Crippling the Body Politic: Disability and Nation-Making in Nineteenth-Century American Literature

By

Manuel Herrero-Puertas

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Russ Castronovo, Professor, English
Ellen Samuels, Professor, English, Gender and Women's Studies
David Zimmerman, Professor, English
Craig Werner, Professor, Afro-American Studies
Walton O. Schalick, III, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation, Waisman Center, Disability Studies

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Abstract

Crippling the Body Politic investigates how governments, institutions, and authors politicize disabled bodies. In particular, I argue that that physical disabilities such as amputation, disfigurement, and dwarfism presented fertile sites for nineteenth-century writers to concretize—but also to strain—the limits of national identity. This process unfolded through what I call "fantasies of disability," in which a bodily impairment propels an imaginative reconfiguration of the body politic as innocent, pliable, and expansive. This line of inquiry intersects American studies and disability studies in order to tease out the ties between ableism and a rising US nationalism, imperialism, and mass capitalism. Whereas Ellen Samuels and Todd Carmody among other scholars have explored disability's intersections with race, gender, and class, a suggestive cross-fertilization between disability and US political iconography has escaped the critical radar. Remedying this inattention, I investigate texts in which abnormal bodies are not the constitutive Others of normative identity. Rather, they embody an ideal national future that results from unchanging social and racial relations in the present.

My introduction takes its cue from a line in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" (1855): "What is removed drops horribly in a pail." Understood as the ur-fantasy of disability, this amputation scene narrates the growth of the social body through unnamed excisions and exclusions enabling further incorporation. I explain this process in detail by considering two intended fronts of growth. The first one congregates geographic fantasies of disability, in which disabled bodies overlap with targeted areas of US expansion. The second one shifts from a geographical to a temporal axis. There, US citizens desire a crippled body politic that would renew their capacity to desire.

Examining Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820) and *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), Chapter One charts a discursive dependency between US expansionism at its apex and bodily deformity. Using Lacan's notion of the mirror stage, I theorize Irving's disabled characters as incomplete political bodies to be rehabilitated through the creation of empire. Removing indigenous populations was a crucial task in this process. Focusing on Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827), Chapter Two tracks the figure of the disabled vanishing American: a receding native subject whose disability nonetheless fueled Anglo-Americans' fantastic identification with the land's original inhabitants. Chapter Three approaches a similar fantasy embodied by a very different subject, exploring the nationalist vision invested in the stunted growth of celebrity dwarf Charles Stratton and the racial anxieties mitigated by his blackface performance in P.T. Barnum's stage adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). Lastly, Chapter Four unlocks several financial fantasies of disability regarding Civil War amputees in William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) and Joseph Kirkland's *The Captain of Company K* (1891). By refusing their government pensions, war amputees in both novels shed their status as allegories of a reunited body politic while calling attention to their troubled existence as material and sentient bodies. Their gesture prompts an economy of horizontal dependency that counters the capitalist ethos of self-reliance and offers a blueprint for disability thinking then and now

Introduction: Fantasies of Disability

Disability, the identity of those bodies and minds that deviate from our assumed notions of the normal, has proven a vexing, yet strangely propelling, force in US history. Among the fifty-six signatures on the Declaration of Independence, there is one whose rugged penmanship—a trace of the signer's disability—buoys and disturbs the nation it inaugurates. On July 4, 1776, Rhode Island Governor Stephen Hopkins, sixty-nine years old and weakened by "shaking palsy," allegedly hobbled toward the signing desk, steadied his spastic right hand with his left, managed to write his name and, as he lifted quill from paper, muttered: "my hand trembles, but my heart does not."[1] The anecdote has inspired founding-fathers mythographers ever since. George Lippard conjured it in the 1840s, at the height of nationalist hagiography: "Here comes good old Stephen Hopkins—yes, trembling with palsy, he totters forward–quivering from head to foot, with his shaking hands he seizes the pen, he scratches his patriot-name."[2] Others highlighted Hopkins's symptoms in the raw instead of his efforts to inhibit them. Rebecca Harding Davis evokes a Continental Congress whose radical and moderate, young and old, healthy and decrepit members united for the sake of the nascent republic: "here is John Jay, with his boyish, beaming face, and Stephen Hopkins, trembling with palsy."[3] Davis's take on Hopkins as a diversifying presence pervades our contemporary era, as bloggers with disabilities celebrate that "they let one of us help create America."[4] In a speech commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), President Barack Obama mentioned Hopkins, who "grasped his pen to sign his name to the Declaration of Independence" and "said, 'My hand trembles. But my heart does not.' My hand trembles. But my heart does not."[5]

In these arrogations of Hopkins's body, disability becomes something for US citizens to fantasize with and about. After all, what was Obama celebrating? The hand that trembles or the heart that does not? Disability as a burden to be heroically overcome by the disabled individual, or disability as an embodied difference that we as a society have heroically learned to tolerate? To complicate things further, evidence suggests that Hopkins never said these words, and that Obama's closing anecdote may be entirely apocryphal.[6] The only statement we know for sure Hopkins produced that day is his signature, which for a long time was read both as an index of democratic inclusion and a dangerous anomaly. Historians and propagandists shuddered to think of Patriots (and Loyalists) reading Hopkins's handwriting as evidence of diffidence or, much worse, cowardice. Lacking John Hancock and Benjamin Franklin's calligraphic flourish, Hopkins's wobbly signature needed exegesis. Benson John Lossing devotes a footnote to it in his *Biographical Sketches of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence* (1848). Hopkins's name "appears as if written by one greatly agitated by fear. But fear"—Lossing insists—"was not part of Mr. Hopkins's character." Charles Augustus Goodrich reminds readers of his *Lives of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence* (1829) that "the only signature, which exhibits indication of a trembling hand, is that of *Stephen Hopkins*, who had been afflicted with the palsy."[7] An ennobling presence and a debilitating figure, a marker of democratic inclusion and an unwanted sign of faint-heartedness, Hopkins's signature unleashes a struggle over the unsettled and unsettling meanings disability accrues in public.

Crippling the Body Politic takes this struggle as its object of study, investigating how governments, institutions, and authors politicize disabled bodies. Like Hopkins's,

the abnormal bodies that populate these pages have been present, to quote historians Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky, "in penumbra if not in print, on virtually every page of American history."[8] I argue that this paradoxical, absent presence of disability emanates from a deliberate overlap of material bodies and symbolic bodies politic. Turned into personifications of US nationhood, dwarfs, amputees, and disfigured individuals presented fertile sites for nineteenth-century writers to concretize—but also to strain and reimagine—the limits of national identity. In this mode of representation, physical disability contributes a generative force in the rise of American nationalism, imperialism, and mass capitalism. Thus, throughout the main period of US political and territorial growth (1803-98), crippling the national body politic constituted a productive, not a destructive, act.[9] US nationalism recycled the presumed lacks and deficiencies of the injured national body into lines of flight, which Deleuze and Guattari define as a nexus between real and imagined geographies.[10] Disability can hurt a nation literally (as in the outcome of war) as well as symbolically (by attributing negative connotations to national markers such as Hopkins's signature); however, as a line of flight, physical disability allowed US nationals to imagine radically different configurations of themselves, configurations that would animate their territorial, social, and political thinking. Without images of disability showing what the nation should *not* be, citizens could not imagine what the nation should aspire to. Disability thus became an integral element of nationalist fantasy.

The process of delineating national identity through the disabled body takes place through what I call "fantasies of disability." Fantasies of disability regenerate the body politic. In a fantasy of disability, a physical impairment triggers an imaginative

reconfiguration of the body politic as innocent, accommodating, and expansive. Through a methodology that combines disability theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Marxist economics, and Native American studies, I identify several fantasies of disability that redefined bodies and nations as essentially unbounded constructs in a perpetual quest for aggrandizement and amelioration rather than completion. Americanists and disability scholars Sari Altschuler, Ellen Samuels and Todd Carmody among others have started to elucidate the role of disability in the formation of national, racial, and adult identities during this period; however, a suggestive cross-fertilization between disability and US political iconography has escaped the critical radar.[11] Remedying this inattention, I examine texts that align the embodied experience of disability with the larger transformations brought about by Western expansion, Indian removal, slavery, the Civil War, and Gilded Age capitalism. Some of the authors I examine—Walt Whitman, Louisa May Alcott, and P.T. Barnum—use anomalous corporeal boundaries to imagine possibilities of growth, regeneration, and rehabilitation for the United States; others—Washington Irving, William Dean Howells, Catharine Sedgwick, and Joseph Kirkland—use the same bodies to probe US identitarian and territorial boundaries.

Bodies politic walk thin tightropes. Taken as corporeal metaphors of collectivity, they harmonize unity in diversity, marshaling heterogeneous multitudes within the confines of a single anatomy. In Antoine de Baecque's words, the body politic, "through systems of analogies, summons to itself both the systems of a narrative about society and also the ways by which different macrocosms can be known."[12] Because of their phenomenological centrality in our experiencing the world, bodies also filter our understanding of the social, evolving into master tropes of communal life (as in "*head* of

state").[13] The underside of this figuration is that, in a democratic nation-state, it abstracts certain bodies while reifying others. Lauren Berlant has discerned in this process a tension between "abstract universality" and "embodied particularity."[14] The particularized bodies of women, children, industrial workers, and enslaved nonwhites in the United States historically belong to a zone of non-belonging, segregation, and disenfranchisement. In contrast, the US Constitution's strategically indefinite "We, the people" abstracts citizens' bodies. Far from innocuous, this abstraction feeds an illusion of sameness in which the *polis* adapts itself to the contours of *one* body—traditionally white, male, able, and propertied—while persuading us about this body's capacity to smooth over difference and dissent without desecrating individual selfhood. Any corporeal metaphor capable of articulating this entente cordiale between the one and the many becomes a darling of liberal democracy, not to mention a suggestive entryway into the realm of political fantasy.

Tapping into this realm, *Crippling the Body Politic* registers how fantasies of disability gestate within strict ableist hierarchies. I face the question "what do fantasies of disability reveal about disability?" somewhat indirectly, by considering what they tell us about fantasy and collective fantasizing. If the cultural work of fantasy is to dissolve structural antagonisms, as Lauren Berlant and Slavoj Žižek among others have noted, fantasies of disability sort out the body politic's antithetical existence as a nobody and everybody; that is, as a trope of collectivity that nonetheless comprehends actual people. I owe my idea of political fantasy to Jacqueline Rose, who borrows Freud's notion of fantasy as a "protective fiction" to contend that no analysis of the nation-state is complete without the collective fantasies that configure and protect it.[15] The idea of shifting fantasy

from an evasive toward a generative context also appears in Slavoj Žižek's work, in which fantasy is a precondition of "narrative form" and "intersubjectivity." For Žižek, fantasy does not designate the hallucinatory satisfaction of a repressed, difficult, or outright impossible desire. Rather "fantasy teaches us how to desire."[16] Scrutinizing its modus operandi—a procedure that Jacques Lacan named "traversing the fantasy"—reveals the state-sponsored ideologies and modes of sociality that fantasy originates.[17] Thus, fantasies of disability are not about wanting to become disabled but about having an impaired body politic repairable through collective and concerted action. The social stigma experienced by people with disabilities is not at odds with the psycho-political indispensability of disability to national consciousness, since our political unconscious requires the disruptive presence of disability in order to keep imagining an ideal state. This claim challenges Tobin Siebers's certainty over our "compulsive requirement, anchored by the political unconscious, to manufacture ideal images of the body politic."[18] As I will explain in my section on disability and temporality, we rather imagine a national future in which the disability of the body politic is not overcome; instead, the failure to overcome it renews our national commitment ad infinitum.

Even if corporeal metaphors are made of neither flesh nor bones, interrogating the fantasies invested in them places us in contact with those tangible bodies whose stories remain untold, unheard, and un-accommodated. Governor Hopkins himself illustrates the silenced subjectivity of the disabled individual placed front and center on the national stage. "My hand trembles, but my heart does not" has resonated through the ages, even if no firsthand account confirms that Hopkins ever said these words. For all the gravitas Hopkins's remark adds to the Declaration, his anomalous signature challenges some of its

"self-evident truths," namely, the notion that "all men are created equal." Through its very existence, disability counters this dictum, attesting to the irreducible phenomenon of human diversity and bringing to the fore the many types of bodies that people inhabit and that become racially, sexually, and clinically defined. Most people with disabilities around 1776—and this collective would include women, enslaved nonwhites, and indigenous subjects—saw "inalienable rights" as the prerogative of capable individuals.[19] Throughout the nineteenth century legal formulations of citizenship excluded people with disabilities, turning them into medical and social problems in need of surveillance, institutionalization, and even eugenic cleansing. At the same time, a host of literary texts, visual representations, and popular performances deployed people with physical disabilities as efficient signifiers of the nation that excluded them. In their laudatory narratives, Lippard and Obama transform Hopkins's palsy into a serviceable symbol of exemplary patriotism. In Davis's account (and in the blogosphere), Hopkins's hypervisible palsy helps paint a heterogeneous, politically correct picture of the founding fathers. In both ambits, disability becomes the channel, no longer the message. It does not constitute a preoccupation in itself; on the contrary, it provides a cultural idiom that reifies more abstract concerns. Therefore, examining the conflictive political symbols that people with disabilities, like Hopkins, have been forced to occupy forces us to rewrite the crucial question that W. E. B Du Bois identified as the burden of African Americans, and which cultural studies has redirected toward any nonnormative subject. This is the question of "how does it feel to be a problem?"[20] From a Du Boisian perspective, Hopkins represents a problem and its solution. To ask Hopkins "How does it feel to be a solution?" means, then, to inquire into the experience of being perceived as the

metaphorical fix to a social crisis, to ask Hopkins how does it feel to be an enabling, yet disabled, body politic.[21]

The fact that this subjective experience is irretrievably lost should not prevent us from charting the symbolic and material processes that turn physically disabled bodies into bodies politic, focusing on several US bodies politic whose physical impairments, far from relegating them into a particularized form, enabled their optimal symbolic work. Fredric Jameson and Homi Bhabha have contended that citizens embrace or repudiate national identity only when this identity is narrativized, when it plays a role in a story and ceases to exist as a formal abstraction.[22] For "national identity" to be narrativized, though, first it needs to be embodied. We need to put a face on it. I locate the historical coordinates of this process in the early nineteenth century and trace its development until the postbellum era, as the heterogeneous bodies populating the United States began to strain the cookie-cutter mold of a white, able, male, and propertied citizenry. By paying attention to images of disability in the imaginary of US nationalism, my goal is to elucidate how the body works as a political symbol but also, and more urgently, to wonder what is at stake when we turn people with disabilities into symbols. Therefore, it makes sense to begin with disability's materiality and, then, to unravel the tropological operations through which fantasies of disability propose alternative US geographies and temporalities.

1. Whitman's Pail, Jim's Leg: Metaphor and Materiality

Paradoxically, while fantasies of disability proliferated in the United States, Americans started to perceive the human body as a marker of ineluctable realities. In an early draft of the poem later known as "I Sing the Body Electric," Walt Whitman affirms: "what

identity I am, I owe / to my body."[23] He was not alone. Advances in physiology and pathology healed citizens, but also justified inequalities among those who looked abnormal and/or behaved in socially unsanctioned ways. Historian of disability Kim Nielsen has classified the manifold sensorial, physical, and mental disabilities between 1776 and 1865 in two basic groups: redeemable and non-redeemable. People with redeemable disabilities could access progressive venues (clinics, asylums, special schools) that would aid them in their path toward responsible, autonomous citizenship; those with unredeemable disabilities were either institutionalized and/or seen as dependent sub-humans.[24] New statistical tools lead to a more comprehensive US census that, by 1840, asked each head of household to report "deaf and dumb," "blind," and "insane or idiotic" members.[25] These new labels paved the road to registering disability—until then a private matter dealt with by relatives and volunteer caretakers—within the population at large. Taking his cue from Michel Foucault, Lennard Davis has suggested that counting the population was never an innocent task; rather, the rise of statistical science buttressed social hierarchies among dependent and independent citizens.[26] Similarly, Ellen Samuels has argued about the "fantasies of identification" that originate in the 1840s and stretch to our present era by seeking "to definitively identify bodies, to place them in categories delineated by race, gender, or ability status, and then to validate that placement through a verifiable, biological mark of identity." These fantasies of readymade, uncomplicated identity are "far less concerned with individual identity than with placing that individual within a legible group."[27] Legibility, as I contend later on, is not merely contingent on empirical observation and refined diagnostic tools; disabled bodies were also rendered legible in fantastic projections propagated via print media,

performance, and visual culture.

Slavery epitomized the cross-pollination of disability's two strands: a scientific "truth" whose axioms spilled over popular culture and a supremacist ideology whose cultural by-products informed the agendas of medical researchers and sociologists. Whereas an incipient pseudoscience deployed medical knowledge to prove blacks' biological inferiority and, thus, to legitimate the peculiar institution, brutal life conditions in Southern plantations disabled slaves, who were "whipped, worked, sold, raped, and studied with a ferocity close to frenzy."[28] Anti-slavery agents were not exempt from taking the slave body's inferiority for granted. In 1840 an exalted speaker at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society confronted slave owners and traders using the moot point of disability, asking "Will any man, who pretends to a jot of philosophy, deny that it is slavery that has disabled the slave? Now, how to set him up again is the next question."[29] By assuming that only whites could rehabilitate the slave from previous injuries and prejudices, many white abolitionists disclosed their paternalist ableism.

Disability evinced and enacted violence. It operated as its residue and as an injurious designation labeling certain human groups inferior and dependent. This act of labeling constitutes the fine print of liberal exaltations of human equality, as this notion animated the progressive movements of abolitionism, women's rights, and immigration reform. According to Alexis de Tocqueville, Americans had pioneered a relation between "equality" and an enlightened belief in "the Indefinite Perfectibility of Man," faulting "aristocratic nations" for deeming themselves "naturally too apt to narrow the scope of human perfectibility."[30] To be equal, in these terms, means to enjoy the same chances of achieving perfection as everybody else. Nonetheless, minority groups strived for equality

and perfectibility by counterpoising a deeply unequal and stagnant collective: people with disabilities. In his pivotal essay "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," Douglass Baynton unveils the ableist underside of many abolitionist and women's rights platforms, since these insistently articulated their claims for equal rights as an attempt to differentiate themselves from people with disabilities.[31] These subaltern groups entered the universal category of abstracted citizens in opposition to those who could not leave their crippled bodies behind. One of the many payoffs of Baynton's argument is that it discloses a discursive dependency on the category of disability. In this relation of dependency, members of a normative group deploy the symbolic grammar of disability to dis-identify themselves from other marginal groups. The person with a disability emerges as the ultimate Other, marginal in its conspicuous departure from the norm, yet central to the work of defining and perpetuating it.

Scholars of disability studies have complicated this notion of disability as the quintessential category of human difference. Their realizations have unfolded in two important stages. In the first one, critics replaced the "clinical model" of disability, which defines it as a bodily circumstance befalling an individual, with the model of "social constructionism," according to which disability constitutes an identity category akin to race, gender, and class.[32] Social constructionism dislodges disability from the individual body/mind and posits it as a social construct, although it also risks reducing disability to a pure fiction. This relativist note clouds the ordeals people with disabilities experience on a daily basis: pain, stigma, and lack of access. Partaking of a second and important stage, Alison Kafer and Nirmala Erevelles among others propose a "political/relational model" that posits disability as a social relation between bodies whose experiences are

nonetheless non-transferrable and often indescribable.[33] Acknowledging this circumstance helps us curb the excesses of constructionism while retaining disability's thrust as a political identity whose members congregate around shared histories of exclusion. This latest model capitalizes on intersectionality. Far from existing in watertight compartments, the labels of disability, race, gender, and class infiltrate each other. For instance, an intersectional analysis calibrates Governor Hopkins's palsy with his privileged background as a white, propertied, and educated male. Under this light, many people with disabilities may pause before calling Hopkins "one of us."

Literary explorations of disability yield new insights when examined from this intersectional perspective. My opening allusion to Whitman was not coincidental, since his poetry exemplifies literature's key role in formulating and echoing fantasies of disability. In fact, for its revolutionary attention to and distortions of the human body as a vehicle of democratic growth, *Leaves of Grass* (1855) constitutes an ur-fantasy of disability worthy of some pilot analysis. In his original preface, Whitman describes "the poet"—himself—as "the arbiter of the diverse" and "the equable man."[34] The poet assumes thus the double task typical of the body politic: to negotiate—and to erase—diversity under a single standardized corporeal structure. On the one hand, the panoply of bodies populating his expansive catalogues attests to this diversity; on the other, the terms in which these bodies' coexist within the same body remain problematic. In other words, *Leaves of Grass* tracks Whitman's awareness that the human body, with its vital organs and its hierarchy of capabilities, is everything but democratic. Moved by this imperative, Whitman starts his poem by breaking individual bodies down into their smallest components: the atoms he exchanges with his reader. "I Celebrate myself, / And what I

assume you shall assume, / For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you."[35] In their diminutiveness, these atoms erase any trace of ethnic, sexual, or occupational difference. This atomization of embodied identity already suggests Whitman's conflicted need to do away with and to celebrate the body.

In the poem, though, Whitman summons American types whose bodies—more unharmonious containers than atoms—return identity to an embodied, classifiable form. Branding Whitman the imperial poet of Manifest Destiny, David Simpson has discerned *Leaves of Grass*'s covert taxonomies: "Whitman, the spokesman of an egalitarian culture, does away with the leaders but preserves the spirit of a system whose logical dependence upon *some* sort of hierarchy … yet remains clear."[36] Seeking neither to demonize nor to exonerate Whitman, my attention to disabled figures in his poetry illuminates disability's serviceability as a generative possibility for US nationalism. Simpson's argument hinges on an extended catalogue in which Whitman allegedly harmonizes the "newly arrived immigrants" in the eastern shore with "the woollypates" in the sugar plantation. The surprisingly understudied presence of disability in the same extract invites some in-depth, intersectional analysis.

> The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a confirmed case,
> He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bedroom;
> The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,
> He turns his quid of tobacco, his eyes get blurred with the manuscript;
> The malformed limbs are tied to the anatomist's table,
> What is removed drops horribly in a pail;
> The quadroon girl is sold at the stand . . . . the drunkard nods by the barroom stove,
> …
> The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race,
> The western turkey-shooting draws old and young . . . . some lean on their rifles, some sit on logs,
> Out from the crowd steps the marksman and takes his position and levels his piece;

> The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee,
> The woollypates hoe in the sugarfield, the overseer views them from his saddle;
> …
> The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron.[37]

Parataxis, free verse, and metonymic association instill a democratic illusion of horizontal sameness: a system in which everything and everyone is necessary, unique, and equal. Conversely, this amputation scene acts as a vortex whose allusion to bodily malformation destabilizes Whitman's multifaceted national vision. The amputee's "malformed limbs" evince the possibility of congenital failure; "tied" negates free will, and whatever "drops horribly in a pail" suggests the unavoidability of exclusion. Earlier in the poem Whitman had welcomed "every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean," of whom "Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile."[38] What is the meaning of amputation then, other than to undercut a text otherwise famous for aligning body, nation, and cosmos? Given their gothic undertones and elusive passive voice, these lines shake up a catalogic sequence in which Whitman itemizes several individuals going about their daily business, unknowingly contributing to the great experiment of American democracy. Disability signifies the unspeakable underside of this experiment. Whitman's "pail" is no melting pot. Its role is not to reconcile difference, but to store it away.[39]

But what if we read this scene generatively? What if its abjected matter signaled an opening rather than an impasse? Refusing to name the excised bodily matter, only the very act of excising, Whitman—and the following chapters prove that he was not alone—uses the disabled body to narrate the growth of the social body through the unnamed excisions and exclusions enabling further incorporation. After all, "what is removed" and what is brought in unfold simultaneously. Throughout *Leaves of Grass*, traumatic

moments of individual and social fracture commingle with episodes of national growth. The poet deliberately confounds a disabled and an expansionist body politic: for it to expand its borders, it has to "remove" something of itself. In this process, the disabled person becomes an uncertain proxy for the body politic of the nation, showcasing its social crisis and "defects." Nevertheless, he or she also illuminates the road toward collective balance. For instance, the "lunatic" is taken "at last" where he supposedly belongs. This "asylum" winks to the historical New York State Lunatic Asylum for Insane Convicts, the first correctional institution in the United States designed exclusively for mental patients, inaugurated while Whitman was hard at work on the first edition of his book.[40] The phrase "a confirmed case" connotes a medical discourse that has shifted disability from the private domain (the "mother's bedroom") into the public sphere. This shift toward a more stable social order coexists with robust images of national expansion: "newly-come immigrants" arriving at the wharf, a "Wolverine" trapper pushing the frontier, and a "western turkey-shooting" contest.

Other writers have been more reluctant to lump sentient and figurative bodies. In chapter thirty-five of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Huck and Tom Sawyer attempt to free the slave Jim from Silas Phelps's custody. Disappointed by a boring lack of complications in their mission, Tom, the incurable reader of romances and adventure tales, decides to spice things up by cutting off Jim's chain instead of simply lifting the bed and removing it. But the true masterstroke, the course of action that would do full justice to the "best authorities" (for Tom Sawyer these include the "Baron Trenck," "Casanova," and "Benvenuto Chelleeny"), is—Sawyer suggests—"to saw Jim's leg off." Tom's plan falls through eventually because, as he explains, "Jim's a nigger and

wouldn't understand the reasons for it, and how it's the custom in Europe."[41] In other words, Jim's tentative amputation would turn him into the hero of romance, but, as somebody the dominant culture sees as inherently inferior, Jim cannot access this dignified status. Ironically, his exclusion from this realm saves him from actual mutilation. Twain tropes and de-tropes disability. Through Tom's urge to saw off Jim's leg, the author unveils our own dependency, as readers, on the symbolic grammar of disability. More importantly, Twain also exposes the objectifying framework of this dependency, since Jim's leg substitutes a piece of furniture and a chain. Tom's fantasy of disability occurs in accordance with a historical institution, slavery, itself premised on another disabling notion: black slaves are immune to physical pain and exploitative regimes of labor. Therefore, fantasies of disability not only work in tandem with ableist and racist ideologies; they contribute to victimize disabled and racial others. Twain's lucid undoing of Tom's fantasy of disability provides us with an analytical method.

2. Spatial Fantasies of Disability

Having outlined the growing relevance of embodied identity in nineteenth-century America, I now explain how these identities, rooted as they were in bodily peculiarities, spilled over to their outsides, generating spatial and temporal fantasies that reverberate in our present era. Because a body acquires meaning through its relation with other bodies, the terrains across which these relations pan out inform these meanings. This realization arrives in the wake of Judith Butler's claim that the figurative body politic of the nation, like the material bodies of its population, resides mainly "outside itself, in the world of others, in a space and time it does not control."[42] If we accept Butler's invitation to think

of bodies as unbounded entities, the dividing lines between ability and disability, between native and foreign, quickly lose their normative raison d'être. To redefine physical bodies and corporate structures of belonging in terms of their respective "outsides" changes our understanding of disability and citizenship. The body and the abstraction known as the body politic become, by definition, fragmented and prone to merging and unmerging with their environment in ways that defy the rigid ideological, racial and territorial confines of the nation-state. Nationalism, then, becomes a frustrated attempt to control the uncontrollable spaces of nations and bodies. Some disability scholars have acknowledged this phenomenon, succumbing to geopolitical metaphors. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson finds the normative body—or "normate"—"outlined by the array of deviant others whose marked bodies shore up the normate's boundaries."[43] A visualization of her statement displays a symmetrical, able body whose fleshly limits are not, however, drawn by itself, but by the disabled bodies "shoring up" against it, conforming its negative space: the area where it ceases to be.

This image parallels the visual arrangements of several nineteenth-century world maps and their implied geographies of expansion, targeting the incorporation of neighboring areas and yet positing the United States as distinct and superior to them. Starting in the late 1840s, New York printers Ensign, Bridgman, and Fanning popularized a pictorial map titled "The World at One View" [Fig. 1]. The map displays two hemispheric circles that barely occupy one third of the broadside. In fact, looking at "the world" here does not entail comprehending a geographic space, but a series of meticulously arrayed bodily differences. Whereas the map's authors minimize cartographic detail, they devote the central area to a horizontal array of human portraits

under the title "Principle Varieties of the Human Race." At its very center, an Anglo-Saxon male in formal attire presides over the world mapped below. The other portraits' skin color gradually blackens toward the extremes, so that this ethnocentric subject is ultimately flanked by an "Esquimaux" and a "Tasmanian" whose grotesque features include uncut hair, asinine smile, facial tattoos, and cleft lip, all bespeaking an innate biological and cultural subordination to the central white subject. These other subjects prove antipodal to this "normate" both in terms of their regions (North Pole and Tasmania) and, more palpably, of their abnormal physiognomies.

The ethnocentric rhetoric of early geography manuals similarly presupposes a power differential between the cartographer/ethnographer and the observed indigenous person being mapped out and anatomized. Jedidiah Morse mentions in his popular textbook *Geography Made Easy* (1784) "the dwarfish tribes which occupy some of the coasts of the Icy Sea."[44] Many other physiognomic descriptions of indigenous populations suggest a shared ground between disability and geography, a ground where territorial jurisdictions and anatomical portraits concretized each other. In *Crania Americana* (1840), renowned skull collector and phrenologist Samuel George Morton proposed a similar racial hierarchy to the one implied by "The World at One View." At the top of Morton's scale, "the Caucasian race … is distinguished for the facility with which it attains the highest intellectual endeavors." Ranking fifth, the "Ethiopian Race" constitutes its natural antithesis, since "the many nations which compose this race present a singular diversity of intellectual character, of which the far extreme is the lowest grade of humanity."[45] A firm believer in polygenesis, the theory according to which different races originate differently, Morton elaborates a meticulous rating of racial groups based

on the characteristics of their skulls, a rating complemented by a prefatory map of the American hemisphere and several geographical observations that emulate the racial taxonomies in "The World at One View."

Through their crisscrossing, these disciplines reveal the suspension of disbelief with which we accept body and nation as well-limited, coherent, and self-reliant foundations. Consequently, there arises a yearning for a standard—yet pliable—American body in the fashion of Whitman's "equable man." On that note, Morse prophesizes that "all nominal distinctions" among inhabitants of the Earth "shall be lost in the general and honorable name of Americans." This belief propels a nascent exceptionalism in which the United States plays the part of the child destined to great feats: "We are yet an infant empire, rising fast to maturity."[46] Decades later, Arnold Guyot's *The Earth and Man* (1849)—a staple in many middle-class households—adheres to this vision, embracing "the proof of the old proverb 'variety in unity is perfection.'" But, same as for Whitman, "variety" for Guyot does not entail equality. On the contrary, it situates the most advanced forms of life on American soil, branding them the litmus test of every other organism in the world: "If such is the law of life in all beings, it ought equally to be the law of life in our entire globe, collectively considered, as a single individual."[47]

Literature of the period mirrored these alignments of body, nation, and empire. Whitman captures the era's scientific push for a gradual assimilation of every human race toward the American standard. This racial convergence has important geopolitical implications. Like Guyot and Morse, Whitman voices imperial dreams of endless expansion in spatial-corporeal terms:

> A bard is to be commensurate with a people. To him the other continents arrive as contributions . . . he gives them reception for their sake and his own sake … he incarnates its geography and natural life and rivers and lakes … When the long Atlantic coast stretches longer and the Pacific coast stretches longer he easily stretches with them north or south. He spans between them also from east to west and reflects what is between them.[48]

A tension unfolds here between the urge for the poet to remain "commensurate" with the American people and, conversely, to mutate and enlarge its constitution until it overlaps an aggrandized national territory. This tension eventually deforms and implodes the body: "My ties and ballasts leave me . . . I travel . . . I sail . . . my elbows rest in the sea-gaps, / I skirt the sierras . . . my palms cover continents, / I am afoot with my vision."[49] Once again, Whitman cannot but borrow the figure of the extraordinary body in order to concretize an expansionist and assorted US body politic. In these lines, Whitman matches in his proportion the colossal body politic featured in the frontispiece of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). Nonetheless, whereas the latter's gigantic frame symbolizes the unipersonal powers of the sovereign monarch, Whitman's behemoth self responds to a democratic impulse that augments it ad absurdum, to the point where it vanishes into pure vision. For the poet to truly comprehend the American land and its peoples, he first needs to dispense with his body. Corporeal metaphor is only useful insofar as it can be ultimately transcended and replaced by disembodied sight. Abnormal corporealities, whether in the form of gigantic bodies politic or the "dwarfish tribes" at the margins of America's imperial grasp, occupy a rest point between two extremes: actual bodies and incorporeal beings.

Like *Leaves of Grass*, the United States government excised, enlarged, incorporated, and removed. The same conflicted desire to aggrandize the US territory

without altering the defining features of its citizenry emanates more bluntly from Senator Lewis Cass, who, speaking during the Mexican-American War voiced the Government's position on the annexation of Mexico: "We do not want the people of Mexico, either as citizens or subjects. All we want is a portion of territory, which they nominally hold." For Cass, any other mode of expansion would lead to a "deplorable amalgamation."[50] The way the United States constituted itself both by addition (annexation, naturalization, demographic growth) and by subtraction (secession, war, segregation) dovetails with what Foucault branded "a logic of opposing strategies" in "the great nineteenth-century effort in discipline and normalization."[51] Disability occupied its middle ground, given that the iconography of disfigurement and amputation articulated this convoluted model of geopolitical growth. In their spatial dimension, fantasies of disability posit a disabled national body whose incompletion justifies aggressive expansionism. Its desired wholeness rekindles the promise of Manifest Destiny: the providential designation for the United States to incorporate California, Oregon, the Southwest territories, Cuba, and to broaden its area of influence beyond continental confines. Like the able, complete, self-sufficient body looms perpetually in the disabled person's horizon, an American empire lingered as the ever-present goal of the US republic. The quest for empire enlarges the national territory, but in the present stage of enunciation, its embodiment adopts the nonnormative disguises of the ghost, the Indian, the freak, and the pensioner—all central figures in the following chapters.

The historical arc of this dissertation then revolves around pivotal events such as the Missouri Compromise, the Mexican-American War, the Indian Removal Act, Secession, the Civil War, and Reconstruction shaping writers' use of fragmentation as a

trope of national and transnational growth. But, as legislative and juridical episodes like the Missouri Compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and *Dred Scott v. Sanford* attest, stretching the limits of the nation did not help US citizens reach the lowest common denominator needed for national affiliation. On the contrary, these measures accelerated internal division. Anders Stephanson, an attentive student of Manifest Destiny, mentions that by 1820 American space had been conceptualized as a "projection of the national self." However, this projection "emerged … in the form of a diffuse disposition toward the world, for there was no clear outside to render its identity precise."[52] That this projection adopted a freakish disposition is explained by the unclear geopolitical contour of the nation (Where does the United States end and other nations begin?) as well as by its inhabitants' insecurities about their own boundaries (Where does one individual end and others begin? What makes an individual?).

Incarnated by a visibly disabled body, the United States emerges more forcefully as a promise than an accomplishment. This iconography harkens back to the Revolutionary era. In 1766, shortly after Great Britain imposed heavy taxes on the American Colonies through the Stamp Act, Benjamin Franklin authored, printed, and circulated a political cartoon titled "MAGNA Britannia: her Colonies REDUC'D." [Fig. 2.] Here, "Britannia" is personified by a helpless, quadruple-amputee woman whose mistreatment of her overtaxed and underrepresented North American subjects has resulted in her being fragmented beyond repair. Franklin himself explains this image as a dramatization of Britannia losing her imperial strength, for she appears "sliding off the world (no longer able to hold its balance)."[53] To convey this idea, Franklin yokes together a corporeal and a social crisis. While the woman adopts a static, mendicant posture,

trading ships remain idle in the harbor; her spear and shield lie abandoned in the battlefield. But the image also conceives the embryonic United States as a series of limbs cut off from the motherland (the name of a colony is written on each lopsided limb). Colonial subjects are to assemble, then, a coherent national self out of the excised body parts of empire. Franklin's visual presentation of bodily injury enables him to articulate an anti-imperial consciousness, suggesting that the peripheral jurisdictions of empire prove as instrumental to its good standing as the limbs of a human body are determinant to its able-bodiedness. Thus, this crisis brims with opportunity, since Britannia's mutilation enables the emergent postcolonial republic to seize the globe that the motherland no longer controls, an implied message Franklin made explicit in another famous exhortation: "Join, or Die."

