Dick*

Ishmael, the narrator of *Moby-Dick*, is an orphan, who never expects an inheritance. *Moby-Dick* is a novel about whaling, and the possession of whales is an important issue for the captains, owners, and investors of the whaling vessels.

Herman Melville wrote about “possession” in Chapter 87 “The Grand Armada,” Chapter 89 “Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish,” and Chapter 90 “Heads or Tails.” The subjects that are discussed in these chapters are mainly the system and the law of possessing whales. However, these chapters are also about the land dispute between different countries. For example, in Chapter 87, it is explained that:

> The waif is a pennoned pole, two or three of which are carried by every boat; and which, when additional game is at hand, are inserted upright into the floating body of a dead whale, both to mark its place on the sea, and also as token of prior possession, should the boats of any other ship draw near. (305)

“The waif” is a kind of flag with a pole that signifies the ownership of a whale’s carcass. By planting a flag, they claimed their possession of the whale. There are two whaling laws concerning the possession of whales: “I. A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it. II. A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it” (308). A Fast-Fish is defined as:

> Alive or dead a fish is technically fast, when it is connected with an occupied ship or boat, by any medium at all controllable by the occupant or occupants,—a mast, an oar, a nine-inch cable, a telegraph wire, or a strand of cobweb, it is all the same. Likewise a fish is technically fast when it bears a waif or any other recognized symbol of

> possession; so long as the party wailing it plainly evince their ability at any time to take it alongside, as well as their intention so to do. (308)

Melville writes, "These two laws touching Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish…will on reflection, be found the fundamentals of all human jurisprudence" (309).

Arimichi Makino argues that Melville exemplifies how the law can "be pretty generally applicable" in this chapter (my trans.; 63). According to Ishmael, a whale is referred to as a "loose-fish," when the body has become completely detached from the whaling vessel and is no longer "fast," or fastened to any property (harpoons, rope, and the like). In contrast, the term "fast-fish" refers to a whale that remains "fast" fixed firmly as the property of those who have fastened it. Furthermore, in Chapter 90, ownership of a "fast-fish" is, according to British law, determined as follows: "Of all whales captured by anybody on the coast of that land, the King, as Honorary Grand Harpooner, must have the head, and the Queen be respectfully presented with the tail" (310). This legal interpretation of whale ownership highlights, to borrow Makino's words, an "ineffective and unethical practice" (my trans.; 63). Makino expands on Melville's ownership discussion as follows:

> Even in the United States, with its noble philosophies such as the Declaration of Independence that purport to assert the freedom and equality of people, once issues of ownership become involved,

> involving ownership of 'moveable property' such as slaves as well as trafficking in land titles after massacres of Native Americans and wage slavery, and these matters are justified under legal interpretations of those in power, the reality becomes one of 'lawlessness'. (my trans.; 64)

The ambiguity of the law concerning the ownership of whales forms an overlap with the ambiguity of laws surrounding the possession of land in America. Melville's contemplation of the laws of possession touches on the concept of possession itself:

> Possession is half of the law: that is, regardless of how the thing came into possession? But, often possession is the whole of the law. What are the sinews and souls of Russian serfs and Republican slaves but Fast-Fish, whereof possession is the whole of the law? (309)

Melville argues that the essence of the law is possession. "Regardless of how the thing came into possession," means that not all the individuals who have killed a whale can claim the right of possessing it. There is no direct relation between the harpooner and the possessor and the phrase "whereof possession is the whole of the law" means that a possessor determines the law of possession. "Russian serfs" and "Republican slaves" did not have any choice or power to choose their possessor[6]. It is noteworthy that Ireland (for England), and Texas (for the United States)

are included in the Fast-Fish list. It is clear that Melville when he was writing this part was referring to the Texas Annexation in 1845.

Moreover, Melville claims that the doctrine of Loose-Fish was more versatile and applicable than that of the Fast-Fish:

> What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal master and mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose-Fish. (310)

Melville suggests here that, until 1492, America could be considered as a Loose-Fish. The Native Americans hunting in the forests and meadows inhabited the vast space on the American Continent but never claimed any portion of the land as their own.

Until 1492, the land of the American Continent was neither a Fast-Fish nor a Loose-Fish but was rather, "just a fish." It was "discovered" by pilgrims and settlers, who later came to regard the whole continent as a Loose-Fish. In the paragraph previously quoted, Melville covers about 350 years between 1492 and 1851. Although America was a Loose-Fish in 1492, he indicates the possibility that Mexico will become a Loose-Fish for the United States in the last sentence. Here, the dynamic conversion from the subject to the object can be seen in this part of *Moby-Dick*. Melville uses both names, America and the United States, to distinguish the new

continent for European settlers from the independent nation, the United States.

In 1492, "America" was just a signifier that suggested a continent that European people discovered across the Atlantic Ocean. It was a desirable New World for European settlers. Melville wrote that "Columbus struck the Spanish standard [flag] by way of waifing it for his royal master and mistress" (*Moby-Dick* 310). "Waifing," in other words, "striking a flag," asserts the right of prior possession. Therefore, Melville indicates the discovery of the New World by Columbus using a metaphorical expression of the waifing of a whale: America in 1492 was the whale and, also, a Loose-Fish.

However, as Melville suggests, "what at last will Mexico be to the United States?" In 1851, or the days in which Melville was working on his novel, the United States was no longer a Loose-Fish, but Mexico was (310). His reference here indicates the Mexican-American War (1846-1848)[7]. Melville was certainly conscious of the social and political background of his day; political interests were pursuing the progressive expansion of territory promoted under the slogan of "Manifest Destiny" while he was writing *Moby-Dick.*

In Chapter 14, "Nantucket," Melville begins to write "the wondrous traditional story of how this island [Nantucket] was settled by the red-men [Native Americans]" (65). However, he makes mention of Mexico in the same chapter:

> Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun; two thirds of this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's. For the sea is his; he owns it, as Emperors own empires; other seamen having but a right of way through it. (65)

He not only referred to the Mexican-American War by implication, but also the imperialistic ambitions of America at the midpoint of the nineteenth century. In Melville's description, which clearly states that the people of Nantucketers own the sea, there seems to be a touch of cynicism about excessive American expansionism.

America, which used to be an object of desire for European settlers (as with Loose-Fish), regarded Mexico as a Loose-Fish which "anybody who can soonest catch it" could claim as their own (308). The signifier, America, is also transfigured into the substantial country signified in the plural forms, "the United States."

### 5. The Ambiguity of Possession and American Expansionism

Rereading, the two novels of the sea, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and *Moby-Dick,* in the context of "possession," one can detect the essence of possession that Tocqueville defined in his book, *Democracy in America*. The vicissitudes of the islanders, who occupy the unexplored island, is depicted closely in *Pym* and the ambiguous

undecidability of possession in *Moby-Dick*. As both novels are set in whaling vessels on the ocean, the expansionism, which was rapidly growing in the United States, is hidden in the background and context of the stories.

After Pym renounces his rights to inheritance, he comes to know various systems of land possession. I want to mention a further matter concerning Pym; he clears the ground himself and builds structures on the island where he alighted. The crew of *the Jane Guy*, which rescues Pym and Dirk Peters, lands on an island where so-called "savages" live and begin trading with them:

> A bargain was accordingly struck, perfectly satisfactory to both parties, by which it was arranged that, after making the necessary preparations, such as laying off the proper grounds, erecting a portion of the buildings, and doing some other work in which the whole of our crew would be required, the schooner should proceed on her route, leaving three of her men on the island to superintend the fulfillment of the project, and instruct the natives in drying the *biche de mer*[8]. (177)

The buildings here are not houses for living in, but stores to preserve dried goods for trade. It seems that the natives reluctantly exchange the grounds of the island, which they possess, for a bargain. While the bargain is "perfectly satisfactory to both parties," after subsequent events, it turns

out to be the opposite. The crew of the *Jane Guy*, including Pym, intends to clear the ground and build houses:

> …we proceeded immediately to land everything necessary for preparing the buildings and clearing the ground. A large flat space near the eastern shore of the bay was selected, where there was plenty both of wood and water and within a convenient distance of the principal reefs on which the *biche de mer* was to be procured. We now all set to work in good earnest…[we] had felled a sufficient number of trees for our purpose, getting them quickly in order for the framework of the houses… (179)

Pym, who longs for adventure, leaves his hometown and refuses to settle down in Nantucket; he refuses the task of the settlers such as clearing and cultivating the land. However, once he lands on the island, he cuts trees to build the houses after all. This episode symbolizes a conversion of Pym from adventurer to settler.

After building the houses on the island, the crews of the *Jane Guy*, including Pym and Augustus, are buried alive by the natives, who have intentionally generated a landslide. Pym criticizes the natives, who seem to him "to be the most wicked, hypocritical, vindictive, bloodthirsty, and altogether fiendish race of men upon the face of the globe" (210). There is the possibility that the crew have done something to earn the natives' enmity. Cutting trees and building the houses on their island might have

induced the natives to execute their "vindictive" act[9]. It seems that the natives bring on this landslide in retaliation for Pym's seizure of their land. Here, one can see that the position of the natives as assailants and the crew as victims are reversed. On the island of the novel, it is difficult to distinguish between assailant and victim, ally and enemy, and invader and trading partner. In Poe's story, the boundary between the subject and object, and the haves and the have-nots are indefinable in the chaotic space of the island.

In *Moby-Dick*, the object/Loose-Fish/America transforms into the subject/harpooner/the United States. Writing critically about the possession of the whale, Melville talks about the disputes over territories between countries in his novel. I assume that independence from Great Britain has brought about this transformation. In the Declaration of Independence, there is an enumeration of usurpations that America submitted as proof of the tyranny of Great Britain. One among them is a denunciation of laws about obstructions to migration and land appropriation:

> He [the King] has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.[10]

The growth in population was a good reason for acquiring land under the

British colonial rule of America. It seems that the metamorphosis of Loose-Fish/the object, into the harpooner/the subject, was the result of freedom from the oppression imposed by Great Britain. Melville represents this transformation by describing his country as follows; "What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish" and "What at last will Mexico be to the United States?" (310). After independence from Great Britain, America changed into the United States as a nation, and these states were united to build an imagined community.

In *Common Sense*, which greatly influenced the process of independence, Thomas Paine criticizes the evils of monarchy and hereditary succession harshly:

> To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of right, is an insult and an imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others forever, and though himself might deserve some decent degree of honors of his cotemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them (sic). (12)

In the root of Paine's accusation, lies the idea of equality. Paine expressed this new notion saying that "MANKIND being originally equals in the order of creation, the equality could only be destroyed by some subsequent

circumstance" (Paine 8). This is the fundamental principle of the United States of America and the basis on which the Declaration of Independence stands. Monarchy and hereditary succession are a pestilence to thwart the realization of original equality.

Pym rejects inheritance, specifically, hereditary succession; he clears the land and builds houses on the island where he happened to land. Pym's performance overlaps what the people of America accomplished with independence, and is a new path of territorial expansion. The United States of America, no longer a Loose-Fish, went through the Revolutionary War by refusing the monarchy, severing its succession from the paternal power of Great Britain, and then chasing Loose-Fish in the same way as a whaling ship. Melville looked at this transformation of America with critical eyes.

Taken together, both Poe and Melville reflect the undecidability of possession and the obscure definition of possession in their sea novels. The barbarous islands of *Pym* and the episode about the possession of whales in *Moby-Dick* symbolically indicate the cultural and psychological dynamics of revolution of America, which accomplished independence from Great Britain, and territorial acquisition carried out as the expansionism. Moreover, both of them—founding principles and expansionism—should not be considered only in the past tense; they are part of the national ethos of the United States of America as Poe and Melville had penetrated and had engraved in their manuscripts.

## Chapter 2

## The Right of Perpetual Occupancy:

## Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scribner: A Story of Wall Street"

### 1. Why is "Bartleby" "A Story of Wall Street"?

Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (hereinafter Bartleby) is subtitled, A Story of Wall Street. In the introduction to her 1981 essay, *Bartleby in Manhattan*, Elizabeth Hardwick writes that "…during this reading I thought to look again at Melville's story, 'Bartleby, the Scrivener,' because it carried the subtitle: 'A Story of Wall Street'" (218). Although this subtitle has piqued the interest of many readers, the story was titled simply "Bartleby" at the time of its publication as a piece in *The Piazza Tales*, with no indication of the title character's role as "the Scrivener" or any connection to Wall Street. Only after the work was republished in *Putman's Monthly Magazine* by the editorial staff at Northwestern Newberry did the work assume the title by which it is known today, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street".

In this chapter, I will examine and discuss the possible reasons Melville added the subtitle "A Story of Wall Street" to his work "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and why he chose Wall Street as the story's setting.

### 2. Bartleby at the Law Office

As its subtitle suggests, the main setting for this story is a law office located on Wall Street in Manhattan, New York City, run by the story's narrator, the Lawyer. When Bartleby arrives at the law office to work as a scrivener, the Lawyer cordons off a space for Bartleby to enclose the space for his new employee. He says, "I procured a high green folding screen, which might entirely isolate Bartleby from my sight, though not remove him from my voice. And thus, in a manner, privacy and society were conjoined" (648). The Lawyer believes that he will be able to use this folding screen to create a convenient space for Bartleby, where Bartleby can remain out of sight, but still be able to hear commands and inquiries from his boss. However, this space quickly becomes a kind of hideaway for Bartleby—his hermitage—and rather than ensuring the Lawyer's privacy, the screen instead grants seclusion to Bartleby (650): "Imagine, my surprise, nay, my consternation, when, without moving from his privacy, Bartleby in a singularly mild, firm voice, replied, 'I would prefer not to'" (649). The emergence of this attitude of seclusion transforms an ordinary "screen" (650) into "*his* screen" (655) and "a small side-window" (648) in front of his desk into "*his* window" (662).

It is not only material "things" that become components of Bartleby's realm. Bartleby spends increasingly prolonged periods indulging in daydreaming and staring at the wall while spending less and less time performing his duties. Over time, this indulgence is normalized as just another of his peculiar idiosyncrasies, which the Lawyer refers to as "his dead-wall revery" (662).

Allowing that Bartleby's idiosyncrasies extend beyond his immediate space, the Lawyer himself gradually begins to recognize numerous other aspects as "his" (Bartleby's):

> *His* steadiness, *his* freedom from all dissipation, *his* incessant industry (except when he chose to throw himself into a standing revery behind his screen), *his* great stillness, *his* unalterableness of demeanor under all circumstances, made him a valuable acquisition. (655 italics Takase)

In the first half of the story, after Bartleby begins to repeat the line, "I would prefer not to"; the Lawyer repeats the word "his" six times in his monologue when ascribing the characteristic of possession to Bartleby's behavior.

When the Lawyer realizes that Bartleby had taken up residence in his office, he states "it is evident enough that Bartleby has been making his home here, keeping bachelor's hall all by himself" (657). The Lawyer also remarks that Bartleby's poverty and solitude are immense, expressing sympathy for Bartleby's perceived lack of wealth and loneliness. The lawyer subsequently mentions several times that Bartleby uses the office as a house and he expresses precautious feelings that Bartleby might take over the office.

As Bartleby ceases to perform any of his duties, the Lawyer, over the course of numerous exchanges, orders him to leave, to which Bartleby

does not respond. The Lawyer confronts Bartleby, who appears to have no intention to leave the premises, with a flurry of indignant inquiries:

> "What earthly right have you to stay here? Do you pay any rent? Do you pay my taxes? Or is this property yours?" He answered nothing. "Are you ready to go on and write now? Are your eyes recovered? Could you copy a small paper for me this morning? or help examine a few lines? or step round to the post-office? In a word, will you do anything at all, to give a coloring to your refusal to depart the premises?" He silently retired into his hermitage. (666-67)

After all, it is the Lawyer who pays the rent and taxes for the office, and it is obvious that Bartleby has no stake in the office or its fixtures. Indeed, the Lawyer is an expert in the business of being "a conveyancer and title hunter, and drawer up of recondite documents of all sorts" (641). The Lawyer chooses to move out of the office himself and gives up making any further attempts to move Bartleby out. Despite his particular expertise, the Lawyer ends up surrendering his office to Bartleby. Why does a person with his professional knowledge of title deeds leave his property? The lawyer explains as follows:

> And as the idea came upon me of his possibly turning out a long-lived man, and keep occupying my chambers, and denying my authority; and perplexing my visitors; and scandalizing my professional

> reputation; and in the end perhaps outlive me and claim possession of my office by right of his perpetual occupancy. (669)

The main concept expressed here by the Lawyer is that Bartleby will endure his occupancy long enough through adverse possession to usurp the Lawyer's rights to the office. The idea that Bartleby will obtain the "right of perpetual occupancy" makes the Lawyer, who has a right to be there, decide to give up his office. The one with the rights leaves, while the other, without rights, remains.

It might be said that the Lawyer's reaction to the illegal occupancy by his employee seems to be exaggerated to the point of absurdity. Here I would like to interpret this story in the wider context of American history to seek the possibility that this strange event of occupancy might evoke latent concerns among the American populace regarding the ownership of real estate.

In Chapter 1, I discussed the Homestead Act of 1862, which provides ownership of land to the people who have settled on the land for a specified period of time. Twelve years before the Homestead Act, the Donation Land Claim Act, as a forerunner of the Homestead Act, was enacted in late 1850 by the United States Congress. This law aimed to promote homestead settlements and develop land patents for those who had lived on the land and cultivated it for four years.

The Lawyer in "Bartleby", published in 1853, must have had knowledge of this new law that allowed those without land ownership to

obtain the right to own it. It is easy to imagine that the Lawyer became anxious about the potential insecurity and uncertainty regarding land ownership in the United States. He became conscious of the extent to which he could claim his property rights.

In the political/economic climate of the 1850s, property rights were not secured. The Lawyer's rights to his office were not absolute and could be challenged by and lost to someone like Bartleby, who would not respond to the repeated orders to vacate. "Occupation" and "residence" bring property ownership to the people who attempt to become claimants by living on and cultivating the land. In the years of the Donation Land Claim Act, which developed into the Homestead Act of 1862, the Lawyer could become a victim whose rights were usurped by Bartleby, a silent claimant.

### 3. The Lawyer's Relocation

The discussion shall now focus on the events that take place between Bartleby's arrival at the law office and the Lawyer's decision to move out. The Lawyer does not make any attempt to forcibly remove Bartleby from his office or to apply for a court order to remove him.

The Lawyer is not aggressive enough to resort to legal action. He recounts that people know him to be an "eminently *safe* man" whose life, "from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best" (641). Even when encountering a man like Bartleby, who is prepared to disobey the Lawyer's directions, it would

be unlikely that the Lawyer would readily resort to an adversarial, litigious approach.

While the Lawyer feels anger and is frustrated by Bartleby's repeated refusals, at the same time, the Lawyer finds himself falling under the mysterious influence of Bartleby. This psychological development in the Lawyer's mind is analyzed by himself as follows: "there was something about Bartleby that not only strangely disarmed me but in a wonderful manner touched and disconcerted me. I began to reason with him" (650). The Lawyer who understands that Bartleby would not respond to any of his commands, expresses his own interpretation of Bartleby's psychological state as follows:

> It is not seldom the case that, when a man is browbeaten in some unprecedented and violently unreasonable way, he begins to stagger in his own plainest faith. He begins, as it were, vaguely to surmise that, wonderful as it may be, all the justice and all the reason is on the other side. (651)

The Lawyer becomes anxious about Bartleby's influence upon his own beliefs, and he becomes concerned about his right to use the office. Even though the Lawyer has, to his own eyes, properly attained this right, instead of defending it when challenged by Bartleby, he chooses to relocate.

One Sunday morning, the Lawyer encounters Bartleby in a way he has never experienced. Stopping by his office, he is prevented from

entering his own property by Bartleby. The Lawyer considers himself to be "unmanned" when he is refused to enter his "own" office (656):

> Indeed, it was his wonderful mildness chiefly, which not only *disarmed* me, but *unmanned* me, as it were. For I consider that one, for the time, is a sort of *unmanned* when he tranquilly permits his hired clerk to dictate to him, and order him away from his own premises. (656-57 italics Takase)

The thwarted Lawyer continues to allow Bartleby to come and go peacefully in the office as he pleases. Meanwhile, Bartleby never uses violence against anyone attempting to remove him, and the interior of the law office is a non-violent space.