Fantasies of disability proliferate around national crises, fluctuating between abstract citizens and the irresistible vision of a yet-to-be-whole body politic. The unfinished bodies featured in the disability catalogue rekindled this promise of wholeness. James Russell Lowell justified expansion and burgeoning imperialism in terms of "obedience to natural laws," postulating that "it was as normal for a young nation to grow as it was for a young organism. Because the growth instinct was natural, it concluded, it was also morally supportable."[54] In the next section, I explain how the disabled body, because of its fragmentation, its brokenness, and its sense of incompletion, offers a realm of expansive possibilities for bodies politic, possibilities that are lacking in the whole, total body looming in the horizon of our communal fantasies (Why should a "whole" body grow more?). For that reason, members of the body politic simultaneously fantasize about and delay wholeness.

3. Disability, Desire, Futurity

We tend to think of disability as a present defect or malfunction that might or might not be overcome in the future, but the fantasies of disability studied here unveil additional temporal vectors. In *Prosthesis*, an extended meditation sparked by the memory of his father's prosthetic leg, David Wills grapples with the spatio-temporal complications of disability: "the whole never was anywhere, neither in the singular nor in the total, because the parts were always detachable, replaceable, because the transfer effect upon which the general is constructed is there at the very beginning, in the nonintegrality of that beginning, called prosthesis."[55] If the future is prosthetic to the present, the present cannot but remain sempiternally incomplete. To claim, as Wills does, that "the whole never was anywhere" is to state that the yearned for totality and homeostasis of the body politic exists outside of time and space. The implications of this reasoning are crucial for this project. Fantasies of disability do not simply place an unattainable perfect body in our collective horizon; rather they value disability in the present and for the present, inviting us to imagine ideal futures that, nevertheless, emanate from an unaltered historical present.

It has been a staple of disability studies to critique those narratives in which individual rehabilitation indexes larger processes of collective restoration. The postbellum "romances of reunion" featured in Chapter Four exemplify this narrative mold, since they plot romantic attachments between injured Union soldiers and their Southern caretakers in order to free readers from the traumas of the Civil War. My primary texts work differently. Washington Irving's US futurities unfold always halfway between the material and the spectral; Charles Stratton's spectacular dwarfism—his capacity not to grow—was precisely what permitted him to embody national fantasies of

sempiternal innocence; the figure of the vanishing Indian in literature lingers in the limbo of disability, too weak to confront US governance and too important to disappear without a trace; finally, in the two Civil War novels that close this project, disabled pensioners who refuse their pensions prevent the structural antagonisms that led to the Civil War from being conveniently forgotten in the name of progress. In these fantasies of disability, rehabilitation does not rehabilitate individual bodies; it rather ossifies those aspects of the body politic whose alteration might redefine an essentialist national identity. In fact, the fantasies of disability in these texts—including Whitman's prophetic visions—fossilize a present state of social relations.

Rehabilitation: a habilitation of the "re-," a reiteration lacking an original referent, returning to an ideal state that never was. The Latin *rehabilitatio* meant "re-establishment" but also "renewal," insinuating that rehabilitation always has something "new" in store.[56] According to Lisa Long, the "*re*" in rehabilitation "ensures a preceding authenticity, promising that we can get back to an essential wholeness. Thus the disciplines of health and history assume that the bodies/documents that mark the existence of a disordering event are incontrovertible, entities merely awaiting retrieval."[57] Rehabilitation marks the utopia of the body, which also invites a social utopia homogeneously populated by standardized, complete, and self-sufficient bodies. It welcomes defective bodies back into the realm of the healthy, a realm in which the normal passes as the norm and the norm looks down on its exceptions. In the context of a fantasy of disability, to be rehabilitated does not mean to embrace a specific body or a body politic in a hypothetical future marked by recovery and restoration; it rather means

to situate these constructs at a present moment when we become able to imagine them as different from what they are.

According to this twisted logic, disability proves instrumental in our capacity to reify social hierarchies and articulate persuasive jeremiads about what the future holds should we fail to accept such hierarchies in the present. As the master creator of nineteenth-century fantasies of disability, Whitman hints once again at this realization. The following lines depict a clash between the desire for a future in which bodies remain ever-changing and mutable and the need for these bodies to remain identifiable and taxonomized within the sexual and racial hierarchies of the present: "Here comes one among the wellbeloved stonecutters and plans with decision and science and sees the solid and beautiful forms of the future where there are now no solid forms."[58] What does the future hold, according to Whitman? Its "solid and beautiful forms" become apparent only as a figment of the imagination deeply at work "now." Far from anxiety-inducing, the lack of "solid forms" in the future reassures poet ("the stonecutter") and readers that the future manifests itself as a shapeless magma in which we discern desired forms, relationships, and affects. Lacking "solid forms," this future reinvigorates our present desires (as well as our freedom to desire). In terms of Whitman's bodily metaphors, the disabled body in the present constitutes an optimal mechanism that titillates our collective desires. This mechanism proves liberating in ways that the healthy body cannot.

My claim about the futures that fantasies of disability from the past imagine redirects a recent discussion on temporality and disability. Approaching disability from the temporal axis yields, more than anything, a new historiography. Such development becomes palpable in the thirteen–year lapse between the two main collections of essays

on disability written and edited by historians. In their introduction to *The New Disability History: American Perspectives* (2001), Longmore and Umansky capture a widespread notion of disability in the American psyche as a nightmarish condition depriving citizens of autonomy and enforcing a regime of compulsory repetition. "Americans"—the editors write—"often perceive disability—and therefore people with disabilities—as embodying that which Americans fear most: loss of independence, of autonomy, of control; in other words, subjection to fate."[59] Further scholarship has revealed disability to be something more complex than a time prison or a personal and historical halt to America's divinely ordained progress (the "American Perspectives" of the title already suggest the volume's nation-centered scope). Published in 2014, *Disability Histories* nods at its predecessor while widening and complicating its assumptions. Whereas Longmore and Umansky state that "disability has always been central to life in America;" Burch and Rembis claim that it "is central to understanding history," meaning that "lived experiences of disability … do not conform to common historical narratives of unilinear progress." In sum, disability provides "a powerful interpretive lens through which scholars can re-member (or reconstitute) the past."[60] In the former source, disability emerges as an unexplored subject of study; in the latter it becomes a methodology.

Crippling the Body Politic uses fantasies of disability to open a critical window into the stories Americans like to tell themselves about their past, present, and future. To that end, I grapple with the fact that the individual and social experience of disability messes with chronological time. In the most lucid exploration of this circumstance, Alison Kafer speaks from the perspective of an individual with a disability who contends: "My future is written on my body."[61] Kafer explains how, when her symptoms appeared

and the social landscape around her began to spin, this future fluctuated between the promise of rehabilitation (understood as normalization) and the hopeless surrender to a life that, forestalled by disability, simply repeats itself forever. In the latter version, Kafer's life prospects shape up as "a future that bears too many traces of the ills of the present to be desirable." Kafer's rebellion against this no-future inspires my own work on the intended futures of nineteenth-century bodies politic with disabilities. Disability, I argue, posits a future in which desire is still possible. Its catalogue of human imperfections prove crucial for enabling desire itself, for imagining us as sempiternal desiring subjects. Disability, in short, keeps us desiring. It is the healthy, normal body that lacks a future.

4. Chapters

In a contemporary public sphere still suffused with injured soldiers fighting for their pensions, heated debates over universal healthcare, and the proliferation in multiple media of desirable body images along with their nightmarish counterparts, my intervention theorizes and historicizes these vexed conflicts over the public and private meanings of physical disability. Knowing how to disarticulate these fantasies of disability makes us better readers and cultural critics, but it also forces us to rethink contemporary policies and practices about disability and corporeal difference. The Americans with Disabilities Act, which Obama mythically linked to the Declaration of Independence, has succeeded or failed depending on how certain bodies have been represented or narrated.[62] Rather than aiming for a stable definition of "body" and "disability," as the language of the ADA seems intent on doing, I propose an alternative method of approaching the ethical and political implications of (mis)representing disability. As my chapters will

show, ableist prejudices and fantasies of disability constitute two sides of the same coin. Thus, the more allegorized a disabled figure becomes, the easier it is for him or her to enter hegemonic spaces of national signification (e.g. "empty sleeve" poetry, P.T. Barnum's museum). On the contrary, disabled figures who cast off their metaphorical varnish and communicate material and sentient phenomena instead of silently embodying the nation are pushed to liminal existences (e.g. Ichabod Crane, Magawisca, Berthold Lindau).

My chapters follow a roughly chronological order, as the geopolitical and social transformations of the United States imbue specific bodies with new meanings. Chapter One examines Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820) and *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), charting a discursive dependency between US expansionism at its apex (1803-1845) and the social construction of disability. Using Lacan's notion of the mirror stage, I theorize Irving's disabled characters as important visual cues of imperial formations: incomplete bodies to be rehabilitated through the creation of empire. The figure of the vanishing Indian was instrumental to the making of US empire. In Chapter Two, disabled Indian women Magawisca and Nelema in Catherine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) hint at an indigenous culture of disability whose imagined body politic, far from vanishing, constitutes a pantheistic mystery that destabilizes Western notions of progress. Focusing on a very different subject, Chapter Three explores the nationalist fantasies invested in the stunted growth of celebrity dwarf Charles Stratton and the racial anxieties mitigated by his blackface performance in P.T. Barnum's stage adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). Lastly, Chapter Four unlocks several financial and nationalist fantasies of disability regarding

Civil War amputees. To that end, I analyze William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) and Joseph Kirkland's *The Captain of Company K* (1891), from a disability studies perspective. Through the characters of war amputees who refuse their government pensions, Howells and Kirkland introduce figures of disability who shed their public status as allegories of a reunited body politic while calling attention to their troubled existence as bodies. Their gesture prompts an economy of horizontal dependency that counters the capitalist ethos of self-reliance and offers a blueprint for disability thinking then and now.

Notes

[1] Hopkins's remark appears in many popular histories of the Revolution. I quote here David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001): 138.

[2] George Lippard, *Washington and His Generals: or, Legends of the Revolution* (Philadelphia: G.B. Zieber and Co, 1847): 397.

[3] Rebecca Harding Davis, "Old Landmarks in Philadelphia," *Scribner's Monthly* 12:2 (June 1876): 158-59.

[4] Samedifference1, "Stephen Hopkins, a Signer of American Declaration of Independence, Had Cerebral Palsy." *Same Difference*, December 13, 2012 http://samedifference1.com/2012/12/13/stephen-hopkins-a-signer-of-american-declaration-of-independence-had-cerebral-palsy

[5] Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act." *The White House. Office of the Press Secretary*. July 26, 2010. https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-20th-anniversary-americans-with-disabilities-act

[6] David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002): 138.

[7] Benson John Lossing, *Biographical Sketches of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence* (New York: George F. Cooledge and Brother, 1848): 46; Charles Augustus Goodrich, *Lives of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Thomas Mather, 1837): 73.

[8] Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, "Introduction: Disability History: From the Margins to the Mainstream," *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001): 2.

[9] I intend "cripple" here to retain the empowering stamina with which disability activists and artists have usurped its derogatory meaning. To cripple the body politic is not to inflict an injury, but to place people with disabilities at the center of the national sensorium. By re-appropriating this centrality and occupying it in a non-silent disposition, people with disabilities might be heard as well as seen in public. On the subversive re-appropriations of "crip," see Carrie Sandahl, "Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?: Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 9:1-2 (2003): 27; Simi Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1998): 16; and Nancy Mairs's essay "On Being a Cripple." Nancy Mairs, *Plaintext: Essays* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992): 9.

[10] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi (London, New York: Continuum, 1988): 10.

[11] Sari Altschuler, "'ain't one limb enough?': Historicizing Disability in the Early American Novel," *American Literature* 86:2 (June 2014): 245-74; Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2014): 1-26; and Todd Carmody, "In Spite of Handicaps: The Disability History of Racial Uplift," *American Literary History* 27:1 (Spring 2015): 56-78.

[12] Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770-1800*. Trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): 6.

[13] We do not choose the body as a political symbol; it chooses us. Mary Douglas has argued that the human body provides the cosmological symbol per excellence. Such status does not derive from the body's fitting shape; on the contrary, the body provides our most direct experience of the world. We choose it because it is right there, framing us in insurmountable ways, not because it stands out as the best among several options. Douglas points out that our "major preoccupation will be with its functioning effectively" and, for doing so, "the relation of head to subordinate members will be a model of the central control system, the favorite metaphors of statecraft will harp upon the flow of blood in the arteries." Douglas's idea has found its way into the domain of literary studies via Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism. Frye ascertains that "the repetition of certain common images of physical nature like the sea or the forest in a large number of poems cannot in itself be called even 'coincidence.'" The body presides among these "common images." Thus, it belongs to the anagogic level of interpretation, the one in which Frye situates symbol-monads that can refer only to themselves, to the material entity they designate. Frye's theory paved the way for Fredric Jameson's study of narrative as a "socially symbolic act." Again, the body focalizes the "act" of narrating: "for, being the

final 'phase' of the allegory, the image of the cosmic body cannot stand for anything further, for anything other than itself." See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002): xxxvi; Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000): 92; and Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981): 72.

[14] Lauren Berlant, "Uncle Sam Needs a Wife," *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*. Eds. Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002): 144.

[15] "Fantasy is not therefore antagonistic to social reality; it is its precondition or psychic glue. But fantasy surely ceases to be a private matter if it fuels, or at least plays its part in, the forging of the collective will." Jacqueline Rose, *States of Fantasy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996): 3.

[16] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (New York: Verso, 1997): 7-10.

[17] Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (New York, Verso, 1991): lxxxi.

[18] Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009): 62.

[19] An isolated measure, the Revolutionary War Pension Act of 1818 granted financial support to disabled veterans from the War of Independence and the War of 1812, restraining the meaning of disability to military injury. See Daniel Blackie, "Disability, Dependency, and the Family in the Early United States," *Disability Histories*, ed. Susan Burch and Michael Rembis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014): 18-19.

[20] W. E. B Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk," *Three Negro Classics*, ed. John Hope Franklin (New York: Avon, 1965): 213.

[21] I owe the substitution of disability for race in Du Bois's question to David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, for whom "nearly every culture views disability as a problem in need of a solution." *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000): 47.

[22] For Bhabha, "the people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference where the claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification." Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990): 297. Jameson ruffled some feathers among postcolonial critics with his provocation that "third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic—

necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-word culture and society." Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," *Social Text* (Fall 1986): 65-88.

[23] Walt Whitman, *An 1855-56 Notebook Toward the Second Edition of Leaves of Grass*, ed. Harold Blodgett (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959): 8-9.

[24] Kim E. Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States* (Boston, Beacon Press, 2012): 49-52. See also, David Braddock and Susan L. Parish, "An Institutional History of Disability," *A Handbook of Disability Studies*. Eds. Gary L. Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman, and Michael Bury (Sage: Thousand Oaks, 2001): 25-39.

[25] *US Census Questionnaire 1840*. Accessed April 18, 2015. http://www.mymcpl.org/_uploaded_resources/MGC-1840censusblank.pdf

[26] Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (New York: Verso, 1995): 63.

[27] Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification*, 2, 6.

[28] Carolyn Sorisio, *Fleshing Out America. Race Gender and the Politics of the Body in American Literature, 1833-1879* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002): 28. See also Todd Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978): 281-88; and Leonard Cassuto, *The Inhuman Race: the Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 16.

[29] *Eight Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston: Dow and Jackson, 1840): xviii. Regarding the scientific justification of ethnocentrism and racism in nineteenth-century United States, including the debate between polygenesis and monogenesis, the classic study remains Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981): 71-80.

[30] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Signet Classics, 2010): 179-80.

[31] Douglas C. Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History." *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*. Eds. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001): 33-57.

[32] See Shelley Tremain, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critical Disability Theory: An Introduction," *Foucault and the Government of Disability*. Ed. Shelley Tremain (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005): 1-26.

[33] Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013): 7-8; Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 6-8.

[34] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings: Authoritative Texts, Other Poetry and Prose, Criticism*, ed. Michael Moon (New York: Norton, 2002): 620.

[35] Ibid., 662.

[36] David Simpson, "Destiny Made Manifest: The Styles of Whitman's Poetry," *Nation and Narration*, 183.

[37] Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 671-72.

[38] Ibid., 664.

[39] Whitman does not identify this difference, an odd gesture for a poet who cherishes the prospect of giving everything and everyone a name. "What is removed," then, could well belong to Julia Kristeva's category of the abject: "a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable." This unthinkable quality of the jettisoned limb defies popular assumptions about the 'natural' limits of body and self, but also the referentiality of language itself as a nationalist meaning-making tool. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992): 1.

[40] See David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002): 283; and Benjamin Reiss, *Theaters of Madness: Insane Asylums & Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 23-50.

[41] Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Boston, New York: New Riverside, 2000): 277-78.

[42] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009): 52.

[43] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 8.

[44] Jedidiah Morse, *Geography Made Easy: Being an Abridgment of the American Universal Geography* (Boston: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1802): 48.

[45] Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana: or a comparative view of the skulls of various aboriginal nations of North and South America* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1839): 2-3.

[46] Morse, *Geography Made Easy*, 45-46, 96.

[47] Arnold Guyot, *The Earth and Man: Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1901): 80.

[48] Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 618.

[49] Ibid., 687.

[50] Qtd. in Jesse Alemán and Shelley Streetby, "Introduction," *Empire and the Literature of Sensation: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction*. Eds. Jesse Alemán and Shelley Streetby (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007): xxv.

[51] Foucault invites us to observe the inner dynamics of this phenomenon as a "succession of offensives and counter-offensives, effects and counter-effects," since "the coherence of such a history does not derive from the revelation of a project but from a logic of opposing strategies." Michel Foucault, "Body/Power," *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 61.

[52] Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996): 28-29.

[53] Benjamin Franklin, William Temple Franklin, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, v1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1818): 219.

[54] Qtd. in Paul Kens, "A Promise of Expansionism," *The Louisiana Purchase and American Expansion, 1803-1898*. Eds. Sanford Levinson and Bartholomew H. Sparrow (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005): 144.

[55] David Wills, *Prosthesis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995): 15.

[56] "Rehabilitation," *Oxford English Dictionary*. Accessed April 21, 2015. http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/view/Entry/161448?redirectedFrom=rehabilitation#eid

[57] Lisa Long, *Rehabilitating Bodies: Health, History, and the American Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004): 10.

[58] Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 619.

[59] Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky, *New Disability History*, 7.

[60] Ibid., 2; Susan Burch and Michael Rembis, "Re-Membering the Past: Reflections on Disability Histories," *Disability Histories*, 3.

[61] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 1.

[62] See Samuel R. Bagenstos, "The Americans With Disabilities Act as Risk Regulation," *Columbia Law Review* 101: 6 (October 2001): 1479-1514; and Alex B. Long, "Introducing the New and Improved Americans with Disabilities Act: Assessing the ADA Amendments Act of 2008," *Colloquy: Northwestern University Law Review*. November 17, 2008. Accessed April 22, 2015. http://colloquy.law.northwestern.edu/main/2008/11/introducing-the-new-and-improved-americans-with-disabilities-act-assessing-the-ada-amendments-act-of-2008.html

Chapter One

"Pioneers for the mind": Embodiment, Disability, and the De-hallucination of American Empire

Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" ends in sheer contradiction. After local bully Brom Bones disguises himself as the Headless Horseman and scares Ichabod Crane away from Tarry Town, Irving bifurcates the plot somewhat disconcertingly: on the one hand, a local farmer claims that Ichabod, the unbecoming pedagogue and "singing-master," had relocated "to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time, been admitted to the bar, turned politician, electioneered, written for the newspapers, and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court"; on the other, though, the town's "old country wives" insist that "Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means" and that "the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow" still resound with his "melancholy psalms."[1] Haunting and civilizing the American wilderness at once, Ichabod is put to a strange, antithetical task by the author. Through this impossible assignment—this chapter argues—Irving taps into a generalized anxiety about the geopolitical growth of the United States.

When this tale appeared in the definite edition of *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* (1820), Irving's audiences encountered important questions: What narrative of the national future was there to uphold: the institutional or the supernatural, the material or the spectral, the one in which citizens occupy new frontiers or that other one in which a disembodied voice finds itself sempiternally tied to the point of departure? In short, was American expansion a ghostly or a practical enterprise? And why did Irving imbricate the two? Ichabod's complex personification of the US body politic opens up

some of these questions. Examining Ichabod Crane as an anxious political allegory allows us to unearth the text's deep concern with national futurity and to overcome, as a result, those interpretations that simplify it as Irving's compensatory gesture for a non-existent American past.[2] More significantly, this approach reveals a reciprocity between figurative embodiment and the proto-imperialist discourse of US expansion. This reciprocity explains the centrality of the present/absent body in this and other narratives of nation-building, as the collective task of widening territorial and identitarian US boundaries hinges on anomalous bodies like Ichabod's: bodies that appear, disappear, stretch, and break apart with ostensible ease.

Inquiring into the motives, unfolding, and implications of Irving's unresolved ending, this chapter reads "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"—among other writings by Irving—as a tale of disembodied pioneering that dramatizes the identification mechanisms through which US citizens embraced an embryonic national identity. A critical paradigm for these instances of identification emerges in every scene in which Ichabod assumes an image of himself: from broken-mirror reflections to sustained analogies with African Americans to the final *vis-à-vis* with the Headless Horseman, these images are never consistent. The author drives Ichabod into specular associations that increase readers' awareness of the national body politic as a disabled (mostly fragmented) construct. Thus, Irving's corporeal metaphor (via Ichabod) of the expansionist United States offers an interesting precursor to a series of abnormal bodies that the author places in liminal spaces between empires and nations—as in the archives of the British Museum or in the tumbledown Moorish fortress of the Alhambra, in southern Spain—and which, in turn, unlock his transnational anti-imperialism.

Unmasking Irving's fictions of disability therefore paves the road for our understanding of the fictions of American empire, its racialized taxonomies, its dynamics of exclusion, and the failures of its democratic pledge.

"Sleepy Hollow's" duplicitous conclusion, alternating Ichabod's embodied and spectral manifestations, does not come unannounced. From the outset, Irving describes the newly-arrived pedagogue in terms of lack rather than endowment: "tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together."[3] This is a body that comprehends vast territories while lacking a stable center. Irving constantly compresses and atomizes Ichabod's body. Such a problematic model of growth also applies to the body politic Irving has in mind, typifying the fragile constructions of communal identity at the core of the *Sketch-Book* and *The Alhambra Tales*. By conflating Ichabod's expansionist body (politic) with the no-body of a ghost at the end of "Sleepy Hollow," Irving introduces a moment of aporia that hijacks collective fantasies about the imperial possibilities of the newly-found nation. This happens because Ichabod succeeds in enlarging the national territory only as long as his ghostly counterpart remains stuck in square one. Irving introduces thus Ichabod's disembodied pioneering as the simultaneous dematerialization of the body and expansion of the body politic.

1. Disembodied pioneering

Later sections will explore, via psychoanalytic and disability theory, Irving's precocious awareness of the discursive cross-fertilization between imperialism and physical disability, as he articulates it through Ichabod, whose insatiable appetite and endless

consumption of resources narrows his frame instead of aggrandizing it, and through several characters in *The Alhambra Tales*, whose fragmented bodies mime the blurry jurisdictions they inhabit. For now, it is useful to situate Ichabod, first and foremost, as one of US historiography's favorite subjects: the pioneer. His inland movement from the coast to Sleepy Hollow heralds the later displacements of the western frontier during the first half of the nineteenth century. Like "Rip Van Winkle," the other most anthologized tale from *The Sketch-Book*, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" dabbles in a chronology of profound political transformation. Both stories orchestrate abrupt jumps between the isolated colonial past preserved in the Hudson Valley's Dutch settlements and a narrative present in which the post-Revolution republic struggles to assert its identity. One of Irving's fictional narrators and doppelganger, the antiquarian Diedrich Knickerbocker, voices a nostalgic lament that also rings a note of nervousness toward "the great torrent of emigration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country."[4] By the time of the story's publication, this restlessness was far from abating: between 1816 and 1821, James Monroe's government had annexed as states a fair expanse of the territories gained in the Louisiana Purchase (1803), while the echoes of the Lewis and Clark expedition had already implanted in the minds of Americans a divinely ordained call to build their nation from sea to shining sea.

Ichabod Crane represents those who embraced this call wholeheartedly. Halfway through the story, the schoolmaster's unleashed fancy "presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath; and he beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or

the Lord knows where."[5] Constantly referred to as a "morsel," Katrina Van Tassel does not originate desire herself as much as provide Ichabod with the means to enlarge both his biological body and the republican body politic. Irving de-eroticizes Ichabod's desire for Katrina, turning it into a national fantasy of expansion and social reproduction. Since the story is set around 1790, Irving orients Ichabod and his prospective offspring toward two territories about to enter the Union as states: Kentucky (1792) and Tennessee (1796). The third alternative, "the Lord knows where," ironizes the providential call of Manifest Destiny, as God's own hand was believed to guide the expansion and occupation of the West.[6]

Removed Native American nations and enslaved people of African descent remained on the losing end of this process. Historian Reginald Horsman has explained US expansion by means of its alliance with Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy and biological essentialism so that, even if "the Indian policy of Washington, Jefferson, and Monroe was based on ideas of improvability stemming from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment," such notion of improvability soon receded and was supplanted by the scientific racism behind polygenesis—the assumption that different races do not share a traceable common ancestry—and phrenology.[7] These theories justified removal, exploitation, and genocide by offering "irrefutable" evidence of Africans and Indians' innate inferiority. In the infamous words of slavery apologist Thomas R. Dew: "the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots."[8] In result, territorial expansion was not a by-product but the direct consequence of a pseudo-scientific determinism reified through physiognomic variations of skin, size, sex, and complexion. Racialized hierarchies shaped Manifest Destiny into an imperial project of subjection deeply at odds with the democratic values

that expansionists had promised to extend to the furthest continental corners and beyond. Official racism impelled US expansion while visibly debunking the egalitarian principles at the core of its mission. Even if the republic could only stretch through the movement, reproduction, and physical toil of actual bodies populating the landscape, otherized African and Indian bodies foiled national growth or, at least, compromised its liberal agenda.

In "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Ichabod's ambivalent fate as both a thriving stalwart of the US body politic and a bodiless spirit plays out these appropriations of the human body by expansionist discourse. Scholars of US imperialism like John Carlos Rowe have outlined the process by which "peoples of color, women and workers consistently colonized *within* the United States" mingled "with a variety of 'foreign' peoples successively colonized by the United States *outside* its territorial borders." From the point of view of the colonized subject, this internal/external dimension proved almost irrelevant, as its rhetorical justification "could be deployed for new foreign ventures even as it was required to maintain the old systems of controlling familiar groups within the United States."[9] Given the era's aggressive expansionism, this process had no end in sight. The desire to aggrandize the borders of the republic overlapped with a nativist apprehension toward the different alterities that successive incorporations presented to a male, ableist, Anglo-Saxon standard of citizenship. Even Walt Whitman's extolment of American inclusiveness was not exempt from the anxiety of incorporation. "Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity"—asked the poet.[10] Like Whitman, many US nationals shuddered at the "new identities" grafted onto the national body with every annexation. Against the nationalist emphasis on enclosure, expansionism and a nascent

imperialism constantly re-opened and sutured their body politic around wider areas of influence.

This precarious equipoise between democratic aggrandizement and the domestic tyrannies of slavery and Indian removal culminated in two key episodes of US political history parallel to Irving's literary production: the Missouri Compromise (1819-21)—aiming to resolve the body politic's internal imbalances—and the Monroe Doctrine (1823)—destined to present a homeostatic American body politic in the eyes of the world. The House of Representatives drafted the Missouri Compromise as a short-term solution to the crisis of slavery, stipulating that, for every annexed free state, a new slave state should follow. Although this intended harmony was believed to prevent dissenting parties from abandoning the Union, the political assemblage that ultimately emerged from the Compromise barely concealed the widening cracks between slave and free states, especially as the western territories awaited incorporation. With every annexation, it became more obvious that the republic risked disintegrating. Looking back to the Missouri Compromise, Abraham Lincoln illustrated its true outcome through a cancer metaphor: "Thus, the thing [institutional slavery] is hid away, in the constitution, just as an afflicted man hides away a wen or a cancer, which he dares not cut out at once, lest he bleed to death."[11] The powers behind the Missouri Compromise refrained from "cutting" the national body politic and allowed the "cancer" of slavery to metastasize instead. Ichabod's expansive, fragmentary, and ultimately ethereal anatomy proves indeed an apt correlate to this image: his limbs might reach out for miles, but his body would always "loosely hung together" before vanishing into thin air.

James Monroe participated ardently in the Missouri debates.[12] His efforts to eradicate slavery at home occurred almost simultaneously with his eponymous doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine cordoned off the American hemisphere against European intervention, yet, its proto-imperialist maneuver also aimed to create a subtle tie of dependency between the United States and newly independent American nations such as Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, and Chile. Like Irving did with Ichabod, Monroe also assigned himself an impossible task, wanting to appease the internal schism around slavery by conflating the national territory with the entire American continent. In his 1823 State of the Union Address, the Doctrine's official inception, Monroe alleged that, "by enlarging the basis of our system and increasing the number of States the system itself has been greatly strengthened in both its branches."[13] Nonetheless, the escalating North-South hostility soon curbed the government's belief that a bigger body politic would result in a healthier one.

The intellectual history behind the Missouri Compromise and the confrontations it aimed to resolve—at best only postponing them—paves the road for our understanding of the Monroe Doctrine. Seen as a corollary to the Missouri Compromise, the Monroe Doctrine facilitated a shield and a sword: a shield to defend the hemisphere from European imperialism and a sword for the United States to instigate its own American empire. That shield also meant to cover up the dramatic schisms within the republic. Emerging from this atmosphere of dissent and separatism, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" suggests that maybe, after so much toil, nobody was willing to show up and hold the shield and the sword, that nation-building constituted, after all, a project of

disembodiment, understood as the spiritualization of certain bodies that drop conveniently from view.

In fact, Irving's sketch anticipates several explorations of disembodiment at pivotal moments in American literary and intellectual history. In *Nature* (1836), for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson famously conceptualized a transcendental relationship between the American man and his vast continent. For the Concord philosopher, individuals could "own the landscape" only after shedding off the material burden of the flesh and transmogrifying themselves into a "transparent eye-ball."[14] An immaterial eye, not a hand, was to colonize America. Emerson's volatilization of the body, like Irving's, was not devoid of contradiction. Namely, Emerson also hesitated between the world of the flesh and those transparent states that transcend it. In his most ardent expansionist plea, Emerson reminded the "Young American" that, "any relation to the land, the habit of tilling it, or mining it, or even hunting on it, generates the feeling of patriotism."[15] But transparent eyeballs do not dig wells nor do they plow the fields. Both Emerson and Irving wonder which is the best option for US citizens at the dawn of an expansionist era: whether to make history or to haunt it from the margins, to remain an active body within a system that discriminates and brutalizes other "inferior" bodies or to transcend the confines of his body and body politic into an immaterial state of contemplation and inaction.

Whereas Emerson sees the body as a prison of the spirit, Irving explores the process by which nonnormative bodies (black, disabled, female) stir social nervousness and confine identity. Escaping the anatomical strictures of the body, jumping out of the epidermis into an alternative, more mobile and fluid existence no doubt invigorated the

restless expansionist spirit, but it also enacted a democratic fantasy of abstract sameness. For Ichabod and Emerson, dislodging the self from the body constitutes a gesture of liberation and, simultaneously, of denunciation: an empowering move toward a life of the mind fraught with possibility and, occasionally, a last, desperate resort in the face of ostracism and violence. At once a successful pioneer body and a ghost haunting the pioneered locales left behind, Ichabod delivers an insightful comment on the antithetical crusade of US expansion, a crusade that tried to augment the nation without jeopardizing its egalitarian foundation. Caught in disembodiment's discursive trap, Ichabod escapes neither his body nor the authority that a patriarchal, xenophobic community has inscribed on it.

This trapping gains relevance as Irving converts Ichabod into a proxy for the nation. Politicking his way into public office, Ichabod does not merely symbolize the national community; he becomes officially inscribed within it. The period during which Irving wrote major works including *The Sketch-Book*, *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828) and *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832) coincides with ongoing debates over the policies just described. Through his diplomatic tasks abroad, Irving was an acute—many times silent—spectator of these transformations in US life.[16] A reluctant politician, Irving articulated his viewpoints more at ease under the guise of the rambling storyteller. It is in the folk legends appropriated, embedded, and circulated by literary personas like Diedrich Knickerbocker and Geoffrey Crayon that Irving's deconstructions of nation and empire wait to be unearthed by the critic.

The problem is that Ichabod also remains a ghost. Embodiment and disembodiment carry out different tasks, it seems. Stranded between corporeal and

disembodied states of being, the American pioneers imagined by Irving and Emerson struggle to harmonize both in order to safeguard the national crusade: to occupy the continent and to lead the world into economic, technological, and intellectual progress. Constructing citizens' bodies as lacking entities, early nationals buoyed their project of endless incorporation. But Irving's choice of Ichabod as an agent of US ascendancy reveals the author's uncertainty about the national self, as seen, for example, when Irving ironizes Ichabod's roots in Connecticut, "a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodsmen and country schoolmasters."[17] Here, Irving separates those characters qualified to tame America's uncharted geographical spaces from those "pioneers for the mind" in charge of developing the national character. This divide recalls the Cartesian mind/body dualism, whose split between embodied and disembodied planes of existence hampers the expansionist project outlined in Ichabod's pioneering delusions and in the model of national growth assumed in the Missouri Compromise and the Monroe Doctrine. Irving's cast of characters substantiates this Cartesian divide: as I will comment later on, the weedy Ichabod is the tale's expansionist actor, whereas the hyper-embodied and muscular Brom Bones represents a Jeffersonian ideal of yeomanry immobility that disdains the early nineteenth-century quest for unlimited expansion and centralized government.[18]

Halfway between Ichabod's evanescent frame and Bones's blunt physicality, Irving introduces the fragmented, disabled body. Physical disability, understood as the social construction of impairment, lends Irving a useful primer.[19] Through it, he verbalizes the distress that befalls the American hero when he fails to harmonize his

transcendent and material obligations, among them, to fulfill the designs of Manifest Destiny without losing his innate innocence. Unlike impairment, "disability is a representation"—claims Rosemarie Garland Thomson, meaning that the disabled body always arises from a specific referential context: legal, scientific, artistic, etc.[20] To Thomson's list, I add Ichabod's catalogue of embodiments and disembodiments, which unveil disability as a fabrication buttressing the normative discourses of nationalism and imperialism. As already mentioned, Ichabod's disorganized body speaks to the political community he belongs to. His westward movement has inspired Donald Pease to interpret Ichabod as an agent of progress who fails to transform his community of arrival, being transformed—if not destroyed—by it in reverse.[21] Revisiting Pease's suggestive framing, I consider Ichabod a simultaneous agent and victim of western expansion, a catalyst of national progress who does not hesitate to deploy violent methods in his mission and, at the same time, a victim whose nonnormative body becomes heavily racialized through recurrent comparisons with African American bodies and who cannot endure the mirror vision of the Headless Horseman, a nightmarish reminder of Ichabod's bodily disorders and of the fragmentary body politic of the post-Revolution state.

2. Imperial Armor: The Body (Politic) in the Mirror Stage

What kind of anti-imperialist critique drips then from Irving's tale of disembodied pioneering? I opened my argument characterizing Ichabod as a problematic mirror image of US imperial aspirations, a mirror image that appears in the encounter with the Hessian Horseman. These specular associations recall Jacques Lacan's theory of corporeality and self-identity known as the "mirror stage." In order to elucidate the interrelationship between disability, embodiment, and empire, the theory of the mirror stage renders a

useful analysis of imperial epistemologies and their signifiers' dependence on physical disability. This section and the close readings that follow show how Irving's narrative of disembodiment reverses the constitutive process of the mirror stage and exposes the imperial body politic of the United States as a fragmented, phantasmatic, and impossible venture in its racial heterogeneity. The mirror stage provides a critical paradigm that unlocks the idealized figuration of a well-bounded and coherent nation-state in perpetual expansion, especially as this ideal animated specific resolutions like the Missouri Compromise and the Monroe Doctrine. On the contrary, Ichabod's embodiment and disembodiment of the US nation unmasks this idealized construction precisely by undoing the mirror stage's assemblage. Also, because this narrative exposure connects us with ulterior modes of signification and identification embedded in language itself, I close my argument by labeling Irving's reversal of the mirror stage a "de-hallucination" process, something more complex and revelatory than a mere return to reality.

Briefly put, the mirror-stage theorizes self-perception by examining the turning point in which a human baby stops seeing his or her own arm, leg or abdomen as "parts" and re-organizes them into a differentiated whole after looking at his or her reflection in a mirror. What the mirror stage teaches us, then, is that the self can only be defined externally; that is, by means of an image of the self that lies *outside* the self. Fuelled by this unresolved paradox, the "mirror-stage" gains explanatory weight throughout Lacan's career: from a developmental phase ("historical value," 1936) to a permanent model of subjectivity ("structural value," 1950s). According to the latter model, the mirror stage explains the "formation of the ego through the identification with an image of the self."[22] Lacan stresses the dynamics of this "*identification*," which he describes as "the

transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image."[23] No doubt, the body's materiality focalizes this assumption. Any instance of identification—understood in Lacanian terms—revolves around the body.

The mirror-stage shifts our perception of the body from a collection of unconnected parts, organs, and functions, also called "*imagos*," to a totalizing whole—or "gestalt"—larger than the sum of its parts.[24] This gestalt reconfiguration creates an illusion of corporeal autonomy that compensates for and tries to minimize our myriad bonds of dependency with the external world (starting with the baby's dependency on the body of the mother). This fiction of corporeal self-reliance feeds the ableist discourse that pervades Western society since the consolidation in the eighteenth century of a clinical understanding of disability as something to be controlled, contained, and, whenever possible, corrected. Whereas physical disability accentuates our dependency on the world outside the flesh (through prostheses, technological implements, monitored assistance), the gestalt form of the mirror stage induces a clear-cut division between itself and the surrounding environment. On the contrary, disabled persons—especially after amputation or disfigurement—have a harder time demarcating their own individuality, given their stronger dependency on external agents.

It is at this point that disability and psychoanalytical theory cross paths. Lennard Davis has pioneered—somewhat timidly—a connection between disability and the mirror stage, a connection that I intend to fortify by triangulating it with psycho-historical representations of American empire. Davis explains the social nervousness around the disabled body by means of a mirror-stage gone astray. First, he invokes Lacan's notion of self-formation as a movement from the *corps morcelé* (a shapeless collection of scattered

body parts or *imagos*) to the "enforced unifying of these fragments through the hallucination of a whole body." After recreating the mirror stage's hallucinated wholeness, Davis introduces the variable of disability:

> The disabled body is a direct *imago* of the repressed fragmented body. The disabled body causes a kind of hallucination of the mirror phase gone wrong. The subject looks at the disabled body and has a moment of cognitive dissonance, or should we say a moment of cognitive resonance with the earlier state of fragmentation. Rather than seeing the whole body in the mirror, the subject sees the repressed fragmented body… the true self of the fragmented body.[25]

For Lacan and Davis, the fragmented body does not derive from extraordinary circumstances (e.g. accident, disease, malformation). It rather represents humans' *a priori* self-conception. "True self" and "fragmented body" join the same equation, an equation too often overlooked, given that our embrace of the anatomic gestalt projected in the mirror represses this disjointed self. As a consequence of such repression, the triumphant ableist "ego" shuns those images of physical disability that connect us back with a pre-mirror stage, uncanny version of our bodies. Disability, therefore, interpellates an earlier vision of the self: dependent, abnormal, and incomplete.

Is the mirror-stage, then, a psychic mechanism to help us cope with our innate disability? In the following extract, Lacan comes close to an answer:

> For the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an 'orthopedic' form of its totality—and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development.[26]

The totality of the body can only be "orthopedic": its wholeness does not rest on its flesh and bones but on a symbolic "armor" that integrates anatomical fragments into a whole. Here Lacan rescues Sigmund Freud's view of man as a "prosthetic God," a vulnerable being whose survival depends on his body's technological extensions.[27] Freud's tenet

presupposes human civilization as a sustained endeavor to overcome our many disabilities. From our physiological dependence on oxygen, water, and food to our bodies' incapacity to fly on their own, disability comprehends a wider catalogue of restrictions than the specific corporeal anomalies we tend to consider "disabled." Above all, disability entails a complication of boundaries whose most dire consequence is a redefined notion of the "self" as an artificial ("orthopedic") amalgamation. The individual is no longer a whole larger than the sum of its parts; it is just parts.

Bodies politic are also orthopedic. The mirror-stage's endless currency in cultural studies derives from the way in which texts build reflective surfaces where individuals and their larger political structures assume images of themselves—to paraphrase Lacan's own take on "*identification*." In these mirror images, self and community sublimate their fractures and inconsistencies into a solidified vision that replaces fragmentation with wholeness. But how exactly does a human community look in a mirror? What kind of gestalt arises from their collective instantiation? And what kind of cohesive "armor" is imposed on them within a specific imperialist context? Benedict Anderson famously defined the nation-state as an "imagined community": a fiction that gains traction through the wheels of print-capitalism.[28] Popularized forms of communal representation lead to the corporeal metaphor of the body politic, which translates institutional hierarchies, foundational myths, and supremacist ideologies into visible and tangible form. The national body politic, then, unfolds as a synchronized mirror stage of its citizens. Taking a shared cue from Anderson and Lacan, we can rethink nation and empire as "imagined communities" that build and enlarge their respective gestalts through cultural artifacts working as mirrors.

These collective instances of identification foster the analogy between disabled bodies and bodies politic. Like the body politic, the disabled body—not to be confused with the impaired one—is also a metaphorical body, one that is socially constructed through the mirror stage in accordance with dominant social values. Therefore, disabled bodies share with the figurative construct of the body politic a capacity to incarnate collective desires, phobias, and crises. Because they need urgent re-construction, disabled bodies contribute ready-made referents to national and imperial quests for consolidation and hegemony. Thus, disability acts as a cable ferry that bounces back and forth between the parallel shores of the colonized body and the imperial body politic. The fascinating paradox is how, when devoid of their signifying potential, disabled persons travel from the center of national identification to its abject margins. Amidst the constant reformulations of the US body politic, its members have traditionally sought stability by differentiating their own corporeal form against its deviant variations. Re-establishing the centrality of disability in Lacan's thought, we realize that disability, like racial and sexual difference, adds to the negative space of the national mirror image. Against this no-zone, our psyche projects a normative "armor" that converts the body from *imagos* into a gestalt. In this negative space of national identification, disability has traditionally performed a double task as both the marker of a discriminated minority (people with disabilities) and a pseudo-scientific vehicle to undermine the humanity of subaltern groups. In other words, US culture ostracized "cripples" at the same time it used the category of disability to stigmatize women, African Americans, and the working class.[29]

Lacan's theory offers a toolkit to interpret the relays between material bodies and allegorical bodies politic. In such relays, the body no longer functions as a fleshly reality

but a metaphorical vehicle that signifies a given community. The mirror stage can explain, first, the individual self as a gestalt agglutination of scattered *imagos* and, second, the body politic as a gestalt agglutination of individual selves apt for citizenship. As I am about to show, Irving unveils, via Ichabod's body and body politic, the totalizing fictions supporting such constructs. Later tales placed outside the United States confirm Irving's drive to indict the categorical closures of nationalist discourse and to depict, instead, a transnational hybridization that affects bodies and nations alike.

In order to unravel the mechanisms and payoffs of Irving's critique, I believe those scenarios in which it operates—namely, hallucinated loci where national borders and stages of conscience collapse—deserve closer attention. The "where," in this case, elucidates the "how" and "why." The epigraph in *The Sketch-Book* already heralds the impossibility to decouple disability from the arenas where it is enunciated and imposed. From John Lily's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578), it reads, "the traveller that stagleth from his owne country is in a short time transformed into so monstrous a shape, that he is faine to alter his mansion with his manners, and to live where he can, not where he would."[30] For Lily, cosmopolitanism is a disabling and irreversible option. The monstrosity resulting from transnational contact seems to antagonize the appetite for rambling that presides Irving's works. Populating the margins of conventional territorial and anatomical demarcations, Irving's disabled pioneers and cosmopolitans invite us to look at disability from outside its official places of enunciation. Irving's transnationalism, thus, defies ableist criteria and subverts the logic behind the era's generalized mismeasure of men.

3. Ichabod's Hunger

If the mirror-stage enables our grasp of a whole body/body politic, Irving upends this sequence, moving from corporeal wholeness into scattered *imagos* and eventually into a disembodied form, tapping into widespread fears about the deficient enclosures of ableism, nationalism, and imperialism. In a brief scene charged with Lacanian overtones, Ichabod gets ready for an evening gathering at the Van Tassels' farm by "arranging his looks by a bit of broken looking-glass."[31] Arranging one's looks connotes a more complicated process than just looking at one's self in the mirror. The fractured image that Ichabod beholds also stands for the different impressions he intends to awake in the community, arranging the way he looks but also anticipating—and responding to—his neighbors' gazes. The implications of this shattered self-image become painfully obvious in the dance sequence in which the schoolmaster aims to win Katrina's favor. Ichabod "fatally prided himself upon his dancing as much upon his vocal powers."[32] His fatal mistake is precisely to disregard the Cartesian split and freely interchange mind and body. This flawed judgment provides a common denominator to his overall frustrations, namely, his inability to materialize his grandiloquent imagination into physical form.

Ichabod's performance could well stand as a paradigmatic scene in Irving's catalogue of bodily disorganizations. A related, even more explicit, counterpart takes place in "The Art of Book Making," also from *The Sketch-Book*. The plot here unfolds through a climactic reverie that upends nationalist and imperialist discourses as these evolve around symbolic spaces of demarcation. One summer day Crayon perambulates around the different exhibits in the British Museum until he notices a door through which mysterious figures enter and exit a room closed to the public. Part by curiosity, part by

ennui, Crayon enters it and discovers a bizarre clique of scholars ripping apart old books in order to manufacture new ones. Authorship is unmasked as an endless combination and recombination of extant materials. Irving's critique gains stamina when Crayon falls prey to the "soporific emanation from this works" and hallucinates a transmutation of the black-clad scriveners into a grotesque spectacle of naked figures trying to cover their exposed parts with the rags and bits they extract from the books themselves. As this chaotic enmeshment escalates, the classical authors whose portraits decorate the walls "thrust out, first a head, then a shoulder, from the canvas" and commence a fight against the looters. The ensuing pandemonium elicits Crayon's laughter, which, in turn, wakes him up and causes him to be expelled from the room after failing to show his "card of admission."[33]

The Rabelaisian tone of "The Art of Book-Making" has led critics to recapitulate it too hastily as Irving's cynical justification of his own re-usage of circulating folktales and legends.[34] No doubt, Irving adheres to the notion that creative genius is a chimerical delusion and that originality owes much to tradition. Not against this grain, but hoping to expand its interpretative scope, I read "The Art of Book-Making" as a complex unmasking of the mechanisms by which body, nation, and empire grow into uncontested cultural and political domains. The first clue for such reading lies in the two-fold symbology of the British Museum, which interconnects in its architectural and ideological design the Earth's remotest corners. At once a quintessential metropolitan institution and a gateway into distant global spaces, the Museum congregates "cases of minerals," "hieroglyphics on an Egyptian mummy," and "allegorical paintings in the lofty ceilings." Its transitory halls and exhibits configure liminal spaces that resonate with

the vast geographical and cultural gaps in between the museum's summoned civilizations. Thus, when Crayon first notices the mysterious door, Irving's verbs restore this global expanse in its actual dimensions, as Crayon stands "determined to attempt the passage of that strait, and to explore the unknown regions beyond."[35] Sauntering around the galleries of the museum, Crayon's stroll gains an imperial connotation via Irving's language of global exploration.

Once in the facility where the scholars-scriveners carry out their literary "rag-picking," Crayon faces an imperial archive. This site of interpretation and meaning-making unashamedly defines the cultural immediacy of the metropolis with the same ease as it enunciates, taxonomizes, and civilizes the far-flung colonies. While Crayon is fully aware that he has entered "the reading room of the great British Library," the scene he witnesses reminds him of "an old Arabian tale" about a philosopher trapped in a library that remains well hidden in the bowels of a mountain.[36] After being immersed for a year in the library's manifold exotic and supernatural volumes, the philosopher "issued forth so versed in forbidden lore, as to be able to soar above the heads of the multitude, and to control the powers of nature."[37] This oriental fable enacts a latent fantasy lurking in the British Library reading room: exhaustive knowledge about the globe and its most unfamiliar dwellers grants unlimited powers of control over it. But, as Michel Foucault would have it, this knowledge is not derived from objective interpretation. Conversely, it is produced within a hegemonic space and then passed on to its subaltern subjects.[38]

Like many of the British Museum's exhibits, this Arabian fable constitutes a cultural artifact rescued from the margins of empire. This embedded story confirms Crayon's burlesque delivery and its anti-imperialist skepticism toward the knowledge that

emanates from the metropolis and its institutions. Same way as Ichabod's body disintegrates during the dance at the Van Tassel's shindig, Crayon's hallucination in "The Art of Book-Making" also implodes the body. Staring at an avid researcher who disembowels several volumes at once in full frenzy, Crayon mutates this image into a cannibalistic scene in which this haggard figure feeds on "a morsel out of one, a morsel out of another." In result, "The contents of his book seemed as heterogeneous as those of the witches' caldron in Macbeth. It was here a finger and there a thumb, toe of frog and blind-worm's sting, with his own gossip poured in like a 'baboon's blood,' to make the medley 'slab and good.'"[39] The concocted volume implies a progressive accumulation of body parts. Ironically enough, this medley of *imagos* remits to the archetypal colonial trope of cannibalism. As with the story of the Arabian philosopher, Irving unmasks the colonizers' mechanisms of signification through tropes and texts borrowed from the colonized.

Building on Mary Douglass' study of purity and danger rituals, Anne McClintock has argued that colonizers at the unexplored edges of empire perform a temporary mimicry of indigenous customs in order to survive. "Colonial discourse," McClintock says, "repeatedly rehearses this pattern—dangerous marginality, segregation, reintegration."[40] Since the reading room stands simultaneously for empire's metropolitan core and its vast abroads, one discerns a similar structure in the manner in which the sinister scholars conduct their labor. According to McClintock, empire assimilates its colonized subjects through a momentary instance of identification that preludes a radical separation. Crisscrossing her conclusions with Lacan's mirror-stage, I argue that the formation of the imperial body politic operates by means of a constant oscillation

between assimilation and expulsion, between a totalized body form and its perpetual disintegration. Like the disabled body, the imperial body politic never regroups its *imagos* into gestalt form.

In "The Art of Book Making," Irving narrativizes this oscillation pattern. Empire, for Irving, no longer rests on coherent sites of meaning, but on unruly and dismembered concoctions out of which communal belonging is meant to develop consistent ties. Following Lacan's theory of the "hallucination of the body," Irving's critique of the national archive compares it to a narcotic amalgam of data. Out of its constant regroupings grow the "hallucinated communities" of nation and empire. But Irving eventually reverses this sequence, showing how the allegedly coherent significations emerging from this reading room—itself a neuralgic center of the British colonial system—can be traced back to a genesis that remains fragmented and carnivalesque. Images of the fragmented, implosive body allow the author to materialize the fragile sutures that uphold political wholeness: "As to the dapper little compiler of farragos, mentioned some time since, he had arrayed himself in as many patches and colors as Harlequin, and there was as fierce a contention of claimants about him, as about the dead body of Patroclus."[41] The patched vestments that the researchers crave during Crayon's vision symbolize these tenuous linkages at the core of self and national identity. At the same time, they recall Lacan's orthopedic "armor" and its restorative role during the self-perceptive crisis that precedes the mirror stage.[42]

In both "The Art of Book-Making" and "Sleepy Hollow," Irving's stepping in and out of these secluded spaces leads readers to a radical reconsideration of communal experiences as these signify through the body. Irving's spin on Lily's initial warning

conveys that cosmopolitan exposure forces the body into a necessary reconfiguration whose confusion proves liberating and insightful. Thinking outside the nation capacitates us to think outside the anatomical boundaries of ableism and vice versa. In "Sleepy Hollow," Irving offers his most detailed account of the constitutive process of the body politic's mirror stage. He does so by debunking the fantasies of disembodiment invested in Ichabod as a "pioneer of the mind" and by racializing his shameful incapacity to control his own body. When Ichabod enters the improvised dance floor, "not a limb, not a fiber about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion, and clattering about the room, you would have thought Saint Vitus himself … was figuring before you in person." Not only that, Ichabod's spasmodic hop also awakens "the admiration of all the negroes; who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighborhood, stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window, gazing with delight at the scene, rolling their white eyeballs and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear."[43] Ironically enough, Ichabod's body resonates with the corporeal eccentricities with which African Americans were perceived in US soil: "amusingly long or bowed legs, grotesquely big feet, bad posture."[44] Irving depicts the dancing Ichabod through minstrel stereotypes traditionally imposed on African Americans, which explains the sympathy nexus arising in the dance scene.

Although it is not my goal to reconcile Irving's politics into a sustained and coherent project, the marginal presence of African Americans in the story suggests that Irving's skeptical anti-imperialism was not exempt from a racialist frame of mind. We first encounter the disturbing presence of blackness in the institutional space of the schoolhouse or, as the narrator calls it, Ichabod's "little empire."[45] In fact, the

schoolmaster adheres to the axiom "Spare the rod and spoil the child," deploying physical punishment and combining violence and paternalism in the formation of new citizen subjects.[46] One afternoon, Ichabod's lesson is "suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a negro, in tow-cloth jacket and trowsers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat, like the cap of Mercury, and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt."[47] Irving portrays the black messenger parodically. To his fake crown vaguely resembling "the cap of Mercury," the writer adds the pompous air with which the anonymous visitor does his errand: "having delivered his message with that air of importance, and effort at fine language, which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of this kind, he dashed over the brook … full of the importance and hurry of his mission."[48] Irving's mockery of the pretentious African American betrays the author's embrace of the racist infantilization of African Americans. Through their stereotypical presentation, black characters in "Sleepy Hollow" constitute marginal figures whose exclusion from public spaces of government and education contrasts with their menial service as messengers, connecting a community that has excluded them.

The story's racial landscape accurately echoes the broader historical configuration of the Hudson Valley. Already by 1625, coffles of slaves brought to New Netherland by the Dutch West India Company operated as "municipal workers," building and repairing fortifications, roads, warehouses, and other structures of the corporate state."[49] The equation between Ichabod, a "Connecticut Yankee" paving the road for American progress, and the subaltern black audience that enjoys his dance anticipates the story's dichotomous ending. Before activating the definite split between Ichabod's corporeal presence and his spectral absence, Irving orchestrates the dance sequence at the Van

Tassel's in such a way that Ichabod resides both at the center of Tarry Town's respectable, white, land-owning community and at the nearly invisible margins populated by African slaves (slavery remained legal in New York until 1827).[50] In addition to the "broken glass," Irving's blackening of Ichabod provides another specular identification that shows the protagonist as a fragmentary entity and upends the mirror stage's sequence of addition and completion.

Irving characterizes Ichabod's bodily discontents and expansionist thrust through a triple front of hunger: physiological, sexual, and cultural. Like a bag with a hole, Ichabod is never full. A "huge feeder" who, "though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda," Ichabod's elastic framework symbolizes a specific type of expansionist body politic, for Ichabod cannot stop eating and, yet, his body always deflates back to its original shape.[51] Hunger also becomes a sexual trope. As already mentioned, Irving depicts Katrina through gastro-erotic metaphors: "She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge, ripe and melting and rosy-checked as one of her father's peaches."[52] The fertile landscape of the Van Tassels farm awakens Ichabod's culinary yearnings. While the protagonist contemplates "the fat meadow-lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat," Irving halts his narrative and captures Ichabod's rapture in extended catalogues. Through these plethoric ecstasies, Irving depicts Ichabod as a believer in the quintessential American promise of opportunity and wealth. Therefore, the schoolmaster does not yearn only at the fruits of the land but the land itself, configuring a vision of domesticity ("pots and kettles" in his pioneer's wagon) and endless natural resources, a vision guaranteed by westward movement and annexation.

Far from a mere physiological pulsion, Ichabod's hunger visualizes future consolidation and growth. His desire to settle the land of "Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Lord knows where" with his offspring overlaps with a nationwide impetus to territorialize America. Ichabod's "devouring mind's eye" contemplates "every roasting-pig running about with a pudding in his belly, and an apple in his mouth." Beholding such prospect, "his imagination expanded with the idea."[53] Like Emerson's "transparent eyeball," Ichabod's insatiable "mind's eye" also intends to comprehend the landscape. Of course, the underlying anxiety is that the encroaching moves of the mind's eye/transparent eyeball take place only as figments of the imagination. Only imagination and vision expand. Ichabod remains a "pioneer for the mind": his westbound movement can only be fulfilled as a possibility countered by his demise. Ichabod's anaconda-like body does not follow his mental powers of expansion. His unrestrained imagination—like Emerson's unifying eye—is not followed by a subsequent growth of body and body politic. Like the national contours mapped by the Missouri Compromise, Ichabod's "whole frame must loosely hung together." His anti-normative body is not obviously fragmented, like the Headless Horseman's; it rather constitutes an effeminate body that also defies the gender norms of its time—best embodied by Brom Bones's "great powers of limb"—and can correlate only to the three-fifths of humanity allowed to African Americans.[54]

In the same manner as images of disability and racial otherness upset the normative construction of individual and social bodies, Ichabod's incapacity to govern his body connects him with African Americans, racial inferiors whose staple representations often endowed them with grotesque physiognomies and puerile minds. Ichabod's distorted anatomy hinders his insatiable fantasies of aggrandizement and

expansion. On the other end of the spectrum, Brom Bones's "Herculean frame" counternarrates Ichabod's frail constitution.[55] Irving confronts their personal politics through their antagonistic anatomies. Since both aspire to marry Katrina and inherit the Van Tassel property, their rivalry also symbolizes the broader debates about the future of the United States. In stark opposition to Ichabod's gluttony for land and progress, Bones does not want to go anywhere.[56] Bones's static and wholesome form concretizes the body politic intended by the signers of the Missouri Compromise; Ichabod's unreliable shape and grotesque appetite parody the imperial hunger of the Monroe-Doctrine supporters.

We can use Irving's tale to disarticulate the ideological platform behind the Monroe Doctrine and its arrogant hemispheric appropriation. Chased away by the Headless Horseman, Ichabod tastes his own medicine, for he is not facing the history of the Revolution in embodied form as much as a ghostly derivation, a projection rooted in his frustrated self-image as much as in his skewed understanding of the national past. This excised embodiment of the national body ushers Ichabod's third kind of appetite: cultural demand for foundational myths of community. Ichabod's manifestations of hunger (physiological, sexual) correlate with his gullibility for national mythos. Irving compares Ichabod's culinary cravings with the "capacious swallow" with which he embraces tall-tales about the past: "His appetite for the marvelous, and his powers of digesting it were equally extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound region."[57] But his search for foundational narratives is mythical, not historical. He supports state-sponsored amnesia through religious destinarianism and heavy-handed allusions to Cotton Mather. His appetite for the supernatural jeopardizes the national future by subjecting it to legend instead of history. Like Emerson, Ichabod

embraces a legendary (and disembodied) version of history that seems far more exciting—and guilt-free—than the actual historical record.

In this sense, it should not surprise us that, of all the mirror images encountered by the schoolmaster, the Headless Horseman proves the most terrifying and the one that propels the plot toward its ambiguous denouement. Adopting the disguise of the beheaded Hessian soldier, Bones deliberately disrupts his muscular, symmetrical physique and confronts Ichabod with a repressed mirror image of the schoolmaster's self. Through the figure of the Headless Horseman, deployed as Ichabod's mirror image, Irving explores the crisis of national identity at the core of this simultaneous celebration and ejection of the pre-national past.[58] The Headless Horseman conforms to an image of anxious independence, a political symbol whose head was lost with the excision of the ties between the United States and the British motherland. Gaping at the Headless Horseman, Ichabod undergoes a reversal process of the mirror stage and contemplates the dissolution of the national self. Such a fatal vision engenders Irving's ambiguous ending, in which we cannot tell if Ichabod survives this incident as body or as spirit.

By undoing his body, Bones reflects Ichabod's corporeal frustration. As I have indicated, the schoolmaster's frustration derives from being unable to materialize his dreams of personal and political expansion into actual form. His body's resilience to growth goes hand in hand with the trivial impact he has on the community. Ichabod first perceives the Horseman as "something huge, misshapen, black and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveler."[59] At the beginning, it seems impossible for the frightened schoolmaster to distinguish this monstrous figure from its background. The rider's

difficult demarcation, which temporarily hides his headless condition, parallels the challenges the disabled body faces in front of the mirror as well as the body politic of empire with every new incorporation and redefinition of its frontiers. As several pieces from *The Alhambra Tales* attest, these challenges find their cautionary echo in other non-American empires which, nevertheless, compete against the United States for control over the American hemisphere.

4. The Alhambra's Disabled Borders and *Imperium in Imperio*

Irving published *Tales of the Alhambra* in May 1832, when he returned to American soil after a seventeen-year hiatus in Europe (the standard edition circulating today corresponds to the 1851 revised version). Loyal to his project of rethinking national and corporeal norms from outsider vantage points, Irving found in the ancient fortress of the Alhambra an evocative arena from where to subvert US nationalist enclosure and its ghostly projections of American Empire. Like the town of Sleepy Hollow, The Alhambra belongs to an unreal realm. Its "whole is protected by a magic charm." [60] Furthermore, like the Van Tassels farm, the Alhambra emerges as a disputed space itself as well as a springboard for further expansion, for it was in the "Vega" that surrounds the Alhambra that Spain's conquest of America was made possible. We learn this as Irving locates, in the outskirts of Granada,

> the place where Columbus was overtaken and called back by the messenger of Queen Isabella, just as he was departing in despair, to carry his project of discovery to the court of France … It was to these walls that Columbus was called back by the heroic queen, and within them the treaty was concluded that led to the discovery of the western world.[61]

In this last section, I demonstrate that this sidelong glance at the New World does not occur in isolation. On the contrary, Irving uses the Alhambra's mythical landscape to

reflect back on the meaning of American nationhood, expansion, and the precarious balance between these two.[62]

Since the laying of its first foundation c.880 as the headquarters of the Umayyad emirate, the citadel of the Alhambra had already been in Muslim, Christian, and French hands before Irving set foot at his gates. Its depth of historical layers, architectural palimpsests, and the ruinous—yet evocative—state in which Irving found its buildings and patios spiked his fever for the picturesque. But *The Tales of the Alhambra* are far from mere exercises in orientalist evasion. The author recasts in Spain current political and social events unfolding at the other side of the Atlantic. By stressing the deceitful essence of the city of Granada, Irving disavows a superficial brochure-like description and introduces the theme of *imperium in imperio*. He moves from a picturesque toward an uncanny narrative mode, disclosing multiple hidden spaces and the Moors who inhabit their cavernous walls. Not only that, the haunting presence of the Moors trapped in the rock awaiting their resurgence feeds the Spaniard's paranoia about an insurrection: a nation exploding within the confines of another nation: "The common people say that there are money-coiners shut up there from the time of the Moors and that the Moorish kings kept their treasures in those caverns."[63] No doubt, these *imperium in imperio* narratives return us to the tale of the Arab philosopher locked in the mountain, which Irving embedded in "The Art of Book-Making." Here, the reader no longer witnesses a concealed body growing more powerful each day, but an entire body politic of unlimited strength and wealth. The arrangement of the tales throughout the volume reveals a growing obsession with the possibility that the citizens of Al-Andalus never left the peninsula, and that their "intestine army" still "lurks in the very bowels of the land."[64]

The figure of the rising nation within another nation resonated powerfully at home. The uprising of Haitian slaves in 1791, leading to the independence of the first African-ruled republic in the Americas, sounded the alarm bells concerning slave revolts and hidden intelligentsias at work both in the continental United States and in its hemispheric area of influence. The frustrated conspiracy of Denmark Vesey to liberate Charleston in 1822 confirmed that domestic slaves had heard Toussaint L'Ouverture's revolutionary lessons. Nat Turner's insurrection caused the biggest toll of casualties, taking place exactly one year before Irving returned from Europe. Even abroad, Irving was well aware of the events in Haiti. Faye Felterman Tydlaska has recently claimed that Irving thought of Haiti as a negative model of US expansion. Haiti's lesson, Tydlaska defends, was that US expansion should proceed by commercial, not violent means. In his own western narratives like *Astoria*, Irving counternarrates the abuses of empire in order to prevent disasters like the Haitian Revolution. But, as I will explain shortly, Irving's fear of another Haiti on domestic ground can be traced back to some of the *Alhambra* stories and their uneasy depictions of African slaves.[65]

The growing power, wealth, and technology of the hidden Moors stand out against the administrative inefficiency of the Alhambra and the Granada province. Irving deploys an image of disability to underscore such contrast. After the departure of French troops by the end of the Peninsular Wars against Napoléon (1808-14), the only garrison left in the fortress consisted of "a handful of invalid soldiers whose principal duty is to guard some of the outer towers which serve occasionally as a prison of state."[66] Although Irving does not historicize their presence too concretely, other sources confirm its accuracy. In his 1855 *Handbook for Travelers in Spain*, British traveller Richard Ford

records his first entrance into the Alhambra: "Now, instead of the well-appointed Mameluke and glittering Moor, or iron-clad champion of Tendilla, a few gaunt, bandit-looking invalids are huddled together."[67] Moorish orientalist splendor had given way, in Ford's vision, to a disenchanting panorama, as the "uneven weed-encumbered court is disfigured by invalids, beggars and convicts, emblems of Spanish weakness and poverty."[68] The irony, though, is that Ford had subtitled his travel guide "The Portions best Suited for the Invalid," catering to the British patients who sought Andalusia's warm climate. Renowned Arabist Robert Irwin confirms that, from the seventeenth century, the Alhambra enters a period of decadence and ruin, a decadence that scared Ford away as much as it enticed Irving.[69] Once the representative site of growing empires—Al-Andalus, Queen Isabella and Ferdinand's Spain, Napoléon's Europe—the Alhambra had officially turned into a an extra-judicial asylum for debtors by 1664. From then on, it no longer hosted royal entourages and administrative delegations, but "galley slaves, invalid soldiers, prisoners, convicts and gypsies."[70] No doubt, the Alhambra presented Irving with a renewed opportunity to show the vulnerability by which hegemonic nations and empires can be upended into a shelter of society's abjected races and bodies. In the Alhambra, like in the British Library, Irving conflates the periphery and center of imperial formations. And, once again, disability proves a useful connector between both.

Subverting the fear factor that permeates *imperium in imperio* literature, Irving's persona refuses to buy into the conspiracy theories surrounding these narratives. Instead, he is openly fascinated with the ancient Moors' insightful notion that permeable jurisdictional borders function better than watertight ones. For Irving, the Moors' cunning led them to build porous borders instead of solid ones.

> The rugged hill on which the Alhambra is built, was in old times perforated with subterranean passages, cut through the rock, and leading from the fortress to various parts of the city and to distant sally-ports on the banks of the Darro and the Xenil. They had been constructed at different times by the Moorish Kings, as means as escape from sudden insurrections or of secretly issuing forth on private enterprises.[71]

Once we are devolved to Irving's present time, we see the figures of disability guarding these ancient networks and preventing them from fulfilling their inherent role: "there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the livelong day by the invalids, old women and other curious do-nothing folk of the fortress."[72]

By means of the Alhambra's disabled boundaries, Irving caricatures national enclosures and awakes another connection with Lacan. Placing fragmented bodies in liminal spaces, Irving rescues the idea of body and body politic as unbounded constructs. The handicapped soldiers are also old and live amidst impoverished conditions, embodying the decayed stage of the fortress itself. Their physical deterioration speaks to the weakening process of the divisions between Muslim leaders, who await their triumphal homecoming from inside the mountain, and Spanish administrators lying on the outside. As in "Sleepy Hollow," disability in The Alhambra also intersects with gender. For example, the wives of the invalid soldiers look up at *Tía Antonia*, a matronly figure and true guardian of the complex.[73] Another instance of disability as emasculation comes in the short sketch "The Court of Lions," in which one of the invalid soldiers runs away from a late-night encounter with the spectral Moors and, in consequence, ruins his chances of accessing the hidden treasures of the place.[74] In a similar strategy to the one highlighted by Tydlaska, Irving mocks military arrogance by showcasing the invalid soldiers as "do-nothing" cowards blindly obedient to Antonia's matriarchal rule.

The only invalid that rises to some preeminence in the collection is the so-called "Veteran," who stars in one of the last sketches and narrates several of the following ones. This ex-soldier "has been lamed of one leg, crippled in his hands and so cut up and carbonadoed that he is a kind of walking monument of the troubles of Spain, on which there is a scar for every battle and broil."[75] An embodiment of Spain's body politic, the veteran has also travelled to America and seen General Washington, of which Irving authored a five-volume biography, most of it written during his second sojourn in Spain (1842-46). This new transatlantic linkage invites us to reconsider the Veteran as a distant allegory of the US nation, having contributed to the War of Independence, and having been exposed firsthand to the foundational presence of General Washington. The Veteran tells the stories of *Gobernador Manco*, his old-times analogue, who lost an arm in military action and governed the Alhambra for a while. His administrative powers over the fortress caused endless friction against the captain-general of Granada.[76] In "Governor Manco and Soldier," Irving contrasts Manco's bombastic military spectacles with his actual inability to seal the convoluted borders of the Alhambra, "a nest of rogues and *contrabandistas*."[77] In the story a visitor warns the Governor that "Boabdil and the warriors who made the last struggle for Granada were all shut up in the mountain by powerful enchantment" and are now ready to strike back. Part of Boabdil's stratagem, the visitor explains, consisted in casting a hallucinatory cloud by which "all Spain is now under the power of enchantment. There is not a mountain cave, not a lonely watch-tower in the plains nor ruined castle on the hills, but has some spell-bound warriors sleeping from age to age within its vaults."[78] Following the premise of the *imperium in imperio* plot, the ultimate threat of Boabdil's comeback entails the restoration of the Al-Andalus

empire.[79] Despite Manco's extreme measures, the invading hordes never knock at the Alhambra's gates. Instead, the visitor turns out to be Manuel Borasco, a local bandit who made up the story of Boabdil's menace in order to dupe the Governor, gain access to the palace, and kidnap one of Manco's handmaidens.