Bartleby succeeds in essentially forcing the one with rights out, without exercising any physical power. A nonviolent exchange of space is carried out in favor of the one lacking in power. In this case, the right of occupancy is charged with the potential to claim another right when someone attempts to exercise the original right. The Lawyer who attempts to use the right is "disarmed" and "disconcerted" by Bartleby's mantra of "I would prefer not to" (650). By staying in the same place, Bartleby renders the Lawyer's rights ineffective. The Lawyer's decision to relocate himself is not an inversion of power, but an invalidation of his own rights. The Lawyer, who could potentially exercise his rights, ultimately renders them ineffective through his own actions.

After the death of Bartleby, the Lawyer tries to write a memo about the strange man named Bartleby, but the note ends up mentioning nothing about Bartleby and only includes the lawyer's current circumstances:

> The good old office, now extinct in the State of New York, of a Master in Chancery, had been conferred upon me. It was not a very arduous office, but very pleasantly remunerative...that I consider the sudden and violent abrogation of the office of Master in Chancery, by the new Constitution, as a —premature act; inasmuch as I had counted upon a life-lease of the profits, whereas I only received those of a few short years. (642)

The Lawyer is relieved of his position as a Master in Chancery due to the dissolution of the New York Court of Chancery. The Lawyer's rights and powers as a property owner and as a member of the judiciary were nullified, and the Lawyer's occupational stability was also ultimately undermined.

## 4. Bartleby of Wall Street

The setting of the story, Wall Street, located at the tip of Manhattan Island, is universally well known as the home of the New York Stock Exchange, one of the world's premier financial hubs. "Walls" or "barriers" play a key role in *Bartleby*. Leo Marx states:

> …Bartleby has come to regard the walls as permanent, immovable parts of the structure of things, comparable to man's inability to surmount the limitations of his sense perceptions, or comparable to death itself. He has forgotten to take account of the fact that these particular walls, which surround the office, are after all, *man-made.* They are products of society, but he has imputed eternality to them. ("Melville's Parable of the Walls," 618-19, italic Takase)

As Marx explains, Wall Street used to refer to a "man-made" wall. In the 17th century, the settlers of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam built walls as a boundary that divided the inside and outside of their territory. The New Amsterdam settlement built the walls to protect themselves against indigenous Americans and the British. The walls on Wall Street served as a boundary line to repel invading forces and to maintain the safety and security of the territory within.

Reverting the topic from boundary to ownership, Manhattan Island where the Wall Street is located was said to have been purchased from Native Americans by Dutch settlers in 1626 for an amount equivalent to approximately 24 dollars. Melville had a clear interest in the concept of land ownership in the context of the founding of the United States, which originally belonged to Native Americans. According to Yukiko Ohshima:

> If you look at his biographical details, in 1837, when Melville was still a young man, who had not yet become a sailor, much less a writer, he

> traveled with companions to visit the lands inhabited by the Native American Sac tribe. (my trans., 12-13)

"*Pequod*," the name of the whaling ship boarded by Ishmael, the narrator in *Moby-Dick*, is the name of a Native American tribe that was decimated by European settlers. Additionally, at the beginning of *Moby-Dick*, Manhattan, the location of Wall Street, is described as an island previously owned by the Native American Manhattan tribe (Oshima 25).

Regarding the opening sections of *Moby-Dick*, Takayuki Tatsumi has observed that, "Many people have the impression that this story begins in a port town in a rural area of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." However, "when one begins to read the actual story, he reaches the famous line, 'Call me Ishmael' in the novel's second paragraph, and realizes that he had it all wrong" (my trans., 53). For Ishmael going on board a whaling ship, it would have been necessary at the time to have begun his journey "from New York City, where Melville himself was born and raised" (my trans., Tatsumi 55). Indeed, in the second paragraph of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael writes the following:

> There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs—commerce surrounds it with her surf. Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme downtown is the battery, where that noble mole is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of

land. Look at the crowds of water-gazers there. (18)

The existence of Native Americans cannot be ignored in any discussion of land ownership in the early period of the United States. Torao Tomita offers this notion on what American settlers believed when they claimed the rights of uncultivated land:

> First, land belongs to those who discover it. Second, the rights to a plot of land belong to the one who occupies it and then cultivates and improves it. Accordingly, the settlers asserted that land that was not occupied or settled should be forfeited and surrendered to those who cultivated it. (my trans., 53)

Furthermore, in the case of purchasing land by paying money, they were traded at very low prices. For Manhattan Island, the buying price was so low that the whole island was plundered from indigenous peoples. No matter how the laws of ownership and property rights are interpreted, such possession was ultimately founded upon a fiction introduced by the white settlers.

As I have already argued in Chapter 1 of my dissertation, in both chapters, "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish" and the following "Heads or Tails," in which Ishmael describes the ownership of whales, is discussed[11]. In Melville's works, we find conspicuous characters and the names of Native Americans—such as Tashtego, a crew member of the whaling ship, *Pequod*

in *Moby-Dick,* and Claggart in "Billy Budd," whose chin resembles that of Chief Tecumseh of the Shawnee Native American tribe. In "Bartleby," there are no characters or imagery evocative of Native Americans. As the events told in "Bartleby" take place almost entirely within the confines of the Lawyer's office, there seem to be no opportunities for a Native American character to enter the office/the narrative.

While the characters in the story, including Bartleby himself, are not Native Americans, the typical fate of the Native American—that of leaving one's place—is performed by Bartleby and the Lawyer. Both of them are forced, in different ways, to vacate their places.

Unlike on the sea, where no one can claim the right of possession of space, on land, property rights belong to a specific person. The Lawyer has the legal right to his Wall Street office, for which he pays rent. In the course of the story, the Lawyer is ejected from his office because another person who does not have property rights refuses to leave.

Can it be said that Bartleby, who makes the Lawyer vacate his office can be taken allegorically as the settlers who forced out Native Americans? No, simply because Bartleby himself is also forced to leave the office where he remains day and night. He is eventually ejected from the room by the landlord and becomes an unresisting captive standing beyond the wall of the Tombs: "the writer [the landlord] had sent to the police, and had Bartleby removed to the Tombs as a vagrant" (34).

Could the Lawyer, another person forced to leave his place, be considered one of the Native Americans who has tragically traced the tear

of roads? No. Unlike Native Americans, who had no concept of the possession of property, the narrator is an expert in property rights and a symbol of American law itself. Why, then, did he end up leaving his office and nullifying the effects of his rights?

Bartleby, who refuses to leave and remains on the property, deprives the Lawyer of his legal rights to the property. In America, property rights were given to people who occupied land under the Homestead Act. This historical system of ownership in nineteenth-century America is represented by the fact that occupying land is superior to legal rights.

### 5. The Shadow of Native Americans on Wall Street

At one point, Melville removed the words of "A Story of Wall Street" from the title of his work. The characters were Bartleby is still on wall street, as the setting of this story remained unchanged. But the act of removing the explicit identification of Wall Street from its highly visible position in the story's subtitle is important. This suggests that the reason for choosing his setting may have been to foreshadow a deeper story with greater danger and poignancy.

In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael discusses ownership of American land while he is speaking about ownership of whales. The characters involved in *Bartleby* are not sailors chasing whales, but lawyers and scriveners working on Wall Street in Manhattan. The setting is not the open sea, but

instead an economic nexus on an island that once belonged to Native Americans. Leo Marx writes of Bartleby and his relationships to the office on Wall Street:

> The plain inference is that he [Bartleby] acknowledged no distinction between the lawyer's chambers and the world outside; his problem was not to be solved by leaving the office, or by leaving Wall Street; indeed, from Bartleby's point of view, Wall Street was America. ("Walls" 618)

If for Bartleby, Wall Street is, in fact, the United States, it might also be true for Melville himself. Discussing ownership of the office on Wall Street highlights broader issues of land ownership and calls the issue of property rights in general in America into question.

I believe that "Bartleby"[12] initiates the American audience into a discussion about property ownership. The setting of the story, Wall Street is a site charged with an unstable potential, which threatens to undermine the foundations of law, especially that of property ownership. Behind the story of Wall Street, lies another story of the United States, which had deprived Native Americans of their land. "Bartleby" proposes a possibility that even the founding principles of the nation itself falls becomes a false fiction.

# Chapter 3

## Inherited House and Vanishing House:
## Native Americans in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher"

### 1. The Story of the House

Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) concerns a house, as a residence for a family, and their line of ancestors. It starts with the narrator visiting his old friend Roderick Usher's house and ends with the house collapsing with its residents still inside. As "the House" in the title refers to both the building and the family, "The Fall" means both the collapse of the house and the extinction of the Usher family.

Richard Wilbur observes on Usher's home in his paper "The House of Poe":

> Since Roderick is the embodiment of a state of mind in which *falling*—falling asleep—is imminent, it is appropriate that the building which symbolizes his mind should promise at every moment to fall…the house threatens continually to collapse because it is extremely easy for the mind to slip from the hypnagogic state into the depths of sleep; and when the House of Usher *does* fall, the story ends, as it must, because the mind, at the end of its inward journey, has plunged into the darkness of sleep. (109 italics Wilbur)

Here Wilbur analogizes the physical with the psychological fall, like falling asleep. Scott Peeples also states, “Poe uses the house to reflect upon literary structures” (187). Other critics, for example, Benjamin Franklin Fisher, indicated a close relevance of the house to the family in this story. The interrelationship of the house and the people seems to be the main topic of discussion for critics.

I will focus not on the relationship of the house and its residents but on the house and its owner. My research will mainly consider the ownership and inheritance of the mansion and the site where the House of Usher stands. In the story, when Roderick’s name first appears, he is identified as “its [Usher’s] proprietor,” and his right of ownership is emphasized (398).

In the story, there is a scene in which Roderick Usher sings the ballad, “The Haunted Palace.” This poem could be read as Roderick being self-referential. In it, he foreshadows his impending doom, and the ballad serves as an allegory about a king who is afraid of evil forces that threaten him and his palace. After discussing the wit and wisdom of the king, and the beautiful palace in a valley, the poem markedly changes in tone towards the second last stanza:

> But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
> Assailed the monarch's high estate. (407)

At the end of the poem, the monarch is deprived of the estate, and he

declines. It is not irrelevant for me to argue for Roderick Usher's proprietary rights in "The Fall of the House of Usher".

In this chapter, I will focus on an inheritance system that connects the past and present, based on the concept of ownership founded on the relationship between a house and its residents. By analyzing the House of Usher as real estate, which the Ushers inherit successively, I will consider the meaning of its collapse, its disappearance, and the status of ownership of the land of the Ushers.

## 2. The Inherited House

When we examine the curious relationship between the house and its residents, Roderick and Madeline, it becomes clear that it influences them. Roderick explains the nature of this influence to the narrator. Certain superstitious impressions enchained him. He tells the narrator that not only has the house affected his mind but his family mansion—including the dim tarn—has also influenced "the morale of his existence."

The word, "frame," means a structure made of wood or metal that surrounds something, and holds it in place. We also use "frame" to explain the structure of a house like an exterior. Another meaning of "frame" is a body that is formed by bones. Poe describes the bodies of the Usher siblings as their "frame" (413, 416). We can infer that Poe chooses "frame" for Roderick and Madeline's bodies to indicate that their framework is similar to the house. The mansion naturally falls when the frames of the

residents—Roderick and Madeline—collapse, because the building loses both the physical and metaphorical structure of its frame.

Returning to the main subject, the ownership of the house, we should notice that the Ushers used to be a prosperous family. The narrator recounts his memory of his old friend, Roderick, and his lineage as follows:

> I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. (399)

Regarding the inheritance, there being "no enduring branch" of the family is a serious problem. The Ushers have passed their house down by successive generations, and Roderick is the final proprietor. However, Roderick and Madeline are the last two survivors of the Usher family, so if one of them does not have children, the Usher lineage will end.

Alexis de Tocqueville published *Democracy in America* in 1835, four years before "The Fall of the House of Usher" was published. Regarding the laws of inheritance, he stated:

> …These laws [the laws of inheritance] do belong, true enough, to the civil code but they ought to take their place at the head of every political institution since they have an unbelievable effect upon the

> social conditions of people, while political laws only mirror what the state actually is. They have, moreover, a reliable and consistent method of operating on society since they take a hold to some degree on all future generations yet unborn. (60)

Tocqueville explains that these laws negatively affect future generations. In the story of the Ushers, the narrator presumes that the reason of the Ushers' decline is the deficiency of the number of family members:

> It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other… (399)

It is remarkable that there are many similarities between the reasons for the decline of the Ushers and Tocqueville's explanation of inheritance. Tocqueville indicates that a family, which practices primogeniture, becomes identified with its land.

> Among nations where the law of inheritance is based upon the rights of the eldest child, landed estates mostly pass from generation to generation without division. The result is that family feeling takes its strength from the land. The family represents that land, the land the

> family, perpetuating its name, history, glory, power, and virtues. It stands as an imperishable witness to the past, a priceless guarantee of its future. (62)

The Usher's inheritance is based on the rights of the eldest child. The house of Usher and its land have been inherited from fathers to sons without division. As the narrator realizes, the "House of Usher" includes both the family and the family mansion; the house represents the family, and the family the house. Conversely, Tocqueville states:

> When the law of inheritance institutes equal division, it destroys the close relationship between family feeling and the preservation of the land which ceases to represent the family. For the land must gradually diminish and ends up by disappearing entirely since it cannot avoid being parceled up after one or two generations. (62)

Because the Ushers have no collateral branches in their family, the relationship between fathers and sons deepens. In the law of inheritance, no collateral branches of the family means an inheritance without division, so the ties between the house and family become gradually stronger. It is notable that the narrator refers to the "repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity" of the Ushers, a result of their "peculiar sensibility of temperament" (398). This means the Ushers have employed their movable property for charitable purposes. If they had no collateral family or

descendants, they could scatter their money to others as charity. However, they must inherit real estate, such as a house or land, directly from father to son from generation to generation. Poe was affected by an inheritance. As Arthur Hobson Quinn notes:

> When the death of [John] Allan's uncle [John Allan is Poe's foster-father and also his uncle], William Galt, in March, 1825, made his nephew [John Allan] a rich man, he purchased this house for $14,950…When John Allan purchased the house, June 28, 1825, there were not many buildings in the neighborhood, and the lot was an ample one. Poe's room, on the second floor, northeast corner, therefore gave him a charming view of the river and the surrounding country. On the wide porch stood a telescope, brought from England by John Allan, from which Poe learned his first lessons in stargazing. (92-93)

Poe had to move away from this house to enter the University of Virginia only two months later. Subsequently, Allan withdrew him from the University because of his gambling debts; Poe left the house soon and never returned. As we know, he was one of the first well-known Americans to try to live by writing, resulting in a financially challenging life and career. He wrote letters to his uncle time after time to ask for his financial support and occasionally received it. Nevertheless, when Poe's foster-father, Allan passed away, nothing was left to Poe. In contrast to Roderick Usher, who inherited the house and its site, Poe did not attain

any property.

Poe seemed to have knowledge of how the laws of inheritance from father to son could be broken. The House of Usher, which is inherited over generations, represents a negative aspect of the law of inheritance, so Roderick, the owner of the house, can be seen as a victim of the estate.

The narrator assumes that the reason for the decline of the Ushers is "this deficiency" of descendants. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," the old inherited mansion and its site represent a declining family and the negative effect of property on a lineal descendant.

### 3. Vanishing House and Native Americans

"The Fall of the House of Usher" is often compared with Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, published in 1851. In 1956, Maurice Beebe wrote a paper entitled "The Fall of the House of Pyncheon". He argued that there are many similarities between the two works. Toshio Yagi also mentioned in his paper ("The Fall of Usher / The Fall of Pyncheon") that the two works are similar on some points (my trans., 44).

Certainly, we can see common points between the two families in these works. They live in old mansions that are in decline. The survivors of each clan are an elder brother and a younger sister, and there are strong interrelations between the houses and their residents. There is also the possibility that Hawthorne read Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher", which was published 12 years before Hawthorne's novel. It is no wonder

that many consider that Poe's work may have inspired Hawthorne to write a story about the fall of a noble family.

However, there is a decisive difference between the two stories: the endings. On the one hand, Hawthorne's Pyncheon family moved to their country house from the cursed mansion and began to recover their prosperity again. On the other hand, Poe's Usher mansion collapses with its residents' bodies and vanishes into the tarn.

Yagi states that, for readers, the image of a collapsing building is more impressive than the building itself (my trans.; 41). Preoccupied with the intense image of the collapse, the image of the mansion vanishing into the tarn is weak. I will focus on the ending, with the mansion disappearing into the swamp. According to *the OED*, "tarn" means "a small mountain lake, having no significant tributaries"[13]. "No significant tributaries" shows that, like the Ushers failing to establish a branch of the family, the water does not circulate so that the tarn may accumulate various things, and its water may be stagnant. David C. Miller, in *Dark Eden: The Swamp in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*, explains that the swamp is "an image whose complexity and elusiveness…could lure awareness through an endless array of dissolving surfaces and shifting dimensions" (2). He argues that the tarn in "The Fall of the House of Usher" "pervades his [the narrator's] soul" and has a "mirror like reflection" (Miller 24)[14].

Miller notes, "The 'dark tarn' of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Fall of the House of Usher' is a symbol of the swamp's insidious influence, of the dangers of the irrational" (11). As Miller suggests, the tarn at the Ushers'

estate is not just the swamp. The narrator describes how it reflects the house itself.

> I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled luster by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the grey sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows. (398)

The tarn frightens the narrator, yet he feels an urge to peek into it and shudders at the sight of "the remodeled and inverted images". Not only does the tarn increase the power and influence of the house, but it also stimulates the narrator's fear for the house and the landscape of Usher. The last scene of this work is as follows:

> While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the "House of Usher." (335-36)

At once the zigzag fissure widens, and the wall collapses asunder, the dark

tarn swallows the fragments of the house, then both the story and the house are closed.

A small mountain lake metamorphoses into a weird monster, and the family's inherited ancestral property vanishes, together with the last two Ushers. It is interesting to note that the house vanishes in fragments. The Ushers also scatter their money via charity. Because there are no branches of the family, the house of Usher is never sold or exchanged for cash; however, it is instead broken into fragments at the story's end.

Regarding fortune or inheritance, a collapsing house is collapsing property; it is the loss of property. If a house collapses, the land remains; however, in the case of the Usher house, the monstrous tarn swallows it, so the land where it stood also disappears. It is possible that the tarn itself is part of the Usher land so that swallowing the house does not necessarily mean reducing the Ushers' land. If land where we could build a house turned into a barren swamp, it could be considered a loss of property. Although the location of this story is not specifically named, assuming that the setting is in America, the ownership of the land swallowed by the tarn is likely to be complicated. When one thinks about land ownership in America, we cannot ignore the Native Americans.

In August 1839, one month before "The Fall of the House of Usher" was published, Poe published "The Man that Was Used Up" in *Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine*. The subtitle of "The Man that Was Used Up" is "A Tale of the Late Bugaboo and Kickapoo Campaign." Kickapoo is the name of a real tribe of Native Americans. In this story, Brevet Brigadier General

John A.B.C. Smith is a fictional character that plays an active role in the battle against the Native Americans. He is a war hero who lost his limbs in the battle and, thus, has to wear artificial legs, arms, and so forth.

As Leon Jackson writes, John A.B.C. Smith is "a composite of technological innovation, territorial greed, and racial suppression" like the country he serves (113). Shoko Ito also argues that "The Man that Was Used Up" is a political satire that reflects Poe's complicated consciousness with regarding Native Americans and his critical attitude toward the invasive expansionism of America (my trans.; 30). Although Poe did not have a favorable attitude toward Native Americans, he was interested in their customs and was attracted by repeated territorial disputes like the Seminole Wars.