Disabled borders facilitate invasion and infiltration, although the pathetic last-minute efforts of Manco to shut the Alhambra contradict the placidity of "the old invalid sentinels on duty," who "lay on the stone benches of the barbican, buried in profound and apparently charmed sleep."[80] The invalid guards, whose bodies constitute in themselves liminal spaces between normative ableism and its abnormal exceptions, occupy themselves an unclear divide between antagonistic races and creeds which cannot help but clash against each other. Manco's paranoia, on the contrary, leads him to articulate perpetual demarcations of the Alhambra contours, which in turn leads him to be fooled by the bandit who sagaciously steps in and out of such contours.

The paranoid tale of Boabdil's enchantment enables Irving to revisit the hallucinatory grounds on which consistent national boundaries are drawn. Like Governor Manco, whose wounded body and psyche lead him to display full military pomp as a compensatory gesture, Spain's body politic has been "hallucinating" its wholeness, while divisions like the jurisdictional conflict between the Alhambra and the city of Granada bespeak the internal fracture behind this complacent vision. Once again, we can extrapolate a reading of Irving's disarmed hallucination of wholeness into the Missouri Compromise, who shyly overcame internecine fracture through legislative reconfiguration, and the Monroe Doctrine, which dared to celebrate US democratic virtue to the extent of expanding its boundaries to the whole continent. Like Governor Manco,

James Monroe tried to solve internal dissension by strengthening US borders against foreign treats, even touring extensively the perimeter of the nation. Monroe "intended to make his tour a public theater of political reconciliation"; however, such political spectacle—pretty much like Manco's annoying cavalcades—did not reconcile the racial and ideological divisions among their audiences.[81]

As an alternative to enclosure, *The Alhambra* bristles with narratives of connectivity. Instances of contact often appear under a much more romantic light than the sarcasm of "Governor Manco and Soldier." Several sketches narrate the reunion of lovers who had been separated on account of their ethnicity or social extraction. "The Three Beautiful Princesses" and "The Legend of Prince Ahmed Al Kamel or the Pilgrim of Love" adhere to the reunited-love plot. Yet Irving's celebration of reunion and his denunciation of separation rely on an ultimate act of enclosure, one that posits the outer limit of community in African figures. In "The Three Beautiful Princesses," for example, the reader finds three sisters who live in permanent domestic seclusion according to the designs of their father, the King. When the princesses finally manage to access the outside world, they quickly fall in love with "three gallant cavaliers" of noble extraction. Irving's unapologetic sentimentalism here does not conceal the fact that their final union rests upon several exclusions. The princesses had been "cooped up" in their castle "among female attendants, seeing nothing of the male sex but black slaves or the rude fishermen of the sea-coast."[82] This previous exposure to the male sex is buried under the objectification (and emasculation) of those men who happened to be either laborers or black.

"The Legend of Prince Ahmed Al Kamel" follows the same sequence: from paternally induced isolation to escape and romantic reunification. Here, the isolated figure is a prince whose father wants to keep at bay from the pernicious influence of romantic attachments. Al Kamel grows up without knowing anything about love. His care is confided to the old sage O Eben Bonabben and an array of "black slaves to attend upon him—hideous mutes who knew nothing of love or, of they did, had not words to communicate it."[83] The pyramid of grinning black faces enclosing the Tarry Town gathering reappears in this orientalist context under the guise of these "hideous mutes." As in the previous case, their role is to cordon off the existence of the prince, whose normative status they help to define by providing its visible margins.

5. Conclusion: De-hallucinating American empire

Somewhat naysaying gothic fiction's typical cycles of doom and haunting, "Sleepy Hollow" ends with its protagonist transmuted both into a ghost who haunts the Tarry Town wilderness and a successful legislator in "a distant part of the country." The town rumors so have it. For that reason, Irving portrays Sleepy Hollow—like the British Museum or The Alhambra—less as a haunted place and more as a hallucinated empire. The author highlights historical distortion as an endemic feature of Sleepy Hollow. Ever since the place was discovered by Hendrick Hudson, this Dutch settlement "still continues under the sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie."[84] The town's hallucinogenic vapors preserve Sleepy Hollow in an ahistorical limbo in which "population, manners, and customs, remain fixed."[85] Honoring its name, Sleepy Hollow makes its citizens sleepy and "subject to trances and visions."[86] Yet, the racial hierarchy

operative in Sleepy Hollow (and in the Alhambra) also makes it concurrent to the national scuffles over slavery and the ethics of annexation unfolding during the time of the story's publication. The sporadic but determinant contributions of African Americans to the plot confirm that the inhabitants of Tarry Town have failed to hallucinate their way entirely out of history. This incomplete detachment from reality echoes Lacan's and Davis's thesis that the hallucination of corporeal wholeness is meant to compensate for the subject's realization that such wholeness is an *ignis fatuus*, that he or she remains dependent on the outside world. The etymology of the term "hallucination" remits to the Latin verb "*alucinari*," which originally stood for "to wander in mind."[87] This emphasis on motion permeates Irving's moments of border crossing, in which the mind, like the body, accesses an unprecedented plane; but, more significantly, it confirms the despondent Ichabod's status as a "pioneer for the mind".

Even if the term "hallucination" crops up in the works of important psychoanalytic theorists, they tend to use it lightly without any definitional gesture. Such is the case of Freud and Lacan, at least. Otherwise, the closest one can get to a working definition of "hallucination" in this context appears in the *Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis* as "sensations or perceptions attributed to the sense organs which are erroneously experienced as if they were caused by external objects."[88] Like the critical paradigm of the mirror-stage, hallucination also prompts a traumatic confusion of subject-object boundaries. Mirror images, as theorized by Lacan and some critics of disability, catalyzed Irving's reversal between reality and illusion. Transitioning from one to the other, Irving's characters fall prey to hallucinations that unleash a chaotic upending of cultural norms. Unlike the hallucination of the mirror stage, Irving's delusions are

retroactive, mobilizing the hallucinating characters into a pre-mirror stage scenario in which they confront their monolithic understandings of the able body and body politic. Like the broken mirror that fails to return a coherent self-image, Irving's prose underscores those moments in which Ichabod's body revolts against himself.

The resultant confusion bears important political consequences. Whereas a "haunted" place directs attention toward a legendary past reenacted in the present; a "hallucinated" site emerges as a present fiction and highlights its unreliable foundation for any futurity. This shift in temporality—from "haunted" past to "hallucinated" present—is best seen in "Sleepy Hollow's" narrative shift from the spellbinding legends of the Headless Horseman and Major André's tree toward the future itself as quintessentially spectral (Ichabod's ghostly pioneering). The ultimate effect of this shift is for us to de-hallucinate the national future. To de-hallucinate does not mean to return to reality after a temporary flight of our imagination. De-hallucination places us one inch further than the reality from which we originally departed. If reality sustains our fictional configuration of the body as a whole and the nation as a coherent entity, then the de-hallucination of that reality undoes the "mirror-stage" operations out of which these fictions emerge and are consolidated. In this process of de-hallucination, body and nation come out as faulty containers.

Notes

[1] Washington Irving, *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent,* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 317-18.

[2] For instances of this traditional reading, see Daniel Hoffman, "Prefigurations in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*." *Washington Irving, The Critical Reaction*. Ed. James Tuttleton (New York: Ams Press, 1993): 86-87; and Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (Philadelphia: Dalkey, 2003): 25-26.

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[3] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 293.

[4] Ibid., 293.

[5] Ibid., 300.

[6] Stephanson, *Manifest* Destiny, 6-15.

[7] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny. The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981): 114.

[8] Qtd. in Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 123.

[9] John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 8. Through his analysis of internal/external racism, Etienne Balibar suggests that nationalist enclosure and imperial openings resolve their conflicted agendas by harmonizing domestic and colonial fronts of exclusion. His theory reveals the centrifugal and centripetal forces of racism in a nationalist context: "Racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism… not only towards the exterior but towards the interior." He illustrates this thesis through the example of *de jure* racial segregation in postbellum United States, seen as an internal instance of racism that overlapped with the consolidation of the United States as an imperial nation of global intent. Discussing the transition from national demarcations to imperial projections, Balibar adheres to this principle, stating that "the heritage of colonialism is, in reality, a fluctuating combination of continued exteriorization and 'internal exclusion'" Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities* (London, New York: New Left, 1991): 53, 43.

[10] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 684.

[11] Abraham Lincoln, "Peoria Speech." *Selections from the Writings of Abraham Lincoln*. Ed. J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton (Chicago: Scott, Foreman and Company, 1922): 118.

[12] For the echoes of Monroe's policies in the realm of American letters, see Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 15-32; and Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2005): 17-32.

[13] James Monroe, "State of the Union Address (December 2, 1823)." *James Monroe: a Compilation of the Papers and Messages of the Presidents*. Ed. James D. Richardson (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004): 290.

[14] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature." *Selected Essays, Lectures and Poems*. Ed. Robert Richardson Jr. (New York: Bantam, 2007): 18.

[15] Emerson, "The Young American. A Lecture before the Mercantile Library Association, Boston, February 7, 1884." *Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte (New York: Library of America,1983): 216.

[16] For a detailed account of Irving's political affiliation and diplomatic appointments during this period, see Andrew Burstein, *The Original Knickerbocker: the Life of Washington Irving*, (New York: Basic Press, 2007): 188-89, 192, 222-30.

[17] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 293.

[18] This is not to say that Irving intended the "Sleepy Hollow" microcosm as an allegory of 1820s United States; rather, I see the story as an anachronistic parable in which certain representative types enact and historically root an impasse between the nation's imperial ambitions and its promise to distance itself on that note from the nations of the Old World.

[19] Whereas "impairment" denotes the existence of a corporeal pathology (e.g. a missing limb), "disability" stands for a disadvantage imposed on the impaired individual by a social order desensitized to bodily difference. Shelley Tremain tests out this difference in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, 1-26. For more on this key terminological distinction, see Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008): 65-68; and Emily Russell, *Reading Embodied Citizenship: Disability, Narrative and the Body Politic*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011): 72-74.

[20] Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 6.

[21] Donald Pease, *Visionary Compacts: American Renaissance Writers in Cultural Context* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987): 17.

[22] Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (New York: Routledge, 2005): 18.

[23] Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits. A Selection*. Trans. Bruce Fink (London: Norton, 2002): 4.

[24] Ibid., 6, 13.

[25] Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, 139.

[26] Lacan, *Ecrits,* 6.

[27] The full quote is: "Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to

him and they still give him much trouble at times." Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1962): 76.

[28] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 2006): 6-7, 36.

[29] See Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 5; and Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality," 34.

[30] Qtd. in Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 11.

[31] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 305.

[32] Ibid., 308.

[33] Ibid., 72-74.

[34] See Burstein, *The Original Knickerbocker*, 136-37; and Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, *Adrift in the Old World: The Psychological Pilgrimage of Washington Irving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988): 121.

[35] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 69.

[36] The British Library did not become an independent institution from the British Museum until 1973. See "History of the British Library." http://www.webcitation.org/5nMvVlrFD

[37] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 70.

[38] See Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 2010). Rodrigo Lazo incorporates Foucault and Jacques Derrida's definitions of the archive into his concept of "migrant archives," understood as "texts of the past that have not been written into the official spaces of archivization, even though they weave in and out of the buildings that house documents." Rodrigo Lazo, "Migrant Archives. New Routes in and out of American Studies." *States of Emergency: The Object of American Studies*. Eds. Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009): 38-39. Responsible for a lifelong transatlantic medley of folktales and sketches, Irving—it is fair to assume—could not but regard written archives as far from static objects of study.

[39] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 70.

[40] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995): 25.

[41] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 79.

[42] This endless oscillation between *imagos* and gestalt also follows the dynamic of abjection, as famously outlined by Kristeva. Whereas Lacan's mirror stage totalizes self-perception into a meaningful and operative whole (body and body politic), abjection pursues a similar goal by subtracting, rather than adding components. Whereas the national body politic incorporates citizens into a gestalt sum larger than their collected individualities, Kristeva contends that the same body politic is equally defined by those individuals whom it rejects and which haunt, from that moment on, its margins. Moreover, because abjection never finalizes its original task of ejection, the abject solidifies its threatening presence in the margins of the self.

Her main correction to Lacan's mirror stage relates to the latter's take on "*identification*." According to Kristeva, an individual does not shape his or her ego *only* by assuming an external image of the self. In addition, that individual needs to abject those aspects of him of herself that prevent acceptance into society. Kristeva soon interconnects the private and social workings of abjection, locating it "[o]n the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, it annihilates me. There, abject and abjection, are my safeguards. The primers of my culture" Regardless of its entailed repugnance and violence, abjection upholds the social fabric and, consequently, enacts—like Lacan's gestalt—a compensatory gesture against fragmentation and chaos. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 2.

[43] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*., 309.

[44] Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality," 40.

[45] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 295.

[46] Ibid., 294.

[47] Ibid., 304.

[48] Ibid., 304.

[49] Christopher Moore, "A World of Possibilities: Slavery and Freedom in Dutch New Amsterdam." *Slavery in New York*. Eds. Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris (New York: New Press, 2005): 37.

[50] Irving's published and unpublished works lack any profound meditation on slavery. At most, he jotted down undeveloped portraits of Southern slaves and free blacks in his travelogues. Burstein comments that Irving "was not above making racist remarks" in his personal and public writings, but "neither was he interested in making excuses for slave owners." *The Original Knickerbocker*, 80, 260-61. Neither an abolitionist, nor an apologist for the peculiar institution, Irving's ambivalence toward the slave question is best felt through the marginal appearances of black characters in his fiction. As Judith Richardson has contended, Irving's Hudson Valley resonates with "the obscuring of the

African American past redoubling that of the Dutch." Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003): 54-55.

[51] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 295.

[52] Ibid., 298.

[53] Ibid., 296.

[54] Ibid., 301.

[55] Ibid., 301.

[56] Paul Giles has recently remarked Irving's overall skepticism toward Jefferson's project of civic virtue. "Antipodean American Geography: Washington Irving's 'Globular' Narratives," *The Oxford Handbook to Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Ed. Russ Castronovo (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 3.

[57] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 296.

[58] For Irving's own troubled memorialization of pre-national America, see Michelle Sizemore, "'Changing by enchantment': Temporal Convergence, Early National Comparisons, and Washington Irving's *Sketch-Book*." *Studies in American Fiction*. 40:2 (2013): 157-83.

[59] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 314-15.

[60] Irving, *Tales of The Alhambra*, (Granada, Spain: Padre Suarez, 1965): 45.

[61] Ibid., 52.

[62] Paul Giles has stressed Irving's "transatlantic reflexivity," through which displaced characters adopt "alternative vistas into their domestic culture" and defamiliarize national identity. *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001): 148.

[63] Irving, *Alhambra*, 34.

[64] Ibid., 280.

[65] Faye Felterman Tydlaska, *Between Nation And Empire: Representations of the Haitian Revolution in Antebellum Literary Culture*. Dissertation. Tulane University. 2008; Irving, *Astoria; or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains*, (New York: Putnam, 1868): 260.

[66] Irving, *Alhambra*, 80.

[67] Richard Ford, *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain*, (London: John Murray, 1855): 302.

[68] Ibid., 304.

[69] Robert Irwin, *The Alhambra* (London: Profile Books, 2004): 69-99.

[70] Ibid., 64-66.

[71] Irving, *Alhambra*, 167.

[72] Ibid., 215.

[73] Ibid., 64.

[74] Ibid., 88-89.

[75] Ibid., 258.

[76] Ibid., 260.

[77] Ibid., 282.

[78] Ibid., 277.

[79] Ibid., 278.

[80] Ibid., 282.

[81] Robert Pierce Forbes, *The Missouri Compromise and its Aftermaths: Slavery and the Meaning of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007): 16, 20.

[82] Irving, *Alhambra*, 151.

[83] Ibid., 181.

[84] Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 292.

[85] Ibid., 295.

[86] Ibid., 292.

[87] 'Hallucination' *Oxford English Dictionary*. Accessed 7 Dec, 2011 http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/view/Entry/83613?redirectedFrom=hallucination#eid

[88] Ludwig Eidelberg, *Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis*, (New York: Free Press, 1968): 172.

Chapter 2

"Let us have thy meaning plainly": Magawisca and the Disabled Vanishing American

The Vanishing American, that indigenous figure who romantically succumbs to an encroaching white civilization, has been a key paradigm of Native American and US literary studies since Brian Dippie popularized the term in 1982.[1] "Vanishing" designates a gradual—not sudden—event, one whose chronological and spatial coordinates can be traced mainly in the fiction, poetry, oratory and ethnography of the 1820s and 30s. Although often bypassed by critics, this question of duration matters. The Indian vanishes—rather than, say, spontaneously combusts—because advocates of Indian removal clung to the notion that the Indian's death was biologically programmed, that it resulted from a predictable process of racial degeneracy rather than from colonization and displacement. In the words of Nathan Hale, one of the era's so-called Indian experts: "If they must perish, let them die a natural and not a violent death."[2] I propose here that images of Indian disability provided reassuring evidence of this prolonged "natural death," which saddened—and befitted—US citizens. The trope of the crippled Indian fulfilled then a double task: it cleared the land while exonerating those willing to take it.

Of course, disability in this context entailed more than tropes. Culminating in the 1848 Trail of Tears, which expelled the last Cherokee tribes from their homeland in the Southeast to the Oklahoma Territory, US imperialism disabled American Indians: smallpox and other diseases unheard of in the American continent decimated their population; alcoholism rendered many chiefs vulnerable and dependent; warfare mutilated young warriors, pushing them and their elders into sterile expanses where game

was scarce and where, in consequence, the newborn suffered malnutrition and rickets. This health crisis has been well documented; it rings familiar bells and fuels contemporary stereotypes.[3] Yet, a more elusive history of Indian disability in the early national period has escaped us. One of its corollaries appears in George Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (1841), a two-volume pictorial and ethnographic record of Catlin's life with several Indian nations around and beyond the frontier. Catlin's last page displays two columns of adjectives contrasting "*Original*" Indians, still in "their primitive and disabused state," with their assimilated, "*Secondary*" brethren. Catlin recaps thus his claim that contact with white civilization had doomed the Indian. Originally a "handsome," "healthy," and "active" specimen, the Indian had become "ugly," "sickly," and "crippled," "dying" rather than "living."[4] These binaries work within the cultural matrix of Manifest Destiny, which yields a convenient syllogism: if Indians are mortally allergic to white civilization and white civilization is unstoppable, then nothing can save Indians from extinction. They cannot be helped, only mourned.

This chapter grapples with the fantasy of disability I call "the disabled Vanishing American," which helped erase Indians' material presence from the land while safeguarding their cultural status as noble savages and proto-national heroes. After all, why the need to keep the "healthy" Indian in sight (Catlin's portrait gallery barely includes any Indians with disabilities)? At once a source of autochthonous pride and a stumbling block in the path to territorial and economic growth, the Indian had to be removed, yet not to the point of total oblivion or disidentification. In this seemingly antithetical construction of the Indian Other, in which the object of destruction and the

object of mourning are one and the same, disability performed important symbolic work. It occupied a "contact zone" where the innocent and able-bodied savage became available as an allegorical refigurement of Americanness, while settlers' mercantilist thirst for land still justified removal on the grounds of Indians' biological inferiority.[5] Prompting audiences' sentimental sympathy as well as overt repudiation, Indian disability configured a Janus-faced Indian body politic that operated as a reminder of its former super-ability and as a renewed promise of its forthcoming demise.

In her historical romance *Hope Leslie; or, Early Times in the Massachusetts* (1827), Catharine Maria Sedgwick deploys enigmatic indigenous women Magawisca and Nelema to undo the fantasy of the disabled Vanishing American. The daughter of Pequot chief Mononotto, Magawisca violently loses an arm in one of the novel's climaxes, yet she lacks a conventional crip identity. Sedgwick hides Magawisca's disability from the narrative surface, branding her an oracular figure for both whites and Indians. Some critics have attributed this inattention to Sedgwick's sloppy characterization. I counter-argue that it evinces her refusal to symbolically appropriate the disabled body.[6] Thus, Magawisca's meaning does not hinge on her mutilated body; this body rather becomes a convenient tool in her efforts to advance an alternative model of racial and gender co-existence to Puritan and Jacksonian societies. To that end, Magawisca retains control over her own image, saving the exposure of her amputated anatomy until a dramatic trial scene in which she uses it to manipulate her jurors. Through her and through the medicine woman Nelema, Sedgwick exposes the cross-purposes of, on the one hand, acknowledging the literal and figurative violence done to the Vanishing American and, on the other, US citizens' need to preserve a residual memory that would anoint national

allegories—the Hope Leslie of the title—with the athletic physique of the Indian warrior, the supernatural gifts of the shaman, and the virginal innocence of the Indian maiden (Pocahontas, Columbia).

What do we learn about the indigenous presence in American letters once we approach it from the angle of disability studies, in particular from the unacknowledged perspective of the disabled Vanishing American? Like the other protagonists of my dissertation—the spectral Ichabod Crane, the freak Stratton, and the anti-establishment Lindau—Magawisca is a complicated figure of collectivity, a reluctant body politic. Turned into an allegory of Indianhood, she is claimed and re-claimed by the novel's main characters, which include a fictionalized John Winthrop begging Magawisca: "let us have thy meaning plainly."[7] But, in making Magawisca and Nelema essentially unreadable, Sedgwick turns them into oppositional figures who unsettle whites' notions of Indian behavior and fallibility. Unlike what happens in frontier romances such as James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales, disability in *Hope Leslie* does not clarify a narrative universe. Magawisca missing an arm does not make things easier for the reader the way a slouching Chingachgook does in *The Pioneers*. On the contrary, her missing arm raises a different ontology of the disabled body. This is not to imply that Sedgwick was an expert on Pequot medicine and disability, but, in her refusal to exploit the sensational/sentimental possibilities of Magawisca's stump and in letting Magawisca herself exploit these possibilities to express dissent, the author scratches the surface of an indigenous culture of disability that scholars have only recently began to explore. In this domain, disability does not signify individual malfunction but social disharmony. Reading Indian disability in Early American literature does not have to lead to a

repository of appropriations and clichés; reading how Sedgwick (tried to) read Pequot notions of disability reminds us that American cultures of disability have never been homogenous, which in turn invites us to rethink US principles of abstract personhood, individualism, and property.

I begin by mapping out the omnipresence of disability in the literature of the Vanishing American. Taking their cue from *Hope Leslie*'s Governor Winthrop, writers and audiences used disability to access the "meaning" of the Indian "plainly." I filter this operation through the concept of "narrative prosthesis," a key category of analysis in disability theory. The next section, devoted to Magawisca, explains how Sedgwick strains this concept, inviting us to imagine disabled bodies differently. To round off my analysis, I factor in the understudied character of Nelema, whose healing ritual of Benjamin Cradock, an English schoolmaster bitten by a rattlesnake, redefines disability as a site of intercultural negotiation. In the context of Nelema's medicine, the abnormal body does not repulse or titillate audiences. Instead, it amends flaws in white constructions of Indianness, constructions that, by the time *Hope Leslie* reached the US public, had started to converge into concrete policies of removal and dispossession.

1. The Disabled Vanishing American and the Mystery of Indian Disability

Non-disabled people, myself included, do not know what is like to be a person with a disability. To claim the opposite would leave us open to accusations of ventriloquism and co-optation. And yet, the discourse of human disability presents all of us—disabled and able-bodied alike— with a valuable tool to make sense of the world. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder have theorized this paradox by means of what they call "narrative prosthesis." The disabled body in narrative, they argue, prostheticizes reality. Disability

"is a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight."[8] Tiny Tim's poverty, Captain Ahab's monomania, and Richard III's immorality—to name a few examples—constitute abstract categories reified as anomalous bodies. Through their textual representation, these bodies deliver a narrative of the larger forces that intervene in their making, asking readers to tackle class inequality via Tim's limp, root Ahab's hubris in the traumatic absence of his leg, and attribute Richard III's atrocities to his stigmatized hunchback.

Like the prosthetic act itself, narrative prosthesis suggests an imperfect substitution, a patched-up work. "A prosthesis seeks to accomplish an illusion"—dictate Mitchell and Snyder.[9] In its frustrated attempt to procure this "illusion," narrative prosthesis eclipses the subjectivity of the disabled person, reduced to a metaphor of something else other than him or herself. But what would it mean to embrace this critical concept from a position less steeped in negativity? What if, in its ultimate failure to convey a sense of wholeness, balance, and certainty, narrative prosthesis would magnetize not one but different readings of the abnormal body? What if narrative prosthesis occasioned a productive failure, meant not to obliterate but to scrutinize disabled subjectivities? The figure of the disabled Vanishing American, Magawisca in particular, invites this strategy, which also owes to Sari Altschuler's recent call to trouble "the reductive logic of narrative prosthesis" by focusing on corporeal signs and metaphors that remain illegible (e.g. Queequeg's coffin instead of Ahab's wooden leg).[10] Before examining Magawisca's cabinet of illegible bodily signs, a quick look at the rhetorical presentation of Vanishing Americans reveals white authors' yearning not to decipher Indian bodies as much as to endow them with the visible symptoms of an

individual and social pathology. Nonetheless, these authors occasionally fall through the cracks of their faux Indian portraits, at times acknowledging gaps in their understanding, other times leaving these gaps as unsolved contradictions. These acknowledgments and contradictions interest me, for they open up an area of uncertainty that, as I shall explain, is ancillary to indigenous notions of disability. In these interstitial spaces between cultures of disability, the imperfect substitution of narrative prosthesis spawns cross-cultural conversation and anti-colonial critique.

While it is tempting to enumerate the ways in which narrative prosthesis fails, a more fertile approach is to investigate how such failure conjures an alternative discourse of disability. Indian traditional medicine proves a case in point. As scholars and medicine men themselves have claimed, "mystery" replaces the terms "medicine" and "disability" in North American indigenous communities. Even when the word "medicine" makes an appearance, it may "refer to an herb or drug, but more often it means some supernatural article or agency which may be of aid in curing disease or just as often the same thing may be invoked to insure the success of some individual or tribal undertaking."[11] In this cultural landscape, the body exists as a mystery interpenetrated by a set of animal, vegetable, spiritual and cosmic relations. Consequently, the body does not explain the world; the world explains the body in ways that only a few can understand. Shamans observe the human body interacting with its environment and then combine the fruits of their empirical observation with a religious acumen based on their privileged access to the world of the spirits, which in turn enables them to mediate between supernatural and earthly spheres. American Indian scholar and medicine man Vine Deloria Jr. has lamented that, through the contemporary commoditization of ancestral Indian remedies,

"the mystery is largely gone, and in its place is the perfunctory recitation of good thoughts not unlike the mantras of self-improvement books and videos."[12] This cultural arrogation began in the colonial period and intensified during the first half of the nineteenth-century, as non-Indian witnesses of Indian life joined the rank and file of Native people in not knowing what disability and health meant, since this knowledge was a prerogative of shamans and gifted healers.

Native healers challenge our Western epistemology of the body by assuming an ungraspable continuum in which bodies are never finite entities. In Indian medicine, "separating the mental from the physical or spiritual made no sense."[13] This decentralized, delocalized frame of reference has baffled many whites, who have tried to assimilate some therapies of Indian medical lore (e.g. sweat lodges, herbals) while scorning its spiritual dimension. Unlike indigenous non-shamans, who accepted the mystery as such, white observers were uncomfortable in the position of not knowing. For Joshua David Bellin, the mystery of Indian health engendered two antithetical kinds of stylized performance. In the first, curative shamanistic rituals foster community through call-and-response techniques and through the deployment of qualified assistants. There is no exegesis here; the mystery remains in place. In the second kind, "performances of Indianness" include explanatory "acts of Indian portrayal, invention, and identity formation, including conversion narratives, stage plays, bicultural autobiographers, traveling medicine carnivals, and Wild West shows."[14] Whereas Sedgwick will abide by the former in her depiction of Nelema's healing ritual, chroniclers of the disabled Vanishing American opt for the latter, reducing the mystery of Indian disability to a narrative prosthesis with which to account for the Indian's imminent downfall.

As already mentioned, this usurpation is rarely without fissures. What follows is a series of readings of typical Vanishing-American texts that signify differently when approached from the standpoint of Native American cultures of disability. This series begins with Eliza Lee Follen's "Sachem's Hill" (1839), a poem that epitomizes the form and content of Vanishing-American literature (it includes the line: "Where has the rainbow vanished?—there does the Indian dwell"). More significantly, Sedgwick, who was Follen's personal acquaintance, quotes the poem's second and third stanzas in *Hope Leslie*'s frontispiece, registering thus a thematic link with this tradition. In "Sachem's Hill," an Indian chief dies, goes to heaven, and returns to earth as a spirit, where he witnesses the wonders urban modernity has introduced in the forest that was once his abode. At first blush, Follen panders to a supremacist ideology. The "Sachem's eagle eye" and his super-ability to navigate his environment ("His were the pathless forests, and his the hills so blue," "on the restless ocean danced only his canoe") do not save him from a "white man" who "came with power." Follen obfuscates the history of this arrival. One line contemplates the sachem and his white counterpart first meeting "like brethren" and then, after a tactical ellipsis, "the Indian sun has set" already in the next line. To top off the poem's Anglo-centrism, Follen Christianizes the pagan sachem by sending him to heaven with "saints and angels." His postmortem visitation unfolds then as a return and appeasement of the repressed: "For the heart that felt revenge, with boundless love is filled. / And the restless tide of passion to a holy calm is stilled."[15] The vanished sachem returns to reassure us that the United States is a better place without him.

A generative reading of the poem insinuates itself once the poet betrays her spiritual dependence on the sachem protagonist: "Here to my mental vision the Indian

chief appears, / And all my eager questions fancy believes he hears. / Oh speak! thou unseen being, and the mighty secrets tell / Of the land of deathless glories, where the departed dwell." Suddenly, the returned Vanishing American occupies a position of authority over the poem's anxious "I," who pleads to be informed of the "secrets" of the afterlife. In the poem's final third, the tone shifts from cultural reassurance to troubled spirituality. The deceased sachem enters a transcendental plane that the author envies: "The things we see are fleeting, like summer flowers decay— / The things unseen are real, and do not pass away." Himself one of these coveted, "unseen"—yet "real"—"things," the Vanishing American becomes a different kind of narrative prosthesis. His diseased body still validates whites' superiority, but its role as a "crutch" of US progress goes astray once we see this same Indian inhabiting a realm inaccessible to the poet. Follen thus kneels to the vernacular knowledge of the protagonist, most likely a Pequot or Narragansett chief. The line "But in the land of spirits the Indian has a place" strikes a double chord, confirming the Indian's inability to survive modernity while also noting his mastery over the immaterial world.[16] With its reversal of the poem's ostensible power relations, this generative interpretation comes in the heels of Siobhan Senier and Clare Barker's injunction "to commit to a form of disability studies praxis that refuses to impose non-indigenous frameworks of health or disability upon native communities."[17] Therefore, the poet initially condescends to the Indian subject whose body yielded to an epidemic, but then ends up jealous of his familiarity with a transcendental sphere where bodies do not matter.

This alternative framework of disability is characterized by Indian pantheism, which obtained an unlikely channel of expression in the parade of setting suns, fallen

trees, and distant mountains typical of Vanishing-American iconography. Early American Romantics of the likes of Philip Freneau, William Cullen Bryant, and Washington Irving found in the forest a store of objective correlatives with which to convey the pathos of receding indigenous figures. Ironically, their use—and abuse—of wilderness imagery correlated with Indians' own belief that the Great Spirit manifests itself everywhere in the universe through a wide array of living and inanimate forms. In Pequot cosmology, for instance, "*manitou*" labels an amalgam of "powerful people, animals and objects" rather than a single anthropomorphized divinity.[18] Similarly, in Philip Freneau's poem "The Indian Burying Ground," everywhere we look we find a correlate of the deceased Indian. "Aged elms," "wearing rains" and a "moistening dews" reverberate with the demise of the "children of the forest;" however, from the angle of Indian cosmology, this same set of correlates could well suggest that the Indian's body has not vanished, that it has simply morphed.[19] Indian cultures of disability implode the concept of narrative prosthesis, replacing its negative definition (a failure to restore wholeness) with an affirmation of possibility. This happens once subjectivity is evacuated from the body and conceptually dispersed across a cosmic system in which the body is but a minor hub. This dispersal calls to mind the Lacanian *imagos* with which Irving de-hallucinated American empire. Here, we realize that the body politic American Indians imagine for themselves is also made of scattered fragments, but that these fragments include non-bodily matter as well. This body politic trumped the adherents of the Vanishing-American myth, who tried to confine this decentralized, expansive subjectivity within the corporeal metaphor of the disabled Vanishing American.

The analytical frame I am proposing teases out ways in which whites' ignorance of the subjects they were removing/killing imbued them with uncertainty over the consequences of their acts. It invites us to look at disability in the context of Indian removal as a contested middle ground between genocide, a total elimination, and settler colonialism, a compulsory displacement that retains nonetheless the presence of the colonized Other in order to validate the colonizer's dominant status. According to anthropologist Patrick Wolfe, the two strategies merge in "the logic of elimination." While the goal of genocide is to wipe out a human collective, the logic of elimination also aims to eliminate them while preserving a specific cultural memory of them, a memory that justifies their non-presence and grounds the origin myth of the group that conducts the elimination.[20] The language of the debates and decisions around the Indian Removal Act (1830) and other Jacksonian policies alternates between a paternalistic stance toward the removed Indian nations and one of gratitude for the debts contracted with them. The Vanishing American acted as a vicarious son and father to white invaders. President James Madison's addresses to his "red children" and Chingachgook's fathering of Natty Bumppo in *The Pioneers* constitute two sides of the same coin.[21] Within this imagined genealogy, white sons accepted the decay and extinction of their putative fathers as part of a natural order. Anyway, either as decrepit elders or feral children, Indians entered the nation only as disabled and dependent subjects.

As a putative father, the Vanishing American imparted life lessons for white Americans' self-improvement. In their depictions of receding Indians, government officials and popular writers adopted a self-deprecating tone while refusing to mention their forcible occupation of Indian land unmentioned. Inspired by Jean-Jacques

Rousseau's concept of the noble savage, Vanishing-American writers used the Indian to gently upbraid Anglo-American civilization. At the same time, though, they held Indians responsible for their dissolution. Future Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story declared in 1828 that "by a law of their nature, they seem destined to a slow extinction." As much as Story exulted in the ancestral Indian's "courage and fortitude, and sagacity, and perseverance, beyond most of the human race," he also admitted that "by their very nature and character they can neither unite themselves with civil institutions, nor with safety be allowed to remain as distinct communities."[22] In his last remark, Story takes a step further and negates the very idea of an Indian polity. The super-ability of individual Indians cannot compensate for their atrophied sense of communal organization. By insisting on this point, Story and other public officials forged the legal fiction behind *Johnson v. M'intosh* (1823), which ruled that Indians could sell their land only as individuals to only one buyer: the Federal government. This decision rested on the legal fiction of individual personhood, an alien concept to most Indian nations, given that "in traditional Native American cultures there are persons, but no 'individuals.' For in these cultures identity is conceived of as exclusively mutual rather than … mutually exclusive."[23]

The first step in the logic of elimination was to present the disabled Vanishing American as an individual bereft of all communal ties: terminally ill, but also hopelessly alone. Ignorant of indigenous models of sociality, Vanishing-American writers introduced the Indian as an individual equally cut off from the modern world and from his ancestors. The Vanishing American thus tends to appear isolated, either mourning or being mourned (Magawisca and Nelema will resist this isolationist impulse). Even if

these writers had inserted Indians in a mythic genealogy of the US nation, they mourned them differently than they did its actual officials. During the same period when ethnographies and primers of Indian life boomed, many founding fathers started to sicken and pass away. In a 4th-of-July address, Boston poet Charles Sprague juxtaposes an already extinct Indian hunter with the "heroic men who lighted the Beacon of 'rebellion,' and unfurled, by its blaze, the triumphant banner of liberty." Sprague then rejuvenates the fathers of the nation: "Undaunted men! How must their dim eyes brighten and their old hearts grow young with rapture, as they look round on the happiness of their own creation! Long may they remain." While the speaker implores this collective to "remain," he ensures his audience that "The Indian, of falcon glance, and lion bearing, … , is gone! and his degraded offspring crawl upon the soil where he walked in majesty." As an individual allegory of American indigeneity, the husky Indian hunter contrasts against the collective of his disabled progeny, who "slowly and sadly … climb the distant mountains, and read their doom in the setting sun."[24] Conversely, not even death can dissolve the community ties the Founding Fathers bequeathed to the young nation.