When "The Man that Was Used Up" was published in 1839, the second Seminole War was underway. Thomas Ollive Mabbott observes that "the story was timely, for the newspapers were full of references to the troubles with Indians in Florida in 1839, in which the Kickapoo tribe was involved" (377). In 1830, the *Indian Removal Act* was passed by Congress and following it, Native Americans were forced to move from their residential districts. The Act instituted many forced relocations of Native American nationals in the United States, known as the "Trail of Tears." Mabbott explains:

> It is not surprising that some readers have thought to find a political satire in "The Man that Was Used Up". The basis for this seems to be

> that the 1840 campaign song beginning "Van, Van's a Used Up Man," in ridicule of Martin Van Buren, is now well remembered by people unaware of how commonly the colloquial phrase "used up," now applied chiefly to supplies, was applied to books, plays, authors, and actors receiving notices as well as to politicians in our author's time. (377)

William Whipple states that Poe's satire in this story is pointed at Richard Mentor Johnson, Vice President under Martin Van Buren, who was widely known as the murderer of Tecumseh, the Native American leader of the Shawnee and a large tribal confederacy (91). Keiko Noguchi affirms that John A.B.C. Smith represents the seventh president of the United States, Andrew Jackson because Smith is a war-hero who has won a battle against the Indians (31)[15]. It is thus clear that "The Man that was Used Up" is a satirical short story in which Poe criticizes Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, presidents who supported and enforced the Indian Removal. If "The Man that Was Used Up" satirizes American expansionism, it is no wonder that we can see elements of satire against American society and politics in "The Fall of the House of Usher," which was written in the same period.

When Madeline revives at the end of the story and appears in front of Roderick and the narrator, her white robe turns red with blood, and the moon that shines behind the house is a blood-red moon[16]. It seems that the bloody *red* robe and a blood-*red* moon are the metaphorical expressions of

Native Americans. *The OED* shows that the color "red" was used to indicate Native Americans since the early seventeenth century[17]. Washington Irving already used the words, "the red warriors" in his book, *Astoria*, published in 1836[18]. "Red" was thus the symbolic color of Native Americans when "The Fall of the House of Usher" was published.

The Indianized Madeline in red is thus, in this sense, no longer Roderick's sister. She, who has no title, is confronted by Roderick, as the proprietor of the land. Her role is to make Roderick, his house, and his land sink into the dark tarn with her. A blood-red moon is also seen as presiding over the collapse of the house:

> Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were along behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and *blood-red moon*, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind — the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight…(417)

As the blood-red moon can be considered to be a metaphor for the Native Americans, it is visible only when the owner, who has a title to the house and land, collapses.

In this story, Poe describes the vanishing of land from America, a country whose government forced Native Americans to move and deprived them of their land. He arranges a red moon behind the Usher house. Native Americans are the symbol of those people that American society tried to remove. Madeline's white robe turns red with blood, and the moon that shines at the back of the house is a blood-red moon. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," it seems that those who were removed from American society come to the forefront when the house vanishes.

## 4. Collapsing House and Witnesses

As the narrator indicates, when you use the name "The House of Usher," it applies to both the family and the family mansion:

> …so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the"House of Usher"––an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion. (399)

The peasantry uses the phrase "House of Usher." According to *the OED*, a peasant is "a person who lives in the country and works on the land, esp. as a smallholder or a labourer; a member of an agricultural class dependent on subsistence farming"[19]. Excluding a doctor and a servant, the only characters in this story are Roderick, Madeline, and the narrator. However,

because the peasantry who live around the “House of Usher” and use the words, the “House of Usher,” appear in it, the circumstances surrounding the Usher mansion are multilayered.

The existence of the peasantry reminds us that the area, where the house stands, is not a secluded world, but part of a community in which the peasants work. Additionally, they must have also witnessed the fall of the Ushers.

As the narrator observes how the mansion collapses and vanishes, the readers understand the situation. Is the narrator the only witness of the collapse of the mansion? It cannot be denied that some peasants possibly witness the collapse. It is conjectured that there was the impact of the collapse of the mansion on the community in which the Ushers and the peasantry live.

“The Fall of the House of Usher” is usually considered a story about someone who is “buried alive” or a house, which is “swallowed by a swamp.” Many critics argue that this story is about the spiritual world, the narrator’s inner life, or his hallucination. However, because we, as readers in the twenty-first century have experienced 9-11, we cannot help but feel the reality of collapsing buildings. We recall the impact of solid buildings that collapse instantly and quickly vanish from our sight.

## 5. After the Fall of the House

After Roderick and Madeline die, there is nobody to inherit the

Ushers' property. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," the narrator writes the last moments of the two descendants and the literal fall of the mansion of Usher. Simultaneously, he narrates the collapse of the inheritance system. Motoyuki Shibata states: "In Poe's world, every border is doomed to fall down" (my trans., 36). For Poe, the borders between life and death, sanity and insanity, fantasy and reality, are ambiguous.

The potency of fantasy is often compared to the efficacy of opium. When the narrator first sees the mansion, he likens "an utter depression of soul" to "the after dream of the reveler upon opium" (397). He also describes Roderick's voice as "the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement" (402).

When we reread "The Fall of the House of Usher," which unfolds in an ambiguous world, in the light of the law of inheritance in the real world, the negative aspect of inheritance is revealed. We also see the unreal conclusion, like a collapsing house, as the way for a mansion and real estate to vanish. It evokes Poe's unconscious desire for American land. "The Fall of the House of Usher" is a device that illuminates the fraying reality of American society in 1839—the law of inheritance, the Native American debate, and American expansionism—under the light of a bloody red moon.

In the twenty-first century, when the readers finish reading this story, many people might recall an image of the World Trade Center collapse. With modern telecommunications, people worldwide witnessed the sight of crumbling buildings and twisted metal, the sound of screaming

people. Hundreds of millions of eyewitnesses shared the shock of it in a global community.

Two big pools have now been constructed on the ground where the Twin Towers once stood. Waterfalls surround the pools and flow into them. The names of the victims are engraved around both pools. The Twin Towers have been transformed from crumbling buildings into waterfront as if the tarn swallowed and vanished the fragments of the “House of Usher”.

Beside the pools, huge skyscrapers have been built. The highest is the “One World Trade Center,” which boasts a height of 1776 feet. 1776 is the year that the Declaration of Independence was signed. It is not clear that the height honors independence or recalls the sublime ideals of liberty and equality. If the collapsing buildings reveal some contradictions in “the Declaration of Independence,” we would have to confront the question of whether the light shines on others in the shadow of high-rise buildings in American society.

# Chapter 4

# From Mother's Son to National Father: King's Change in Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic*

## 1. Switching Inheritance

In this chapter, I consider *A Romance of the Republic* to analyze the inheritance of property as a process distorted by switching babies. This was Lydia Maria Child's fourth novel and the capstone of her remarkable literary career. Child defied racism in this novel by writing about racial intermarriage and switching babies.

However, Child's target is not merely racism. In this story, Rosa, a fair-skinned slave, decides to switch her baby with a white baby to give her son a life of freedom and privilege. This exchanging of a mixed-race baby with a white baby not only means a simple subversion/inversion and binary opposition—white and black/freeman and slave—but also a complex distortion of the status of each baby. One inherits property as an heir, and the other becomes a slave who is, thus, property himself.

This work can be read from several perspectives. The story can be categorized into a so-called "passing novel" in which a person of color, willingly or unwillingly, assimilates into the white majority because of his/her appearance of whiteness. In this novel, attractive mixed-race sisters marry white men and gain entry to white society. The work also contains elements of sentimental novels that rely on emotional responses,

both from the readers and the characters within the narrative. The plot develops tragically when one of the sisters discovers her husband has another, white, wife. Her emotion escalates at another discovery that she was bought as a slave by her "husband."

The babies are switched in the South where the slave system was deeply rooted, and this system brought serious destruction to the babies' fates. The switching of the babies disrupts the process of primogeniture, which is based on the blood-related father-son relationship. In this chapter, I will reread this work, by focusing on the dysfunctional process of the inheritance of property.

*A Romance of the Republic* is the last full-length novel by Lydia Maria Child, who was famed as an advocate for the abolition of slavery and as an activist who sought equal rights for women and Native Americans. This work was published in 1867, just two years after the proclamation of the emancipation of the slaves, declared at the end of the Civil War. It is set in the latter half of the nineteenth century, finishing with the conclusion of the Civil War. It portrays the lives of Rosa and Flora, two beautiful sisters who are raised as wealthy white girls. The story begins with the sudden death of their father, at which point they discover that they are mixed-blood slaves. The critics focus on Rosa, who exchanges her baby with that of a fully white woman. This episode is at the core of the story in which the nature versus nurture debate is much discussed.

In this chapter, I wish to focus more on King than Rosa, Rosa's second husband who has no blood connection with the switched children. I

investigate King's deeds to analyze what kind of role he plays and how he is transformed in American Civil War society.

## 2. The Change in the Role and Character of King

*A Romance of the Republic* has a two-part structure. After appearing at the beginning of Part 1, Mr. King immediately disappears and is little seen in the remainder. In Part 2, he steps into the story again by marrying Rosa and takes a much more significant role. Rosa, who has been purchased as a slave by Fitzgerald, runs away from his plantation and marries King. After the marriage, Rosa begins to play the role of a traditional upper-class wife, and the story gradually comes to be dominated by her new husband. Carolyn L. Karcher touches on this transformation, going so far as to say that King comes "to dominate the novel" ("Lydia Maria Child" 96) and indicates the following regarding the role he plays in this work:

> King personifies the tragic contradiction between the abolitionist ideal of a classless society in which whites and blacks, men and women, enjoyed equal opportunities, and the racial, sexual, and class paternalism that continued to dominate their thinking. (Karcher, "Lydia Maria Child" 98)

King represents the difference that exists between the ideals of the

abolitionists and those of the patriarchy.

King first appears as the son of a close friend of Rosa's father, Mr. Royal, a wealthy white resident of North Boston. When Mr. Royal introduces King to his two daughters, King is immediately smitten with the older sister, Rosa. Thinking about marrying her, King is surprised by a piece of information brought by a southerner—Fitzgerald—that Rosa is a mixed-race slave with black blood. Responding to this unexpected discovery, King has the following thoughts in his mind:

> Though he had had a fatiguing day, when he entered his chamber he felt no inclination to sleep. As he slowly paced up and down the room, he thought to himself, "My good mother shares the prejudice. How could I introduce them to *her*?" Then, as if impatient with himself, he murmured, in a vexed tone, "Why should I think of introducing them to my mother? A few hours ago I didn't know of their existence." (14)

King asks himself how he could carry on the difficult task of introducing a woman of mixed race to family members who would likely not accept this. Soon after meeting Rosa, he assumes that if he would tell his mother that he would like to marry her, his mother would never approve of his marrying a slave. As a member of a community whose values are embodied in and symbolized by his mother, he thus decides not to marry Rosa, a mixed-race slave.

He leaves for Boston on the pretext of receiving a letter which tells

him that his mother is not well. At that point, instead of announcing his feelings to Rosa, he tells the sisters to regard him, “as if I were a brother, should it ever be in my power to serve you” (26). Giving up on ever having a relationship with Rosa as a romantic partner, he instead declares that he wishes to serve her and her sister as if he were a family member before leaving them. At this time, King is nothing more than a son from an upper -class background who is wary of his mother.

After his return to Boston, King follows his physician’s advice by taking his mother to Southern France, Egypt, and various other places in pursuit of a warm climate. King’s mother, who now misses familiar faces and places, says she wants to return to New England, but she passes away in Florence without ever seeing her hometown again. King has devoted himself to taking care of his ailing mother for two years, and his thoughts are primarily of her. However, alone on a ship, crossing the Atlantic to America after his mother’s death, his mind turns again to Rosa.

When King hears that Rosa’s father, Mr. Royal, has passed away, he immediately travels to New Orleans to search for information about Rosa and her sister. Madam, who has lived next door to Rosa’s family, tells him that Rosa has married Fitzgerald and Flora has gone missing. King tells Madam he would like her to contact him immediately if she hears anything from Rosa. While King was traveling around Europe, Fitzgerald buys Rosa and Flora from their creditors. As Fitzgerald does not tell them about the trade, Rosa believes she is very much in love with her husband, Fitzgerald. She does not know that their marriage is not legal.

King appears again at the end of Part 1. Rosa, who has bourn Fitzgerald's mixed-race baby, has escaped to Europe. She was afraid of being sold as a slave again with her baby. The next time she appears on the stage, she is an opera singer in Italy. King, who met with Rosa again in Rome, tries to protect her from Fitzgerald's pursuit and confesses his love for her.

> What would my dear prudential mother say, to see me leaving my business to agents and clerks, while I devote my life to the service of an opera-singer?—and who has been the victim of a sham marriage! ...My dear mother has gone to a sphere of wider vision, whence she can look down upon the merely external distinctions of this deceptive world. Rosabella must be seen as a pure soul, in eyes that see as the angels do; and as the defenseless daughter of my father's friend, it is my duty to protect her. (245-46)

King imagines what his mother would say when she sees what her son is doing, as he once imagined his mother's reaction on her meeting Rosa for the first time. His circumstances having changed, King is liberated from his familial obligations. Thus, he asks Rosa to marry him, and the two are married.

King has devoted himself to filial duties for the last two years. Being released from the oppressive expectations of an ideal son to an ailing mother, he is finally able to act following his desires. Now free and

independent, he begins to form a new community—in short, a community that will become his own family.

### 3. King and His Two Sons

One of the fears, which motivate Rosa, is anxiety of her child being sold as a slave. She thus exchanges her baby with that of Fitzgerald's legal white wife, Lily Bell.[20] This action results in a white child being raised as a slave, and a mixed-race child being raised as white. Rosa's biological son, Gerald, is thus raised in a wealthy home as the son of Fitzgerald and Lily Bell. Gerald becomes the heir to the vast property holdings of Mr. Bell, who is his grandfather. Lily Bell's biological son, conversely, is sold as a slave and lives as one, but eventually escapes and lives in the north with a mixed-race wife.

One day, Rosa confesses to King that she has switched her baby with Lily Bell's. Upon hearing the confession of his wife, King proposes to tell the truth to young Gerald, Rosa's son.

> You have wisely chosen me for your confessor, and if I recommend penance I trust you will think it best to follow my advice. I see how difficult it would be to tell all your own and your mother's story to so young a man as Gerald, and he your own son. I will tell him; and I need not assure you that you will have a loving advocate to plead your cause with him. (265)

Taking Rosa's role, who is in a distraught frame of mind and is unable to reveal the truth to her biological son, King explains that Gerald was switched with George after birth by the former's biological mother.

In the same way, King talks to Lily Bell's son, George, explaining his origins as follows:

> "Your father was Mr. Gerald Fitzgerald, a planter in Georgia. You have *a right to his name*, and I will so introduce you to my friends, if you wish it. He inherited a handsome fortune, but lost it all by gambling and other forms of dissipation. He had several children by various mothers. You and the Gerald with whom you become acquainted were brothers by your father's side. You are unmixed white; but you were left in the care of a negro nurse, and one of your father's creditors seized you both, and sold you into slavery. (326)

King tries to introduce Lilly Bell to George as his biological mother, but Lily Bell refuses to recognize George as her son. To Lilly Bell's eye, George is a slave who has been raised as such and has a mixed-race wife. Consequently, she asks King not to tell George about her. Thus, George loses access to the central person—his mother—who can tell him about what happened to him in his childhood. As his biological father, Fitzgerald has already died, so no clue of his true identity is left for George.

King, acquiring secondhand information, is the only person who can tell George about his origin and his biological father. As King's statement that "neither of your parents was related to me in any degree, or connected with me in any way" (437) illustrates, George learns the secrets about his birth and upbringing—the reason why someone born white was sold as a slave—from one who is outside his closed group of relations.

By filling in the blanks in Gerald's and George's early childhood memories, King builds close connections with them by gaining their trust. He usurps the knowledge of the true identities of the exchanged sons to build intimate relationships with them. While King reveals to Gerald Rosa's switching of the babies and informs George who his true father is, he tries to create, by giving secret facts to both Gerald and George, fictitious father-son relationships with them.

To Gerald, King speaks as if he were a surrogate father:

> We are ready to do anything you wish, or to take any position you prescribe for us. You may prefer to pass in society merely as my young friend, but you are *my step-son*, you know; and should you at any time of your life need my services, you may rely upon me *as an affectionate father*. (268 italics Takase)

In another scene, King tries to act as George's father, saying, "if you do your best, you may rely upon my influence and my fatherly interest to help you all I can" (436).

The switched children fight in the Union Army during the Civil War, where the two have a chance to encounter. Both children join the Union Army during the Civil War and have a chance encounter in which Gerald is killed and is survived by George.

George believes himself to be Mr. Bell's grandson and expects that he is rightfully entitled to inherit his grandfather's vast wealth. At the disclosure of the fact that he has been switched with Gerald, George loses his right of inheritance.

King tries to fix this entangled inheritance, and he uses his property to prepare assets of the same value as the property that George should have received from Mr. Bell. He arranges for interest to be added, beginning the day that Mr. Bell died. He also investigates the value of the inheritance left to George's biological mother, Lily Bell, and declares in his own will that an equal amount be left to George in an attempt to compensate for what would have happened had he been raised by his biological parents. King also supports George in ways other than monetarily.

> I intend to employ the young man [George] as one of my agents in Europe; and if he shows as much enterprise and perseverance in business as he did in escaping from slavery, he will prove an excellent partner for me when increasing years diminish my own energies. I would gladly adopt him, and have him live with us; but I doubt whether such a great and sudden change of condition would prove

salutary, and his having a colored wife would put obstructions in his way entirely beyond our power to remove. (416)

King arranges employment for George after he returns from the Civil War and wishes to adopt him as his son eventually. He knows that it will still be difficult for George and his black wife to live in white society, so he helps them resettle in Marseille in France. On the way to Europe, King, who has accompanied them, lectures George about what he must study in the future, what he must strive to do, and what to care about. In this way, King performs a father's role for "his son" George.

### 4. King and the Republic

The two sisters, Rosa and Flora, whom Fitzgerald buys as slaves, live separately after Flora leaves. Rosa, who is about to be sold by Fitzgerald to another slave-owner, flees to Europe and marries King, and then becomes part of white society. Conversely, Flora begins to live, disguising herself as white, with Mrs. Delano, who becomes her substitute mother. Flora marries the young Florimond Blumenthal, who has been previously working in her father's office.

Both beautiful mixed-race sisters marry white men and pass for whites within society. Rosa initially lives in Southern France with King after she marries him, and she returns to Boston after several years. By

moving his family back to Boston, King transforms himself into the main character as a father of his community. His community not only includes his nuclear family, consisting of his wife and children, but a variety of people who are linked to Rosa, and he takes control of their affairs.

Rosa is reunited with her younger sister, Flora and Rosa and Flora also accidentally re-encounter Tulee, who has previously lived with them for many years as their nursemaid. Tulee initially served the sisters as a slave but has been freed by them, as she requested. When Rosa escapes to Europe, Tulee is captured and pressed into service once more as a slave. It is King who buys Tulee and her children back from the slave-owner, and she begins to live with Rosa and Flora once more. The size of King's community is thus increased.

When King decides to participate in the Civil War, he expresses his reasons for joining the fight to Rosa:

> "Rosa, *this Republic* must be saved," replied he, with solemn emphasis. "It is the day-star of hope to the toiling masses of the world, and it must not go out in darkness….I foresee that this war is destined, by mere force of circumstances, to rid *the Republic* of that deadly incubus. Rosa, are you not willing to give me up for the safety of the country, and the freedom of your mother's race?" …"What are all these comforts and splendors compared with the rescue of my country, and the redemption of an oppressed race? What is my life, compared with the life of *this republic*? Say, dearest, that you will give me willingly to

this righteous cause." (423-424 italics Takase)

We find the word "republic" four times in this scene, and they are repeatedly used in the rhetoric of "rescue" and "save." Slavery has become a personal problem through its connection with his wife.

Similarly, Flora's husband, Mr. Blumenthal, recalls his distress at Flora being sold into slavery. At that time, he lacked the money to rescue her. Mr. Blumenthal declares that this "accursed system" must be terminated (425). Since Rosa and Flora have both experienced being sold as mixed-race slaves, their husbands share the belief that the Civil War will be a battle against slavery, which torments their wives. King's role is transformed from "saving my family" into "saving the republic" in the Civil War.

This work was published in 1867, immediately after the end of the Civil War. After gaining independence from Britain in the previous century, the Civil War was the most critical period in which America was deciding whether or not to divide one nation into two. King was also separated from his mother and strives to rebuild a scattered family as his new community. With his disgust of the slave system, he seeks to save the nation by participating in the Civil War. He loses his right leg in the war but manages to return home alive. The story ends with the following sentences:

All the family, of all ages and colors, then joined in singing "The Star-spangled Banner"; and when Mr. King had shaken hands with

them all, they adjourned to the breakfast-room, where refreshments were plentifully provided. (441)

An ideal community is portrayed here, consisting of people of different generations, races, and sexes, speaking different languages. The idea on which the nation is founded is doubtlessly projected in this scene.

King struggled to create this community, and he suffers from the gulf between ideals and reality. Bright, who appears in Part 2 of this story, indicates a paradoxical contradiction in King's actions. Bright, the manager of a house that Flora's family has rented for the summer, publicly declares himself to be an abolitionist. He "always maintained it was a sin and a shame to pay slave-traders so much for what never belonged to them" (379). King pays a large sum of money to buy Tulee and her children back from a slave-trader, but Mr. Bright argues that it is morally wrong to pay such a large sum to a slave-trader. He argues that King even sins by buying slaves from a slave owner to create his ideal community. To materialize his ideal, King spends large sums of money, performs shameful actions and, therefore, sins.

Here, I will reconsider the title of this work. The author, Child, describes this novel as a "romance"[21]. Concerning "romance" in the history of literature, the contemporary writer Nathaniel Hawthorne presents his famous theory of it. Richard Chase describes the notion of romance in this period in America as follows:

> Romance is, as we see, a kind of "border" fiction, whether the field of action is in the neutral territory between civilization and the wilderness, as in the adventure tales of Cooper and Simms, or whether, as in Hawthorne and later romances, the field of action is conceived not so much as a place as a state of mind—the borderland of the human mind where the actual and the imaginary intermingle. Romance does not plant itself, like the novel, solidly in the midst of the actual. Nor when it is memorable, does it escape into the purely imaginary. (19)

Chase categorizes a romance into a "border fiction." It seems that King's community itself inhabits this borderland. His ideal family, which he has created by pragmatic methods, is a community that is reproducible only in a romance that wanders in the gap between ideals and reality.

## 5. The Republic as a Family

If this novel is read as the story of King, the plot might be seen as a story of King's family building. King, the son of a matriarchal family, meets his mother's expectations until he marries a mixed-race slave. After being freed from filial obligations, he creates his household as a father.

King's role as a father can be seen in his efforts for George. These efforts symbolize the fact that the inheritance of property in America is unlike inheritance in England, which is essentially an aristocratic society.

Jerry Griswold, the author of *Audacious Kids*, a work about nineteenth-century children's literature, notes the following:

> If American political writing presented the nation as a family writ large, we should not be surprised (given the reciprocity between domestic and political tropes) that America's domestic novels addressed political issues and presented the family as a nation writ small. (15)

Similarly, Lincoln also likened the nation to a household in his "House Divided" address. In 1858, the Democratic Party Senator Stephen Douglas and Lincoln, who ran for election representing the Republican Party, publicly debated the issue of the expansion of the slavery system. At their meeting, known as the Lincoln-Douglas debate, Lincoln presented his famous "House Divided" address to clarify his attitude toward the slavery system.

> A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. (Lincoln)[22]

In this address, Lincoln likened the American nation to a house in which all American people live together. Lincoln equated the problem of the

division at the national level to a family problem, suggesting that the American nation was itself under a patriarchal family system, with the president as its father.

If, as Griswold says, we assume that "American novels of family life present political issues and represent a family as a nation writ small," Child in *A Romance of the Republic*, portrays an idealized form of the American nation through the story of a family (15). By telling the story of how a divided family is restored as a multiracial group, Child pleads for the restoration of the nation as a multiracial one. When Lincoln was assassinated, Child mourned his death with the words, "Lincoln was a magnificent gift given by God for a crisis such as this" (quoted by Karcher, *The First Woman*, 486). Child may have superimposed the image of Lincoln, the father of the nation, who was felled by a bullet mid-career, onto King, who strove to rebuild one family.

# Chapter 5

# What He Renounced and What He Held:
# Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*

## 1. Poe as a Writer and Editor

*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* is the only long novel written by Edgar Allan Poe (I use *Pym* in Italics for the title of the story to distinguish the title from the character, Pym). In his essay, *The Philosophy of Composition*, Poe argues that "if any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression" (432). Knowing that *Pym* is too long to be read at one sitting, he states "such as 'Robinson Crusoe,' (demanding no unity,) this limit [the limit of a single sitting] may be advantageously overpassed" (432-33). Although it seems that *Pym*, at first glance, is contrary to Poe's philosophy of composition, it is possible that Poe attempted to write this story as a verisimilitude like *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

In the Preface, Poe, as Pym, writes: "the probability being that the public at large would regard what I should put forth as merely an impudent and ingenious fiction" (3). On Poe's effort to make the story appear real, Richard Kopley writes the following:

Pym's earnest presentation of his adventures, weighted with an

> abundance of nautical and scientific detail, did not convince or please. As if the veracity of *Pym* were the critical issue, Poe anticipated, through his main character's expressed anxiety. (Kopley, Readers Write 401)

Poe attempted to write a new type of story and felt anxious about the public response to his new work. The story of Pym ended up reflecting-Poe's authorial concerns and consequently was imbued with multifarious instability and contradiction.

Following the model of *Robinson Crusoe*, Poe uses historical documents to write *Pym*. In *Poe's Pym,* a collection of papers on *Pym* published in 1992, Susan F. Beegel proposes the possibility that Poe might have used the *Globe* mutiny (on a Nantucket whaling ship in 1824) as a source for *Pym* (7). In another paper, Joan Tyler Mead demonstrates that "Poe copied almost directly from contemporary accounts of maritime adventures by Benjamin Morrell and Jeremiah N. Reynolds" (20). Furthermore, John Carlos Rowe reveals that the influence of Nat Turner's rebellion of 1831 is clear in this work.

In this narrative, Poe interweaves truth with fiction, using several historical facts and information. Conversely, *Pym*'s conclusion—a large white human figure that swallows the boat, which has long troubled critics, appears to be symbolic rather than realistic, as Michiko Shimokobe argues (1).

In *Pym*, the characters board several ships and small boats. At the

beginning of this story, Pym and his friend, Augustus, board the *Arial*, which is wrecked by a storm's onset. The next ship Pym boards is a whaling ship, the *Grampus*, on which a mutiny erupts and the captaincy changes. Subsequently, a gale is blowing, and the *Grampus* is almost destroyed. In the famous last scene, Pym and Dirk Peters, aboard the small canoe, "rushed into the embraces of the cataract" (217).

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the instabilities of Pym's status in this work. The narrative weaves between what Pym/Poe renounces and what Pym/Poe holds true. While in the novel, Pym renounces the inheritance that he expects to receive as the heir of his grandfather, Poe, as an author, renounced ownership of his copyright in the process of publication of *Pym.* It seems that the events in *Pym*—the shipwreck, renunciation of inheritance, mutiny, and fight with the natives of Tsalal—represent not only Pym/Poe's perplexity, but the fluctuation of this text itself.

## 2. Pym's Passive Attitude and Renunciation of Inheritance

Throughout the story, Pym remains passive in everything: he never acts with his own will. Pym is invited to board the *Arial* and the *Grampus* by Augustus and is saved by the crews of *the Penguin* from the shipwreck. When the ship's crew incites a mutiny, he is again saved by Augustus from starvation.

After he returns from the adventure, Pym is advised to write a work

based on his experience. In the Preface, Pym writes that several gentlemen "were constantly urging it upon me, as a duty, to give my narrative to the public" (3). It is Poe, as an editor, who suggests Pym to publish a book about his adventure:

> He [Poe] afterword proposed (finding that I would not stir in the matter) that I should allow him [Poe] to draw up, in his own word, a narrative of the earlier portion of my adventures, from facts afforded by myself, publishing it in the Southern Messenger *under the garb of fiction*. To this, perceiving no objection, I consented, stipulating only that my real name should be retained....and, in order that it might certainly be regarded as fiction, the name of Mr. Poe was affixed to the articles in the table of contents of magazine. (4)

To this offer, Pym shows no positive intention to write his narrative. Allowing Mr. Poe to substitute for writing a part of the narrative, the text of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* has been made public.

Pym's passivity is apparent at the beginning of the story and continues after he departs; Pym remains passive as a part of the ship's crew. Pym and his friend Augustus drink excessively and, under the influence of alcohol, board *the Arial*. It is not Pym but Augustus who is inclined to embark upon this midnight adventure of the sea.

> It might have been half an hour from the time of our getting in bed, and I was just about falling into a doze, when he suddenly started up, and swore with a terrible oath that he would not go to sleep for any Arthur Pym in Christendom, when there was so glorious a breeze from the southwest…He was only tired, he added, of lying in bed on such a fine night like a dog, and was determined to get up and dress, and go out on a frolic with the boat. (8)

On *the Arial*, Augustus takes the initiative by taking the helm, and Pym stations himself by the mast. When Augustus is too drunk to operate the tiller, Pym says, "I was too agitated to think of taking it [the tiller] myself" (11). His passive attitude could be seen in his role as an observer.

The most typical episode that symbolizes Pym's position as a passive outsider is his renunciation of his inheritance. At the beginning of this story, Pym believes that his maternal grandfather "was more attached" to him than to any other person in the world" (7). Pym "expected to inherit most of his property at his death" (4). This expectation fails when his grandfather becomes angry at Pym's plan to board a whaling ship.

> …my grandfather, from whom I expected much, vowed to cut me off with a shilling if I should ever broach the subject to him again. These difficulties, however, so far from abating my desire, only added fuel to the flame. (19)

It seems that Pym easily decides to embark upon a whaling voyage with Augustus, which leads to his renunciation of the inheritance. He does not insist on his right as his grandfather's heir. By his renunciation of his right to the inheritance, he escapes from his family and obtains freedom. This scene is symbolic of Pym's anti-authoritarian sentiments. Conversely, he is tenacious in his "passion for the sea" (18). He wishes to sever the connection with his family, and he prefers a life of vagrancy.

When Pym decides to go on a whaling voyage, Augustus makes arrangements to hide Pym in the ship.

> In pursuance of my scheme of deception, I was necessarily obliged to leave much to the management of Augustus, who was employed for the greater part of every day on board the Grampus, attending to some arrangements for his father in the cabin and cabin hold. (20)

Augustus continues to take initiative in planning how to sneak Pym onto the ship. Although Pym has a strong passion for the sea, he must rely on Augustus, who could efficiently work *the Grampus*. After the *Grampus* embarks on her voyage, Pym is still treated as an outsider in the power struggle. While the mutiny occurs on deck and the captain, Augustus's father, is killed, Pym hides in a box in the hold of the ship. Far from participating in the bloodshed, Pym does not even know what is happening outside.

## 3. Pym as a Holder

The most famous incident of this narrative is the scene involving cannibalism. The passive attitude exhibited by Pym, however, is reversed in this incident. They somehow survive the mutiny, but are caught in a rainstorm while all their provisions are swept away by the waves. At that moment, there are four survivors: Pym, Augustus, Dirk Peters, and Parker.

As a result of the rainstorm, the four survivors suffer from severe starvation. In a tense critical situation, Parker "proposed that one of them should die to preserve the existence of the others" (112). They are going to decide the victim by drawing lots. Pym is given the job of holding the lots, which means that he does not have to draw one. He is a passive observer again. When Pym retires to one end of the hulk to arrange the lots, he thinks the following:

> Even then I could not bring myself to arrange the splinters upon the spot, but thought over every species of finesse by which I could trick some of my fellow sufferers to draw the short straw, as it had been agreed that whoever drew the shortest of four splinters from my hand was to die for the preservation of the rest. Before any one condemn me for this apparent heartlessness, let him be placed in a situation precisely similar to my own. (116)

Although he implies this conspiracy, he never reveals whether he follows

through with it. First, one of the survivors, Dirk Peters, draws, then Augustus, and as a result, they are both free. The victim is now narrowed down to Pym or Parker. Pym expresses his feelings at this critical moment: "At this moment all the fierceness of the tiger possessed my bosom, and I felt towards my poor fellow-creature, Parker, the most intense, the most diabolical hatred" (117). There is a possibility that Pym would lay a trap for Parker. It is Pym who utilizes his position of power to make Parker pick the shortest splinter.

> It was full five minutes before he could summon resolution to draw, during which period of heartrending suspense I never once opened my eyes. Presently one of the two lots was quickly drawn from my hand. The decision was then over, yet I knew not whether it was for me or against me. No one spoke, and still I dared not satisfy myself by looking at the splinter I held. Peters at length took me by the hand, and, and I forced myself to look up, when I immediately saw by the countenance of Parker that I was safe…(117)

During the lottery, Pym "never once opened" his eyes. He did just hold the lots. Seemingly, there is no strong evidence that Pym forced Parker to draw the fatal splinter. Pym holds the truth as a closely guarded secret. His role showcases how passivity is advantageous in a scene such as this one. Pym has power over the survivors as the passive holder. A holder connotes a person who possesses the power of controlling the right of choice. In this

case, Pym's passivity functions as a ruler who holds hegemony over the other survivors. His passivity has a phantasmagoric aspect; passiveness does not connote a simple negative attitude, but it sometimes leads to a spontaneous action and yields violent power.

## 4. Circumstances of the Publication of *Pym*

Some researchers have previously discussed the complications involved in the publication of *Pym*. First, I would like to take a brief look at the background of the publication of *Pym*. According to *Poe's Log*, the first installment of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* was published on the *Southern Literary Messenger*, January 26, 1837; simultaneously, White, the editor of the *Messenger*, announced Poe's retirement. Then, Poe and his family arrived in New York in early February. On March 3, the *Messenger* published the second installment of *Pym*, though the serialization stopped thereafter. After moving to New York, Poe continued working on *Pym* and finished the novel while living in New York. Harper & Brothers announced that *Pym* was ready to be published in May 1837. However, the publication of *Pym* was canceled. Due to the "Panic of 1837," the New York City Bank suspended payments. It was on July 30, 1838 that *Pym* was finally published as a book. Poe lost his job as an editor and, at nearly the same time, began to write the *Pym* series. It was during this period that Poe started living a vagrant life, being tossed in the cosmopolitan wave of New York.

The process of writing this narrative is also unstable in its structure. It is common knowledge that the author of *Pym* is Edgar Allan Poe. I would like to point out the hardly mentioned fact about this text that there are two writers within the text—Pym and Poe:

> The expose being made, it will be seen at once how much of what follows I claim to be my own writing; and it will also be understood that no fact is misrepresented in the first few pages which were written by Mr. Poe. Even to those readers who have not seen the Messenger, it will be unnecessary to point out where his portion ends and my own commences; the difference in point of style will be readily perceived. (5)

According to Pym in the preface, Mr. Poe writes the first few pages. Pym said it was easy for the readers to perceive the difference between Pym's portions and Poe's. It can be seen as an authority-violating situation here, which is created by Edgar Allan Poe himself.

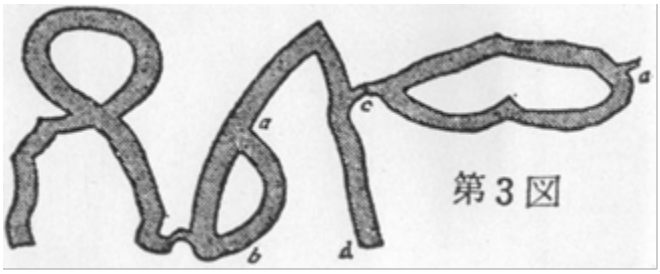
## 5. Copyrights and Authorship

Alexander Hammond argues that "the economics of authorship and publication underwent a profound transformation in this country between 1820 and 1850 as a mass market emerged" (153). Michael T. Gilmore also points out that "authors lost most of their earlier control over publication"

to “highly competitive publishing houses” (4). By the end of this period, publishing had become an industry, and the writer had become a producer of commodities for the literary marketplace. Kenneth Silverman says, “the opportunities and limitations of Poe’s own career had been inseparable from that growth” (246). In the growing marketplace of publication, the lack of international copyright became a major problem for the publishing business.

In 1838, the year when *Pym* was published, George Palmer Putnam founded the American International Copyright Association with the aim of securing copyright recognition for American authors overseas. In 1843, famous American authors, including Poe, formed the American Copyright Club to push for international copyright. All their efforts failed; however, Poe certainly claimed an international copyright law and was responsible for putting things in place.

Within the text, Poe implicitly asserts his own copyright. Examine these figures of *Pym*.



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These are the figures of the chasms where Pym and Peters were buried alive. Daniel A. Wells notes, “the shape of the chasm in the island of Tsalal spells out, in longhand, the letters of Poe’s last name, reversed” (14). He

adds, “Poe signs his name, he has written with an invisible finger his signature on the Tsalalian hills” (14). Indeed, to me, these figures appear as Poe’s secret signature declaring his authorship.

As we know, this story suddenly ends, and there is an added note that an unknown writer is supposed to have written. This note provides information about the death of Pym and “the few remaining chapters” of this narrative:

> It is feared that the few remaining chapters which were to have completed his narrative, and which were retained by him, while the above were in type, for the purpose of revision, have been irrecoverably lost through the accident by which he perished himself. This, however, may prove not to be the case, and the papers, if ultimately found, will be given to the public. (219)

Pym retained the last few chapters to revise. Owing to his death, we lost these chapters, which are to be published when they are found. However, there is one more possibility that can allow us to read the chapters left unpublished. It is Poe, the author himself, who is able to bring the blank pages of the lost chapters to the readers.

> The gentleman whose name is mentioned in the preface, and who, from the statement there made, might be supposed able to fill the vacuum, has declined the task — this for satisfactory reasons

> connected with the general inaccuracy of the details afforded him, and his disbelief in the entire truth of the latter portions of the narration. (219)

The gentleman is clearly Poe. He implies that he has some information about "the vacuum" that is created in Pym's narrative by the author's death. However, Poe "declined the task" of writing the remaining chapters. He asserts his authorship not only by engraving his secret autograph on the hills of Tsalal, but also by leaving the missing pages.

In the note, an unknown writer/Poe left the description of Dirk Peters, a mixed-race Native American who is one of the survivors of this adventure. The bewildering conclusion of *Pym* has long been controversial—one of the reasons is the fate of Dirk Peters. "Peters, from whom some information might be expected, is still alive, and a resident of Illinois, but cannot be met with at present" (219)[23]. At the end of the story, nobody reaches him and his whereabouts remain unknown. Although his residence and address are revealed, the reason why no one could meet him is left undisclosed. Dirk Peters is entitled to accomplish the role of filling the vacuum of Pym's narrative. This emphasizes that Poe is the only person who can truly fill the vacuum of this narrative.

Tomonori Nishiyama argues that Poe is trying to protect his texts by copyright; conversely, as his works are completed through stealing others' text, he must have known that literature is just "purloined literature" (my trans., 41-42). If so, the narrative, which Edgar Allan Poe writes as Arthur

Gordon Pym, is the stolen story from Pym/Poe. This story can also be referred to as an uncompleted work, and Poe exercises his authorship by not completing the last few pages.