Against this model of white collective endurance, the prodigious body of the wild Indian preceded his or her impairment once in contact with white civilization. Even the sympathetic Roger Williams would refer to Indians as "Adams degenerate seede."[25] At the same time, though, Williams's *A Key into the Language of America* (1643)—the most quoted source in *Hope Leslie*—teems with images of Indian super-ability. Williams confesses that he has seen "them run betweene fourefcoure or an hundred miles in a Summers day, and back within two dayes," rarely encountering "a lame man or an old man with a Staffe."[26] The Indian's capacity to walk long distances under strenuous

circumstances drew the attention of white observers of Indian life from the colonial period to the mid-nineteenth century. In Mary Jemison's captivity narrative, published in the early 1820s, the protagonist revels in the fact that her Seneca captors work out on a regular basis, and that those who best cultivate their bodies access leadership positions more easily:

> They also participated in various athletic games, such as running, wrestling, leaping, and playing ball, with a view that their bodies might be more supple, or rather that they might not become enervated, and that they might be enabled to make a proper selection of Chiefs for the councils of the nation.[27]

Jemison's disgust and attraction to the Indian body reaches a paroxysm when portraying her Seneca husband, Sheninjee, "a noble man; large in stature; elegant in his appearance, … strange as it may seem, I loved him!—To me he was ever kind in sickness, and always treated me with gentleness; in fact, he was an agreeable husband, and a comfortable companion."[28] Her narrative shifts uneasily between Sheninjee's erotic appeal and her disgust toward Seneca customs and rituals.[29]

Images of majestic Indians roaming the prairie gave way to those of assimilated ones crawling the city streets. In Catlin's *Letters*, the "uncontaminated" Indians remain "well-proportioned in their limbs and good looking," whereas "civilized" ones see how their "limbs have become enervated and naked by the excessive use of whiskey."[30] Somewhat similarly, Freneau's poem "The Indian Student" tells of a young warrior from Susquehanna attending Harvard University, where "At last he came, with foot so lame, / Where learned men talk heathen Greek."[31] The image of this transplanted indigenous subject hobbling around campus counters the lithesome and quick nature he exhibits in the wilderness. Another lethal transplantation occurs in Isaac McLelland Jr.'s *The Fall of*

the Indians and Other Poems (1850), where we are told of a "great City, which usurps the place / Of the small Indian village," and where "one shall see / Some miserable relic of that race." The unnamed Indian protagonist—once again depicted in solitude—"shivers as he goes" and incarnates the pathology of his race: "And the Indian heart is ailing / And the Indian blood is failing."[32] The trope of defective "blood" also pervades Reverend Heckewelder's *History, Manners, and Custom of the Indian nations* (1819), a source that Sedgwick half-scathingly credits in *Hope Leslie* as the "interesting work of this excellent Moravian missionary."[33] For Heckewelder, Indians have had their "blood" polluted by the "shameful complaint" of "ardent spirits." They "are infected with it to a great degree; children frequently inherit it from their parents, and after lingering for a few years at last die victims to this poison."[34] Writers like Heckewelder adhered to the same host of convenient contradictions: Indians were strong, yet weak; pure, yet easily corrupted; resistant to extreme pain and torture, but not to smallpox or to a tiny sip of liquor; able to walk for miles under a scorching sun, yet incapable of orienting themselves in the city.[35] In short, they were admirable—yet unfortunate—neighbors who had just put up the "For Sale" sign in their yard.

Disabled Vanishing Americans lacked a future partly because they could not think of one. Mary Jemison regrets the fact that her good-hearted husband could not mentally project any time beyond the present. As she soon discovers, the Seneca people's "cares were only for to-day; the bounds of their calculations for future comfort not extending to the incalculable uncertainties of to-morrow."[36] In his reductive description of the many Native American nations he sojourned with, Catlin notes that "with minds thus unexpanded," Indians' "inclinations and faculties are solely directed to the enjoyment of

the present day."[37] Indians' alleged no-future strikes a chord with those who imagine the lives of people with certain disabilities as so miserable that the most merciful—if not rational—approach is to negate them a future.[38] White depictions of the Vanishing American register a similar attitude, which betrays yet another contradiction: the Indian's mind cannot grapple with futurity, yet ethnographers and fiction writers showcase him fully aware of his impending extinction. In Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which Dippie places at the center of the Vanishing-American corpus, Chingachgook conjugates the future tense: "there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans."[39]

By denying Indians a future—even denying them the capacity to imagine one—examiners of Indian life bypassed the theme of colonial conquest, exulting instead in a mythic Indian past that was always being reenacted in some imaginary location outside the nation's targeted area of expansion. In terms of physical (dis)ability, Indian experts situated the anatomies of uncivilized Indians in a genealogical line that harkened back to Classic Greek art, by then the pinnacle of corporeal aesthetics. Catlin's portraits of young Indian warriors, stately elder chiefs, and tribal group scenes abide by this canon. "The wilderness of our country," Catlin writes, "afforded models equal to those from which the Grecian sculptors transferred to the marble such inimitable grace and beauty."[40] US cultural producers embraced his vision. Reputed geographer Jedidiah Morse remarked that "in the shape of their limbs, and their erect form, Indians have evidently the advantage over the whites. Some … would be perfect models for the sculptor. Instances of deformity are rare."[41] In a popular Vanishing-American romance, *Tadeuskund, the*

Last King of the Lenape (1825), Nicholas Marcellus Hentz describes a fifty-year-old chief thus:

> His limbs formed upon the noblest model, moved with the grace of youth and the firmness of maturity; his expanded chest, on which his muscles were carved as it were by the chisel, recalled to Livingstone's classic imagination the remains of the famous Torso of Hercules."[42]

Sedgwick trips up this tradition by fashioning Magawisca's arms "a model for sculpture" and then rendering Magawisca's body analogous with another emblem of classical beauty: the Venus de Milo.[43]

Before further extricating Sedgwick's reversals of this literary tradition, it is worth laying out a previous critical attempt to clarify the role of disability in frontier literature, since my reading of *Hope Leslie* builds on and complicates it. In "The Myth of American Ability," Thomas Jordan discerns in the Leatherstocking Tales Cooper's conscious linkage of the "frontiersman's rugged individualism" typical of Natty Bumpo with Chingachgook's "disabled identity," which ultimately "facilitates his ultimate removal from the novel."[44] The Bumppo-Chingachgook binomial indeed illustrates how the myth of the frontier relied on the juxtaposition between the former's "perfect body" and the latter's infirm one. Moreover, as a white character raised by Delaware Indians, Natty Bumppo helped audiences identify culturally—not racially—with the super-abled, wild Indian of the past. Whereas Jordan's intervention advances a productive front in which disability and American studies can intersect, a more revealing picture opens up once we factor in non-Western theories of disability. As Senier and Barker suggest, "culturally specific and spiritually nuanced conditions may resist assimilation within the social model of disability and thus present productive epistemological challenges to disability studies."[45] Through Magawisca, Sedgwick genderizes and complicates the

Bumppo-Chingachgook binary; through Nelema, she introduces a healing figure whose vernacular grasp of disability, a "mystery" indeed—inspires the novel's eponymous protagonist to imagine alternatives to Puritan racism and patriarchy.

2. Magawisca's Death or Liberty (or Disability)

Magawisca is Sedgwick's response to the contradictions of the Indian body, construed as super-abled and disabled, vigorous and vanishing. This construct pervaded the two stages of US-Indian relations relevant to *Hope Leslie*. The first one—the *Early Times* of the title—comprehends the aftermath of the Pequot War (1636-38); the second one overlaps with the novel's period of composition and publication, during which the United States embraced an aggressive Indian policy and a rising expansionism crystallizing in Andrew Jackson's presidency (1829-37). Sedgwick comments on this reality indirectly, by mobilizing a considerable bibliographical apparatus. She wants us to know—and to confront—what she has read in preparation for this novel. Chapter epigraphs, careful footnotes, and intertextual allusions frame the events of *Hope Leslie* within the larger historical narrative of colonial North America.

The novel begins right after an alliance of English and Dutch colonial forces has defeated the Pequot and gained control over the Connecticut Valley. Governor of Massachusetts John Winthrop saves the wife (Monoca) and offspring of Mononotto from a life of slavery in Bermuda, where most Pequot prisoners were sent. Winthrop thus rewards Monoca for protecting two white women who had been her husband's captives. Monoca soon dies. Winthrop sends her two surviving children, Magawisca and Oneco, to live as servants of the Fletcher family in the frontier settlement of Bethel. There, Magawisca befriends the Fletchers' son, Everell, and Hope and Faith Leslie, the

daughters of Mr. Fletcher's romantic acquaintance in the Old World. After a deadly attack on Bethel, Mononotto reunites with Oneco and Magawisca and tries to execute the young Everell in order to avenge the son he lost in the war. Alas, right when the axe is descending on Everell's neck, Magawisca interposes herself and loses her arm. Everell escapes intact and is afterwards sent to England. A series of events ensue both in Boston and Bethel, culminating in Magawisca's acquittal after being accused of conspiracy and in Everell and Hope Leslie's happy marriage. Although this summary does not do justice to the novel's ambitious cast and scope, it emphasizes its Indian theme as it revolves around Magawisca's mutilation.

The novel was an instant popular success, outselling anything Sedgwick ever wrote. Yet its dissenting politics remained low in the critical radar of several generations. Even a landmark excavation such as Nina Baym's *Woman's Fiction* (1978) dispenses *Hope Leslie* in a few lines, in which Baym alludes to Magawisca as a stereotypical "saintly Indian maiden."[46] New Americanists Christopher Castiglia, Dana Nelson, and Carolyn Karcher first unearthed Sedgwick's confrontational stance on the fronts of interracialism, democracy, marriage, and domesticity.[47] The value of their contributions notwithstanding, I want to anchor my analysis in a dismissive remark by G. Harrison Orias, who described *Hope Leslie* as a literary product "of Uncle Tom's Cabin texture."[48] Orias's disdainful analogy—he is writing in the 1930s—points exactly to the political commitments that redeem this text from our contemporary perspective. For sure, Sedgwick's novel did not cause a civil war, but her desired impact was nothing short of a firm condemnation of Indian removal. Her jabs at Jacksonian policy take the form of deliberate anachronisms such as "treaty." When the narrator berates Pequot chiefs and

English traders for "violating their treaties of friendship," she is winking to the Indian treaties breached by the Federal Government throughout the 1820s.[49] As an anti-patriarchal contestation to this betrayal, Sedgwick orchestrates successful interracial bonds among women, as for example when Magawisca and Hope Leslie set up a meeting for Hope to reunite with her captive sister Faith: "The basis of their treaty being settled, the next point to be arranged, was the place of the meeting."[50]

Stowe exhorts her readers to "feel right" about slavery; Sedgwick induces the more laborious, less visceral, task of restoring women's silenced voices.[51] Official chroniclers of the Pequot war Benjamin Trumbull, William Hubbard, and William Bradford briefly mention the real events regarding Mononotto's wife and her offspring. Winthrop does not mention them in his *Journal* nor in his *History of New England, 1630-1649*.[52] His omission marks the threshold where Sedgwick's fiction begins, with Magawisca and Oneco being handed over to the Fletchers shortly after their mother dies. Unlike male historians, Sedgwick endows Mononotto's female family with a name and a rounded personality.[53] In doing so she takes her cue from Harriet Vaughan Cheney's *A Peep at the Pilgrims* (1825), *Hope Leslie*'s most important fictional source. If *Hope Leslie* narrates the aftermath of the Pequot war, Cheney's *A Peep* takes the actual military conflict as its background, with Mononotto and his wife—here named Mioma—playing a key role in the last chapters.[54] Sedgwick will take a step further, giving a name not only to Mononotto's wife, but also to her daughter Magawisca. Magawisca grows into a central character whose cryptic style grants her an unusual degree of freedom. On the contrary, Mononotto shifts between senility and prostration, withering away and eventually killed by lighting. Oneco is a juvenile Indian who elopes with the simple-

minded Faith Leslie. They do not have children. Sedgwick triangulates the two archetypes of the Vanishing American—the superannuated chief and the child-like warrior—with the assertive Magawisca, who displays a wider psychological palette. By placing Magawisca, rather than Mononotto or Oneco, at the center of white-Indian relations, Sedgwick distances herself from her sources.

In another departure, this time from the purported empiricism of Indian observers like Heckewelder and Morse, Sedgwick overtly introduces Magawisca as the stuff of fantasy: "The writer is aware that it may be thought that the character of Magawisca has no prototype among the aborigines of this country. Without citing Pocohontas, or any other individual, as authority, it may be sufficient to remark, that in such delineations, we are confined not to the actual, but the possible."[55] Not only does Sedgwick bring about a new Indian "prototype," she uses Magawisca to retroactively defuse the normative interpretation of the Pocahontas legend, namely, that of the virtuous Indian princess who irremediably falls for with and protects the colonizer.[56] As I am about to show, Magawisca's rescue of Everell debunks this pervasive interpretation of the Pocahontas-John Smith rescue. Sedgwick's deflection from this tradition split audiences' reception of Magawisca. While some critics welcomed her embodiment of an alternative Indian body politic ("that the best features of her character have had a real existence in savage life, that she is a possible Indian, we have no doubt"), others sneered at Sedgwick's ideal Indians by invoking a mentally-handicapped indigenous reader unable to get the compliment. This was the case of a *Western Monthly Review* critic who imagined "one of these red men, with his shaggy black hair, high cheek bones, deep set and cunning eye, his dirty blanket around him" reacting to Magawisca with a primeval "ugh!"[57] The self-

appointed custodians of the Vanishing-American tradition resented such an unconventional portrait.

What is the role of Magawisca's body in her characterization as a "possible" Indian? Gustavus Stadler has contended that Sedgwick "pays an indulgent amount of attention to her body, continually mapping its specificities and dramatizing the efforts of the English settlers to read her corporeality as a series of unequivocal signs."[58] Like these settler characters, readers of frontier romances during the 1820s worried over the legibility, and hence predictability and (in)docility, of indigenous populations. Magawisca's first appearance in the novel triggers the narrator's and other characters' desires to figure her out. We are told that her "form was slender, flexible, and graceful; and there was a freedom and loftiness in her movement which, though tempered with modesty, expressed a consciousness of high birth." This noble-savage mode of presentation precedes a more racialized description:

> Her face, although marked by the peculiarities of her race, was beautiful even to an European eye. Her features were regular, and her teeth white as pearls; but there must be something beyond symmetry of feature to fix the attention, and it was an expression of dignity, thoughtfulness, and deep dejection that made the eye linger on Magawisca's face, as if it were perusing there the legible record of her birth and wrongs.[59]

Physiognomic terms ("face," "teeth") soon cave in to impressionistic and abstract ones ("dignity, thoughtfulness, and deep dejection"). The last sentence does not reduce Magawisca to a "legible record"; it rather highlights the efforts of those staring at her to crack the bodily code in which her story, and the story of her people, is supposed to be written. In this early description of Magawisca, Sedgwick already posits her as a cryptic body politic.

Sedgwick unveils white settlers' anxiety to comprehend Indian subjects, to imbue then with a superficial, infallible identity.[60] Both narrator and characters focus on her hybrid cultural signs, reveling in the clash between her primitive and assimilated Indianness. Therefore, she combs her hair "contrary to the fashion of the Massachusetts Indians" while adorning it with "small feathers" and "rings of polished bone." Her clothes "had been obtained, probably, from the English traders," including "leggings, similar to those worn by the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's court." Nevertheless, Magawisca also wears "moccasins." Last but not least, her bare arms suggest "a model for sculpture," yet she "ornaments" them with a "broad band" inscribed with "rude hieroglyphics."[61] This proleptic reference to Magawisca's arms is worth pausing over. The rude signs of an unsettling illegibility baffle onlookers in similar ways as the absence of conventional disability tropes baffled readers of *Hope Leslie*. This observation challenges Stadler's analysis, since Magawisca does more than "bring into being the private life of [the novel's] white subjects," endowing them with a "rich interiority."[62] In addition, she points to another interiority—her own—which we cannot access, much less colonize.

Sedgwick respects the mystery of Magawisca's body. Her description hints at an alternative valuation of bodies, one that Sedgwick herself did not master, but that we can pursue, adding a new layer of contestation to the novel's politics. In fact, Magawisca enters the story not as a body, but as a mind. Before she is physically present, a flummoxed Mrs. Fletcher mentions her "rare gifts of mind," attributing a divine origin to the Indian girl's bilingualism and intellectual curiosity.[63] But Mrs. Fletcher's choice of the term "gifts" implies also a network of exchange. That is, who has given Magawisca the "gift" of her prodigious mind? What "gifts" will she give to others? The idiomatic

phrase "to be gifted" here does not entail an individual condition as much as one's belonging in a web of reciprocities, obligations, and favors. This gift-giving economy corresponds with Kim Nielsen's description of Iroquois cultures of disability. Like other northeastern Indians—Pequot included—the Iroquois lacked a term for "disability" per se, since they saw each human individual as possessing a "gift" and each community as an active network in which different gifts are exchanged regardless of the flaws and incapacities of the gifted one.[64] This relational model of disability stands as the antithesis of the clinical model, which individualizes it while attempting to heal/normalize the disabled body/mind. An epitome of the former, Magawisca brings other characters together and imagines possible scenarios of white-Indian coexistence.

This epistemology of disability provides us with a new reading method with which to reconsider the novel's interracial web of exchanges and obligations. Why does Sedgwick put Magawisca, a mutilated woman, and Nelema, an emaciated elder, to the task of fostering communal ties and encounters, and of trying to bring the entire cast of characters into an organic whole? In fact, Sedgwick floods the text with metaphors in which different bodies act as one. At times, these metaphors trump Indian and white characters' miscegenation anxiety. For example, Mononotto frets about the growing romance between Magawisca and Everell, asking the former "Why hast thou linked thy heart, foolish girl, to this English boy?"[65] Mrs. Fletcher too resents this intimacy: "Two young plants that have sprung up in close neighbourhood, may be separated while young; but if disjoined after their fibers are all intertwined, one, or perchance both may perish."[66] These warnings betray a generalized nervousness about individuals ceasing to act individually, especially when crossing racial boundaries. On the contrary, Magawisca

celebrates this circumstance by referring to herself in pantheistic terms, through a gallery of animal and vegetable avatars. “My foot,” she says, “is used to the wild-wood path. The deer tires not of his way on the mountain, nor the bird of its flight in the air.”[67] Expressed in such terms, her super-ability rests neither in a divine origin nor in a specific biological predisposition; it arises from a set of analogies and connections with the natural world.

Like Magawisca’s body itself, the scene in which she loses her arm is fraught with mystery.[68] Its preliminaries already bespeak Magawisca’s familiarity with Pequot medicine. Mononotto sends her away, but she manages to drug her guardian with a “sleeping potion” that an old Mohawk woman had already given her, a concoction “of all the plants on which the spirit of sleep has breathed.”[69] It is important to note, as no critic has ever done, that Magawisca enters the execution scene in a narcotic trance. This circumstance foils the Pocahontas-based interpretation according to which Magawisca is solely motivated by her infatuation with Everell, sacrificing her arm in order to preserve his body. Far from harnessing Magawisca’s physical capacity, this hallucinatory stage reinforces the pantheistic and mystical overtone of her actions. In order to reach the sacrificial stone, she has to climb a rock, which she does “impelled by a determined spirit, or rather, we would believe, by that inspiration that teaches the bird its unknown path, and leads the goat, with its young, safely over the mountain crags.”[70] Comparing Magawisca to “a superior being” led by a “supernatural power,” Sedgwick imbues her physical exertions with an otherworldly halo.

Given this de-individualized notion of Pequot identity we may ask: does losing her arm make Magawisca disabled? One would expect Sedgwick to reply in the affirmative, but her narrative effacement of Magawisca’s impairment hints at a valuation

of the body antithetical to that of the disabled Vanishing American. Magawisca's armlessness makes her an obvious disabled person from our Western perspective, but since she does not exhibit the conventional topoi of disabled heroines in Anglo-American letters indicates, she might not qualify as such in her own Pequot culture. She certainly lacks a place among the melodramatic exploitations of disability that Martha Stoddard Holmes labels "fictions of affliction." For Holmes, "while nineteenth-century writing posited an interiorized psychology of disability, disabled subjectivity was of necessity a mix of interior and exterior, private and public, secret and dramatic."[71] Whereas the disabling act traditionally turns characters into narrative prostheses that concretize slippery abstractions, Sedgwick's disabling of Magawisca further obscures the latter's motivations and demeanor.

Losing an arm does not make Magawisca more legible. Right after the axe falls down, Magawisca's "lopped quivering member drop[s] over the precipice."[72] The fact that the excised limb automatically disappears from view augurs that her disability will not be a central concern of the novel, at least not in the conventional manner outlined by Holmes. Facing such an unusual deflection of the disability theme, critics have betrayed their internalized desire for disability to signify something, insistently lifting the "cloak" with which Sedgwick covers Magawisca from then on. For Mary Kelley, a biographer and devoted scholar of Sedgwick, Magawisca's sacrifice presents us with "the most heroic act in the entire novel."[73] Carolyn Karcher reads the excised arm as a phallic symbol whose removal de-sexualizes Magawisca and forestalls her interracial affair with Everell.[74] Michael Davitt Bell riffs on the Pocahontas connection, noting that Sedgwick's "principal addition to [this] tale is the gory detail of the severed arm."[75] In truth, however,

the scene unfolds quite gorelessly, without any description of Magawisca's injury besides the mention of her limb falling off the precipice. No bleeding stump, no trail of blood, no fainting. Significantly, only Mononotto faints. The other Indian warriors are thrown in disarray "uttering horrible yells." Everell becomes "paralyzed by a rapid succession of violent emotions." Only Magawisca, the woman who has sustained this serious injury, acts in a dignified manner: "'Stand back!' cried Magawisca. 'I have bought his life with my own.'"[76] Her statement concludes an exchange, not a sacrifice.

What does Magawisca gain by losing her arm? The chapter ends in a flashback, with Magawisca looking down from the rock, about to enter the scene. In this conclusion, the narrative shifts gears from the perspective of male witnesses (Everell, Mononotto) to her point of view, so that we end up looking at the execution altar from her eyes in retrospect. This reverse chronology not only returns Magawisca's body to a state of wholeness, it also challenges audiences' expectations that a disabling incident of the caliber of losing an arm would bring about a radical transformative moment. From this moment until Magawisca's trial, near the end of the novel, there is no there there regarding Magawisca's impairment. Occluding her mutilated body, Sedgwick challenges Mitchell and Snyder's assumption that the "characterization of disability so often result[s] in indelible, albeit overwrought, literary portraits."[77] By doing and undoing Magawisca's disability, Sedgwick introduces a non-lineal chronology of disability aligned with indigenous beliefs. As Senier puts it, although Mohegans "were certainly struggling with disease and disability, they did not view these as permanent conditions, or even as properties of individual bodies."[78] Senier bases this observation on the journal annotations of Pequot medicine woman Fidelia Fielding. More interested in recording the

sun's movement throughout the day than her own medical practice, Fielding shaped her journal into a ritualistic device appurtenant to cycles of natural repetition and recurring phenomena. The end of the mutilation chapter in *Hope Leslie* mimics this form, shifting our attention from Magawisca's mangled body to the natural elements surrounding her ascent to a literal and figurative position of authority.

Naysaying the explanatory role of narrative prosthesis, Magawisca's armlessness turns her more into an oracle than an open book. She becomes the constant companion of her father, vaunting her new authority over male Pequot warriors, and is referred to as "the priestess of the oracle," evincing her revamped relationship with the Great Spirit.[79] Even English characters recognize this facet. When Benjamin Cradock agrees to take her place in jail while she escapes under his garments, he tells her: "Thou woman in man's attire, it is given to thee to utter truth, even as of old, lying oracles were wont to speak words of prophecy."[80] Cradock's allusion to a "woman in man's attire" confirms the gender reversals operated by Magawisca since her mutilation. Cradock also echoes Magawisca's mutable identity and knack for disguise. In addition to escaping the prison in man's clothes, she wanders the streets of Boston in the guise of a moccasin seller who incognito approaches Hope Leslie and invites her to a rendezvous with Faith. On a metanarrative level, Cradock also speaks to Sedgwick herself. As a re-teller of the pre-national past, the writer has indeed put on "man's attire" and occupied a position of cultural authority in order to debunk official truths and popular myths of Puritan life.[81] As a woman writer revisiting early colonial history, Sedgwick, like Magawisca, enters a condition of possibility: not what is, but what should have been.

Together with the mutilation scene, the end of Magawisca's trial constitutes the other key scene of disability in *Hope Leslie*. Like her original injury, her coming out as disabled takes place in a site consecrated to the official administration of justice, as the Boston court replaces the sacrificial stone where Mononotto aimed to obtain retribution for his murdered son. Mononotto and Winthrop become equidistant figures, distanced in their bigotry from the area of rapprochement Magawisca and Hope Leslie inhabit. Framed by Sir Philip Gardiner, the novel's villain, and arrested under the charges of plotting against the Massachusetts colony, Magawisca is brought to trial by the colony's highest magistrates, headed by Governor Winthrop. They offer to pardon her as long as she renounces her Pequot identity and embraces Christianity. Magawisca refuses their offer in her characteristic style, mixing pantheistic reference and oracular tone: "I do fear to speak … but it is such fear as he hath, who, seeing the prey in the eagle's talons, is loath to hurl his arrow, lest, perchance it should wound the innocent victim." This response motivates Winthrop's impatient query: "'Speak not in parables, Magawisca, … but let us have thy meaning plainly,'" which encapsulates the intention behind many depictions of the disabled Vanishing American. Winthrop's plea also illustrates how, in Mitchell and Snyder's terms, "literary efforts to illuminate the dark recesses of disability produce a form of discursive subjugation."[82] Magawisca forestalls this subjugation.[83] By revealing her true form, Magawisca does not render her "meaning" available to others; she feeds them an already extant construct: the disabled Vanishing American.

But while her body incarnates this construct, her words shake it to the core:

> "Take my own word, I am your enemy; the sun-beam and the shadow cannot mingle. The white man cometh—the Indian vanisheth. Can we grasp in friendship the hand raised to strike us? Nay—and it matters not whether we fall by the tempest that lays the forest low, or are cut down

> alone, by the stroke of the axe. I would have thanked you for life and liberty; for Mononotto's sake I would have thanked you …" She paused—… mounted the steps of the platform, and advancing to the feet of the Governor, threw back her mantle, and knelt before him. Her mutilated person, unveiled by this action, appealed to the senses of the spectators … She spoke, and all again were as hushed as death. "Thou didst promise," she said, addressing herself to Governor Winthrop, "to my dying mother, thou didst promise, kindness to her children. In her name, I demand of thee death or liberty."[84]

What does it mean for a disabled Vanishing American to voice Patrick Henry's Revolutionary plea for "death or liberty"—not to mention the "life and liberty" motif from the Declaration of Independence? These add to Sedgwick's catalogue of clever anachronisms. She has Magawisca utter them more than a century before Henry and the Continental Congress did. In addition, Magawisca prefaces her patriotic credentials by broaching Winthrop's broken "promise" to Monoca. Through this sequence of allusions, Sedgwick ties distant historical events—the Pequot war, the Revolution, and Indian removal—to a prevailing logic of elimination that simultaneously destroys and memorializes Native people. Facing this logic, Magawisca condemns the failure of the United States to stay true to Henry's cry. After all, the construction of the Vanishing American gave the Indian neither death nor liberty, only a prolonged state of disability that proved convenient for the nationalist imaginary. In true oracular fashion, Magawisca removes her cloak and reveals not herself but the future of the nation.

She also makes John Winthrop cry. Sedgwick captures this reaction in order to humanize rather than emasculate him, for the Governor's "heart was touched with the general emotion, and he was fain to turn away to hide tears more becoming to the man, than the magistrate."[85] Moved by Magawisca's injury, Winthrop abides by the treaty he had contracted with her mother. Moreover, his "feeling was contagious," as everybody in

the audience starts to intercede for Magawisca. At this juncture, it is important to separate what Sedgwick is doing from what Magawisca might be doing. Regarding Sedgwick, Castiglia has mentioned her adherence to a sentimental political project that would curb Winthrop's and others' rigidity in favor a more sympathetic public sphere, one in which whites and Indians know their places and learn to collaborate.[86] The role of disability in this project is, according to Holmes, to provide "melodramatic machinery, a simple tool for cranking open feelings."[87] But is this what Magawisca does in this scene? Keeping up with my unprecedented frame of analysis, I would claim that here she reveals herself as a deft manipulator of her white audience through the dramatic presentation of her body. An expert on reading how others read Indian disability, Magawisca offers her body as a narrative prosthesis for her Puritan audience to be reassured of their cultural superiority and to strike a visceral connection that eventually would acquit her. She trusts the persuasive appeal of her disabled body to the degree that she even feels safe telling a court of justice: "I am your enemy." This is possible because the revelation of her stump tunes out any other sign. Her audience's tears blur Magawisca's declaration of war.[88]

As the descendant of Vanishing Americans, Magawisca is an uncomfortable, unwieldy presence. In the end, she heads to the western territories of her own accord, but the memory she leaves behind is much more problematic than that of Chingachgook, Logan, Tadeuskund, or Follen's "Sachem."[89] Loyal to a relational, communal model of health and disability, Magawisca's task is to connect, even after her own material presence has vanished. On that front, Nelema's lessons have paid off.

3. Nelema's Arm

Sedgwick endorses Indian traditional healing in *Redwood* (1824), the novel she wrote before *Hope Leslie*. There, the narrator ponders the benefits of Indian herbalism, not seeing any "reason why the simples they extract from the bosom of our kind mother earth should not prove as innocent and quite as efficacious as the drugs of foreign soils."[90] In *Hope Leslie*, Nelema will validate this hypothesis and articulate an entire front of cultural resistance around it. Sedgwick depicts her as Magawisca's aged alter ego. Like Magawisca, she inspires Romantic longing, but also an oppositional politics against the inconsistencies of Puritan law and religion. Like Magawisca, she is devoted to putting others in contact and implementing networks of care. Last but not least, Nelema, like Magawisca, eschews easy interpretation. Whereas Magawisca and Hope Leslie have focalized most critical attention, scholars' silence around Nelema evinces the need to take up the Indian theme in *Hope Leslie* from an Indian angle. Once again, the goal of this approach is not to expose Sedgwick's skewed understanding of Indian medicine and cosmology, but her willingness to acknowledge unexplained Indian presences in her novel, presences that would unsettle the faux certainty of those adherents to the myth of the Vanishing American. Proponents of this myth systematically denounced Native healing rituals and remedies as either elaborate fraud or an atavistic superstition. Their animosity explains a systematic criminalization of Indian medicine that harkens back to the colonial days. In the account of Nelema's healing of Cradock, which earns her a death sentence under charges of witchcraft, Sedgwick exposes Puritans bigotry and their drive to monopolize knowledge of the body.

Nelema belongs to an unnamed "tribe who had been faithful allies of the Pequods." Although her isolation fits the mold of the Vanishing American, she keeps good relations both with other Indians and with Mrs. Fletcher, whom she usually supplies with "wild berries and herbs, … receiving favours in return."[91] She practices a gift-giving economy similar to Magawisca's. The social harmony procured by this economy is disrupted whenever white characters misread her body, words, and/or actions. During her first appearance, Nelema frowns on Mrs. Fletcher's baby, remarking something in her native language that Magawisca then translates as "the baby is like a flower just opened to the sun, with no stain upon it … he better pass now to the Great Spirit," because "this world is all a rough place—all sharp stones, and deep waters, and black clouds." Through this cryptic message, Nelema alerts Mrs. Fletcher of Mononotto's impending raid on Bethel, which eventually will kill her and her baby, but the white woman underestimates this warning, discrediting Nelema as an embittered Vanishing American ("the days have come to her that have no pleasure in them"). Like Magawisca after Winthrop demands her plain "meaning," Nelema switches registers, replacing the pantheistic allusions to the hostile world of the frontier with a less equivocal complaint: "I had sons too—and grandsons; but where are they? … they have fallen like our forest trees, before the stroke of the English axe." Her reference to the axe preconizes the weapon that accidentally severs Magawisca's arm and conflates the settlers' destruction of the wilderness with their deliberate extermination of its original dwellers. Nelema proves thus another important oracle that, like Magawisca, veiledly discloses the inconsistencies between Puritans' lofty values and their authoritarian practices. Her intervention prompts an

example of Puritan intolerance: Jennet's ironical disqualification of Nelema acting "as if she were gifted like the prophets of old."[92]

In the same passage, Nelema assuages Mrs. Fletcher by deliberately exposing her frail physique. "'Fear me not,'" she says, "and she threw back her blanket and stretched out her naked, shriveled, trembling arm, 'what is this to do the work of vengeance?'"[93] Sedgwick will match the image of Nelema's non-revengeful arm with Magawisca's excised one. Both limbs materialize an invitation for the most sympathetic white protagonists—Hope Leslie, Everell—to grow acquainted with the mysteries of American Indian medicine. Unlike the Indian Saco, who raises his arm against Mrs. Fletcher only to have Everell pierce it with a bullet, Nelema's arm does not perform the work of vengeance but of healing, as seen in her assistance to Craddock. A half-senile English tutor comically at odds in the New World, Cradock experiences in his own flesh the dangers of the frontier. Descending from a rock after a perilous hike, he places his hand in a crevice where a rattlesnake lies unseen. The resultant near-fatal wound quickly becomes "horribly inflamed, … the whole arm swoln and empurpled."[94]

Sedgwick's choice of the snake as damaging agent returns us to a Native reading of disability. A totemic animal for the Pequot, the snake in *Hope Leslie* alternates its Biblical status as a quintessential manifestation of evil with a more positive valuation in Native religion, in which it plays a crucial role in several creation myths, embodying a trove of medical and spiritual knowledge.[95] Nelema will partake of the same duality. Sedgwick associates her with the snake, even entertaining the possibility that both are the same entity. This explains why, when Cradock is rushed in emergency to Nelema's hut, she tells them: "I knew you were coming, and have been waiting for you." Also, in the

ritual that follows—one of the novel's most fascinating and unacknowledged episodes—Nelema imitates the movements and gestures of the rattlesnake, "making quick and mysterious motions, as if she were writing hieroglyphics on the invisible air." Forced to stay during the ceremony, Hope Leslie later confesses to Everell: "I trembled lest she should assume the living form of the reptile whose image she bore." To further reinforce this association, Nelema uses a "wand" that has been "wreathed with a snake's skin" and then points "to the figure of a snake delineated on her naked shoulder," revealing this as the "symbol of our tribe." This is no small revelation. The symbiosis between Nelema and the snake represents a natural order altered by English hikers/settlers. Nelema, who has already declared herself "the last of my race," points here to a vanishing body politic whose iconic referent she has inscribed on her bodily surface. The "hieroglyphics" she seems to write in the air add to the essential illegibility of Indian women characters.[96]

Cradock's injury results from his ignorance of the natural environment; Nelema's successful cure rests on her transcendental understanding of it. Sedgwick does not explain the combination of herbs Nelema administers to Cradock. It is fair to assume that she just did not know. However, testimonies of real Pequot healers—those few willing to make their knowledge available to others by writing it down—do not get much more specific. The 1754 herbal of Mohegan priest and medicine man Samson Occom opens up a window into this lore, and provides a frame of comparison in which to reconsider Sedgwick's interest in the subversive mysteries of Indian medicine and disability. In one of the four pages of Occom's original manuscript, Occom lists "an herbe good for Rattle Snakes bite."[97] Such a vague entry—Occom never names the specific plant—amounts to little else beyond Sedgwick's superficial reference to the "herbs" that Nelema picks up

"from one corner of her hut."[98] In her analysis of Occom's herbal, Senier concludes that this document "cannot be read outside of its own historic, environmental, and cultural contexts."[99] Like the content of Nelema's pouch, the herbal demands insider knowledge. On this same front, so does *Hope Leslie*. Sedgwick inadvertently complies with one of the rules of Mohegan and Pequot medicine: secrecy. Doing so, the white woman writer respects this knowledge as a source of communal power, a veiled source that, nonetheless, moves the narrative forward.