To conclude, Pym renounces his inheritance by going to the sea; thus, he abandons his fortune and land. His half-forced independence from his family and the patriarchy is symbolized during the scene in which Pym disguises himself to slip onboard the brig and runs into his grandfather on the way to the wharf:

> Just as we turned the second corner, after passing Mr. Edmunds' well, who should appear, standing right in front of me, and looking me full in the face, but old Mr. Peterson, my grandfather. (21)

Pym's grandfather notices his grandson and calls out to him; however, Pym pretends not to be aware of his grandfather:

> "Why, bless my soul, Gordon," said he, after a long pause, "why, why – whose dirty cloak is that you have on?" "Sir!" I replied, assuming, as well as I could, in the exigency of the moment, an air of offended surprise, and talking in the gruffest of all imaginable tones–"sir! you are a sum'mat mistaken; my name, in the first place, bee'nt nothing at all like Goddin, (21)

As Pym masks his identity from his grandfather, so does Edgar Allan Poe

disguise himself—sometimes as Arthur Gordon Pym and other times as Mr. Poe. In this textual disguise, Poe, the nineteenth–century author, managed to exercise authorship without formal copyright. By holding the missing chapters of his narrative within him, rather than releasing them to the public, Poe acquired the textual authority.

# Chapter 6

# House on Usurped Land:

# Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*

## 1. Inherited House

One year after the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's second novel, *The House of the Seven Gables*, was published in 1851. In this novel, Hawthorne departs from the setting of seventeenth century Boston, and places his new story in Salem, Massachusetts in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the story itself is narrated from the point of view of Hawthorne's contemporary nineteenth century community, the author recalls the history of the seventeenth century—the Puritan era.

The plot constantly refers to the history of two families—the Pyncheons and the Maules—that originated in the seventeenth century. Colonel Pyncheon is one of the early Puritan settlers, and we are told that he built a mansion in Salem about a hundred and sixty years before the narrative begins. This house triggers a prolonged dispute over the land between the two families for two hundred years; the house represents their ill-fated conflict.

The story develops at the land where the historical house is located. The site upon which the House of the Seven Gables stands, and in the middle of which is a magnificent spring of soft water called Maule's Well, which is originally owned by a man named Matthew Maule. Colonel

Pyncheon wishes to build his mansion on this site. He tries to realize his plan by charging Matthew Maule with the sin of witchcraft and dispossesses him. When Maule is about to be executed on the gallows, he declares that the Pyncheon family will be cursed by God. This curse will bring misfortune to the Pyncheons.

As soon as poor Matthew Maule is dead, Colonel Pyncheon starts building his magnificent mansion, which later comes to be known as the Pyncheon House. On the very day that Colonel Pyncheon invites the townspeople to his newly built mansion, he is mysteriously found dead in his chair in his room.

In 1851, the well-known contemporary critic, Evert Augustus Duyckinck remarks:

> The story of the House of the Seven Gables is a tale of retribution, of expiation extending over a period of two hundred years, it taking all that while to lay the ghost of the earliest victim in the time of the witchcraft; for by the way, it is to Salem that this blackened old dwelling, mildewed with easterly scud, belongs. The yepman who originally struck his spade into the spot, by the side of a crystal spring, was hanged for a wizard, under the afflictive dispensation of Cotton Mather. (28)

Duyckinck has a good reason to take note of "the witchcraft," which is one of the significant themes in this novel. Nathaniel Hawthorne's

great-grandfather, John Hathorne, was involved in the witchcraft trial. According to Brenda Wineapple:

> Colonel John mounted his steed and rode out to the stony promontory later known as Gallows Hill.... According to his family, he also brought down a curse on subsequent Hathornes [Hawthornes], hurled at him by one of the dying witches. (15-16)

There are some critics who draw attention to the social characteristics of the antebellum America reflected in the story, such as commercialism, the economic infrastructure of America, and the development of the transportation network. Henry James remarks that the story is a "magnificent fragment" with "a sort of expansive quality which never wholly fructifies" (54). David Anthony considers *The House of the Seven Gables* in terms of "the vexed relations between mass culture and high culture accompanying class struggle during this period [the mid-nineteenth century]" (251). My interest here is in the social and genetic interpretation of this novel. I suggest that this novel can be read in terms of "inheritance" as a social aspect, and "reproduction" as a genetic aspect. To support my argument, I would like to introduce one paragraph from the preface of the novel.

Nathaniel Hawthorne writes an interesting preface to *The Scarlet Letter*—"The Custom House"—which should be read before beginning the novel. *The House of the Seven Gables* also has a famous preface in which

Hawthorne defines the difference between a romance and a novel in his work. After this definition, he goes on to state that romance "lies in the attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very Present that is flitting away from us" (22). Hawthorne also requests the reader not to "assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative" (3). Then, he compares a romance to "building a house, of material long in use for constructing castles in the air" (3). I would like to pay special attention to the next paragraph of the preface:

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

Two terms in this paragraph attract our attention—"ill-gotten gold" and "real estate". "Gold" and "land" are the two forms of estate, namely, movable property and real estate. Hawthorne declares that both these forms of estate are thrown over all future generations like an avalanche of snow. The adjective "ill-gotten" implies that the "gold" has been acquired wrongly.

With regard to the term “real estate,” Colonel Pyncheon is said to have unfairly dispossessed Matthew Maule by misleading the townspeople to execute him for the sin of witchcraft. It is immediately after Colonel Pyncheon builds a new mansion on the site that he dies a sudden death. Subsequently, an old bachelor, Jaffrey Pyncheon—who is Hepzibah, Clifford and Jaffrey’s uncle—is killed by his nephew. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon also dies with the same symptoms as Colonel Pyncheon and the old bachelor. Their unfortunate deaths seem to be brought on by them taking away the land for Matthew Maule. His curse is believed to have brought the misfortune of sudden death to the Pyncheons. However, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon’s death is discussed as follows: “the event [his death] was a natural, and—except for some unimportant particulars, denoting a slight idiosyncrasy—by no means an unusual form of death” (309).

The Judge’s death indicates that the deaths of the Pyncheons are caused by some kind of hereditary diseases and not by Maule’s curse. Now consider the implication of the above-mentioned paragraph. Hawthorne says that “the wrong-doing of one generation,” such as the seizure of land, becomes “a mischief”. This mischief, nevertheless, is not a curse or death; rather, it implies that “ill-gotten gold” and “real estate” will bring misfortunes to “the heads of posterity”. So, to summarize, ancestral property such as “ill-gotten gold” or “real estate” exerts an influence on the descendants. It appears that the paragraph in the preface describes this kind of “inheritance”.

I argue that the story could be reconsidered in terms of “inheritance.”

The House of the Seven Gables itself is property that has been passed down through the generations of the Pyncheon family. Accordingly, the three deaths in this family—those of Colonel Pyncheon, Jaffrey Pyncheon, and Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon—are connected with the inheritance of the House of the Seven Gables.

I provide a brief explanation regarding the deaths of the Pyncheon family that occur in the story. Three men of the Pyncheons die in different and mysterious ways. The very day that Colonel Pyncheon opens his beautiful new mansion—a hundred and sixty years before the narrative begins—his guests find him dead in his room. The second instance of death is that of Jaffrey Pyncheon. He is said to have been murdered by his nephew Clifford. The third character to die is Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. During his visit to the House of the Seven Gables to see Clifford, he dies suddenly in the empty parlor while waiting for Clifford to appear.

At this point, one question arises—who is the final inheritor after these men are gone. The Pyncheon family has arrangements for certain members to inherit the money and property owned by these three men after their death.

But now the family faces a serious crisis—there are no young family members left to give birth to an heir to the Pyncheons. Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon is a sixty-year-old spinster who lives alone in the House of the Seven Gables. She is no longer able to bear children. In addition, there are only five surviving members of the Pyncheon family—Judge Jaffrey, his son who lives in Europe, Clifford, Hepzibah, and Phoebe. The Pyncheon

family, which was once prosperous, has fallen into a steady decline. These dwindling family members may result in the end of the Pyncheon bloodline. However, there is one girl left to resolve this crisis; Phoebe Pyncheon, who is a pretty young girl of seventeen, arrives at the House of the Seven Gables. The aim of this chapter is to consider the inheritance and perpetuation of the Pyncheon family in *The House of the Seven Gables*. I also draw attention to the inheritance of the house itself. While considering the inheritance of the house, it is important to look at the history of the Pyncheon family in retrospect.

## 2. Breakdown of Paternal Inheritance

In chapter 1 of this story—"The Old Pyncheon Family"—the conflict between Colonel Pyncheon and Matthew Maule results in Maule's execution for witchcraft and brings about the death of Colonel Pyncheon. Colonel Pyncheon is the first member of the Pyncheon family to die in this novel. When his magnificent, new, seven-gabled mansion has been constructed, Colonel Pyncheon invites the townspeople over to show them the House. The guests await his welcome speech; however, Colonel Pyncheon does not arrive. When some of the guests knock on the door of the Colonel's room, they receive no response. As soon as the door is opened, Colonel Pyncheon's grandchild, Gervayse, runs up to him and finds him dead in his chair, his ruff and beard smeared red with blood. As there is no clue to his strange death, his doctors call it a "Sudden Death" (17).

Consequently, the townspeople gossip that Maule's curse is the cause of taking Colonel Pyncheon's life.

Colonel Pyncheon—a rich man who has built a massive mansion—is an influential member of the community. Upon his death, all his property, including the Pyncheon-house, is bequeathed to his heir—his son. In this case, the son inherits the paternal property. This is primogeniture, that is, a system in which the eldest son in the family receives all the property when his father dies.

In addition to the seven-gabled house, Colonel Pyncheon owned another piece of real estate, namely, "Waldo County, in the State of Maine" (18). He had "a claim, through an Indian deed, confirmed by a subsequent grant of the General Court, to a vast and as yet unexplored and unmeasured trace of eastern lands" (18). Had Colonel Pyncheon "survived only a few weeks longer," this claim would have been realized (18). The Indian deed, which is necessary to confirm the claim, is missing. Therefore, the son of Colonel Pyncheon cannot get hold of this "impalpable" land. This is why the Pyncheon family engages in a protracted struggle to acquire the eastern land. This land "would be the source of incalculable wealth to the Pyncheon blood" (18).

Gervayse Pyncheon is Colonel Pyncheon's grandson and the first to witness the Colonel's dead body. He, too, has inherited the house by the system of primogeniture. On attaining manhood, Gervayse Pyncheon "had visited England, where he married a lady of fortune, and had subsequently spent many years, partly in the mother country, and partly in various

cities, on the continent of Europe" (190). When his fortune begins to decline, he returns to America. However, his efforts to obtain the eastern deed are motivated by his desire to return to England. Eventually, his lust for the deed brings misfortune to his daughter, Alice Pyncheon.

The account of Alice Pyncheon is a story within a story. It comprises a discrete interlude to *The House of the Seven Gables.* According to Leon Chai, "Hawthorne deliberately contrasts it [the story of Alice Pyncheon] with the rest of his story by presenting it as a composition by Holgrave, the daguerreotypist" (257). Holgrave tells Phoebe that he is a published author and begins to read out a story that he has written about Alice Pyncheon. His story relates the events that occurred thirty-seven years after the old mansion was built. For the sake of clarity, I introduce the characters in his story. The owner of the massive mansion, Gervayse Pyncheon, summons a man called Matthew Maule. He is the only son of Thomas Maule, who built the House of the Seven Gables. Alice Pyncheon is the only daughter of Gervayse Pyncheon.

Gervayse Pyncheon strikes a deal with Matthew Maule, who is the son of Thomas Maule and the grandson of the executed Matthew Maule. Gervayse tells Maule, "put me in possession of the document, essential to establish my rights, and the House of the Seven Gables is your own" (199)! His intention is to exchange the critical deed of the eastern land with the House of the Seven Gables. However, Maule concedes to the deal on the condition that he is permitted to speak to Pyncheon's daughter, Alice.

Alice is then summoned; she is mesmerized by Matthew Maule. On

account of his pact with Gervayse Pyncheon, who wishes to obtain the lost deed to the Pyncheons' eastern property, Matthew Maule is allowed to exercise his mesmeric power over Alice. After they meet, "Alice is forced by Maule to perform a variety of demeaning acts for him, including waiting on Maule's bride the night of his wedding" (Anthony 260). She is enfeebled because of this mesmeric power and subsequently dies of a fatal cold. Nevertheless, it is the mental fatigue and indignity she suffers under Maule's mesmerism that became the cause of her death. Although Alice's father, Gervayse, permits Maule an interview with her in order to obtain the eastern land, he is left empty-handed. Thus, Alice may be considered a victim of her father's lust for property.

Matthew Maule's intentions in the course of this incident are noteworthy. His true purpose is not the recovery of the land on which the House of the Seven Gables was built. Initially, he might have coveted the land and the House. Nevertheless, he changes his mind because of Alice haughty manner. Her aristocratic manner provokes his ill will. Alice forces under the spell of Matthew Maule, instead of getting the information about the deed from him. His purpose is "to convert the mind of Alice into a kind of telescopic medium, through which Mr. Pyncheon [Gervayse Pyncheon] and himself [Matthew Maule] might obtain a glimpse into the spiritual world" (206).

In one of Alice's trances, she describes three figures, which can only be perceived, through her spiritualized vision. The visual allegory in her spiritual world expresses the theme of the Pyncheon family history; it

represents a struggle for possession in which one family (the Pyncheons) obtains the wealth.

For Colonel Pyncheon, this wealth takes the form of the land, which he snatches from Matthew Maule. It comprises the secret whereabouts of the deed. The possession of the Maules' land at the cost of his death, creates a sense of guilt in the members of the Pyncheon family, and this shows up during Alice's trance in which she sees a man [Colonel Pyncheon] throwing up the blood. The ominous actions of these three mysterious figures in Alice's trance represent the relationship between this family guilt and their failure to obtain the land. Young Matthew Maule makes the following declaration to Gervayse:

> The custody of this secret, that would enrich his heirs, makes part of your grandfather's [Colonel Pyncheon's] retribution. He must choke with it, until it is no longer of any value. And keep you the House of the Seven Gables! It is too dear bought an inheritance, and too heavy, with the curse upon it, to be shifted yet awhile from the Colonel's posterity! (207)

Matthew Maule's objective is thus neither the repossession land nor the procurement of the House of the Seven Gables. He wants to forth the Pyncheon family to maintain this accused old house. His mesmerism leads to the death of Alice; thus, the Pyncheons have to keep the mansion. Although Gervayse Pyncheon tries to recover the eastern property to which

Colonel Pyncheon had held the title, he fails. On the contrary, his lust for the eastern land drives Alice to her death. She is a victim of her father's greed.

The eastern land, however, has passed into the possession of others; the Pyncheons are, as yet, unaware of this fact. The following sentences allude to this transfer of the land:

> But in course of time, the territory was partly re-granted to more favored individuals, and partly cleared and occupied by actual settlers. These last, if they ever heard of the Pyncheon title, would have laughed at the idea of any man's asserting a right—on the strength of mouldy parchments, signed with the faded autographs of governors and legislators, long dead and forgotten—to the lands which they or their fathers had wrested from the wild hand of Nature, by their own sturdy toil. (18–19)

As a result, the Pyncheons permanently lose the eastern property. Only the deed to the land may still be hidden in the House of the Seven Gables. However, the Pyncheons do not find it.

The second character to die in the novel is an old bachelor, namely, Jaffrey Pyncheon (Alice Pyncheon is a character in Holgrave's story). Jaffrey Pyncheon's death is also very sensational and mysterious. The following paragraph describes a key scene that provides a solution to the mystery of his death:

> …the young man was tempted by the devil, one night, to search his uncle's private drawers, to which he had unsuspected means of access. While thus criminally occupied, he was startled by the opening of the chamber-door. There stood old Jaffrey Pyncheon, in his nightclothes! The surprise of such a discovery, his agitation, alarm, and horror, brought on the crisis of a disorder to which the old bachelor had an hereditary liability; he seemed to choke with blood, and fell upon the floor, striking his temple a heavy blow against the corner of a table. What was to be done? The old man was surely dead!…the young man continued his search of the drawers, and found a will of recent date in favor of Clifford—which he destroyed—and an older one in his own favor, which he suffered to remain. (311–312)

While young Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is ransacking his uncle's desk, his uncle finds him; he is extremely surprised to come upon young Jaffrey. When the old bachelor dies, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon finds two wills, one in his own favor and another of later date in favor of Clifford. Jaffrey destroys the second will and plants an evidence to throw suspicion on Clifford, who is accordingly soon imprisoned for murder.

As a matter of course, Clifford loses the right of succession. All of the old bachelor's property, including the massive mansion, comes into the possession of young Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Only the life-estate of the old mansion is succeeded by Hepzibah Pyncheon in accordance with the old

bachelor's will. Although Clifford is expected to inherit the property of his uncle Jaffrey Pyncheon, he is unable to come into his inheritance. On the contrary, he is unjustly sent to prison for thirty years. It is Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon who succeeds to the property of the Pyncheon-house and his uncle's other possessions.

The old bachelor is "possessed of great wealth, in addition to the old mansion and real estate which constituted what remained of the ancient Pyncheon property" (22). Since young Jaffrey Pyncheon inherits his uncle's property, he becomes a rich man and a respected individual in a public position. In contrast, Clifford is jailed for murder. This accusation of murder and the old bachelor's property determine the destiny of the two nephews, Jaffrey and Clifford.

The following sentences explain the mindset of the deceased old bachelor:

> Being of an eccentric and melancholy turn of mind, and greatly given to rummaging old records and hearkening to old traditions, he had brought himself, it is averred, to the conclusion, that Matthew Maul, the wizard, had been foully wronged out of his homestead, if not out of his life. (23)

At this point in the novel, a century and a half has passed since Colonel Pyncheon built the mansion. Although old Jaffrey Pyncheon tries to return the land to the descendants of the executed Matthew Maule, his plan is not

realized because he encounters oppositions from his relatives. With regard to "patrimonial property," Hawthorne declares, "there is no one thing which men so rarely do, whatever the provocation or inducement, as to bequeath patrimonial property away from their own blood" (23). Old Jaffrey Pyncheon's relatives are afraid that he will execute his plan of returning the land to the Maules through his last will. However, he does not return anything to the Maules; he appears to have abandoned the idea of the restoration of the land. Consequently, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon inherits all the property from the old bachelor.

The third character to die is also named Jaffrey Pyncheon; he is Judge Pyncheon, the nephew of old Jaffrey Pyncheon. He dies suddenly in an empty parlor while waiting for Clifford to appear. The following paragraph from the novel describes Judge Pyncheon:

> The new heir [Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon], up to the period of his accession, was reckoned rather a dissipated youth, but had at once reformed, and made himself an exceedingly respectable member of society. In fact, he showed more of the Pyncheon quality, and had won higher eminence in the world, than any of his race since the time of the original Puritan [Colonel Pyncheon]. Applying himself, in earlier manhood, to the study of the law, and having a natural tendency towards office, he had attained, many years ago, to a judicial situation in some inferior court, which gave him, for life, the very desirable and imposing title of Judge. (24)

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, like Colonel Pyncheon, is greedy—he has a strong lust for property. His greed is the cause of Clifford's imprisonment, and eventually leads to Judge Pyncheon's own death.

Despite his enormous fortune, the avaricious Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is not satisfied with his wealth. He covets his uncle's hidden property as well. His obsession with acquiring wealth ironically becomes the cause of his own death. He is convinced that Clifford is privy to some important secrets regarding the great wealth of his uncle Jaffrey Pyncheon. After Hepzibah finds out about the secret spring and uncovers the old deed to the eastern land, she recalls what her brother talked to her cousin, Jaffrey in their youth:

> When they [Clifford and Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon] were young together, Clifford probably made a kind of fairly-tale of this discovery. He was dreaming hither and thither about the house, and lighting up its dark corners with beautiful stories. And poor Jaffrey, who took hold of everything as if it were real, thought my brother had found out his uncle's wealth. He died with this delusion in mind! (316)

In a sense, Hepzibah's remark is correct because Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's misunderstanding brings about his own death. He dies suddenly, while waiting for Clifford, probably because he is exceedingly eager to ask Clifford what he knows about their uncle Jaffrey's wealth.

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon becomes a person of wealth, owing to his uncle's property and amasses more wealth himself. He has already launched himself into politics and is preparing to become a governor. In his attempt to acquire more property, he visits Clifford at the old house because he believes that Clifford knows the secret of the old bachelor's wealth. Were the property to be found, all of it would pass into Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's possession by the will of his uncle. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon believes that Clifford knows the whereabouts of the hidden wealth. He demands that Clifford tells him about the hidden wealth. When he waits for Clifford, he suddenly dies of seizure.

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon has an only son who is his heir. This son is traveling in Europe. However, we are told that about a week after Judge Pyncheon's death, "one of the Cunard steamers brought intelligence of the death, by cholera, of Judge Pyncheon's son, just at the point of embarkation for his native land" (313). As a consequence, all of Judge Pyncheon's property is inherited to the other Pyncheons: "Clifford became rich; so did Hepzibah; so did our little village maiden [Phoebe], and through her, that sworn foe of wealth and all manner of conservatism—the wild reformer—Holgrave" (313)! Since Judge Pyncheon also owns a country house, the surviving Pyncheons move out of the Pyncheon-house to live there.

Having examined the details of three instances of deaths and the system of inheritance in this chapter, I will now focus on the old bachelor, Jaffrey Pyncheon. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon succeeds to all of the old

bachelor's property. However, Hepzibah secures the life-estate of the House of the Seven Gables although she does not have proprietary rights. The life-estate provides her with a permanent residence. Up to this point, the system of inheritance in the Pyncheon family has generally been patrilineal—from father to son, or man to man. It is unusual for a woman to succeed to the patrimonial property. Although Hepzibah does not own the seven-gabled mansion, her uncle's will give her the right to occupy the House as long as she lives. This is the peculiarity of Jaffrey Pyncheon's inheritance; it apparently represents the breakdown of paternal inheritance in the Pyncheon family line.

### 3. The Barren House

The central image of *The House of the Seven Gables* is the house itself. It is also the title of this novel. The most part of this story take places within the old mansion. Two inhabitants of this old house are Hepzibah Pyncheon, who is a sixty years old spinster, and Holgrave, who lives in a remote gable in the massive mansion. The other people, along the development of the story, will come to the Pyncheon-house to inhabit: Clifford, who comes back to the old mansion, and Phoebe, who joins the inhabitants of the old house. In terms of the reproduction, there is an interesting difference among these members. Two people are unable to procreate. Other two are able to procreate. Consider now the possibility of reproduction in the space of the House of the Seven Gables.

First of all, I would like to look at Hepzibah Pyncheon as a woman. This woman has been living in the old mansion since she was born, because her uncle, the old bachelor gives her a life-estate of the Pyncheon-house. She has the right to reside in the House during her lifetime. As for her appearance, "storm-shattered by affliction—but a gaunt, sallow, rusty-jointed maiden, in a long-waisted silk–gown, and with the strange horror of a turban on her head" (41)! The face is "redeemed from insignificance only by the contraction of her eyebrows into a near-sighted scowl" (41). Hepzibah, a sixty years old spinster, never had a lover and got married; she never knew, "by her own experience, what love technically means" (32). When she was a young lady, she would have the opportunity to have a boyfriend and get married. However, she is now too old to have a child. She does not have the reproductive function any more.

The other member of the Pyncheon family, who has the possibility to reproduce the Pyncheons' descendant, is Clifford. However, he loses his thirty years in prison and now he is too old to have a child. He is the nephew of the deceased Jaffrey Pyncheon. When his uncle, Jaffrey Pyncheon dies of a hereditary spasm, Clifford is unfairly blamed for his death by the machinations of his cousin, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. After thirty years, Clifford is released and comes back to the old house to live with his single sister. During his thirty years imprisonment, he loses his youth. When he is released, he is already an old man. He "had never quaffed the cup of passionate love, and knew that it was now too late" (141). He wastes his manhood in his thirty years in prison.

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is also an old man. Hepzibah told him: "You are not young, Cousin Jaffrey—no, nor middle-aged—but already an old man. The hair is white upon your head" (236-237)! In terms of reproduction, neither Clifford nor Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon will function. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is not able to have more children. He gets married before and has an only son. However, according to Roy R. Male, "Jaffrey exhausts his wife in three or four years, and his only son dies of cholera" (124). The three older Pyncheons will not be able to have any descendants.

There is one person living in the old mansion, who is not the member of the Pyncheon family. This man is "a certain orderly young man, an artist in the daguerreotype line, who for about three months back, had been a lodger in a remote gable" (30). He is twenty-one years old, a young man, whose name is Holgrave. At the beginning of this story, a man and a woman—Holgrave and Hepzibah—are living in the House of the Seven Gables. However, it is an obvious fact that the reproduction is impossible between Hepzibah and Holgrave with their ages. As Holgrave is a healthy, young, and procreative man, he can produce a child if a young woman comes to the Pyncheon-house.

One day, an omnibus pulls up in front of the old mansion and a young girl alights. The young girl "stole softly into the hall, and herself invisible, gazed through the dusty side-lights of the portal at the young, blooming, and very cheerful face, which presented itself for admittance into the gloomy old mansion" (68). This girl is Phoebe Pyncheon who comes to the seven-gabled house where the old spinster and young daguerreotypist are

living. As a seventeen years healthy young girl, she must have a reproductive function. At that point in time, a young man and a young woman get together in the space of the House of the Seven Gables. Young Holgrave and young Phoebe can satisfy all conditions to procreate. There is a possibility of the reproduction in the Pyncheon-house since Phoebe came to the old house. In other words, there is no possibility of the reproduction in the old mansion until Phoebe visits to the House.

I would like to consider the cause of the childless house. Although there are a young man and a young woman, it is not possible for them to have a child in the old house. It seems that the cause of the childless is not only the inhabitants, but also the House itself. You may call that the House of the Seven Gables is a barren house. “Barren” means that women or female animals are not able to bear children or young animal. I would like to examine the peculiarity of this old mansion.

It seems that there is a correlation between the barren Hepzibah and her residence. As Hepzibah lives in the gloomy house, she may become a barren woman. The Pyncheon-house has been exerted a bad influence on her. I suggest the case of Phoebe as a sample to explain the influence of the seven-gabled mansion. When she arrived the old mansion, she was “the young maid” (82), and her “fresh and maidenly figure was both sunshine and flowers” (109). Clifford, especially, needed her. She is like a daughter for him, and yet he is keenly aware of her virginal bloom. Soon a routine is established: while Clifford naps after breakfast, Hepzibah watches him, and Phoebe tends the shop; later the young girl entertains him while

Hepzibah turns to business. For Clifford, “the reality, and simplicity, and through homeliness of the girl’s [Phoebe’s] nature, were as powerful charm as any that she possessed” (140). Gradually, however, Phoebe grows somewhat more pensive, as she lives longer in the House.

The old mansion “had both the dry-rot and the damp rot in its walls; it was not good to breathe no other atmosphere than that” (174). In other words, it is bad for the health to breath in the old house. Fortunately for her, she knows how to change her mood. The following paragraph presents her way of doing this:

> Unless she had now and then indulged her brisk impulses, and breathed rural air in a suburban walk, or ocean-breezes, along the shore-had occasionally obeyed the impulse of nature,…unless for such moral medicines as the above, we should soon have beheld our poor Phoebe grow thin, and put on a bleached, unwholesome aspect, and assume strange, shy ways, prophetic of old-maidenhood and a cheerless future. (175)

Thus, Phoebe’s habits, such as a walk, keep cheerful and healthy. However, she is certainly influenced by the old house. The village maiden, Phoebe “was less girlish than when we first beheld her, alighting from the omnibus; less girlish, but more a woman!” (175)

Poor Hepzibah takes no pleasure in the shadowy house. She “had grown to be a kind of lunatic, by imprisoning herself so long in one place,

with no other company than a single series of ideas, and but one affection, and one bitter sense of wrong" (174). It is unusual for her to go out of the old gloomy house or to join the local community. Then, Hepzibah became a fastidious, solitary, and difficult woman with a frown because of her residence. Male indicates:

> In *The House of the Seven Gables* the basic elements of the moral situation are once again placed before us. But the characters, tone, and guiding metaphor have radically changed from those of *The Scarlet Letter*. The ambiguous qualities of womanhood are subsumed in the dark house; the masculine traits are symbolized in the various inhabitants of the street; and the central metaphor is drawn from the process of evolution. (Male 119)

He shows that the female sexuality is suppressed by the Pyncheon-house in *The House of the Seven Gables*. For example, Hepzibah is confined in the House. If Alice Pyncheon had not died young, she could have had children. On the other hand, "the various inhabitants of the street", such as Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, represents the male sexuality. For example, Hawthorne places special emphasis on Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's sexuality: "The man, the sex, somehow or other, was entirely too prominent in the Judge's demonstrations of that sort" (118). In the novel, the female sexual desire is confined inside the gloomy old house. The male sexuality is released in the outside of the old mansion.

Male explains that “the central metaphor” of this novel is “the process of evolution”. He, moreover, refers to the meaning of evolution:

> Evolution, as we know, favors those who have the most offspring, and Hawthorne did not ignore the sexual element in the genetic history of the Pyncheons. One of the ironies of this history has been the way in which the sexual aggressiveness of the dominant strain has limited its children. (123)

Evolution means that the gradual development of plants or animals over many years from simple to more complicated forms. In other words, the evolution in the novel is represented by the rise and fall of the Pyncheon family over the years. It is “the genetic history” of the Pyncheons. As Male remarks, the reader can not ignore “the sexual element” in this novel.

Here is an example of “the sexual element”. In the paragraph, that follows, shows the hens—“Chanticleer, his two wives, and a solitary chicken” —in the Pynchon-house (88):

> So wise as well as antique was their aspect, as to give color to the idea, not merely that they had existed, in their individual capacity, ever since the House of the Seven Gables was founded, and were somehow mixed up its destiny. (89)

One of the hens “had been in a state of heavy despondency, caused as it

afterwards appeared, by her inability to lay an egg" (152). One day, the hen can lay an egg, however, this precious egg is stolen by Hepzibah:

> Hepzibah, on learning the fact, took possession of the egg and appropriate it to Clifford's breakfast, on account of a certain delicacy of flavor, for which, as she affirmed, these eggs had always been famous. Thus unscrupulously did the old gentlewoman sacrifice the continuance, perhaps, of an ancient feathered race, with no better end than to supply her brother with a dainty that hardly filled the bowl of a teaspoon! (153)

The barren house is symbolized by this occurrence. For example, Hepzibah, like her chickens, becomes a barren woman. The hens get their eggs stolen, and they have no chance to breed. It seems that females are not able to produce a child in the space of the Pyncheon-house.

There is no doubt that the Pyncheon family has been procreating since there are still surviving family members. However, "the only members of the family, known to be extant", are Judge Jaffrey, his son, Clifford, Hepzibah and Phoebe (24). Like their hens, the Pyncheons are falling into a decline. The hens "kept themselves alive, unquestionably, and laid now and then an egg, and hatched a chicken, not for any pleasure of their own, but that the world might not absolutely lose what had once been so admirable a breed of fowls" (89). Children are necessary for the Pyncheon family to continue their bloodline. The youngest Pyncheon,

Phoebe is the only woman to be able to have a child. Hepzibah, Clifford, and Judge Pyncheon are too old to have a child.

Even young Phoebe and Holgrave, nevertheless, can not have a child during their stay in the old mansion. But one possibility arises by the country-house. As soon as Phoebe and Holgrave get married, they move out of the old barren house into the Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's country-house. Although it is uncertain whether this couple can have a child in the country- house, they can not have a child during their stay in the Pyncheon-house. On the other hand, the chickens have taken away to the country-house before the young couple's move. Then, "the two hens had forthwith begun an indefatigable process of egg-laying, with an evident design, as a matter of duty and conscience, to continue their illustrious breed under better auspices than for a century past" (314).

Consider now the implications of the hens' family planning at their new garden. The hens could not lay many eggs while they lived in the garden of the old mansion. However, they keep laying eggs indefatigably after the move. It seems that the hens symbolize the new couple, Holgrave and Phoebe. There is a possibility that the new couple will be able to procreate in the country-house.

The young characters of the Pyncheon family, such as Alice, Phoebe and Judge Jaffrey's son in this novel, were all born in the places different from the old mansion. For example, Alice was born in Europe, Phoebe was born in a village, and Judge Jaffrey's son was probably born in Judge's country-seat. As a conclusion, one can argue that the House of the Seven

Gables is a barren house, where nothing could be procreated.

## 4. The Country-House for Reproduction

The ending of *The House of the Seven Gables* is somewhat abrupt; the death of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon brings about a sudden resolution in the story. In this chapter, I would like to examine the effect he has on each character both before and after his death. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, Hepzibah's rich cousin, who forced Clifford to thirty years' imprisonment by a wrong accusation. He represents the long line of avaricious character of the Pyncheons. It is obvious to the reader that Hepzibah, Clifford, even Phoebe have strong aversions to him. Hepzibah mutters to herself about him:

> Let Jaffrey Pyncheon smile as he will, there is that look beneath! Put on him a scull-cap, and a band, and a black cloak, and a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other—then let Jaffrey smile as he might—nobody would doubt that it was the old Pyncheon [Colonel Pyncheon] come again! He was proved himself the very man to build up a new house! Perhaps, too, to draw down a new curse! (59)

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is describing as a two-faced man with "a Bible in one hand" and "a sword in the other". It is apparent for Hepzibah that Jaffrey is a sly and imperious person.

The Judge attempts, in chapter 8, to bestow his affection upon Phoebe in Hepzibah's cent-shop. He offers to kiss her with familial affection, but Phoebe refuses him. The Judge's feature is too intense for Phoebe, "when this dark, full-fed physiognomy (so roughly bearded, too, that no razor could ever make it smooth) sought to bring itself into actual contact with the object of its regards" (118). She feels hatred toward his indecent nature. Although he is her relative, she realizes that the Judge is a stranger to her.

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is entirely rejected by Clifford too. When Judge visits the seven-gabled mansion to see Clifford for the first time since his release, Clifford asks Hepzibah not to allow him into the House. Clifford says to her; "go down on your knees to him! Kiss his feet! Entreat him not to come in! Oh, let him have mercy on me! Mercy! —mercy" (129)! Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is a mortal enemy for both Hepzibah and Clifford.

The conflict between Judge Pyncheon and his Pyncheon relatives reaches a climax in chapter 15 and 16. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon enters the Hepzibah's one-cent shop and responds to Hepzibah's scowl with his usual unpleasant smile. He wants to see Clifford, but Hepzibah refused his offer. Judge Pyncheon claims Clifford knows the whereabouts of the hidden wealth. Judge threatens Hepzibah to shut Clifford up in an insane asylum, if Clifford refuses to reveal the secret. Moreover, he even boasts that Clifford is released by his arrangement.

Hepzibah accepts his request unwillingly. Though she knocks at Clifford's chamber, the room is empty. Hepzibah shouts to Judge Pyncheon that Clifford has disappeared. She comes to the parlor and finds Judge

Jaffrey Pyncheon still silently seats on the chair and Clifford beside him. Next moment, she is surprised to find Judge Pyncheon is dead.

After Judge Pyncheon's death, Clifford, Hepzibah, and Phoebe become the successors of his property. Judge Pyncheon has a son who might inherit his father's estate, however, the son predeceases him; so the surviving Pyncheons inherit all of Judge Pyncheon's wealth including the country estate, to which they decide to move. It seems that Judge Pyncheon's death is a crucial event in the novel. I would like to examine the influence of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's death and his legacy on the surviving characters.

Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's property is truly a wonderful present for Hepzibah. As she succeeds to Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's property, and becomes a rich woman; so Hepzibah does not have to earn money at her little shop any longer. She used to be a recluse and made a living by the Pyncheon family's wealth, then she ran out of money, and reopened a dusty little cent-shop to make living. However, she inherits the wealth and closes her business. Hepzibah get rid of the gloomy house, and then moves into Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's country-seat.

However, the opening of the cent-shop was the only chance for her to open up to the world outside the old house. When she became nervous about running a cent-shop, a few friends of Hepzibah, Holgrave and Uncle Venner gave advice for her. Holgrave said to her:

> I speak frankly, my dear Miss Pyncheon: —for are we not friends? I

> look upon this as one of the fortunate days of your life. It ends an epoch, and begins one. Hitherto, the life-blood has been gradually chilling in your veins, as you sat aloof, within your circle of gentility, while the rest of the world was fighting out its battle with one kind of necessity or another. Henceforth, you will at least have the sense of healthy and natural effort for a purpose, and of lending your strength—be it great or small—to the united struggle of mankind. This is success—all the success that anybody meets with! (44-45)

Uncle Venner also said, "So, you really began trade…I'm grad to see it. Young people should never idle in the world, nor old ones neither, unless when the rheumatize gets hold of them…I'm glad to see you beginning to do your work, Miss Hepzibah (62)"! Thus, both of them know that it is important for her to establish a contact with the outside community.

However, she closes her small cent-shop. She will not probably go back to her secluded life as before, because she has her family now. Her brother, Clifford is released from jail, and the young couple, Phoebe and Holgrave, live together. Hepzibah can escape from her old shadowy mansion and her solitude by the Judge Pyncheon's estate.

The best gift for poor Clifford is not Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's wealth. "The shock of Judge Pyncheon's death had a permanently invigorating and ultimately beneficial effect on Clifford. That strong and ponderous man [Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon] had been Clifford's nightmare" (313). After Judge Pyncheon's death, Clifford's recovery is described as follows: "he recovered

enough of them partially to light up his character, to display some outline of the marvellous grace that was abortive in it, and to make him the object of no less deep, although less melancholy interest than heretofore" (314). Furthermore, when Judge Jaffrey is dead, Clifford can be rich and depart from the old house where he has a hateful memory.

As Holgrave and Phoebe get married, and Holgrave also receives Judge's inheritance through Phoebe. Both of them become rich. Then, they move to Judge Jaffrey's country-seat. The marriage of Phoebe Pyncheon and Holgrave Maule can be considered as the reconciliation between the Pyncheons and the Maules. Nevertheless, most of readers have agreed with F.O. Matthiessen that "the reconciliation [of Maule and Pyncheon] is somewhat too lightly made" (332). Furthermore, Holgrave's marriage proposal seems to be too sudden.

The marriage between Holgrave and Phoebe would never be possible without Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's death. The following paragraph suggests that the elements are together in the marriage between Holgrave and Phoebe:

> Meanwhile, all the circumstances of their situation seemed to draw them together; they were like two children who go hand in hand, pressing closely to one another's side, through a shadow—haunted passage. The image of awful death [Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's death], which filled the house, held them united by stiffened grasp. (305)

It seems that Holgrave and Phoebe are placed in a strange situation. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's dead body is lying by them. This dreadful setting, however, enables Holgrave to declare his love for Phoebe. The situation "hastened the development of emotions, that might not otherwise have flowered so soon" (305).

After Holgrave gets married and becomes a rich person, he suddenly changes his mind. As the critic, Michael T. Gilmore has suggested; "the daguerreotypist [Holgrave] declares his love for Phoebe and renounces his radicalism. Henceforth he will confine himself "within ancient limits" and even "build a house for another generation" (*American Romanticism* 108). When he talks to Phoebe at the garden before marriage, he says as follows:

> If each generation were allowed and expected to build its own houses, that single change, comparatively unimportant in itself, would imply almost every reform which society is now suffering for. I doubt whether even our public edifices—our capitols, state-houses, court-houses, city-halls, and churches—ought to be built of such permanent materials as stone or brick. It were better that they should crumble to ruin, once in twenty years, or thereabouts, as a hint to the people to examine into and reform the institutions which they symbolize. (183-184)

However, after the marriage, he changes his opinion about the construction of a family house:

> But I wonder that the late Judge—being so opulent, and with a reasonable prospect of transmitting his wealth to descendants of his own—should not have felt the propriety of embodying so excellent a piece of domestic architecture in stone, rather than in wood. Then, every generation of the family might have altered the interior, to suit its own taste and convenience; while the exterior, through the lapse of years, might have been adding venerableness to its original beauty, and thus giving that impression of permanence, which I consider essential to the happiness of any moment. (314-315)

At this statements Phoebe is surprised to find Holgrave has given up the former radical ideas; wood to stone, temporary to permanent, and radicalism to conservatism. However, in this paragraph, he is not talking about the past, but about the future, and how the future generation should live.