Like Hope Leslie, we witness Nelema's ceremony from an estranged perspective. Nonetheless, the very act of witnessing already violates the Puritan code. As Nelema's neophyte assistant, Hope Leslie participates in an Indian sacred practice that Puritan authorities had banned and vilified under the lapidary labels of witchcraft, paganism, and demonism. The rationale for this ban was political as well as religious. Historian Francis Jennings explains that colonial governments outlawed "the Indian powwow or medicine man" because they were aware that this figure constituted "one of the strongest unifying factors in any Indian community."[100] By criminalizing shamanism, colonial authorities took another step toward their goal of individuating Native Americans. Pushing back against this effort, Hope Leslie witnesses Nelema's incantations and becomes complicit in its spiritual overtones. Daring to stay and look, Hope Leslie proves a more courageous cultural mediator than Roger Williams, who produces a skewed portrait of the same ritual in *A Key*. In order to locate the heroine Hope Leslie in a position that Williams did not dare to occupy, Sedgwick uses his remarks as the chapter's epigraph:

> Powwow—a priest. These do begin and order their service and invocation of their gods, and all the people follow, and join interchangeably in a laborious bodily service unto sweating, especially of the priest, who spends himself in strange antick gestures and actions, even unto fainting.

> Being once in their houses and beholding what their worship was, I never durst be an eye-witness, spectator, or looker-on, lest I should have been a partaker of Satan's inventions and worships.[101]

To the endless parade of contradictions around the disabled Vanishing American, Williams adds the paradox of witnessing without witnessing, perhaps the most representative gesture of Anglo-Americans' approach to the Indian, both during Puritan and Jacksonian times. Far from passive compliance, Hope Leslie answers Nelema's call in full, defending her in front of Winthrop and then freeing her from prison. Doing so, Hope Leslie becomes a cog in the mechanism of reciprocity and community-building that constitutes the desired impact of Indian medicine's mysteries. Helping Nelema escape and reunite with Mononotto and his family, Hope Leslie ensures that Nelema will return the favor by bringing back her captive sister Faith via Magawisca, whose mediation will, in turn, reunite Hope Leslie with Everell. Seen in retrospect, Nelema's medicine ritual accomplishes much more than restoring Cradock's infected arm.

Hope Leslie's—and Sedgwick's—drive to investigate the mysteries of Indian medicine from a non-judgmental stance clashes against Puritan intolerance. The servant Jennet personifies the latter. She spearheads the official accusation against Nelema after peeping at the same scene "through the key-hole" of a closed door.[102] Sedgwick thus puns on Williams's *Key*, given that Jennet's fear of Nelema's shamanism probably owes much to Williams's lessons. Depicting Jennet's accusation as ridiculously biased, Sedgwick legitimizes Nelema's shamanistic healing of Cradock—frightful as it might prove to the eyes of the non-initiated—and endorses Hope Leslie's stance in favor of Nelema's methods. Significantly, Hope Leslie invokes Magawisca in her defense of Nelema, showing that she has indeed learned her lesson in Pequot pantheism: "I repeated

what I had often heard you, Everell, say, that Magawisca believed the mountain, and the valley, the air, the trees, every little rivulet, had their present invisible spirit—and that the good might hold discourse with them. 'Why not believe the one,' I asked, 'as well as the other?'"[103] Hope Leslie exhorts us to accept two religions whose most adamant representatives (Winthrop, Mononotto) have perceived as irreconcilable. This might be Sedgwick's most radical lesson. Whereas Vanishing-American writers looked at Indian life through a "key-hole" that filters only convenient information, Sedgwick—like Hope Leslie—wants to take a good look and collectively fill in the gaps in her and others' knowledge.

4. Conclusion

Was Sedgwick then a lucid observer of Indian mores or did she just stumble upon some intriguing—and potentially subversive—traits in her depiction of Indian women? Put more sharply, is she radical by coincidence? My examination of *Hope Leslie*'s nuanced—yet pervasive—dissent with the historiographical and literary tradition of the disabled Vanishing American has suggested that Sedgwick is rather inviting us to revisit US history and its foothold on corporeal metaphors of Indian disability. What looks like rhetorical sloppiness in portraying disability in fact taps into one of its non-Western discourses. Her narrative rendition of Indian medicine unfolds neutrally. It eschews the temptation to solve its mysteries, which so many have tried to do by ventriloquizing Native people or by testing healing practices against the familiar terrain of Western clinical knowledge.

Sedgwick's approach was anathema to Jacksonian politics and its project of disempowering Indians by individuating them, by shifting the legal frame of their

relationship with the land, and by criminalizing shamanism. In the context of Manifest Destiny and Indian removal, the figure of the emaciated, melancholic, and/or defunct Indian sachem presents us with an obvious narrative prosthesis. The last of his kind, the elder sachem politely steps aside from the path of progress. The void he leaves behind is inhabited by a distorted memory with which US citizens can identify, even draw inspiration as they go about taming the frontier. That is the work of narrative prosthesis, a way of conceptualizing the efficient metaphor of the disabled Vanishing American. But, as narrative prostheses, Magawisca and Nelema work by omission rather than by substitution. Sedgwick offers us a look behind the scenes of how disability signifies in colonial America. As for Indian disability, the writer knows she is not qualified and simply lifts the curtain for us to venture inside and to investigate the systems of networks in which Indian disability comes into being. What one encounters there is a very different kind of body politic, one who does not personify a finite number of members as well as their political organization but who also incorporates a set of geographical, animal, and animistic relations. The disabled Vanishing American cannot imagine his or her own body politic without these. The resultant straining of corporeal metaphor remains a provocative mystery.

Notes

[1] Dippie bases his definition on a quote by jurist Joseph Story. Thus, the "Vanishing American" represents a "bold, but wasting race." This characterization brands the individual Indian body as already always a body politic. *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes & U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 1982): xii. The term was originally coined by G. Harrison Orias, who defines it as "nature's nobleman" and a powerful aid in the quest of early-nineteenth-century Americans for romantic themes. G. Harrison Orias, *The Cult of the Vanishing American, A Century View: 1834-1934* (Toledo, OH: H.J. Chittenden, 1934): 3-4. A previous echo of this label can also be found

in Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968).

[2] Nathan Hale, "Heckewelder's Indian History," *North American Review* (June 1819): 170.

[3] For an overview of colonization-related Indian diseases, see Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 32-44; Siobhan Senier and Clare Barker, "Introduction," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies. Special issue on Disability and Indigeneity* 7:2 (2013): 123-40; and Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States*, 13-20. From a medical perspective, see also John Duffy, "Smallpox and the Indians in the American Colonies," *Biological Consequences of the European Expansion, 1450-1800*. Eds. Kenneth F. Kiple and Stephen V. Beck (Ann Arbor: Ashgate/Variorum, 1997): 233-250; Sherburne F. Cook, "The Significance of Disease in the Extinction of the New England Indians" *Human Biology* 45:3 (1973): 485-508; and T. Kue Young, *The Health of Native Americans: Towards a Biocultural Epidemiology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 12-16, 19-28. On Indian alcoholism and its cultural distortions, see Philip A. May, "The Epidemiology of Alcohol Abuse among Native Americans: The Mythical and Real Properties," *Contemporary Native American Cultural Issues*. Ed. Duane Champagne (Los Angeles: Altamira, 1999): 227-44.

[4] George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*, *v.1 (*London: Tosswill and Myers, 1841): 266.

[5] I borrow the term "contact zone" from Mary Louise Pratt, who defines it as a "social space[s] where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths." *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 4.

[6] Besides the novel's original reviewers, Michael Davitt Bell exemplifies this position. For Bell, Magawisca's ambiguous body proves Sedgwick's frustrated attempt to reconcile the novel's social realism with the improbable events of the romance. "History and Romance Convention in Catharine Sedgwick's 'Hope Leslie'" *American Quarterly* 22:2, Part 1 (Summer 1970): 219-21.

[7] Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie; or. Early Times in the Massachusetts* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993): 291.

[8] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 49.

[9] Ibid., 7.

[10] Sari Altschuler, "'Ain't One Limb Enough?,'" 267. For an examination of this corporeal sign in particular, see Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin:*

Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012): 111-38.

[11] Eric Stone, *Medicine among the American Indians* (New York: Hafner, 1962): 5. Many indigenous people even lack an equivalent term to "disability." Nielsen, *A Disability History*, 2. For example, Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel, medicine woman for the Mohegan Tribal Nation of Connecticut, cautions us that "traditionally, disability is not seen as such." Qtd. in Senier and Barker, "Introduction," 126.

[12] Vine Deloria Jr., *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2006): xviii.

[13] Nielsen, *A Disability History*, 3.

[14] Joshua David Bellin, *Medicine Bundle: Indian Sacred Performance and American Literature, 1824-1932* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008): 3.

[15] Eliza Lee Follen, "Sachem's Hill," *Poems* (Boston: William Crosby & Company, 1839): 15. I have not been able to locate an earlier published version of the poem. Sedgwick uses it as an epigraph in 1827, which suggests that Follen might have circulated it privately during the 1820s.

[16] Ibid., 16-17.

[17] Senier and Barker, "Introduction," 137.

[18] Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss, "The Pequots." *Early Native Literacies in New England*. Eds. Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008): 130.

[19] Philip Freneau, "The Indian Burying Ground." *Early American Poetry. Selections from Bradstreet, Taylor, Freneau, Dwight & Bryant*. Ed. Jane Donahue Eberwein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978): 232-33. Other examples of a surfeit of nature metaphors can be seen in Irving, "Traits of Indian Character," *The Sketch-Book*, 227-29; and William Cullen Bryant, "An Indian at the Burying-place of His Fathers," *Poems Collected and Arranged by the Author* (London: Henry King, 1873): 65-68.

[20] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (December 2006): 402.

[21] Qtd. in Lewis Cass, "Remarks on the Policy and Practice of the United States and Great Britain in Their Treatment of the Indians," *North American Review* 55 (April 1827): 19-20. On the topic of Chingachgook's ambivalent contribution to the US nationalist imaginary, see Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 21-22 and Eric Cheyfitz, "Savage Law: The Plot Against American Indians in *Johnson and Graham's Lessee v.*

M'Intosh and *The Pioneers*." *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism*. Eds. Donald Pease and Amy Kaplan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993): 109-28.

[22] Joseph Story, "Discourse, Pronounced at the Request of the Essex Historical Society, September 18, 1828." *The Miscellaneous Writings of Joseph Story v. 3*. Ed. William W. Story (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1852): 463-464.

[23] Cheyfitz, "Savage Law," 112. On the implications of *Johnson v. M'intosh*, see also Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975): 1-9.

[24] Charles Sprague, "American Independence: An Oration Pronounced Before the Inhabitants of Boston, July 4, 1825." *Writings of Charles Sprague* (New York: Charles S. Francis, 1841): 4, 8.

[25] Qtd. in Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997): 47.

[26] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1971): 71, 75.

[27] Mary Jemison, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*. Ed. James E Seaver (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990): 48.

[28] Ibid., 28-29.

[29] While crossing a Shawanee town just ravaged by the Seneca, Jemison remembers seeing "a number of heads, arms, legs, and other fragments of the bodies of some white people who had just been burnt. The parts that remained were hanging on a pole which was supported at each end by a crotch stuck in the ground, and were roasted or burnt black as a coal. The fire was yet burning; and the whole appearances afforded a spectacle so shocking, that, even to this day, my blood almost curdles in my veins when I think of them!" (Ibid., 19).

[30] Catlin, *Letters*, v. 1, 7. Even if it did not influence Sedgwick directly, *Letters and Notes* galvanized many of the popular perceptions of the Indian also at play in Sedgwick's novel.

[31] Philip Freneau, "The Indian Student," *Poems Written and Published During the American Revolutionary War,* v. 1 (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1809): 128.

[32] Isaac McLelland Jr., *The Fall of the Indian: With Other Poems* (Boston: Carder and Hendee, 1850): 61.

[33] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 351.

[34] Reverend John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Custom of the Indian nations* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876): 220.

[35] Like with African slaves, US citizens believed that American Indians did not experience physical pain or that, at least, their tolerance was much higher than that of whites. Echoes of this belief appear in Freneau, "The Death Song of a Cherokee Indian," *The Poems of Philip Freneau: The Poet of the American Revolution*. Ed. Fred Lewis Pattee. v. 2 (Princeton NJ: Princeton Historical Society, 1903): 313-14; and in Sedgwick's short story "The Catholic Iroquois." Here, the captive daughters of a powerful Iroquois chief, Talasco, accept Christianity. Once returned to their tribe, one of them, the protagonist Francoise, stoically suffers torture and death at the hands of her own father, anticipating the Mononotto-Magawisca mutilation scene in *Hope Leslie*. Sedgwick, *Tales and Sketches* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1835): 66.

[36] Jemison, *A Narrative*, 48.

[37] Catlin, *Letters*, v. 2, 85.

[38] See Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 1-3.

[39] Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 21. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: Oxford World Classics, 2009): 26.

[40] Catlin, *Letters*, v. 1, 15.

[41] Jedidiah Morse, *A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs* (New Haven: Davis & Force, 1822): 69.

[42] Nicholas Marcellus Hentz, *Tadeuskund, the Last King of the Lenape: An Historical Tale* (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard & Co, 1825): 74-75.

[43] For a provocative take on the Venus de Milo as a landmark of disability aesthetics, see Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, 125-27.

[44] Thomas Jordan, "The Myth of American Ability: Cooper's Leatherstocking, the Frontier Tradition, and the Making of the American Canon," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 32:4 (2012) http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1739/3178

[45] Senier and Barker, "Introduction," 125.

[46] Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978): 53-54.

[47] Christopher Castiglia, "In Praise of Extra-Vagant Women: *Hope Leslie* and the Captivity Romance." *Legacy* 6.2 (fall 1989), 3-16; Dana D. Nelson, *The World in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 66-89; Carolyn L. Karcher, "Introduction" in Catharina Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie; or. Early Times in the Massachusetts* (New York: Penguin, 1998): ix-xxxviii; and "Catharine Maria Sedgwick in Literary History," *Catharine Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*. Eds. Lucinda Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003): 5-16.

[48] Orias, *The Cult of the Vanishing American*, 11.

[49] See Satz, *American Indian Policy*, 85, 198; Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 158-162; Sean Michael O'Brien, *In Bitterness and Tears: Andrew Jackson's Destruction of the Creeks and Seminoles* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2003): 229-41; James Mooney, *Historical Sketch of the Cherokee* (Piscataway, NY: Transaction, 2009): 51-124; and Theda Perdue, *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003): 63-69.

[50] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 191.

[51] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998): 432.

[52] Benjamin Trumbull, *A Complete History of Connecticut, Civil and Ecclesiastical, From the Emigration of Its First Planters, From England, in the Year 1630; to the Year 1764; and to the Close of the Indian Wars* (New Haven: Maltby, Goldsmith and Co. and Samuel Wadsworth, 1818): 88-92; William Hubbard, *The History of the Indian Wars in New-England* v. 2 (New York: Klaus, 1969): 37-38; and William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952): 398.

[53] Setting a strong precedent for her daughter, Monoca dies without converting to Christianity, even if "many Christian men and women laboured for her conversion." Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 22.

[54] Harriet Vaughan Cheney, *A Peep at the Pilgrims in Sixteen Hundred Thirty Six. A Tale of Olden Times* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1825): 396-475.

[55] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 6.

[56] See Karcher, "Introduction," xxiv; and Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of An American Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 78-79.

[57] *North American Review* (April 1828), 418; *Western Monthly Review* (1 September 1827): 294-95.

[58] Gustavus Stadler, "Magawisca's Body of Knowledge: Nation-Building in *Hope Leslie*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 12.1 (1999): 45. Despite his thorough analysis of Magawisca in relation to liberal ideologies and white interiority, Stadler tiptoes over the question of her disability, which ultimately lessens the impact of his argument.

[59] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 23.

[60] The fantasy of disability at play here recalls Ellen Samuels's "fantasies of identification." Indian bodies, like the bodies of women, children, and African slaves need to constitute legible records of their identity and subjectivity. In Magawisca's case, this record belongs in the realm of fiction and popular myth, which originates in the scientific report and ethnographies of Heckewelder, Catlin and other Indian experts. Samuels studies the present-day "institutionalization of blood quantum identification for Native people of the United States," which no doubt originates in these Vanishing-American writers' desire to tease out the Indian Other. Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification*, 1-3, 141-52.

[61] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 23.

[62] Stadler, "Magawisca's Body," 52.

[63] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 32.

[64] Nielsen, *A Disability History*, 2-3.

[65] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 84.

[66] Ibid., 32-33.

[67] Ibid., 24.

[68] Disgruntled by the plot's implausible twists and turns, early reviewers of *Hope Leslie* nonetheless quoted the scene of Magawisca's impairment as evidence of Sedgwick's potential. *North American Review* (April 1828): 416-17; *The London Literary Gazette* (December 22, 1827): 821.

[69] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 89.

[70] Ibid., 93.

[71] Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009): 9.

[72] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 93.

[73] Kelley, "Introduction," *Hope Leslie*, xxvii.

[74] Karcher, "Introduction," xxiv.

[75] Davitt Bell, "History and Romance Convention," 217.

[76] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 93.

[77] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 16.

[78] Senier, "'Traditionally, Disability Was Not Seen as Such': Writing and Healing in the Work of Mohegan People," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies. Special issue on Disability and Indigeneity*, 215-16.

[79] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 194.

[80] Ibid., 312.

[81] For Dana Nelson, "despite the numerous textual apologies regarding her humble inadequacies as historian and author, Sedgwick had set out to redefine opinion regarding both race *and* gender conventions." Thus, "*Hope Leslie* is remarkable for its valorization and foregrounding of feminine heroics: a woman who actively resists her male superiors in order to act on the good impulses of her heart." *The World in Black and White*, 68.

[82] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis,* 6.

[83] Ibid., 6.

[84] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 292-93.

[85] Elsewhere in the novel, Everell "yielded to a burst of natural and not unmanly tears." Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 87.

[86] Castiglia, "In Praise of Extra-Vagant Women," 5.

[87] Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*, 3.

[88] Sympathy and sentiment are not at odds with the sensational thrust of her asymmetrical body, for "her mutilated person," Sedgwick writes, "appealed to the senses of the spectators." Only the despicable Sir Philip Gardiner remains insensitive to the contemplation of Magawisca's maimed form, which brands him as the antagonist character to be excluded from both nation and novel. Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 293.

[89] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 324.

[90] Sedgwick, *Redwood; a Tale* (New York: Putnam, 1824): 287.

[91] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 36. Taking into account the geographic location and the chronological proximity to the Pequot War, she had to be either Narragansett or Mohegan. See Drinnon, *Facing West*, 35-45.

[92] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 37-38.

[93] Ibid., 37-38.

[94] Ibid., 103.

[95] William S. Lyon, *Encyclopedia of Native America Healing* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABL-CLIO, 1996): 219-22, 257, 280.

[96] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 103-04. Not to mention the echo the "rude hieroglyphics" Magawisca exhibits in her arms during her first appearance.

[97] Samson Occom, *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century America*. Ed. Joanna Brooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 46. Contemporary sources indicate that Nelema might be using either Virginia and/or Senega snakeroot chewed and applied in a poultice or root of wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*). See Stone, *Medicine*, 70; and Gladys Tantaquidgeon, *Folk Medicine of the Delawares and Related Algonkian Indians* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1972): 128-29.

[98] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 104.

[99] Senier, "'Traditionally, Disability Was Not Seen as Such,'" 217-18. According to Kelly Wisecup, "'Herbs & Roots' must complicate our understanding of eighteenth-century European taxonomies, which created a system in which all known plants could be listed and their similarities and differences made visible." Kelly Wisecup, "Medicine, Communication, and Authority in Samson Occom's Herbal," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10.3 (Fall 2012): 549.

[100] Qtd. in Bellin, *Medicine Bundle*, 4.

[101] Qtd. in Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 95.

[102] Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 105.

[103] Ibid., 107.

Chapter Three
Freak Bodies Politic: Charles Stratton, *Dred*, and the Embodiment of National Innocence

Ichabod's fragmentary embodiment of Americanness led to a haunting—and haunted—aporia, not too different from the plea of the disabled Vanishing American, trapped between the memory of his super-ability and the present emphasis on his decrepitude. Unlike them, Charles S. Stratton performed a fragmented, impossible nationhood in ways that proved commercially and symbolically successful. Introduced as an eternal "Young American" and "a perfect man in miniature," Stratton mostly went by the stage name of "General Tom Thumb."[1] Under the management of legendary showman P.T. Barnum, Stratton became the world's most famous dwarf and an outstanding case study of nineteenth-century media stardom, accruing a fortune while touring the globe's far-flung corners and hobnobbing with the likes of Queen Victoria and King Leopold I of Belgium. Stratton's public career gained traction through his famous levees (receptions) at Barnum's American Museum, on Broadway, during which the short-statured Stratton (twenty-five inches tall, fifteen pounds) sang traditional ditties, bantered with the audience, invited children onstage to compare heights, impersonated Napoléon (a crowd-pleaser), Frederick the Great, and a Highlander; produced statuary replicas of Cupid and Hercules; marched to the beat of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" in a Revolutionary uniform, and starred in *Hop O' My Thumb*, a farce that had him riding a Shetland pony, scurrying through the legs of normal-sized adversaries, and parroting patriotic slogans such as "I will do anything the State desires."[2] Last but not least, in 1856 he put on a blackface and starred as the slave child Tom Tit in H.J. Conway's *Dred; A*

Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp, a Barnum production based on Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel of the same title.

Stratton's personas as well as his status in the US imaginary—what the "State" desired him to do— permitted Americans to imagine ideal futures without feeling the need to alter the present state of social and racial relations. As a perpetual infant, Stratton concretized popular constructs of Adamic innocence; as a deceased European emperor, he personified the sort of corrupt maturity that characterized other nations and that America was trying to avert; and as the minstrel-like Tom Tit, he acted out African Americans' inadequacy for citizenship: his stunted growth cued their political immaturity. Far from paratactic, this cavalcade of stage identities constitutes a layered whole that played on important discursive contradictions among antebellum Americans. Most significantly, Stratton's pantomimes racialized childhood around a supremacist axis (only white children deserve to be children) while betraying how blackness had been infantilized by an antithetical logic: "the Negro is but a grown-up child and must be governed as a child."[3] If, as Robin Bernstein proposes, childhood is performed, then Stratton's theatrics invite questions about the function of disability in that performance.[4] My point is that a flexible construction of disability—dwarfism in particular—facilitates this simultaneous promotion of childhood innocence and racial incapacity. Stratton's biological stasis hence realigns recent scholarly efforts to read race through disability and childhood. Emily Russell has noted that "when a citizen with an embodied difference enters the public sphere, that body becomes the determinant force of their belonging."[5] Analyzing Stratton as a particular brand of "embodied citizen"—Russell's flagship concept—unveils the reworking of disability into a spectacle that mediates the

relationship between the masses and the state. Stratton presents thus an understudied nexus between ideal constructions of US community and its excruciating realities during the tumultuous 1840s and 1850s.

Tapping into the realm of embodied fantasy, this essay examines Stratton as a freak body politic: a capacious, yet self-revealing, corporeal metaphor of the United States. Newspaper clippings, handbills, *cartes de visite*, and other Thumb-related memorabilia honor Stratton's mosaic of identities, as he played his parts stranded between white and black races, between the adult and the child, the domestic and the foreign, the norm and its manifold exceptions [Fig. 3]. But, as an alternative personification of collectivity, a freak body politic does not harmonize unity in diversity, nor does it marshal heterogeneous multitudes within the confines of a single anatomy. On the contrary, reassessing Stratton unveils the body politic in its surplused, lopsided, multifaceted, disjointed, undeveloped, and unbound nature; it pierces its outermost harmonious coating and reveals underneath a set of oppositions that revolves no longer around the figurative body that solves them but around its fleshy counterparts. Briefly put, this critical gesture exposes the toll that embodied political fantasies take on material bodies. Stratton illustrates this payoff. Onstage, he was pampered as a harmless, at times mischievous, prankster of rosy cheeks and impish gaze; offstage, he was overworked and forced to ape the intoxicating habits of adults, as Barnum commanded him "to take wine at dinner when only five, to smoke at seven and 'chew' at nine."[6]

Biographers and freak show scholars have disputed the line between exploitation and consent in Stratton's career. Robert Bogdan and David Gerber have upbraided Barnum for the cruel ruses that involved, for example, having Stratton and his dwarf

wife, Lavinia Warren, pretend to be the parents of a nondwarf baby—not to mention Stratton's endless workdays, during which he would perform the same show thrice even when still a minor. More recently, Michael Chemers and Eric Lehman have seen in Stratton a gifted performer who escaped the freak show's realm of objectification and took the reins of his acting and entrepreneurial career.[7] Despite their contributions to our cultural knowledge of Stratton, both camps of what I call the "Thumb wars" ignore Conway's *Dred* as a text that scripts the abusive Barnum–Stratton partnership by interweaving racist and ableist aggressions. This is not to say that Conway deliberately encoded an exposé of Barnum's mistreatment of Stratton; rather, a closer examination of the play in connection with Stratton's other exploits sheds new light on how the symbolic grammar of disability informed ideal figurations of the national body while justifying violence against racialized and disabled bodies.

Under this light, Stratton's case study belies prevalent assumptions about the nineteenth-century freak show. Elizabeth Grosz keys audiences' fascination with freak shows to the freak's aura as "an ambiguous being whose existence imperils categories and oppositions dominant in the social life." For Grosz, the freak's "intolerable ambiguity" brands him or her—"it" in many cases—a powerful social reactant.[8] But careful scrutiny of Thumb reveals that the dwarf's racial, national, and generational ambiguities proved, on the contrary, rather tolerable: they situated him at the center of a wheel whose spokes branched out in many polarized directions. He was not the only freak whose anomalous body was linked to the national body. The conjoined twins Chang and Eng embodied unity during times of secession. The decrepit body of Joice Heth, an allegedly 160-year-old slave woman, stirred patriotic nostalgia when Barnum claimed

that she had been baby George Washington's nurse. Likewise, Linda Frost argues that the erotic allure of the "Circassian Beauty," a Caucasian woman rescued from sexual enslavement to the Turks and exhibited by Barnum, played a part in the cultural production of whiteness.[9] Thumb was exceptional, though, in that his national credentials came into being only through a plethora of characters—national and nonnational. While his body served as a stand-in for the United States, embodying its collective ideals and anxieties, his performances delimited its racial, sexual, and generational boundaries. His responsiveness to context made him incarnate Americans' conflicting desires for equality, on the one hand, and for individuality and difference, on the other. His goal was to rekindle Americans' belief in themselves as innocent historical agents who, like the cherubic Thumb, were able to harmonize social, racial, and sectional differences and to contain and assimilate, in the assumed perfection of their democratic institutions, the rest of the world.

To map out the relays between Stratton's metaphorical and literal bodies, my argument proceeds from the "General" to the particular. I start with Stratton's most widely known persona, the protean General Tom Thumb, and then segue into his embodiment of Yankee Doodle: an aestheticized infant who grows best by not growing up at all and whose forestalled development licensed US audiences to retain a sense of their alleged incorruptibility. After the parameters of Stratton's public self are made clear, I jump into *Dred*, exploring how the anxiety around Stratton's tentative growth translated in racial terms into an anxiety about African Americans' "growth" from slaves into citizens. (*Dred* premiered one year before *Dred Scott v. Sanford*.) I conclude by tracing Tom Tit's departure from Stowe's original "Tomtit"—differences between them

transcend spelling—and foregrounding those moments when Stratton's racial, child, and freak alter egos enter a shared continuum.

1. Growth Anxiety: General Tom Thumb, Napoléon, Yankee Doodle

Barnum met Stratton during a travel delay near Bridgeport, Connecticut, on November 1842. Local acquaintances brought to the manager's attention a riveting "bright-eyed little fellow, with light hair and ruddy cheeks . . . as symmetrical as an Apollo."[10] This Apollonian frame typified the promotional literature about Stratton, also presaging his statuary impersonations of Hercules and other archetypes of classical beauty. The medical reason behind Stratton's anatomic "perfection" was that his dwarfism belonged to the ateliotic type. A true rarity since the development of growth hormone treatment, ateliotic dwarves resemble miniaturized versions of nondwarf humans.[11] This circumstance enabled Stratton to preserve his doll-like features. "Most dwarfs left a disagreeable impression behind them," comments an early biographer of Barnum, "but Tom Thumb was pleasant if a shade elfin, to look upon."[12] His scaled-down anatomy made him an oddity among oddities: a freak whose carnivalesque inversion of social norms did not proceed through the mechanisms described by Mikhail Bakhtin but who, to quote Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "embodied exceptionality as a marvel and exceptionality as anomaly."[13]

Barnum upheld Stratton's fair anatomy as an unequivocal sign of the dwarf's incorruptible character, telling the masses that he "never knew the General to utter a profane or vulgar word in his life," for "his morals in all respects are unobjectionable."[14] In an autographed letter whose dwarf-related quips betray Barnum's authorship, Stratton expresses his Christian fervor: "I adore my Creator and know that He is good to us all. He

has given me a small body, but I believe he has not contracted my heart, nor brain, nor *soul*."[15] Stratton's expansive "soul" compensated for his "small body." He was destined to be a paragon of innocent virtue, at times a mess maker without malice, other times a dandified playboy in miniature, but never someone who acted on self-interest.[16] For, says Barnum, "he was in no sense a 'spoiled child,' but remained throughout that natural simplicity of character and demeanor which added so much to the charm of his exhibitions."[17]

Since Stratton was to impress the world as an eternal "young American," his miniature frame seemed a treasure worth preserving. Ever since the moment Barnum discovered him, the manager shuddered at the possibility that Stratton could be merely a child and not a dwarf: "He was only five years old, and to exhibit a dwarf of that age might provoke the question, How do you know that he is a dwarf?" As a result, compulsory hyperbole about Stratton's tininess characterized Barnum's "dwarf experiment."[18] Iconic portraits of Stratton accentuate this tininess by juxtaposing him and average-sized objects (a chair, a hand, a hat). The painful awareness that Stratton's body could start growing at any given moment confirms that this ateliotic dwarf embodied a paradoxical, enabling disability: while mainstream society stigmatized dwarves, the spectacle of Stratton's bodily difference rendered him a perpetually unblemished mirror of able-bodied citizens. In a biographical sketch first published in 1847, we are told that Stratton "grew, daily, like other children, until he attained the age of eighteenth months, when Nature put a *veto* on his further upward progress, and ordered him forever afterwards to remain in status quo."[19] Ordained by "Nature" no less, this "status quo"

would be made extensive to Stratton's fellow citizens, resonating with a collective craving for a polis whose children-citizens rehearse a perpetually postponed adulthood.

Stratton thus epitomized the childlike innocence that liberal subjects of US democracy extolled and scholars of childhood studies continue to mine.[20] Since historical change is ripe with possibilities for success and disaster, adults have tended to fossilize children in a sempiternal undeveloped state, claiming that such a state of perpetual interruption attested to their best wishes for children's correct and healthy upbringing. In the words of Henry David Thoreau, "every child begins the world again."[21] But children grow up. They have racialized, genderized, and medicalized bodies that assign them stationary places in society. Whereas the nation strived to expand its frontiers and increase its global influence while showing unity in diversity, its citizens were best imagined as playful, guilt-free children entering the wilderness like tabula rasae never to be deformed.[22] To be innocent, in these terms, means to reject the kinds of growth and maturity that would expose national subjects to unwanted forms of agency and connivance, in particular with the US involvement in transatlantic slavery, Indian removal, and the territorial conquest of Mexico and other lands through imperial warfare. Innocence, understood as the nongrowth of the national self, guaranteed progress without defiling Americans' moral reputation.

In its most noteworthy instances, this idealized innocence gave ideological shape and substance to "Young America," a nationalist movement that left not sphere untouched, from the law to literature and the visual arts. Young Americans—those journalists, artists, and politicians that bustled around New York City in the 1840s and 50s—conceived an intrinsically innocent US republic.[23] Cherubic-faced, rosy-dimpled

children in popular paintings such as Henry Inman's "News Boy" (1841) and Thomas Leclear's "Buffalo Newsboy" (1853) propagated the not-so-innocent phenomena involving social stratification, imperialist warfare, and filibustering in Central America. Placing that quintessential index of modernity, the newspaper, in the hands of these street urchins mitigated technological and socio-political changes in the United States—which the penny-press industry produced and narrated. As an American who would remain forever young and whose celebrity status owed a lot to Barnum's mastery of the US printscape, Stratton partook of the same iconography.

Stratton's efficient symbolic work on these lines intensified his show business appeal. The 1840s and 1850s marked a golden era for children's plays and for plays with children in them. In both instances, professional child actors enacted fantasies of precociousness that transmogrified innocent children into responsible and productive citizens who acted out their resilience and preparedness by remaining impervious to physical pain.[24] Stratton's career belongs to a larger trend that filled US stages with baby contests, Tom Thumb weddings, and child celebrities who solemnly incarnated tragic Shakespearean heroes. Antebellum audiences' fascination with child celebrities abided by the logic of the miniature, an aesthetic canon that undergirded a profound anxiety toward growth. According to Melanie Dawson, "miniature represents completeness": its growth signals loss rather than gain.[25] Such was the case of the Bateman sisters, famous child actresses who, as teenagers, "found audiences less willing to accept them as child prodigies."[26] Their trajectory confirms an unwritten law of nineteenth-century theater: child prodigies were not allowed to grow up. Neither could dwarves. Major Stevens, another "American dwarf," was doomed the minute he left behind his ateliotic

proportions and reached forty-eight inches. “One fear of midget performers” in any period, Bogdan claims, “is that, . . . , in later life they will grow. In these cases the height they attain puts them between that of a typical adult and a successful attraction—the worst of two worlds.”[27]

Barnum’s growth anxiety over Stratton had financial and ideological implications. Stratton’s growth would have truncated his profitable career. More importantly, Barnum belonged with those who ossified children as ideal members of the body politic. Throughout his life the showman singled out children as his ideal audience, always ready to embrace humbugs and be complicit in practical jokes. This lifelong fondness culminated when an elderly Barnum asked to have his portrait published with the caption “The Children’s Friend,” urging his associate James Bailey to “remember that the children have ever been our best patrons.”[28] The museum’s commercial motto indeed guaranteed “amusement, blended with instruction . . . all for twenty-five cents, children half price.’”[29] Admission to the lecture room, where visitors could attend William H. Smith’s *Drunkard* (1844), Dion Boucicault’s *Octoroon* (1859), and Conway’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and *Dred*, was included in the general ticket of admission. Part of the rationale behind Barnum’s “Moral Dramas” was to advertise the American Museum as a family spot. This marketing strategy proved entrepreneurially savvy (more tickets sold) while upholding Barnum’s Christian valuation of the family as the marrow of American society.