According to Brenda Wineapple, "Holgrave renounces his wanton ways, declaring himself a conservative eager to set out trees and make fences, even, he says, to built a house for another generation" (235). Although Holgrave thinks about only his own generation before marriage, after marriage he envisions a house in which every generation can live. It seems that Holgrave's transformation is caused by the marriage. He begins to consider his next generation, namely, his children.

He used to be "ardent, youthful, and radical a man at home in the

modern world who nevertheless lives in the cranky old house, temporarily of course" (Wineapple 234). However, he becomes a conservative man, a man suitable for a husband and father. The daguerreotype is the forefront of science and technology in the mid-nineteenth century; the daguerreotypist is considered very modern. By the end of the story, he moves out of the old house into the country-house with his wife. He now has a permanent home and a family. Although he can secure his livelihood, he loses his radical ideas and capitalistic character. It seems that he is preparing himself to make a home.

Earlier, Holgrave talks to Hepzibah about his thought at the first day of her cent-shop. He remarks as follows; "It ends as epoch, and begins one". Here he suggests that one generation ends and another begins. With the exception of two chapters (Chapter 1 "The Old Pyncheon Family" and Chapter 13 "Alice Pyncheon"), the greater part of the novel is narrated in the time between 1840 to 1850.

As Henry Nash Smith remarks;

> Few nations have ever undergone such rapid and far-reaching economic changes as did the United States during the middle and later decades of the nineteenth century. It was the period when the use of steam power in transportation and manufacturing was transforming an agrarian into an urban economy, establishing the main outlines of the society we live in today. (90)

In the mid-nineteenth century, the revolutionary change took place in the use of energy which had originated from the spread of steam system in America. According to Leo Marx, "The invention of the steamboat had been exciting, but it was nothing compared to the railroad" (*The Machine* 191). The economic situation in America had rapidly developed by the invention of the railroad. "The railroad was vital to a young republic [America] bent on the rapid building of a nationwide market economy" (Marx, *The Railroad* 186). The development of the railroad has brought the nation an economic evolution. As Marx remarks:

> The new roads, steamboats, and railroad—especially the railroads—annihilate distance and "like enormous shuttles", pattern the various threads of American life into one vast web. As a result, local peculiarities are overcome, the Union is held staunch the opening of the West is accelerated and the influence of Europe weakened. (234)

After the invention of railroads, America experienced a remarkable metamorphosis from an aristocratic and agricultural nation to a modern industrialized nation.

In the novel, we encounter an allegory of the antebellum America. The new transportation, the railroad also appears in *The House of the Seven Gables.* When Hepzibah and Clifford try to flight from the old mansion, they use the railroad. As David S. Reynolds has suggested; "In a

key scene toward the end of the novel, Clifford and Hepzibah Pyncheon, fleeing on a train, find themselves confronted with a dizzying array of images from modern popular culture" (268). It was surely "the great current of human life" (256). "The train itself, the era's prime symbol of brute force and modern technology" (Reynolds 268).

When they are on the train, Clifford and Hepzibah react very differently to the scenery outside. The following paragraph represents the difference between them in the railroad:

> Clifford's naturally poignant sympathies were all aroused. He caught the color of what was passing about him, and threw it back more vividly than he received it, but mixed, nevertheless, with a lurid and portentous hue. Hepzibah, on the other hand, felt herself more apart from humankind than even in the seclusion which she had just quitted. (257)

On one hand, Clifford comes truly alive when he is on the train, on the other hand, for Hepzibah, the train is a very alien space. She feels like she is falling behind the times. However, when he gets off the train, Clifford becomes a despondent. Clifford makes an effort to adjust himself to the new era, however, he is just exhausted. Their conditions are described as follows: "The world [the railroad] had fled away from these two wanderers [Hepzibah and Clifford]. They gazed drearily about them" (266).

Both Hepzibah and Clifford are left behind the world, i.e., the

mid-nineteenth century. In this republic [America], “amid the fluctuating waves of our social life, somebody is always at the drowning-point” (38). After getting off the train, Hepzibah and Clifford go back to the old mansion. They will move the country-seat at the end of the novel. This elegant country-house is a suitable place for them to live peacefully.

We also encounter another allegory of the contemporary America; the emergence of the suburb, mobility created by the railroad made the countryside more accessible to the city dwellers. The suburb became the ideal place for young families like Holgrave and Phoebe. According to Clifford Edward Clark, Jr.:

> The debate over national housing standards in the later period [the last three decades of the nineteenth century] benefited from a transportation revolution that now allowed middle-class families to move to the suburbs and commute to work. (73)

In the late-nineteenth century, the expanding transportation facilities, such as steam railroads and electric trolley lines, helped encourage a new image of suburban neighborhood. Contemporary reformers, furthermore, regard cities as dangerous and degrading. Some of them saw life is the country as a therapy to the bad influences of the city. It seems that the urban cities are unattractive for the middle-class families to live.

On the other hand, the country-side is more suitable for making a comfortable living. The country-houses were popular among the

middle-class families. Gillian Brown describes this phenomenon as follows: "The modernization of the Pyncheons and the Maules into a nineteenth-century middle-class family living in a wooden country home depends on and reflects the rise of American bourgeois domesticity"(93-94). Especially families with children, they regarded the country as a suitable place where children could grow up more freely and naturally.

It seems that Judge Pyncheon's country-house is appropriate for Holgrave and Phoebe to raise a child. So by the end of the novel, there is a possibility that the Pyncheons bloodline may continue to next generation.

### 5. Leaving the House of the Seven Gables

When young couple, Holgrave and Phoebe, moves into the Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's country-house, there arises a possibility that they will be able to continue the Pyncheon bloodline. On the day of departure, Holgrave asks Phoebe; "how will it please you to assume the name of Maule" (316)? After telling that he is a descendant of the executed Maule, then he asks her if she can accept his family name. Though Pyncheon bloodline would continue through Phoebe's child, the Pyncheon family name will disappear after Clifford's and Hepzibah's death.

Many critics have said the conclusion to *The House of the Seven Gables* is a reconciliation of the Pyncheons and the Maules. The longtime conflict between two families ends in an amicable settlement by the marriage of Holgrave and Phoebe. However, there is more to this ending

than just reconciliation.

The issue between the Pyncheons and the Maules consists of the authorship of the old house and the ownership of the eastern land. Holgrave, who finds the deed in the parlor of the seven-gabled mansion, is the descendant of the executed Matthew Maule. Thomas Maule, the carpenter of the Pyncheon-house, took his own revenge on the Pyncheon family by concealing the valued deed in the recess. However, when it is found, Holgrave discovers the document already old and worthless. Only thing left is the old mansion which remains vacant. The Pyncheon family is deeply involved in dealings of two kinds of real estates; the land upon which the old house stands and the eastern property. They took the former without the proper claim, and failed to get the latter, even though they had the title. I would like to examine how the Pyncheons deal with these two kinds of real estates.

First, in the case of the eastern land, the Pyncheon family has been searching for the deed for a long time. The following paragraph describes the Pyncheons' greed for the deed in a symbolic manner:

> All try the picture-frame. What do these ghostly people seek? A mother lifts her child, that his little hands may touch it! There is evidently a mystery about the picture, that perplexes these poor Pyncheons when they ought to be at rest. (280)

The "mystery" in this paragraph is that of the deed of the eastern land.

This paper had been hidden in the back of the Colonel's portrait. Finally, Holgrave presses a hidden spring, and the portrait tumbles down to reveal the worthless Indian deed. It is ironic that the document, which the Pyncheons have been looking for over the years, is actually in their parlor. This ironical situation reminds us of the pamphlet of Plinlimmon in *Pierre* by Herman Melville. Though Pierre was rummaging everywhere for the pamphlet, years later, the pamphlet was found from "between the cloth and the heavy quilted bombazine lining" by an old Jew Clothesman (Melville, *Pierre* 29). "So that all the time he was hunting for this pamphlet, he himself was wearing the pamphlet" (Melville, *Pierre* 294) In the same way, the Pyncheons themselves were living together with the deed. However, they did not know it for years.

It is uncertain whether Colonel Pyncheon has obtained the deed by fair means or not. However, the deed is "signed with the hieroglyphics of several Indians sagamores, and conveying to Colonel Pyncheon and his heirs, forever, a vast extent of territory at the eastward" (316). This sign shows that the deed is a proper one. However, ironically the Pyncheons lose their deed and can not exercise their power over the eastern land.

Secondly, I would like to examine the land of the Pyncheon-house. Hawthorne emphasizes that the base of our knowledge about the dispute is the tradition, and not the written. The author refers to the event as:

> No written record of this dispute is known to be existence. Our acquaintance with the whole subject is derived chiefly from tradition.

> It would be bold, therefore, and possibly unjust, to venture a decisive opinion as to its merit; although it appears to have been at least a matter of doubt, whether Colonel Pyncheon's claim were not unduly stretched, in order to make it cover the small metes and bounds of Matthew Maule. (7)

Colonel Pyncheon dispossessed Matthew Maule of the land. There are several common points between the acquisition of the land in America, and the way Colonel Pyncheon obtains this land.

Native Americans regarded land and its resources as something to be shared. The settlers "arrived in the New World with preconceived and well-defined ideas about property. Land ownership was a civil right, guaranteed to the individual as cultivator of the soil or keeper livestock" (Brandon 203). Native Americans "viewed that the land was held in common by the tribe" (Brandon 203). Native Americans had no concept of property ownership like the immigrants from Europe. Native Americans did not own the land, or even claim to possess their homelands. "The land is our Mother, says Iroquois[24] tradition, and we cannot sell our Mother" (Brandon 203).

The land in America was owned by nobody until the European settlers established colonies. European settlers were taking the land of the native Americans without discussion or consultation. If the settlers want the land, they have to hew out the forest to get the land. According to Wineapple, this seven-gabled mansion "was built property stolen twice

over, first from the Indians and then from the carpenter Matthew Maule" (233). Even Matthew Maule did not buy the land or have the title. He "had hewn out of the primeval forest, to be his garden-ground and homestead" (7); however, he also had wrested the land from Native Americans.

"The rich territory of Waldo County," where Colonel Pyncheon had the title, passed into the actual settlers' hands. Hawthorne mentions about the settlers:

> If they[the actual settlers] ever heard of the Pyncheon title, would have laughed at the idea of any man's asserting a right—on the strength of mouldy parchments, signed with the faded autographs of governors and legislators, long dead and forgotten—to the lands which they or their fathers had wrested from the wild hand of Nature, by their own sturdy toil.(18-19)

Although the Pyncheon family has the title, the actual settlers can acquire the land. The settlers or their fathers had wrested the land from "the wild hand of Nature". In America, people were not able to buy or sell the title of the land. The most effective way for the settlers to get the land is by cutting down trees, building a house.

One of the most progressive social movements of the late-nineteenth century is the Homestead Act of 1862. As Walter Benn Michaels remarks; "At the heart of the homestead movement was the conviction that the land

should belong to those who worked it" (*The American Renaissance* 94). The land in America is for the people "who worked it," not for the owners of the title. Colonel Pyncheon stole the land where Matthew Maule worked and stole from Native Americans. When the deed is found by Holgrave, he said the following words:

> The son of the executed Matthew Maule, while building this house, took the opportunity to construct that recess, and hide away the Indian deed, on which depended the immense land-claim of the Pyncheons. Thus, they bartered their eastern-territory for Maule's garden-ground. (316)

The Pyncheon family got the Maule's small land and lost the vast eastern land in that way.

In the end, the four main characters—Hepzibah, Clifford, Phoebe and Holgrave—prepare to leave the House of the Seven Gables and live in the country-house. When they decide to move, they ask Uncle Venner to live with them in a cottage in their new garden and he is going to join them in a few days. The last scene is that wise Uncle Venner sees the vision of Alice Pyncheon playing sweet music over the old house; he sees her ascending to heaven from the old mansion. The scene is portrayed as a picturesque image.

The end of this story is symbolized by the death of the owner, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, and the residents' moving from the Pyncheon-house.

After all the inhabitants, including the ghostly Alice floats heavenward, have gone, the old mansion is left abandoned. Hepzibah, who has the life-estate of the mansion, departs from it. Since the life-estate ends at her death, she cannot bequeath the House of the Seven Gables to Phoebe or to Holgrave. The old mansion becomes the house without owner.

At the end of this Romance, Hawthorne presents us the empty house through the eyes of Uncle Venner as the final scene. Hawthorne describes not the country-house where the characters begin a new life, but the empty old mansion. It is possible to find a similarity between the abandoned old mansion and America before colonization: The Pyncheon-house loses its owner, and nobody claims the ownership of the land before colonization. However, the settlers come to the New World and claim the ownership of the land against Native Americans. If there had been owners of the land in America before Columbus's 'Discovery', Native Americans would have owned the land. In this novel, Hawthorne describes that the settlers have inherited the land of which they have deprived from Native Americans. The House of the Seven Gables symbolizes the sin that Colonel Pyncheon, Matthew Maule, and all people in America commit against Native Americans.

# Conclusion

## Property and Inheritance in Nineteenth-Century American Literature

In this dissertation, I have explored the issues of property and inheritance in six works—property and possession as discussed in *Moby-Dick* and "Bartleby", and inheritances as discussed in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, "The Fall of the House of Usher", *A Romance of the Republic*, and *The House of the Seven Gables*. In nineteenth-century American literature, the practice of patriarchal inheritance was not always favorably portrayed.

Chapter One described the issue of possession of land, as discussed in *Moby-Dick* and *Pym*, and outlined several historical factors relevant to the argument of this dissertation, including expansionism in nineteenth-century America. Chapter Two detailed occupancy and the laws that were intended to promote homestead settlements in "Bartleby." Bartleby, who is hired by a lawyer, eventually starts living in the office. Unable to persuade Bartleby to move out, the lawyer relocates his premises. Chapter Three analyzed the handing down of property by right of primogeniture, which leads to the decline of the Ushers. Chapter Four examined how, in *The Romance of the Republic*, the switching of the mixed-race baby and white baby causes confusion in the families regarding inheritance, which is resolved by King, who is not related to them by blood.

Chapter Five investigated the renunciation of inheritance, copyright, and authorship in *Pym*. The complicated structure of *Pym* was discussed as a sign of Poe's consciousness about copyright.

In Chapter Six, the inheritances depicted in *The House of the Seven Gables* represent a more complicated case of property when compared to those in the other works discussed. The Pyncheon clan was formerly prosperous, but soon began to decline. At the beginning of the story, only a few members of the clan were extant. The details are as follows:

> The only members of the family, known to be extant, were, first, the Judge himself, and a single surviving son, who was now travelling in Europe; next, the thirty years' prisoner, already alluded to, and a sister of the latter, who occupied, in an extremely retired manner, the House of the Seven Gables, in which she had a life-estate by the will of the old bachelor. (24)

In the latter part of the story, Judge Pyncheon dies suddenly. At almost the same time, his son in Europe dies of cholera on the Cunard steamer bound for America, which results in a failure of primogeniture. Consequently, the ownership of the house was transferred to Clifford Pyncheon. He and the other Pyncheon family members move to the country house. Another property, which is mentioned in this story, is "a claim through an Indian deed…to a vast and as yet unexplored and unmeasured tract of Eastern lands" (18). The Eastern lands "would be the

source of incalculable wealth to the Pyncheon blood" and "would have consummated all that was necessary to render the claim available" (18). The reason the Pyncheons fail to acquire the land is that the primary document to exercise the right is missing. The document, which is called the Indian deed, was hidden from the Pyncheons by the Mauls in the house.

In this way, the failure of the patriarchal inheritance tradition is depicted in *The House of the Seven Gables*.[25] The hidden Indian deed and its belated discovery are a symbolic episode that illustrates the ambiguous nature of land rights in America. As Colonel Pyncheon had died, there is no way in which his objective of having the claim to the land can be accomplished. The Pyncheons, therefore, were never able to acquire the land. The property, with all of its inherent value, thus passes on to its actual owners.

> …the territory was partly re-granted to more favored individuals, and partly cleared and occupied by actual settlers. These last, if they ever heard of the Pyncheon title, would have laughed at the idea of any man's asserting a right—on the strength of mouldy parchments, signed with the faded autographs of governors and legislators, long dead and forgotten—to the lands which they or their fathers had wrested from the wild hand of nature by their own sturdy toil. (18-19)

In this way, the question of the right of possession with regard to two

unique properties—the house and the Eastern Lands—is explored in *The House of the Seven Gables*.

### 2. Words Passing Down to the Next Generation

In American society, some words and phrases used in historic documents such as the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson, Manifest-Destiny by John L. O'Sullivan, and addresses by other presidents, are regarded as a kind of intangible cultural inheritance, and have been quoted and cited repeatedly for a long time. These words have, over time, become common principles and provide a social foundation to American society that is influential to this day.

The most outstanding example is the Declaration of Independence. Nina Baym says how Abraham Lincoln relied on the idea of the Declaration of Independence:

> ...he[Lincoln] was passionately committed to the egalitarian principles of the Declaration of Independence and the spiritual ideals of the Bible, and he would regularly invoke both the Declaration and the Bible when contesting slavery and thinking about the future of the United States. (745-46)

Lehrman points out, "in his 1863 Gettysburg Address, President Lincoln embraced the Declaration of Independence as the foundation of the

Republic — a foundation which had been undermined by the apologists for slavery" (Lehrman). The phrases from the Declaration of Independence is quoted in the famous address as follows:

> Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. (Lincoln 747)

Barack Obama, who referenced the Declaration of Independence many times during his time as President, spoke thus at his first inaugural address in 2009:

> The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness. (Obama 2009)[26]

Obama cited it again at his second inaugural address in 2013. He spoke as follows:

> We recall that what binds this nation together is not the colors of our skin or the tenets of our faith or the origins of our names. What makes us exceptional--*what makes us Americ*an--is our allegiance to an

> idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago… (Obama 2013, italics Takase)[27]

In the same speech, he quoted the following phrases from the Declaration of Independence:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (Obama 2013) [28]

Obama stated that Americans should pledge allegiance to the idea stated in the Declaration of Independence. He quoted the phrase "what makes us American" from the Declaration of Independence. Obama continues:

> The patriots of 1776 did not fight to replace the tyranny of a king with the privileges of a few or the rule of a mob. They gave to us a republic, a government of, and by, and for the people, entrusting each generation to keep safe our founding creed. (Obama 2013)

By "our founding creed," Obama refers to the Declaration of Independence, which has been inherited and should be perpetuated by Americans[29].

Takayuki Tatsumi mentions "America under Trump" at the round-table talk organized by the academic journal, *The American Review*.

Tatsumi points out that "The Declaration of Independence by Jefferson, and addresses by Lincoln and Kennedy are always contained in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature,* which is a standard textbook for universities in America" (17). He adds that successive Japanese prime ministers' speeches would not be expected to be included in the anthology of Japanese literature (17). On the other hand, one can find the names of the presidents, such as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt in the anthology. In addition to the names and speeches of presidents, the names of John L. O'Sullivan, Martin Luther King Jr. and other influential individuals from American history are included in the anthology, which compiles "national" documents.

## 3. The Declaration of Independence Proclaimed

In America, words can be considered as a form of legacy that have been passed down over decades. The ideal form of the nation of America is a construct of words in the form of addresses, speeches, and other vocal manifestations. The words are not only written and read, but also are spoken and heard.

We can see the words below at the website of Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

> Goods, ideas, and people intermingled in early Philadelphia. In this diverse city, a new republic was born. The Declaration of

> Independence and U.S. Constitution were both debated and signed inside Independence Hall. Nearby sits the Liberty Bell, an international symbol of liberty. [30]

"A new republic was born" in Philadelphia, where the idea of the Declaration of Independence was brooded and of which the Liberty Bell is a symbol. The sound of liberty reverberated on July 8 to mark the reading of the Declaration. According to James R. Heintze, who has researched the first public reading of the document, "On Monday, July 8, the Declaration of Independence was "proclaimed" (read aloud) by Col. John Nixon of the Philadelphia Committee of Safety at the State House in Philadelphia" (Heintze)[31]. He continues:

> It was also read again that evening before the militia on the Commons. Throughout the city, bells were rung all day. On that day as well the Declaration was publicly read in Easton, Pennsylvania, and Trenton, New Jersey. It was these first public readings which constituted America's first celebrations of the Fourth of July. Typically in towns and cities across the nation accompanying the oral declarations were loud shouts, huzzas, firings of muskets, and the tearing down of the British emblems. (Heintze)

The voice of the reader and the sound of the bells united the new nation. The National Public Radio has broadcast the Declaration of Independence

for thirty years on every Fourth of July[32].

There is an entry entitled “Legacy” in Wikipedia on the United States Declaration of Independence. The entry, “Legacy,” notes how the Declaration of Independence has had an influence on other countries and other politicians, especially on Lincoln. It has been revalued, reinterpreted, and reused countless times in the history of the United States: especially in arguments related to slavery and women’s suffrage.[33] The fact that the words and phrases of the Declaration of Independence are heavily quoted in the historical documents and speeches proves that the nation has been constructed by the inheritance of words, which have been passed down by previous generations. Not only the Declaration of Independence, but also the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and Lincoln’s address at Gettysburg in 1863 have been passed down and quoted repeatedly. One of the symbolic events representing the national trait of passing down inherited words is the process of electing the President of the United States. It is mainly composed of speeches and debates, in which the candidates present their vision of an ideal nation.

## 4. Thomas Jefferson’s View of Inheritance

Why did the system of inheritance fail in nineteenth-century American literature? The answer, or a hint to the answer, can be found in the words of Thomas Jefferson. His values with regard to property and inheritance should be investigated to grasp the core of his ideas. Jefferson

wrote to James Madison on September 6, 1789 "…that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living" (959). It is notable that Jefferson has such a view on the usufruct of the earth and inheritance.

Before the letter to Madison in 1789, Jefferson wrote to him on October 28, 1785:

> Whenever there are in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on. (841-42)

He wrote this letter in Fontainebleau, France, where he stayed as the United States Minister to France. Jefferson noticed the plight of the poor in France and concluded that the cause of poverty was that property was concentrated in a very few hands. This led to "the numberless instances of wretchedness" which Jefferson had observed in France and was "to be observed all over Europe" (841).

The historical concept of land property in Europe differed greatly from Jefferson's idea. Tocqueville showed—as already quoted in the Introduction of this dissertation—that land is the root of the power of the European aristocracy.[34] However, according to Jefferson, land is a common property and a legal right to the land is only for the living. Jefferson believed that the earth—land—should not be succeeded to by right of primogeniture. It should be divided equally at least, or the rights should be

valid only for the living.[35] After his retirement from the presidency, Jefferson's opinion did not change. In 1813, he wrote in a letter to his son-in-law, John Wayles Eppes:

> The earth belongs to the living, not to the dead. The will and the power of man expire with his life, by nature's law. Some societies give it an artificial continuance, for the encouragement of industry; some refuse it, as our aboriginal neighbors, whom we call barbarians. The generations of men may be considered as bodies or corporations. Each generation has the usufruct of the earth during the period of its continuance. When it ceases to exist, the usufruct passes on to the succeeding generation, free and unencumbered, and so on, successively, from one generation to another forever. (1280)

Jefferson's standpoint on inheritance can also be noted in his letter to Major John Cartwright from June 5, 1824:

> Can one generation bind another, and all others, in succession forever? I think not. The Creator has made the earth for the living, not the dead. Rights and powers can only belong to persons, not to things, not to mere matter, unendowed with will. The dead are not even things.... A generation may bind itself as long as its majority continues in life; when that has disappeared, another majority is in place, holds all the rights and powers their predecessors once held,

> and may change their laws and institutions to suit themselves. Nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man. (1493)

According to Jefferson, inheritance is not an excellent system. Posterity can succeed to ancestors' property, but it puts an heir under restraint. People may be deprived of freedom by the inheritance system, especially by primogeniture.

From the perspective of the nineteenth-century American literature that this dissertation has examined, a successor like Pym in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, could resign his heirship to obtain freedom. Pym renounces his right of inheritance to go aboard a whaling ship and certainly refuses to be bound by the strictures imposed upon him by the expectations of previous generations. Roderick and Madeline, in "The Fall of the House of the Usher," die as if they are crushed by the house, which had been succeeded to for generations by the Ushers. Roderick and Madeline cannot sever the connection with the Usher clan. They are bound by the clan and the house they have inherited so far. It might be said that inherited property is thus the cause of their deaths. Likewise, Hepzibah and Clifford also are burdened with their ancestors' property, the house itself. At the end of the story, both of them leave the inherited property. After having relocated, there are signs that the Pyncheon family might prosper in the country house. Hepzibah and Clifford are able to break the chains by which they were bound, to leave the house and move to the

country house. In the American context, succession to property does not only bring fortune to heirs, but sometimes places fetters upon descendants. It binds and ties the new generation.

## 5. The Young America Movement and Nineteenth-Century Writers

An interpretative reading of the history of America can be useful in understanding the adverse aspect of inheritance in nineteenth-century American literature. The American Revolutionary War was narrated as the metaphor of patricide: the son America killed the father England to become independent as a new nation. The Revolutionary War emancipated America from the restraints of father England. This is in accordance with the ideas of Jefferson who called inheritance "binding." Jefferson used the word "the political bands" in the opening of the Declaration of Independence:

> When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.[36]

The principle of the Declaration of Independence is close to Jefferson's view

of an ideal system of inheritance. It may be natural for Jefferson to break a band connected to a father or predecessor, to be free and independent.[37] In the United States of America, constituted by the founding fathers, including Thomas Jefferson, people shall imbibe the idea of Jefferson, and disconnect themselves from the past symbolized by inheritance. It might be a natural result that the description of inheritance in American literature ends in failure.

In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Holgrave begins "to speak of the influences of the Past" (182):

> Shall we never, never get rid of this Past?" cried he, keeping up the earnest tone of his preceding conversation. "It lies upon the Present like a giant's dead body. In fact, the case is just as if a young giant were compelled to waste all his strength in carrying about the corpse of the old giant, his grandfather, who died a long while ago, and only needs to be decently buried. Just think a moment, and it will startle you to see what slaves we are to bygone times—to Death, if we give the matter the right word! (182-83)

The expectations of the previous generation bind the younger generation. The past is an obstacle for Holgrave, as well as for Jefferson. It is no wonder that Jefferson's idea has over many years become the cardinal principle of America.

Especially in literary history, it seemed that American writers such

as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville were espousing independence as a principle. Takayuki Tatsumi mentions in his book, *Young Americans in Literature*:

> ...it is impossible to ignore that a long critical history of F.O. Matthiessen's literary historical magnum opus *American Renaissance* (1941) ,...gradually expanded the period of the American Renaissance that Matthiessen defined in his book (1850-55), putting emphasis upon its coincidence with American Expansionism, another name for the slogan "Manifest Destiny" and the Young American Movement...(20)

He states that; "we are now inclined to reframe the duration of the American Renaissance as the first golden age of American literature roughly between 1832 and 1860" (20-21)[38].

Herman Melville writes in his essay, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," in 1850 and stated his opinion as follows:

> Let America then prize and cherish her writers; yea, let glorify them. They are not so many in number, as to exhaust her good will. And while she has good kith and kin of her own, to take her bosom, let her not lavish her embraces upon the household of an alien. For believe it or not England, after all, is, in many things, an alien to us. (919-20)

Melville argues that America's own literature should be developed. He states: "…no American writer should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to write like an American" (921). He expresses his literary nationalism in his essay:

> And all that is requisite to amendment in this matter, is simply this: that while freely acknowledging all excellence, everywhere, we should refrain from unduly lauding foreign writers and, at the same time, duly recognize the meritorious writers that are our own; —those writers, who breathe that unshackled, democratic spirit of Christianity in all things, which now takes the practical lead in this world, though at the same time led by ourselves—us Americans. (921)

It seems that his argument is a declaration of literary independence from the literature of other countries, especially England. In the beginning of his essay, Melville says: "Would that all excellent books were foundlings, without father or mother, that so it might be, we could glorify them, without including their ostensible authors" (911). In addition to his argument in his essay on American literature, he implies that as foundlings, all the excellent books look like 'our own' literature in America. Two years after "Hawthorne and His Mosses," Melville published *Pierre or the Ambiguities* in 1852. In this story, Pierre (the main character and suggestive of Melville himself), who attempts to be a writer, burns the

portrait of his father, his family letters, and "all sorts of miscellaneous memorials in paper":

> Thus, and thus, and thus! on thy manes I fling fresh spoils; pour out all my memory in one libation!—so, so, so—lower, lower, lower; now all is done, and all is ashes! Henceforth, cast-out Pierre hath no paternity, and no past; and since the Future is one blank to all; therefore, twice-disinherited Pierre stands untrammeledly his ever-present self!—free to do his own self-will and present fancy to whatever end! (198-99)

Here again, the rejection of filial ties symbolizes casting away the past. A child with no parents signifies Pierre, or Melville, and the American writers of the nineteenth century.

It is necessary for the writers of the nineteenth century in America to be unshackled from the past that binds them. The period of the American Renaissance, in a broad sense, is the period of literary independence. The writers of the nineteenth century write the stories not in succession of the past, but living of their own will as young Americans. The failure of inheritance in nineteenth-century literature is symbolic of literary independence.

To conclude, I have explored the system of inheritance and property, especially the land ownership, in nineteenth-century literature in America. Inheritance is a system in which ancestors bequeath their property and

heirs succeed to their hereditary property. In American literature, inheritance is not favorably portrayed partly because primogeniture does not work well.

In American history, when the settlers arrived on the new continent, the native Americans had already inhabited the land. Land is not the substantial foundation for the settlers. The overall idea of land is excessively frail and ambiguous. Instead of land, America was founded on words.

## Notes

[1] By 1895 the number of New England whaling vessels had dwindled

[2] For the detail of The Homestead Act, see National Archives. https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/homestead-act

[3] Wigwam is a dome-shaped hut or tent made by fastening mats, skins, or bark over a framework of poles (as used formerly by Native Americans in the past).

[4] As Richard Kopley argued, Poe is indebted for many geographical and historical elements of description of the islands to Benjamin Morrel's A Narrative of Four Voyages. (See Explanatory Notes by Richard Kopley in The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket pp. 234.)

[5] John O'Sullivan, Annexation (1845) [United States Magazine and Democratic Review 17, no. 1 (July-August 1845): 5-10.] See, https://pdcrodas.webs.ull.es/anglo/OSullivanAnnexation.pdf

[6] The absurdity of the law is emphasized in Chapter 90, Heads or Tails. Melville illustrated the case where one gentleman deprived some poor, honest mariners of the fat of the whale, in the name of the Lord Warden, the Duke.

[7] The Mexican-American War (1846-1848) marked the first U.S. armed conflict chiefly fought on foreign soil. It pitted a politically divided and militarily unprepared Mexico against the expansionist-minded administration of U.S. President James K. Polk, who believed the U.S. had a "manifest destiny" to spread across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. See, HISTORY.com,

https://www.history.com/topics/mexican-american-war.

[8] According to Kopley, “Poe is relying on Morrell’s discussion of biche-de-mer, the sea cucumber” (Explanatory Notes 238). Poe wrote; “It is that mollusca from the Indian Seas which is known in commerce by the French name *bouche de mer* (a nice morsel from the sea) (177). Also, Poe explained that the Chinese consider *biche de mer* a very great luxury, believing that it wonderfully strengthens and nourishes the system, and renews the exhausted system of the immoderate voluptuary (179).

[9] According to *the OED*, “vindictive” means “Of persons: Given to revenge; having a revengeful disposition” and “Of actions, qualities, etc.: Characterized by a desire for, or the exercise of, revenge”.

[10] The Declaration of Independence, see USHistory.org, http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/

[11] I have written in the Chapter 1: As highlighted by Arimichi Makino, Ishmael exemplifies how the law can “be pretty generally applicable” in this chapter (my trans.; 63). According to Ishmael, a whale is referred to as a “loose-fish,” when the body has become completely detached from the whaling vessel and it is not or is no longer “fast,” or fastened to any property (harpoons, rope, and the like). In contrast, the term “fast-fish” refers to a whale that remains “fast” to the property of those who have fastened it, such that “A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it” (446). In addition, in the following Chapter 90, entitled, “Heads or Tails,” ownership of a “fast-fish” is, according to British law determined as follows, ownership “of all whales captured by anybody on the coast of that land, the King, as Honorary Grand Harpooneer, must have the

head, and the Queen be respectfully presented with the tail" (450). This legal interpretation of whale ownership, to borrow Makino's words, highlights "ineffectiveness and unethical practices" (63). Makino has expanded on Ishmael's ownership discussion as follows: "Even in the United States, with its noble philosophies such as the Declaration of Independence that purport to assert the freedom and equality of people, once issues of ownership become involved, involving ownership of 'moveable property' such as slaves as well as trafficking in land titles after massacres of Indians and wage slavery, and these matters are justified under legal interpretations of those in power, the reality becomes one of 'lawlessness'" (64). The ambiguity of the law concerning the ownership of whales overlaps with the ambiguity of laws surrounding rights to land in America.

[12] According to Newman, "Bartleby" was the first of 15 works Melville submitted to the magazine between 1853 and 1856. All the stories were submitted either anonymously or using a pseudonym, but it was an open secret that the author was Melville (19). I consider it noteworthy that "Bartleby" was the first of a group of works submitted by Melville in this manner.

[13] According to *the OED*, "tarn" originally means: "local northern English, now generally used by geologists and geographers".

[14] Miller writes, "The description recalls the opening passage of Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher": the narrator's mysterious journey on horseback to the abode of his boyhood friend, Roderick Usher, on a "dull, dark, and soundless day…through a singularly dreary tract to country"; the "sense of insufferable gloom" that pervades his soul; and the mirror like reflection of the "black and lurid tarn" that affronts his at the foot

of Usher's forbidding edifice" (24).

[15] Andrew Jackson, who was known as a war hero of the Seminole Wars, massacred hundreds of Native Americans. He was also known as the President who enacted the Indian Removal Act. At that time, the Vice President is Martin Van Buren.

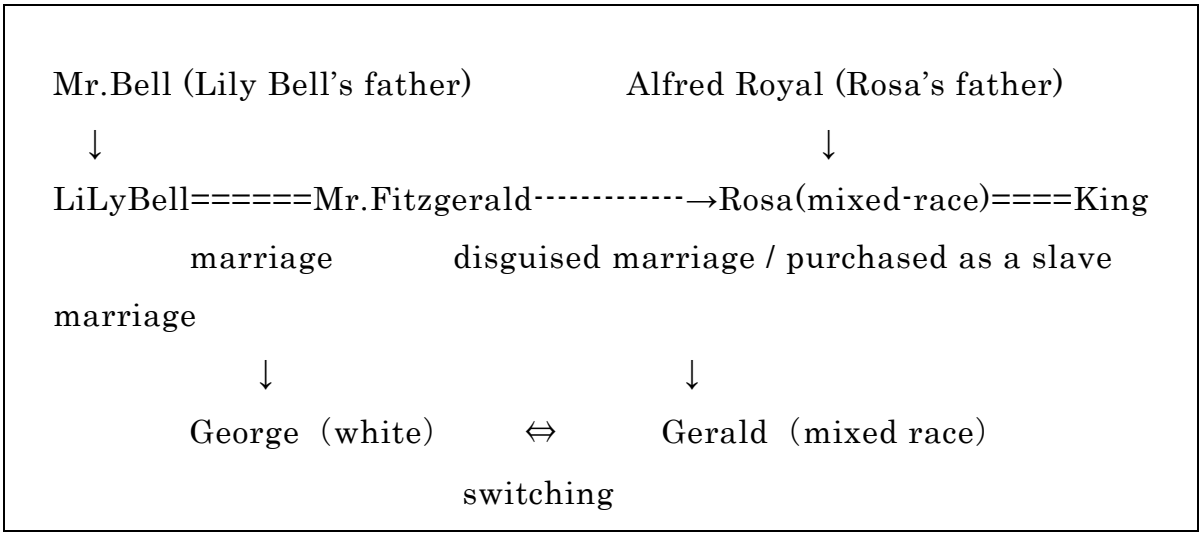
[16] In the last scene in which Madeline appears, she is described as follows: "There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame" (416).

[17] According to *the OED*, "red people" was first used in *Travels in American Colonies* in 1725. The sentence is as follows: "They desire always to be at peace wth the White people and desire to have their own way and to take revenge of the red people."

[18] Washington Irving used as follows: "In the evening the red warriors entertained their white friends with dances and songs".

[19] See, the detail of "peasant, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/139355?rskey=JSaz1o&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid

[20] Character Relationship Diagram




[21] According to *the OED*, Romance is " A fictional narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of ordinary life".

[22] Abraham Lincoln, House Divided Speech (June 16, 1858) Springfield, Illinois. See, http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/ lincoln/speeches/ house.htm

[23] This sentence stimulated many writers; Charles Romyn Dyke based his 1899 novel, *A Strange Discovery*, on it, which is still fresh in our memory. Mat Johnson published *Pym: A Novel* in 2012.

[24] The Iroquois Confederacy is a group of First Native Americans. The Confederacy was based, at the time of the arrival of the Europeans, in what is now update New York, as well as parts of Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Quebec.

[25] In *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne writes the inheritance from Chillingworth to Pearl. However, this inheritance is not

“primogeniture”. It should be called a rare case: Chillingworth bequeathed his property to his ex-wife’s daughter with no blood connection. Primogeniture does not work as well. Hawthorne describes as follows: “At old Roger Chillingworth’s decease, (which took place within the year,) and by his last will and testament, of which Governor Bellingham and the Reverend Mr. Wilson were executors, he bequeathed a very considerable amount of property, both here and in England, to little Pearl, the daughter of Hester Prynne” (261).

[26] See the full text, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address

[27] See the full text, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama

[28] See the full text, http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.html

[29] Obama made mention of the Declaration of Independence at his last speech in 2017: “It’s the conviction that we are all created equal, endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. See, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/10/us/politics/obama-farewell-address-speech.html.

[30] See, https://www.nps.gov/inde/index.html

[31] See, http://gurukul.american.edu/heintze/declar.html

[32] See,
https://www.npr.org/2018/07/04/623836154/a-july-4-tradition-npr-reads-the-declaration-of-independence.

[33] See,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence#Influence_in_other_countries

[34] I have written in the Chapter 1: Tocqueville further explained how aristocracy "takes root in the land, attaches itself to the soil from which it derives its power; it is not established by privileges alone, it is not founded on birth but upon the ownership of property handed down through the generations" (40). In Europe, land was thus the foundation of aristocratic strength, inherited over generations.

[35] According to Jean Yarbrough, "What Jefferson principally has in mind is the abolition of entail and primogeniture, so that all the children of the same family inherit equally" (70).

[36] See the full text,
http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.html

[37] In the Declaration of Independence, the word "dissolve" is used in the last sentence. "…all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do."

[38] According to Tatsumi, 1832 was "the year Emerson resigned his

Unitarian pastorate", and 1860 was "the year after the publication of Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species (1859) and a year before the opening of the Civil War (1861-65), including not only Poe but also proto-feminist writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe and African American writers like Frederick Douglass" (*Young Americans in Literature* 20-21).

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