The General generalized. Through the nickname “Tom Thumb,” Barnum inserted Jacksonian traits into a borrowed tradition of English folk heroes known to defeat tyrannical giants. Dwarves in this tradition symbolize the heroic child, but also the

ordinary Everyman.[30] Barnum tapped into this signifying system by orchestrating David-versus-Goliath battles between Stratton and the museum's giants, during which the "conquering hero" would boast: "For though a mite, I am mighty."[31] Likewise, *Hop O' My Thumb* climaxes in the defeat of a gargantuan despot by the lissome Stratton, who victoriously claims: "I'll keep the monster, then, to black my shoes."[32] In *Hop* Stratton hides in flower calyxes, disappears through keyholes, and effortlessly dodges his opponents' blows. Dwarfism in this context seems a rather enabling condition. It made both the dwarf and the American audiences who cheered him giant-proof, a talent that according to this medieval typology also conferred immunity to political tyranny. Sketches of Stratton legitimize him as torchbearer of American democracy, prefacing his birth with reference to an antediluvian era:

> We read in sacred history of the existence of a race of giants, before the flood, which afflicted the earth with carnage and conflict. The history of David has made every child familiar with that of his enemy, Goliath of Gath. Saul, King of Israel, was a head taller than the tallest captain of his hosts. One Roman Emperor attained the stature of nearly eight feet. In later days, we hear of O'Brien, the Irish giant, who was eight feet four inches in height; and M. Louis, the French giant, seven feet one inch in height.[33]

At a moment when the United Stares became increasingly worried about its future, the "child" invoked in this passage was asked to discern ancient instances of "carnage and conflict" and to identify with General Tom Thumb as the definitive stalwart against Old World behemoths.

In his memoirs, Barnum updates these medieval figurations of dwarves as "common folk" whenever Stratton shares the table with European monarchs and overpowers them with his Yankee congeniality and wits, all contingent on an extraordinary body whose dwarfism had been creatively recycled from handicap into

empowering trait.[34] Stratton's familiarity with palatial environments also palliated the absence of monarchic and aristocratic personages in American culture. One theatergoer, James White Nichols, exemplifies audiences' enthrallment with Thumb's elaborate garments:

> His coat, short breeches and stockings were of the richest order, spangled with jewels and brilliants which sparkled in a hundred bright reflections from every part. In his hands he carried a dress sword of perhaps 8 inches in length; his hat he carried beneath his arm in true court style, while his head was covered with a wig which gave his little round face one of the sweetest expressions imaginable.[35]

Thumb channeled Northern audiences' self-fashioning as retaining the aristocratic grandeur of the Old World without any of its despotic excesses and anachronisms. It is not a coincidence that he drew record-breaking audiences to the American Museum right after his triumphant European tour, during which he mingled with the continent's royalty. In his levees, Thumb entertained his guests, miming *ad absurdum* the courtly conventions with which European monarchs had welcomed him. As a result, manager and spectators indulged in Stratton's monarchic hatching. When Barnum's flaunty menagerie crossed into Belgium, "a customs officer, dazzled by all this splendor, inquired if Thumb was a prince in his own country. 'Certainly,'" replied one of Barnum's associates, "'he is Prince *Charles* the First, of the dukedom of Bridgeport and kingdom of Connecticut.'"[36]

At the same time, Stratton inserted a wedge between the United States and the imperial hubris it was to eschew. Temporarily inhibiting Thumb's characteristic Yankee buoyancy, he would send audiences into hysterics by morphing into a dejected Napoléon exiled in Saint Helena, somberly pacing the stage while reminiscing about his former glory.[37] Such is the performative work that Joseph Roach labels "surrogacy": an "imperfect substitution," a performance that produces social memory by filling "a

vacancy created by the absence of an original."[38] As Napoléon, Stratton did not talk much; Nichols remembers him "in indescribable style: his meditative & abstracted ramble, his taking of snuff—all were perfect."[39] Stratton's "perfect" rendition did not emanate from his closeness to an original model but from how his dwarfism unsettled the Napoléon signifier, turning him into the butt of jokes about his homonymous complex. Embodying these distant memories, Thumb became an "effigy": a performer whose body is "alternately adored and despised but always offered up on the altar of surrogacy."[40] Although Roach was not thinking of the pleas of disabled patrons when mentioning the effigy's body, his statement encapsulates the ambivalent valuation of political embodiments like Thumb, who carried out the cultural work of surrogacy thanks to (because of) his disabled body: an infantilized and miniaturized physique that made up in microcosmic fashion an ideal American self. This self incarnated and overcame nostalgia by putting on and ridiculing the masks of the past; at the same time it glanced into the national future always from a position of innocence.

Stratton's parody of outdated political forms discloses, nonetheless, a symbolic dependency on them as well as a reluctance to face the reality of slavery, where violent subjection does not hinge on bodily size but on skin color. As General Tom Thumb, a character who imperceptibly slipped into Yankee Doodle, Napoléon, and Tom Tit, Stratton instigated his audiences' mimetic desires and repudiations, echoing a widespread unease about the heterogeneous bodies populating the US body politic, but also a collective hope on the nation's undeveloped potentialities. Enabling this two-pronged function, dwarfism was the key factor that readied his politicized body to condense national pleasure and anxieties. Stratton blossomed thus into the all-purpose body politic

of Barnum's ideal nation, interpellated when the manager dedicated his 1855 autobiography to "the Universal Yankee Nation, of which I am proud to be one."[41] The phrase's threefold imperial oxymoron (at once conflating a regional, a national, and a cosmic locale) presupposes the urban North as the epicenter of US progress, an intended trajectory in which Southerners and African Americans remained uncomfortable presences. By embracing the "Universal Yankee Nation," Barnum aligned his interests with the opponents of the Compromise of 1850, especially Northern Whigs like William Henry Seward. Like the Missouri Compromise in the 1820s, its 1850 update mitigated rather than solved the sectional clash over slavery. The 1850 Compromise turned California into a free state and so banned any slave state from ever reaching the Pacific, but it also capitulated to the Slave Power by passing the Fugitive Slave Act. Whereas the Compromise halted the westward movement of slavery and redefined US expansionism as a "Yankee" enterprise, it sanctioned slave owners' nationwide claims to their runaway slaves. Universalizing the "Yankee" portion of the United States could not be carried out without a fastidious—yet mandatory—nod to non-Yankee constituencies. As my final section demonstrates, a blackface Stratton delivered that nod.

Thumb's embodied fantasy occludes Stratton's ordeals. Although Barnum suffuses his writings with exaltations of their partnership, which benefited Stratton economically and elevated him to worldwide fame, he subjected Stratton to nuanced—and not so nuanced—disparaging practices and micro-aggressions.[42] One of these consisted in fabricating funny tales involving the dwarf's disability. On the occasion of Stratton's wedding night, Barnum narrates how Stratton delivered the following speech to a crowd gathered under his balcony: "Ladies and gentlemen, a little woman in the

adjoining apartment is very anxious to see me and I must, therefore, make this speech, like myself—*short*."[43] In *Dred* a white man asks the euphuistic Tom Tit about his romantic life. The slave child responds, "I don't exactly speak from experience, but I intend to very shortly."[44] This "shortly" rings with a double meaning that echoes the conclusive "*short*" in Stratton's wedding speech: its self-aimed disability pun invites spectators to imagine dwarves' awkward sex lives. Literal (dwarfism) and figurative (impotence) shortness characterized Stratton's enfreakment as Thumb. In Barnum's own account, Stratton's wedding triggered a cascade of affection for the ballyhooed couple. Other versions relate how guests in their church pews could not suppress laughter when the priest pronounced the dwarves "man and wife."[45] Dwarf-themed puns and double entendre pervade *Hop O' My Thumb* and most of Thumb's archive. Even Queen Victoria wished in her diary that Stratton "could be properly cared for, for the people who show him off tease him a good deal."[46]

But we should not conclude that, in opposition to Stratton's vulnerability, the body politic he summoned as Thumb, and especially as Yankee Doodle, was seamless. Like Thumb, Yankee Doodle was not meant to grow. Every time nineteenth-century Americans conjured him via song or pantomime—and they invoked him profusely—a rejuvenated version of the republic imposed itself over an internecine present.[47] Barnum arranged Stratton's levees, including *Hop O' My Thumb*, so that "Yankee Doodle" would be his signature song, instilling in the popular imagination a notion of the dwarf as a reincarnation of this Revolutionary hero. Before London audiences, he "appeared as a soldier of the American Revolution, dressed in white wig, black cocked hat, blue coat, white waist-coat and breeches with a ten-inch-long sword in his hand" and going

"through the paces of a military drill while singing 'Yankee Doodle.'"[48] But Stratton's personified Americanness rang with a contradictory sectional accent. *Hop O' My Thumb* dramatizes this trajectory. It presents a kingdom threatened by a cannibal, foreign ogre who is literally eating up the body politic. Playing the David-versus-Goliath card again, the author puts the Yankee dwarf up to the task of pacifying the land. The fictional "Hop" of the title, played by Stratton, soon exhibits his US affiliations, singing "Yankee doodle is my name, / America my nation."[49] Despite Hop's mischievous nature, his patriotic compromise proves unfaltering. When King Cole assures Thumb that "the safety of the States your aid requires," Hop replies: "I will do anything the State desires."[50] The presumably unconscious slip between "States" and the "State" as well as the rhyming echo between "requires" and "desires" validates Stratton's national attachment. However, the scene replays an increasing feud between the federal "state" and several Southern "States" that had questioned its authority ever since South Carolina claimed state sovereignty in the 1832 Ordinance of Nullification.

Hop O' My Thumb brims with moments in which national fractures such as the Nullification Crisis cannot be kept offstage. In this sense, the scene in which the King petitions Hop to lead his army against the ogre-led hordes of invaders is of the utmost interest. "Pray will you head our troops?" asks the monarch, to which Hop replies, "Make me a noble, and I'll stay with you." But Hop's aristocratic yearnings cease abruptly when the King asks back, "What can you do?" and the dwarf dances a "nigger air."[51] This unexpected racial crossing echoes another instance, this one at Buckingham Palace, in which the real Stratton followed his rendition of "Yankee Doodle" in front of Queen Victoria with several "Negro songs."[52] Stratton's unannounced racial drags borrowed

freely from the conventions of the minstrel show, famously defined by Eric Lott as "a realm of counterfeits—contradictory popular constructions that were . . . more or less pleasurable or politically efficacious in the culture that embraced them."[53] Where, then, lies the political "efficacy" of Stratton's racial masquerades? In a similar fashion to his Napoléonic farces, his racial drag tried to clear the space between the quintessential US subject and those others whose inferiority became apparent through the ease and impunity with which white subjects impersonated them. As long as the face behind the mask remained identifiable with Yankee Doodle or Tom Thumb, the layout of the mask—black, Napoléonic—only reinforced the intended capaciousness of the freak body politic Barnum engineered for Stratton: its attempts to reconcile the system of hierarchies governing it. The sudden transposition of these masks instilled an illusion of horizontal democracy that camouflaged these hierarchies as they existed offstage.

Stratton's polysemic anatomy provided a canvas for Barnum's accommodating abolitionism. Seeking large audiences rather than political justice, Barnum ended up supporting the Compromise's fence-sitting stance through his theatrical productions. Both as a place and a mode of production, Barnum's theater was a melting pot, including "in one place immigrants and native-born, working class and middle class, men and women and city residents and tourists." Southern gentlemen's northern Grand Tours remained incomplete without a visit to the American Museum.[54] Accordingly, the museum's rendition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred* elided Stowe's anticapitalism and protofeminism, relying instead on racist stereotypes.[55] Even when attending a play based on an abolitionist novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe, that illustrious scourge of the South, Boston and New York audiences joined Southern whites in imagining plantation life

through two-dimensional sambos, mamas, and pickaninnies. Against this background, Stratton entered a continuum in which the twinned discourses of ableism and racism obliterated North–South oppositions, enabling us to follow Anna Duane Smith in questioning a dichotomy that antagonizes the North, in its sentimental avowal of black children, and the South, in its rhetorical (and literal) nudges to unruly pickaninnies.[56]

In its intersection with race, disability undoes this dichotomy. Lennard Davis, Robert McRuer, and Ellen Samuels have approached disability as a category that normative subjects impose on their racial and sexual others.[57] This process intensified in the antebellum North. In a society increasingly defined by individuals' abilities to conduct industrial labor, women, free blacks, and children quickly entered its lower echelons as disabled noncitizens and dependent subjects. Paradoxically, this era also saw numerous efforts to fix and normalize defective bodies through temperance, institutionalization, and the promotion of healthy habits.[58] Amy Hughes notes a similar contention on the antebellum stage: a clash between the impulse to produce fit citizens and the need for fit citizens to retain a catalog of aberrant bodies against which to define themselves. Consequently, reform melodramas à la *Dred* incorporated elements from the minstrel and the freak show. The lofty end of moral improvement justified the means by which the abnormal bodies and enfeebled minds of drunkards, lunatics, brutalized slaves, and infantile blacks pervaded a theatrical tradition that was coeval with the tension between, in Hughes's words, "sensationalism and discipline."[59]

Stratton enmeshed these performative practices as he changed masks. A bulky advertisement in the "Amusements" section of the *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 16, 1856, advertises more than *Dred*'s premiere. In the ad, Barnum assures readers that,

starting at 3 p.m., "General Tom Thumb" would conduct his regular "Songs, Dances, Personations" and "pretty Farce" (*Hop*). At 7 p.m. and without leaving the museum's walls, he would transition into Tom Tit. Finally, the ad encourages theatergoers to momentarily disregard these "entertainments" and witness "THE LARGEST SNAKES IN THE WORLD," the "HAPPY FAMILY" (a collection of incompatible animal species gathered in a cage), and a "DWARF LADY." From its punning introduction of Thumb in *Dred* as "last and least" to its pairing of dwarves and exotic animals, it does not take a disability studies expert to apprehend the ad's denigration of dwarfism. But the alchemy of disability also boosts a formal and thematic continuity between abolitionist drama, minstrelsy, the freak show, and the child beauty pageant. *Dred*'s original front cover reinforces this hybridity by displaying two incongruous halves [Fig. 4]. Whereas the top registers the conventional data—that the play was based on an abolitionist best seller, produced by Barnum, and staged at the museum—the bottom features a picture of "The Original General Tom Thumb." Bearing no discernible allusion to its top predecessor, this half portrays Thumb perched on an average-size hand while sporting his Napoléonic regalia and—to honor his diminutive sobriquet—equaling in height the thumb pointing upward next to him. Hence the line stretching timidly between the cover's two halves does not separate as much as collapse them, exposing the aforementioned hodgepodge of abolitionism and freakery.

In sum, Stratton toggled between different socially constructed identities (racial, national, generational) whose playful alternation sanitized national history, softening the magnitude of its crises and aggressions and reassuring spectators of their status as unsullied members of the national collective. Nonetheless, as the next section shows,

Stratton's blackface performance in *Dred* compromises his original innocence, subordinating it to a racial hierarchy so strict that not even children, otherwise sacrosanct presences in the US imaginary, escaped it.

2. "They *Are* Growing": Tom Tit, Tomtit, Zip Coon

Racializing—and so expanding—Stratton's repertoire, *Dred* buttressed Barnum's nationalist pedagogy. One reviewer wrote: "The chief curiosity of the piece, especially to the domestic and junior people, for whose convenience this abstract has been provided in the *Express*, will be the presence of the great little celebrity, General Tom Thumb."[60] Designating "domestic and junior people" as the play's intended audience, the reviewer solidifies Barnum's efforts to reach out to children and to infantilize adults. Barnum endorsed this review by embedding it in the play's printed version.

Even if critics and audiences had met previous adaptations of Stowe's novel rather tepidly, *Dred* beat the odds and ran for five lucrative weeks.[61] Stowe's best-selling *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had inspired endless dramatizations, parodies, and minstrel shows, but *Dred* was longer, overpopulated, and more digressive: it lacked its predecessor's dramatic potential. Broadly summarized, the novel narrates the private and public transformations around the Canema plantation, owned by the Gordon family. The heiress Nina Gordon plans to marry Edward Clayton, whose progressive stance against slavery signals the imminent demise of the plantation system and the arrival of Emancipation. While Nina and Edward strive to prepare their slaves for the rights and duties of citizenship—for example, Edward's sister runs a school for black children—Dred, the black revolutionary leader, pushes for a violent insurrection of slaves against their masters. Stowe's engagement of African American perspectives on slavery eschewed the

simplistic dramatizations that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had endured, leading critics to brand the novel *Dred* an "utter failure as a drama."[62] Furthermore, in an unequivocal departure from sentimental complacencies, Stowe killed her flighty protagonist, Nina, twenty-one chapters before the conclusion. Only a stage celebrity could squeeze some profit out of this material.

In an early dramatization by C. W. Taylor, the child actress Cordelia Howard played Tom Tit [Fig. 5]. Popularly known as "The Youthful Wonder Generally Called the Child of Nature," Howard "was costumed in ragged breeches" and "blacked up, with her golden curls covered with a horsehair wig." Her charisma should have clinched the play's success, since she had secured a theatrical reputation by playing Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but that was not the case.[63] Besides her performance's cross-gender factor, Howard's pre–Tom Tit repertoire lacked the versatility of the freak Stratton, which entitled him to incarnate the United States as well as its nonnormative subjects. Spectators reacted with unease at Howard's racial transformation:

> When, with the pleasant memory of her [Howard's] personation of little Eva in one mind, we saw her announced to black her face, don the ragged breeches and attempt to depict the characteristics of the devil-may-care little slave rascal, we looked, not for an excellent bit of miniature acting, but rather for a practical demonstration of the extent to which a beautiful child may be deformed by burned cork and horse-hair wig.[64]

Race "deformed" childhood, demoting child celebrities to grotesque versions of themselves. As a dwarf with an eccentric body, Stratton accommodated this metamorphosis from "beautiful child" to "slave rascal" in ways that Howard could not. His purity as a perpetual child was not at odds with pandering to a generalized distaste for dwarfism.

Like General Tom Thumb—and unlike the unalterably cute Howard—*Dred* is rife with contradictions. Barnum's drive to congregate the nation's most famous freak and its most reputed moralist on the same stage shaped *Dred* into a strange mélange of abolitionist slogans, freak antics, allegorical tableaux, dwarf jokes, and sensational white-to-black violence. This admixture becomes palpable in one of *Dred*'s original handbills [Fig. 6]. As the placement of Stratton's racial masquerade front and center suggests, the play capitalized on his celebrity while softening Stowe's antislavery tirades. Bookended by his stage names "Gen'l Tom Thumb" and "Tom Tit," the blackface Stratton here lacks the physiognomic exaggeration typical of minstrel performers. His face's pigmentation does not reach the characteristic pitch-dark tone of white performers in blackface, whereas the foregrounding of his white hands stresses his fake blackness. In stark contrast to Dred and the play's other unruly slaves, Tom Tit's amicable presentation on this handbill indexes a model of blackness that will be complicit with its own subjection. Since readers can literally see through Tom Tit and read the reverse of the page, the handbill's materiality feeds illusions about the transparency and noncomplexity of black identity.

This simplified vision counters Stowe's increasingly complex antislavery politics. In *Dred* she acknowledges the myriad stances on slavery—paternalism, colonizationism, violent rebellion, gradualism, abolitionist jeremiad—that circulated, clashed, prevailed, and faded into oblivion in the antebellum public sphere. The novel's climacteric arrives in a camp meeting where every interested party has its say, but in less explosive passages Stowe's narrator unveils her qualms about the possibility of a slave revolution in the South:

> There is no principle so awful through all nature as the principle of *growth*. It is a mysterious and dread condition of existence, which, place it under what impediment or disadvantage you will, is constantly forcing on; and when unnatural pressure hinders it, develops in forms portentous and astonishing.[65]

Although Stowe seems merely to describe the Dismal Swamp's lush vegetation, the homophony between her "dread" and the black insurgent who gives the novel its title suggests otherwise. In a related scene, Edward Clayton, the novel's liberal hero, fears that racial equality will alter the national landscape beyond recognition. "You see," Edward cautions a slave-owning friend, "in this day, minds *will* grow. They *are* growing. There's no help for it, and there's no force like the force of growth."[66] The growth discussed by Stowe's narrator and by Edward presents a vegetable metaphor for the inexorable promise of a postracial United States.

Tom Tit's noisy entrances throughout *Dred* hijack the political growth among slaves that Stowe's Tomtit ultimately accomplishes. After acting like a male Topsy throughout most of the novel, Tomtit eventually flees the South, settles down in New York City with his grandmother Milly, and becomes a devoted Christian and activist. In Milly's own words: "Tomtit's doing beautiful, . . . He's come a Christian, and jined the church; and they has him to wait and tend at the anti-slavery office."[67] In the play, the Claytons and Gordons represent a middle class whose genteel reformism prevails over Dred's revolutionary thirst. Tom Tit has a lot to do with this outcome, since Conway inverts Stowe's original character. Conway's Tom Tit behaves like a Malvolio-esque house slave, a hopeless emulator of whiteness and wannabe citizen stuck in his immature and whimsical desires. He enters and exits almost every scene, bringing comic relief whenever any antislavery spiel gains too much prominence.[68] Early on, the visitor Cipher

Cute arrives at Canema from Connecticut and meets the mulatto slave Harry, who is Nina's secret half-brother and the plantation's administrator. Impressed by Harry's refinement and mental dexterity, Cute asks him: "What does your reading teach you?"—to which Harry loftily replies:

> Sir, you are a stranger to me, but the free expression of your own sentiments but now, embolden me to utter mine. I will speak the truth, and only the truth, and if that is wrong and brings punishment on me, why 'tis the will of Heaven, and I submit. Then, sir, I will trouble you with—.

Harry is unable to deliver his passionate antislavery harangue, interrupted by the "*distant shouts*" announcing the arrival of Nina and by Tom Tit, who "*rushes down the steps from the house*, . . . *clapping his hands*" and singing "*Out of the way, old Dan Tucker*" to the curmudgeon, aptly named Reverend Orthodoxy.[69] Always testing white masters' benevolence, Tom Tit acts more as a moral litmus test for white characters than as an indicator of African Americans' eagerness to grow.

Doing so, he internalizes his masters' racism while harmlessly complying with the plantation's supremacist code. He introduces himself as one of the owners of the Canema plantation and declares "common niggers" his natural enemies. At times his pompous demeanor is risible; other times he indulges in crude racist statements: ""De banquet ob de choicest delicacies ob de season is served in de saloon for we gentlefolks; and de tables groan under de weight ob de hog and hominy for de common niggers."[70] Tom Tit switches from a victim of slavery into his self-aware perpetrator. He does so by carefully navigating the plantation's social network, studying its matrix of racially defined protocols and interactions. He knows that adult interactions occur as premeditated performances so that, unlike Thumb, whose stage routines depict a playful, innocent mischievousness, he always seeks personal advancement through his actions, altering his

dialect, comportment, and body language depending on where he is and mainly on who else is there with him. In one scene, he transitions from his buffoonish entrance "*singing some popular nigger air*" to an apparently pious moment induced by his grandmother. Nina has just informed Milly that Tom Tit might be sold away. Facing this impending disaster, the devoted Milly commands Tom Tit to pray. Her grandson obeys, asking God "to look down on my Aunt Milly," but, when the slave Cuff ushers in Edward Clayton, Tom Tit awakens from this benign lapse and excoriates his grandmother for inadequately bowing in the presence of a future master: "You call dat a curtsy, Aunt Milley. Really, I am ashamed of you." In addition, Tit curtly expels Cuff, an ignorant field slave, from the house: "Nigger, leave de presidence—quit—make yourself scarce—vanish—absquotulate!"[71] Tit's arrogant diction and his ambiguous mispronouncing of "residence" resuscitate his unpleasant self. Whereas it is impossible to determine if he really uttered "presidence" during the play's performance, such a strategic slip would have diminished white liberals' fear about black citizens acquiring positions of "presidency" after Emancipation. Dwarfism no longer signifies the heroism of the Yankee Everyman (battling giant kings, for example); rather, it channels a racist desire to ridicule those African Americans who aspire to control public life in the United States. Stratton's disabled body signals Tom Tit's inability to be white; Tom Tit's blackness signals Stratton's inability to have a normal body. Other characters address him with epithets that highlight his dwarfism ("my little diminutive master of ceremonies" and "my little tulip").[72] This condescension, along with the size differential it designates, underscores slaves' ultimate dependence on their owners.

The play's strategic cross-pollination between racial aberrance and dwarfism neutralizes Stowe's increasing radicalism. Distancing herself from Edward Clayton's comments on "growth," Stowe had broken with a quietist branch of abolitionism inspired by the evangelical theories of Alexander Kinmont. Kinmont's speculations on racial difference are relevant here not simply because he influenced Stowe's (and Barnum's) abolitionist agenda but mainly because he describes people of African descent as children: uncreated beings brimming with a potential that never fully materializes. Like Stowe, Kinmont depicts African Americans' "growth" through vegetable metaphors: "All the sweeter graces, of the Christian religion appear almost too tropical and tender plants to grow in the Caucasian mind; they require a character of human nature which you can see in the rude lineaments of the Ethiopian."[73] In a cultural context that valued children's innocence over adults' corruption, Kinmont alleged that African Americans' infantile servility and naïveté made them better Christians than whites. Stowe (not so much in *Dred* as in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, with the symbiosis between Tom and Little Eva) made this notion a pillar of her antislavery philosophy, building toward a kind of black millennialism that called on whites to equip morally and intellectually their black servants so that the latter's spiritual potentialities could surface. Of course, this idealized vision of racial harmony infantilized Africans. Even if they were whites' betters, they still needed white people to spur their providential promise.

In *Dred* Stowe overcomes Kinmont's condescending racialism; in his adaptation, Conway reactivates it by rewriting the character of Tom Tit with Tom Thumb in mind, to the point that Stratton appears in the "Dramatis Personae" section as "*General Tom Thumb*"—not as himself.[74] Consequently, in Conway's *Dred*, Barnum's growth anxiety

cross-fertilizes Stowe's anxiety about the Swamp's "principle of growth." Stowe's Tomtit is not as omnipresent as Conway's Tom Tit, yet the former plays a crucial role in the novel, since he exemplifies a model of growth—into both adulthood and citizenship—that Stowe endorses in her fiction and Kinmont sanctions in his *Lectures*. Tomtit's trajectory configures Stowe's volte-face on paternalistic plantation culture, her biggest departure from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. By making Tomtit grow *within* the national enclosure (Topsy returns to Africa as a missionary) and assist immigrant children in the New York tenements, Stowe disrupts the racialized binary between the angelic child and the pickaninny, entertaining a possibility of racial and national advancement against those plantation mistresses and owners in *Dred* who equate African Americans with unruly children. These views articulate Stowe's rebuttal of anti-Tom novelists such as Caroline Rush, who asserted that "the greatest slave on a plantation is the mistress, . . . the mother of an immense family."[75] Stowe locates and decries a similar condescension in Nina Gordon's train of thought:

> For the most part, the servants are only grown-up children, without consideration, forethought, or self-control, quarrelling with each other, and divided into parties and factions, hopeless of any reasonable control . . . add to this the care of young children, whose childish mothers are totally unfit to govern or care for them.[76]

While many Americans abided by William Wordsworth's "Child is Father to the Man" dictum, Southern planters inverted it. Even more, the allusion to "childish mothers" unable to raise their offspring signals the necessity of white intervention, in the form of either a humane master or a devoted abolitionist.

The infantilization of blacks proved a strategy useful to abolitionists and racist pseudoscientists alike, their ideological clashes notwithstanding. Samuel A. Cartwright

justified supremacist tenets by equating African American adults with white children: "Like them they fear the rod . . . they are very easily governed by love combined with fear, and are ungovernable, vicious and rude under any form of government."[77] Within the paternalistic logic of slavery, not only were black adults demoted to immature children but the very notion of childhood was vilified once transplanted into the South, its innocent halo replaced with a perception of children as monsters of excess in need of restraint, since slaves, like children, "require government in every thing; . . . they are apt to over-eat themselves or to confine their diet too much to one favorite article, unless restrained from doing so."[78] In the South, too, children might be the future—so goes one of our most pervasive cultural truisms—but that future would always be subordinated to adults' present decision making. Cartwright's medico-biblical defense of the Southern status quo crosses paths with Kinmont's historiographical view of blacks as potential—never actual—equals. Northern abolitionists equated African Americans with children in order to emphasize the innate good of the black race; Southerners did the same to underscore blacks' total dependency on planters' supervision, care, and punishment.

Barnum supported a condescending abolitionism indebted to Kinmont's doctrine and, to a certain extent, Cartwright's. In his 1869 memoir the manager reproduces a speech he delivered in front of the Connecticut legislature on May 26, 1865. Barnum, who had joined the Republican Party at the time of Abraham Lincoln's first election, lauds the Thirteenth Amendment on the grounds that "the black man possesses a confiding disposition, thoroughly tinctured with religious enthusiasm and not characterized by a spirit of revenge." Barnum mimics Kinmont (as well as Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) in asserting that the main reason for blacks to join the ranks of free

men was their biological inclination to be better Christians than whites. Nonetheless, as with Kinmont and Cartwright, this biological predisposition bore the ultimate mark of racial atavism. Thanks to the education and training afforded by their white brethren, blacks' "low foreheads will be raised and widened by an active and expanded brain; the vacant eye of barbarism, ignorance and idleness will light up with the fire of intelligence, education, ambition, activity and Christian civilization."[79] In Barnum's racial universe, black bodies would be normalized only after whites educate them. Barnum voices a self-interested jeremiad in which the alleged equality—even superiority—of blacks constitutes at once a providential fait accompli and a white man's burden. This impasse befitted Barnum's lip service to racial equality ("the rabid fanaticism of some abolitionists is more reprehensible than slavery itself"), also echoing the shaky stalemate of the 1850 Compromise.[80]

Conway's and Barnum's extolment of black education has led most critics to take for granted the play's staunch abolitionism. For Chemers, *Dred* showcases indisputable evidence that, "whatever Barnum's relationship to slavery may have been in the 1830s . . . , he was by the time of this production a firm and outspoken abolitionist, and this play addresses the issue directly."[81] Lehman even contends that "Charles Stratton's role as Tom Tit in *Dred* helped garner support for northern abolitionists before the Civil War."[82] Whether or not—and to what extent—this was the case, this statement obscures the fact that *Dred* also reifies widespread fears about the reproduction of blackness and disability in the United States. Like General Tom Thumb, Tom Tit is not meant to grow or to reproduce. It is useful to remember here the obsessive punning about Stratton's sexual impotence and the elaborate ruse in which Mr. and Mrs. Stratton became the parents of a

nondwarf baby. Once we overcome the belief that "Tom Tit had been superfluous in the novel," we observe that Stowe's Tomtit grows in a way that is influential and beneficial for the body politic yet threatening for the racial status quo.[83] Conway interrupted this growth and turned Tom Tit's pretensions into comic, spectacularly inefficient transgressions.

Underwriting this anemic progress, Tom Tit resembles the minstrel type Zip Coon. Another figure of stunted growth, a plantation slave who behaves with aristocratic panache, Coon is a wannabe dandy who effortlessly clings to a lifestyle of flawed refinement and whose preposterous attempts to ascend the social ladder turn him into the object of contemptuous mockery. His antics resonate with minstrelsy's stump speeches, where white actors in blackface discussed politics and science in a gibberish parody of black vernacular. Zip Coon becomes the object of scorn through the severe split between what he says and how he says it, proclaiming himself "a larned skoler."[84] His failed attempts to master new knowledge contradict the play *Dred*'s alleged extolment of African American education. Tom Tit's malapropisms and Harry's interrupted abolitionist harangue indicate blacks' inadequacy to knowledge. Taking his cue from Zip Coon, Tom Tit embodies too the violent paradox of being "a larned skoler."

This paradoxical endorsement of black education via Tom Tit / Zip Coon unfolds in several musical numbers where black bodies simultaneously celebrate and hamper black advancement. At first glance, *Dred*'s songs and dances testify to the benefits of black education, although they also shoehorn it into the narrative frame of minstrelsy. Ann Clayton, Edward's sister, conducts a racial experiment through her school that attests to the Claytons' progressive standpoint on slavery. The Magnolia Grove

schoolchildren—white children in blackface—provide most of *Dred*'s musical entertainment. Wearing white collars, they enter both ends of the stage in perfect "*two and two*" formation, singing:

> The blessings of education,
> The blessings of education
> Make us happy on mass'rs plantation,
> And carry freedom throughout a nation.[85]

The fact that this stanza opens and closes the play's set list confirms the authors' and producers' vacuous extolment of black education. Conway's final tableaux return the Magnolia Grove schoolchildren onstage singing the same lyrics. Their performance's circularity marks the stasis of their political predicament. Although the desired trajectory of educated black subjects would relocate them from the "plantation" to the "nation," the lyrics suggests otherwise, positing education as a catalyst of the slaves' happiness and the attendant freedom of the nation. Whether and to what degree these slave singers would ever become active members of the "nation" they sing remains unclear. But in the way they are structured and iterated, the play's musical numbers convey that African Americans' optimal stage is longing for—rather than attaining—citizenship.

No other scene articulates this effect so vividly as the final tableau. Thumb-as-Tom-Tit, in the center of the stage, waves his baton next to a "*Figure of GODDESS OF LIBERTY on Pedestal*." The Magnolia Grove schoolchildren chant "the blessings of education" again while a transparent banner descends and interposes the following message between the players and their audience: "Education Leads to Present Amelioration and Ultimate Liberty."[86] In this grand finale, Thumb mediates between the abstract values of the federal creed ("Liberty," "Education," "Freedom") and their clash against the South's agenda. He does so again by attracting attention to his dwarfism,

contrasting his tiny, baton-weaving figure with the allegorical stateliness of Miss Liberty.[87] But the contrast between the play's concluding slogan and the lyrics sung by the Magnolia Grove choir signals an impasse, a political instantiation of Stratton's interrupted growth. "Present Amelioration," as long as it has the servile Tom Tit at its symbolic center, hardly ever leads to liberty and citizenship. Racial progress, premised as such, remains a "Present" quandary without a future.

3. Coda: Charles S. Stratton

Like his alter ego Tom Tit, Stratton saw his yearnings for professional growth come to a halt in *Dred*. Since 1850, he had occasionally started in serious melodramas like *Griselda, or the Miserable Husband*, which dealt with marriage and the disintegration of family life (themes that Stratton had experienced firsthand because of his erratic, alcoholic father). This new direction never took off, as Stratton remained contractually obliged to his levees and Thumb impersonations. Whereas Lehman contends that, "as 'Tom Tit,'" Stratton "was not Napoleon, not General Tom Thumb, but had to fully inhabit a different character, or the illusion would be ruined," both *Dred*'s frontispiece and advertisement—not to mention its script—suggest that the separation between Tom Tit and Thumb was far from draconian.[88] Stratton's performance supported this nondivision. During the last act, and even if the official script did not command him to do so, Tom Tit dropped his pants and used his body-length black stocking to strike Hercules's classical-nude poses. Doing so, Stratton exposed—literally and metaphorically—the different layers that made up his stage figure: replacing Tom Tit with Tom Thumb to become Hercules. Did this impromptu gesture signal Stratton's deliberate critique of his own exploitation? Dropping his clothes and entering into

Hercules mode might have been Stratton's confirmation that Tom Tit inhabited Thumb's same area of subjugation.[89] This might be the closest Stratton ever was to fully appropriating his disability onstage and entering the performative mode Carrie Sandahl calls "solo autobiographical performance," in which disabled performers invert the conventions of the freak show.[90] In Stratton's case, his tentative rebellion never propelled a solid rupture between the reluctant freak and the frustrated actor. *Dred* was Stratton's major hit *as an actor*, yet it signaled the decline of his *acting* career. After 1856 Stratton's contributions to regular dramas dwindled, and he gradually returned to General Tom Thumb's levees and tours.

This trajectory demonstrates how Stratton's disabled body inevitably structured his public persona. Superimposing Stratton's white and slave characters, *Dred* engendered a sanitized vision of the citizen-to-be African American, a vision that appeased abolitionist audiences' liberal guilt while fueling their sense of racial superiority. By investing national meaning in Stratton's disability, Barnum validated the potential of ateliotic dwarves to personify the body politic of the United States, a body politic that has been monumentalized in the statue that presides over Stratton's tomb at Mountain Grove cemetery, near Bridgeport, Connecticut [Fig 7]. A tall pinnacle has been erected over the square mausoleum of the Stratton family. On top of it stands a marble, life-sized replica of Stratton. One arm behind his back, the other one grabbing his lapel, his gesture bespeaks true gentility. He looks decidedly forward; his slightly tilted body implies and compels movement, perhaps progress, as if he were trying to mime Davy Crockett's "Go Ahead" slogan, long associated with General Tom Thumb.[91] The distance between the towering dwarf and the ground-level observer illustrates Stratton's

contradictory existence as a freak body politic, an embodiment stranded between the white norm he signified and the anomalous, racialized body that ostracized him from that norm. This distance reproduces, in its spatial arrangement, the ideological gap between the disabled individual as trope and the disabled individual as flesh.

Notes

[1] The appellation "American man in miniature" proliferates in foreign newspapers that chronicled Stratton and Barnum's sojourns. See for instance, "General Tom Thumb," *Illustrated London News*, December, 27, 1845, 411. For a compilation of titles commonly associated with Stratton, see also Hildegard Hoeller, "Freaks and the American Dream: Horatio Alger, P.T. Barnum and the Art of Humbug," *Studies in American Fiction* 34.2 (Fall 2006): 199-200.

[2] Albert Smith, *Hop O' My Thumb, or The Seven League Boots* (London: T. Brettell, 1846): 23.

[3] George Fitzhugh, *Sociology of the South* (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854): 83.

[4] Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood and Race from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011): 22-30.

[5] Russell, *Reading Embodied Citizenship*, 16.

[6] In her memoir, Lavinia Warren, a dwarf who was married to Stratton for most of her life, berates Barnum for his mistreatment of Stratton. *The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb: some of my life experiences* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979): 115.

[7] For Bogdan, "Stratton's talents were those of a showman, not a performer." *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988): 151–52. Although Gerber presents a more nuanced take on the question of freaks' complicity in their own exploitation, he does not hesitate to group Stratton with "the giant or the bearded lady who did little beside attempt, through environmental props and clothing, to look even taller or hairier, while perhaps carrying on some monologue." See "The 'Careers' of People Exhibited in Freak Shows: The Problem of Volition and Valorization," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996): 56. Chemers, for whom "the label 'freak' disintegrates when it touches Stratton," pioneered a reconsideration of Stratton as a professional performer. *Staging Stigma: A Critical Examination of the Freak Show* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 55. This critical recuperation also characterizes the first scholarly biography devoted to Stratton. See Eric D. Lehman, *Becoming Tom Thumb: Charles Stratton, P. T.*

Barnum, and the Dawn of American Celebrity (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013): xiv–xv.

[8] Elizabeth Grosz, "Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit," in Garland-Thomson, *Freakery*, 57.

[9] See, respectively, Cynthia Wu, *Chang and Eng Reconnected: The Original Siamese Twins in American Literature and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012); Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Linda Frost, *Never One Nation: Freaks, Savages, and Whiteness in U.S. Popular Culture, 1850–1877* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[10] P. T. Barnum, *The Life of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000): 243.

[11] Betty M. Adelson, "Dwarfs—the Changing Lives of Archetypal Curiosities—and Echoes of the Past," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 25.3 (2005), dsq-sds.org/article/view/576/753.

[12] Raymund Fitzsimons, *Barnum in London* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1969): 71.

[13] Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 17. Bakhtin sources the carnivalesque to the "grotesque body," which is "never finished, never completed." *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Hélène Ilswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984): 317. Contrariwise, ateliotic dwarves see their anatomic growth interrupted in a way that still indicates completion, lacking size but mimicking bodily standards. On the contrast between grotesque and miniaturized bodies, see also Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993): 105–17; and David Wall, "A Chaos of Sin and Folly: Art, Culture, and Carnival in Antebellum America," *Journal of American Studies* 42.3 (2008): 526–27.

[14] Barnum, *Life*, 263.

[15] Qtd. in Alice Curtis Desmond, *Barnum Presents General Tom Thumb* (New York: Macmillan, 1954): 171.

[16] Stratton's alleged sexual magnetism—stealing kisses from the ladies in the audience—did not counter his presumed innocence. As Lori Merish persuasively argues, Barnum stage-managed him into one of American culture's earliest embodiments of "cuteness," a "performance aesthetic" that triggers a simultaneous desire for commodity ownership and "familial allegiance" ("Cuteness and Commodity Aesthetics: Tom Thumb and Shirley Temple," in Garland-Thomson, *Freakery*, 189). Thumb was a seducer because he was cute, not because he had sex appeal. Unlike Chemers, I fail to see Stratton as

"hypermasculine" (he often cross-dressed) and "hypererotic." *Staging Stigma*, 42. His playboy antics, rather, need to be examined within the wheel of opposites Stratton incarnated to assuage Americans' anxieties about social change.

[17] Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs: or, Forty Years' Recollections of P. T. Barnum* (New York: American News, 1871): 201–2.

[18] Barnum, *Life*, 243–44.

[19] *Sketch of the Life, Personal Appearance, Character and Manners of Charles S. Stratton* (New York: Samuel Booth, 1874): 4.

[20] See Anna Mae Duane, ed., *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013): 5–7; Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005): xix–xv; and Henry Jenkins, "Introduction: Childhood Innocence and Other Modern Myths," in *The Children's Culture Reader*, ed. Henry Jenkins (New York: New York University Press, 1998): 1–37.

[21] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Other Writings* (New York: Modern Library, 1992): 26.

[22] For a classic instantiation of this argument, see R. W. B. Lewis's conceptualization of the American Adam: "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race," an individual whose "moral position was prior to experience" and who, "in his very newness . . . was fundamentally innocent." *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955): 5. By neglecting women's and ethnic minorities' roles as victims of America's innocence, Lewis partakes of the paradigm of the critic as American Adam, perpetuating its myth of nonguilt while attempting to pin it down structurally. Even if he goes to great pains to explicate the self with which Americans set out to build their society, Lewis falls prey to alluring formulations of American exceptionalism, never explaining what he vaguely alludes to as "the usual inheritances of family and race." A recurrent "inheritance" among these was the display of people with disabilities in public spectacles of bodily and cognitive difference.

[23] Edward Widmer has pondered over Young America's obsession with the "Young." In antebellum New York, Widmer writes, "young people of all nations were praised for their instinctive liberalism, while the monarchies of Europe were always described with adjectives of senescence and decrepitude … America, … was invested with all the virtues of playful innocence." Edward L. Widmer, *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 56.

[24] Marah Gubar, "Entertaining Children of All Ages: Nineteenth-Century Popular Theater and Children's Theater," *American Quarterly* 66.1 (2014): 5.

[25] Melanie Dawson, "The Miniaturizing of Childhood: Nineteenth-Century Playtime and Gendered Theories of Development," in *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*. Eds. Caroline F. Levander and Carol J. Singley (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003): 74.

[26] John Hanners, *"It Was Play or Starve": Acting in the Nineteenth-Century American Popular Theatre* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1993): 63. On Barnum's "Baby Shows," see Barnum, *Struggles*, 146–47; on the craze of Tom Thumb weddings, in vogue during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Stewart, *On Longing*, 117–24.

[27] Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 294. On Major Stevens, see Alvin Goldfarb, "Gigantic and Minuscule Actors in the Nineteenth-Century American Stage," *Journal of Popular Culture* 10.2 (1976): 268.

[28] *Selected Letters of P. T. Barnum*. Ed. Arthur Saxon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983): 328, 334.

[29] Barnum, *Struggles*, 135.

[30] Gillian Brown has linked the vernacular Tom Thumb story with John Locke's ideas on education and Tom Paine's revolutionary rhetoric. Far from a victimized figure, Tom Thumb, like Jack the Giant-killer, stood for "the empowered child, a strikingly self-determined individual." Ignored, if not mistreated, by his family and left to fend for himself, Tom Thumb pulls himself up by his bootstraps, conquers an ogre, steals his fortune, and marries his daughter. *The Consent of the Governed: The Lockean Legacy in Early American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001): 84–85. On Tom Thumb's allegorical origins, see also Anne Lake Prescott, "The Odd Couple: Gargantua and Tom Thumb," *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 75–91; and Chemers, *Staging Stigma*, 33.

[31] Fitzsimons, *Barnum in London*, 61; George Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927–49), 5:485.

[32] Smith, *Hop O' My Thumb*, 24.

[33] *Sketch*, 3.

[34] This trend peaks in Barnum's bombastic account of Stratton's audiences with Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace (Barnum, *Life*, 256–61; Barnum, *Struggles*, 156–73). See also *Sketch*, 5.

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[35] Qtd. in Lehman, *Becoming Tom Thumb*, 80–81. Advertisements and spectator reports tend to emphasize those moments when Stratton displayed the "magnificent presents and jewels received from the crowned heads and nobility of Europe" (Odell, *Annals*, 5:507).

[36] Barnum, *Struggles*, 210.

[37] Odell, *Annals*, 5:11. Coinciding with the apogee years of Stratton's celebrity, the museum staged "the funeral of Napoleon Bonaparte from St. Helena to France," attesting to the popular fascination with the emperor's decline and demise rather than with his former glory (*Annals*, 6:306).

[38] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 36.

[39] Qtd. in "The Day General Tom Thumb Came to Danbury," *Newstimes*, ed. Jacqueline Smith, July 22, 2010, www.newstimes.com/default/article/The-day-General-Tom-Thumb-came-to-Danbury-586726.php

[40] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 40.

[41] Barnum, *Life*, ii.

[42] Barnum and Stratton became equal business partners on January 1, 1845. See Barnum, *Struggles*, 257.

[43] *Sketch*, 22.

[44] H. J. Conway, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp. A Drama, in Four Acts* (New York: John W. Amerman, 1856): 19.

[45] "General Thumb's Wedding," *New-York Observer*, February 12, 1863.

[46] Qtd. in Arthur H. Saxon, *P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): 132.

[47] In the antebellum years, rowdy audiences at dime theaters often requested orchestras to play "Yankee Doodle." See Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 80; and Oscar George Theodore Sonneck, *Report on "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Hail Columbia," "America," "Yankee Doodle"* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1909): 79–141.

[48] Fitzsimons, *Barnum in London*, 60.

[49] Smith, *Hop*, 7.

[50] Ibid., 23.

[51] Ibid., 10–11.

[52] Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997): 71–73.

[53] Lott, *Love and Theft*, 101.

[54] John W. Frick, *Uncle Tom's Cabin on the American Stage and Screen* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 99. For evidence of Southerners visiting the museum, see Amy Hughes, *Spectacles of Reform: Theater and Activism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012): 27.

[55] For the gradual minstrelization of Barnum's stage, see Frick, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 71–89; Lott, *Love and Theft*, 211–33; Alan Ackerman, *The Portable Theater: American Literature and the Nineteenth-Century Stage* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1999): 19; David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800–1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987): 101–10; and Bruce A. McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820–1870* (Des Moines: University of Iowa Press, 1992): 158–60.

[56] Analyzing black students' oral examinations at the New York Free School during the 1820s as a performance of citizenship, Smith unearths a theatrical precedent to Stratton's racial pantomimes. "'Like a Motherless Child': Racial Education at the New York African Free School and in *My Bondage and My Freedom*," *American Literature* 82.3 (2010): 461–88.

[57] Davis postulates that "disability is an amorphous identity with porous boundaries" that easily soaks other identities, redefining them around the abled–disabled axis. *Bending over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (New York: New York University Press, 2002): 36. On the intersectionality of disability, see Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification*, 166–67; and Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006): 29–30.

[58] See the aptly named chapter "Creating Citizens, 1776–1865," in Nielsen, *A Disability History*, 49.

[59] Hughes, *Spectacles of Reform*, 25.

[60] "Dred," *N.Y. Daily Express*, October 9, 1856.

[61] Judie Newman, "Staging Black Insurrection: *Dred* on Stage," *The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe*. Ed. Cindy Weinstein (New York: Cambridge

University Press, 2004): 113–31; Monroe Lippman, "Uncle Tom and His Poor Relations: American Slavery Plays," *Southern Communication Journal* 28.3 (1963): 183–97; H. Philip Bolton, *Women Writers Dramatized: A Calendar of Performances from Narrative Works Published in English to 1900* (New York: Mansell, 2000): 311–15; and Odell, *Annals*, 6:547–48, 557–58, 565–66.

[62] "Dred", *N.Y. Daily Express*, October 9, 1856.

[63] Newman, "Staging Black Insurrection," 124.

[64] "Dred," *New-York Tribune*, September 24, 1856.

[65] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 496.

[66] Ibid., 470.

[67] Ibid., 546.

[68] Further compromising the play's progressive abolitionism, Tom Tit's shenanigans coexist uncannily with the spectacle of the coffle and the brutalized slave body. The entrance of "*a number of slaves, male and female, in wretched attire, manacled, driven . . . with a heavy whip*" corresponds to a mode of presentation that fluctuates between the sentimental and the sensational (Conway, *Dred*, 19). Its apex arrives in act 2's stormy conclusion, in which audiences contemplate the corpse of "*a bleeding negro, his throat all bloody*." This is Jem, a slave who escapes the coffle and falls prey to sadistic slave catchers. The opening scene of act 3 returns to "*the body of the negro JEM, his throat torn by the dogs*." Jem's victimized body bespeaks the horrors of slavery, but it does not occlude slapstick humor when, after a rebellious slave swears revenge, the matriarch of the planter's family faints and Tom Tit rushes in throwing water on her face. Tom Tit's efforts to reanimate this neurasthenic lady deflate the dramatic presence of Jem's mangled corpse and, by extension, the desire for insurrection it instigates among the other slaves (Conway, *Dred*, 31).

[69] Conway, *Dred*, 14.

[70] Ibid., 6, 16–18.

[71] Ibid., 25–26.

[72] Ibid., 26.

[73] Alexander Kinmont, *Twelve Lectures on the Natural History of Man and the Rise and Progress of Philosophy* (Cincinnati, OH: U.P. James, 1839): 218.

[74] Conway, "Dramatis Personae," *Dred*. Likewise, in his monumental *Annals of the New York Stage*, the drama historian George Odell never uses Stratton's real name.

[75] Qtd. in Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006): 238.

[76] Stowe, *Dred*, 35.

[77] Samuel A. Cartwright, "Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race," *Health, Disease, and Illness: Concepts in Medicine*. Eds. Arthur L. Caplan, James J. McCartney, and Dominic A. Sisti (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004): 31.

[78] Cartwright, "Report on the Diseases," 32.

[79] Barnum, *Struggles*, 628.

[80] Qtd. in Frick, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 101.

[81] Chemers, *Staging Stigma*, 48.

[82] Lehman, *Becoming Tom Thumb*, 134. For another benevolent reading of Conway's *Dred*, see Bluford Adams, *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 141–42.

[83] Lehman, *Becoming Tom Thumb*, 100.

[84] Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 93.

[85] Conway, *Dred*, 17.

[86] Ibid., 48.

[87] The complex revolutionary legacies of the "goddess of liberty," invoked here in juxtaposition to Tom Tit's aberrant body, deserve additional comment. According to Shirley Samuels, feminized allegories of "Liberty" allowed US citizens to symbolically link "the democratic antecedents of the new nation" to "the archetypes of Greece and Rome." *Facing America: Iconography and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 4. During *Dred*'s final tableau, this same figure signifies both in conjunction and in contradistinction with Tom Tit. It aligns the play's abolitionism with the foundational values of US democracy, and, at the same time, it creates a contrast between the white woman meant to reproduce those values and the black subject outside their projected area of reproduction. Like Tom Tit, the "Goddess of Liberty" here incarnates a national fantasy that ultimately excludes her, even if she is put to the

biological and metaphorical task of propagating it. I derive this last point from Lauren Berlant's analysis of the Statue of Liberty. See Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 6–7, 22–28.

[88] Lehman, *Becoming Tom Thumb*, 102.

[89] The effect of this transition, Adams argues, "mocked Dred's embodiment of black male power." *E Pluribus Barnum*, 140.

[90] Carrie Sandahl, "Queering the Crip," 25–56.

[91] Barnum revered "the legend of the southwest frontier, Davy Crockett—going so far as to emblazon Crockett's motto, 'Go ahead,' on the side of Thumb's miniature carriage." Adams, *E Pluribus Barnum*, 12.

Chapter Four

Between Sacrifice and Exchange: Civil War Pensioners in W.D. Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* and Joseph Kirkland's *The Captain of Company K*

While volunteering as a nurse during the Civil War, Louisa May Alcott underwent a personal crisis that helps us historicize a generalized—and deliberate—confusion between metaphorical and fleshly bodies. As the first injured soldiers arrive from the Union battlefront and quickly fill up the bunks in her ward, Alcott receives instructions to "tell them to take off socks, coats and shirts" and "scrub them well." Sponge in hand, the neophyte nurse faces a breach of decorum that, even if justified by the exceptional demands of warfare, proves too taxing on a middle-class woman of her upbringing. Alcott finds herself paralyzed, at a loss for words. "To scrub some dozen lords of creation at a moment's notice," she recalls, "was really—really—." Her paralysis in narrating such bodily intimacies contrasts against the eloquent patriotism with which she set out to perform her duty. Eventually she manages to proceed with her scrubbing by conjuring this nationalist spirit, which entails depersonalizing the prostrated soldiers (she calls them "specimens") and figuring them as an abstract collective to be sacrificed in the line of fire: "remembering all they had been through since the fight at Fredericksburg, I yearned to serve the dreariest of them all."[1] Only by imagining her patients as a faceless body politic does Alcott muster the necessary courage to wash their actual wounds.

Thirty-seven years later a Chicago-based novelist named Joseph Kirkland rewrote this scene with a vengeance. In his surprisingly understudied novel *The Captain of Company K* (1891), the flibbertigibbet Sally Penrose listens to a "Boston lady" preach how, after the first gun was fired in Fort Sumter, it became "a woman's mission to bathe

the brow of anguish." Moved by this call, Sally joins the Burden-Sharers, a well-intentioned yet comically incompetent group of bourgeois housewives turned nurses. The "brow" motif epitomizes the Burden-Sharers' unpractical culture of sentimentality, as they "visited all the hospitals, without exception, and repeated over and over again the offer to bathe the sufferers' brows."[2] Of course, no scrubbing gets ever done. Instead, this synecdochic "brow" resurfaces in a conversation between Sally and her fiancé Will Fargeon, the captain of the title and the novel's protagonist. Fargeon confronts Sally with the obvious: "Well, but my dear Sally, you know the brow is only a small part of a man. Who is going to wash the rest?"[3] Forced to replace metaphor with flesh in her imagination, Sally, like Alcott before her, goes silent.

This uncomfortable silence constitutes the subject matter of this chapter. It is prompted—I contend—by the nerve-wracking proliferation of disabled veterans in a seceded nation whose citizens desperately imagined a whole, self-sufficient, and homeostatic body politic. With an unprecedented toll of more than 60,000 amputations, the Civil War transformed the social perception of the fragmented body and induced a pivotal moment in the representational history of the US body politic, deepening the confusion between this abstracted body and the militarized bodies that constituted it. The empty sleeves, wooden crutches, and artificial limbs that crammed the postbellum public sphere embodied traumatic memories of large-scale fratricidal violence, yet they also triggered collective fantasies of rehabilitation, reunion, and prosthetic enlargement. These fantasies hinged on a strategic use of corporeal metaphor passed down from writers, artists, and politicians to common folk. For instance, on March 2, 1866, the Soldier's and Sailor's Union of the District of Columbia hosted a fundraiser for the benefit of amputee

Yankee veterans and their families. On one of the walls, the Ladies' Auxiliary branch of this organization hung a giant banner that read, "Our disabled soldiers have kept the Union from being disabled."[4] Through its provocative doubling of disability, this slogan encapsulated popular perceptions of the Civil War amputee as a sacrificial figure: he who had heroically fragmented his body in order to preserve the sacrosanct wholeness of the national body. As the fundraiser's slogan suggests, and as scholars such as Lisa Long corroborate, a disability logic of national growth through individual loss was predicated through the master narrative of war sacrifice. Taken as a positive denouement for this narrative, the rehabilitation of individual bodies in the postbellum era instilled harmonious visions of a re-United States.[5]

In the following argument, I examine two novels—Kirkland's *The Captain of Company K* and William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1891)—whose disabled veteran characters shed their allegorical status while asserting their troubled materiality. I argue that their struggles mirror the authors' attempt at a realist exploration of disability in their fictions, an exploration that would transcend ableist stereotypes and advance an embryonic politics of resistance against the normal—yet idealized—body politic of postbellum United States. As my opening examples show, this unexplored narrative territory mutes the fictional Sally Penrose and the non-fictional Louisa May Alcott. Unlike them, Howells and Kirkland revisit the injured body of the ex-soldier in its material dimension, opening up questions of access, dependency, and stigma while doing away with the mythic construction of these bodies into proxies of a reconstructed body politic. Both authors smash the totalizing mirror of nationalist fiction with which Irving had grappled in "Sleepy Hollow." As a result, the disabled figures of Berthold Lindau in

Hazard and Will Fargeon in *Company K* are no longer dominated by their symbolic significance. By extricating them from a two-dimensional field of representation, Howells and Kirkland treat disability in its own right, neutralizing the discursive nimbleness by which it often operates as a cultural idiom more apt in reifying abstractions than in conveying disabled subjectivities.

Disability-studies theorists have traditionally denounced this appropriation, even if their methods vary and, at times, clash. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder propose prioritizing those texts that "share a self-reflexive mode of address about their own textual production of disabled bodies."[6] For Tobin Siebers this strategy reinforces a "strong constructionism": an understanding of disability as an artificial, socially produced category to be deconstructed and dispensed with. Against this "social constructionism," which occludes the excruciating realities of people with disabilities, Siebers endorses a "new realism of the body," understood as a narrative mode that would highlight the immediate concerns of pain, sentience, and dependency through an unpolished, first-person delivery. More recently, Emily Russell has reminded us that the disabled body is often already "*conceived* as more real," and that Siebers's demand for explicitness reinforces this misconception.[7] Overall, the problem is that the physically disabled body becomes a fitting vehicle for social fantasies precisely because it appears to us as hyper-real. Its flawed and fallible—hence universally representative—anatomy encourages audiences to resituate it on some ontological plane where it does not bleed or hurt. Against this conceptual displacement, disability artists and thinkers struggle to secure the means for narrativizing disability in ways that foreground the corporeality and sentience

of the disabled person without disallowing a variety of registers and themes through which creative resistance remains possible.

Taking up this challenge and hearing Siebers's call for a "new realism of the body," I use two nineteenth-century writers to argue for a realism of the body capable of driving a wedge between the strictures of the "new realism" and the postmodern negations of the real so pervasive in social constructionism. At the same time, my argument delivers a gentle nudge to the presentism of many debates in disability studies. Given that the field takes off after the 1990 passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it tends to deny the retrospective thrust and potential of its presiding questions. Like many contemporary disability authors and activists, the two novelists of my choice strive to explicate war-related disability without turning it into default choices in their discursive toolkit. In doing so, they present it as an amalgam of meanings, practices, prejudices, stereotypes and half-hidden truths. More importantly, they also concretize it as an institutional practice by involving readers in the vexed politics of Civil War disability pensions. A pension constitutes a concrete mechanism of compensation by which the state balances its debts with those who fight to uphold it. And yet, the rhetoric and culture of Civil War pensions deeply partake of the fantasies, desires, and anxieties already mentioned. For this reason, I read Lindau's and Fargeon's amputations through their refusal of their Federal pensions, which enables them to break a bureaucratic and a symbolic contract with the state. Their key gesture propels a paradigm shift in our thinking about politicized bodies and their problematic lives as tropes, inviting us to reconsider our double-edged approach to soldiers' disability as a site of exemplary prowess and a budgetary burden.

My argument unfolds in three stages. Before unpacking Lindau's and Fargeon's disability politics, and since the key move I am signaling is the rejection of their pensions, I will first outline the trajectories of disabled Civil War pensioners. Oscillating between sacrificial monuments and welfare-state parasites, pensioners turned into contradictory entities drawn into the political economy of postbellum United States. As I explain in the next section, postbellum capitalism used veterans' disabilities as a discursive mask that concealed the convertibility and commodification of money, land, and bodies. This process unfolded on two levels: on the level of individual soldiers who could cash in their prosthetic devices for a specified sum, and on the level of Federal Reconstruction, with Radical Republicans depriving southerners of their pensions and land so that Union soldiers could be rightfully compensated. Next, I link this panorama to the economic and narrative consequences of Lindau's pension rejection in *Hazard*. In my final analysis of *Company K*, I map out Fargeon's effort to disengage himself from the cultural logic of Civil War pensions, a logic that Kirkland finds aligned with the creed of antebellum expansionism. In both case studies, I unveil how Lindau and Fargeon replace an ossified notion of war-related disability with an alternative economy of horizontal dependency that belies the capitalist ethos of self-reliance and forces us to consider disability as a catalyst for—not just a symbol of—social change.

1. "the money value thereof": Civil War Pensions and Commutations

The injured Civil War veteran symbolized either sentimental reunion or sectional resentment with ostensible ease. Right after Appomattox, Northerners and Southerners developed forms of sympathy for wounded soldiers that focused attention, even fetishistically, on the unrecoverable costs and horrors of the war. Audiences eroticized

soldiers' stumps through iconic empty-sleeve images. In J.R. Bagby's poem "The Empty Sleeve," a Southern wife tells her returning husband: "The arm that has turned to clay / Your whole body has made sublime."[8] Like the Ladies Auxiliary Branch motto already mentioned, the booming genre of "empty sleeve" poetry confirms that there was much to be gained collectively by memorializing soldiers' amputations in public. At this stage, dominant values of military sacrifice and patriotism conferred a halo of sanctity and hyper-masculinity on the Civil War amputee. Needless to say, had this same amputee lost his limbs in a non-military accident, or simply due to illness, the halo would be gone (nowhere is this maxim clearer than in Lindau's second amputation, which I will later examine in detail). Ambrose Bierce parodied this popular trend in his snapshot of a mangled Unionist: "A long livid scar across the forehead marked the stroke of a sabre; one cheek was drawn and puckered by the work of a bullet. Only a woman of the loyal North would have thought the man handsome."[9]

The sexualization of the Civil War amputee emanated partly from a political desire for reunion. Almost immediately after Southern defeat, Republican officials and US Representatives encouraged citizens to overcome sectional rancor and reunite peacefully. Benevolence toward the South characterized the strategies of statesmen such as John Quincy Adams II, who promoted a "union of hearts" to seal the schism of Secession.[10] Their efforts signaled the rise of what Nina Silber has called the "romance of reunion," which staged a North-South reconciliation via an inter-sectional wedding between a prostrated soldier, now fully rehabilitated, and his former nurse.[11] In texts like Russell Conwell's *Magnolia Journey* (1869) and Joel Chandler Harris's "A Story of the War" (1880), the soldier's sacrificial wounds and the abnegation of the nurse-turned-wife

yield a quick, amnesiac reunion.[12] This rhetoric of sacrifice and appeasement pivoted on war-related disability in order to promote national unity.

Whereas romances of reunion choreographed sectional reconciliation around soldiers' stumps, for bloody-shirt politicians no reunion could ever take place without proper indemnity. In their speeches, the pathos of disability justified a harsher treatment of the vanquished South. This trend intensified during the 1876 election. Colonel Robert Ingersoll, a blustery orator from the Republican Party harangued his audiences: "Soldiers, every scar you have got on your heroic bodies was given to you by a Democrat. Every scar, every arm that is lacking, every limb that is gone, is a souvenir of a Democrat."[13] Calling attention to veterans' scars, Ingersoll reenacts the original act of wounding, identifying the aggressor as a Southern Democrat silently awaiting his chance to rehash his coup against the Federal government. Like Ingersoll, Radical Republicans Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens saw in war-related disability enough justification to treat rebel states as conquered colonies. Stevens pursued reparation through confiscation, for "every Union man and the government should be remunerated out of the pockets of those who have inflicted this great suffering upon the country."[14] On September 1865, he exhorted members of the Pennsylvania Republican Convention to

> look around you, and even where behold your neighbors, some with an arm, some with a leg, some with an eye, carried away by rebel bullets. Others horribly mutilated in every form … Contemplate these monuments of rebel perfidy, and of patriotic suffering, and then say if too much is asked for our valiant soldiers.[15]

Here, brutalized veterans no longer constitute paragons of sacrificial beauty; instead, the repulsion caused by their unsightly bodies runs directly proportional to the need for compensations, even at the expense of national reunion.[16]

Supported by Stevens and his Congress acolytes, the Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862, granted the Federal government the right to confiscate Confederate land and allot it to Union soldiers, homesteaders, and African American farmers so that "five hundred million dollars be raised for the purpose of pensioning the veterans of the Union army."[17] Old plantations lost their grandeur once reticulated and distributed among the conquerors. Union soldiers' right to indemnity meant a convenient strategy for those who, like Sumner, argued that seceded Southern states had turned themselves into a foreign land that was now rightfully colonized and whose subjects deserved to be treated as inferior nonnationals. For Sumner, the damage done exceeded the quantification efforts of economists and statesmen:

> Who can repair the shattered and mutilated forms that have been returned from the battle with Slavery? ... Indemnity we renounce. There are no scales on earth in which it can be weighed. There are no possible accumulations of wealth which would not be exhausted before its first installment was counted out.[18]

Undoubtedly, the goal here is not to renounce indemnity but to wink at its unquantifiable essence. Sumner's bombastic tone aims, like Stevens, to deprive the South of its economic and political power and to cement the Union's prosperity on rightful reparations to its injured soldiers.

Although Sumner laments the lack of "scales" to "weigh" soldiers' "sacrifices," by 1865 government officials were already scratching their heads over possible means of economic compensation. Crucial to their efforts was the rise of prosthetic science. In August 1862, the US Army Board of Surgeons chose Benjamin Franklin Palmer's prototype—from then on called "the Palmer leg"—as the official prosthetic leg for Union veterans. While the Palmer leg allowed orthopedists to normalize disfigured bodies,

guarantee patients a modicum of functionality, and help them retain a sense of self-reliant manhood in an increasingly industrialized workplace, they also epitomized national progress for many patriots and public intellectuals. Physician and literati Oliver Wendell Holmes extolled the virtues of the Palmer leg on two fronts: aesthetically, it pioneered "a limb which shall be presentable in polite society"; politically, the Palmer leg epitomized the United States' technological ingenuity.[19] Four years later, Congress approved an Act by which the government, through the Pension Commissioner and the Army's Surgeon General, would renew every five years the prosthetic limbs that amputee Union veterans had originally received from the War Department. This Act commanded Federal officials to preserve the anatomies of the almost thirty thousand Union soldiers disfigured in the war. Nevertheless, it also offered veterans the option to exchange their new prostheses for "the money value thereof" at the following rates: "For artificial legs, seventy-five dollars; for arms, fifty dollars; for feet, fifty dollars."[20] From then onward, Civil War veterans had to decide whether to accept the material support of the government via state-of-the-art prostheses, or a money sum equivalent to their cost.

The possibility for amputee veterans to trade their prostheses for money instilled an illusion of freedom that cannot be extricated from the liberal notion of "freedom" that actors in a capitalist marketplace experience by buying, selling, investing in and speculating with stocks and commodities. Turning their prostheses into cashable items, veterans entered a system of abstract equivalences between military sacrifice, money, and land. I borrow the phrase "abstract equivalences" from Karl Marx, who, in his *Grundrisse*, uses this notion to outline that bourgeois illusion according to which the

relationship of abstract equivalence between marketable commodities in a capitalist society underscores the social equality of the people trading them. In Marx's own words:

> Each of the subjects [in a commercial exchange] is an exchanger; i.e. each has the same social relation towards the other that the other has towards him. As subjects of exchange, their relation is therefore that of equality. It is impossible to find any trace of distinction, not to speak of contradiction, between them.[21]

Popular conceptions of the postbellum marketplace as a site of egalitarian sameness and upwards mobility instilled this vision in the national imaginary, aiming for a free market to invisibilize sectional and racial differences that the war had rendered hyper-visible.

Money carried out some important cultural work on this front. According to Marx, its obliterating power erases contradictions and imbues citizens with a sense of equality and freedom to the point that all inherent contradictions of bourgeois society appear extinguished in money relations as conceived in a simple form.[22] David Zimmerman has studied this "phenomenology of exchange" in connection with postbellum cultures of the marketplace, borrowing Marx's theory of abstract equivalence to argue about "the democratic potential that inhered for some writers –Twain, for example—in the apparent evacuation of materiality formally enabling the act of exchange itself."[23] What Zimmerman refers to as an "evacuation of materiality," I also understand as a fantasy of disembodiment related to the (in)corporeal fantasies and allegories that recur throughout my study. In a public sphere suffused with bodily reminders of the Civil War, a capitalist culture of exchange imagines a society where all bodies look alike, mainly because they are imagined as not looking like anything in particular other than as faceless buyers and sellers.

Studying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British imperialism, especially its triangulations with West Africa and the Americas through the slave trade and its financial networks, Ian Baucom has discerned a powerful precedent for the bodily fungibility I chart in the context of Reconstruction and Gilded-Age capitalism. Digging in the minutes of the Lords Commissioners for the Admiralty in 1790s Liverpool, Baucom notices a system of monetary compensations for specific bodily injuries endured by soldiers and sailors while conducting the business of empire. Such system exposes an

> imperturbable search for an alternate, alinguistic grammar of commensurability, the casual pursuit of a financializing, decorporealizing logic of equivalence that so confidently translates a lieutenant's foot into 5 shillings a day … the triumph, over the whole enterprise, of this monetarizing anatomization of the body—the triumph, over an embodied knowledge of history.[24]

The infrastructure and legislation of Civil War pensions reenact this history with all its attendant desires and omissions. Both in the context of the Atlantic slave trade and US Reconstruction, the "monetarizing anatomization" alluded to by Baucom evinces a return to the allegorical epistemology of the seventeenth century. Here, Baucom's argument hews rather closely to Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory under capitalism. For Benjamin, "the link between allegorization and commodification lies in the 'debasement,' by both procedures, of the 'thingliness' of the things on which they go to work."[25] Such "debasement" applies with equal force to the inanimate objects called "commodities" under a relation of exchange values and to the imperiled bodies of soldiers who have been pensioned off by the government, especially in their prerogative to trade prostheses for their cash value, among other possibilities of commutation. In other words, the relationships between the state and its citizens operated via these pensions turned

disabled soldiers into commoditized allegories of the nation-state, a circumstance against which Howells's and Kirkland's antiheroes will rebel.

Pensions enabled the Federal government to homogenize and abstract their pool of applicants via a money sum. And yet, congressmen and public officials rejoiced in the monumental depiction of war amputees, but to provide each one of them with the appropriate financial, technological, and social assistance was a less glamorous, more difficult task. Pension Bureau chiefs had to quantify disability; that is, to translate it into currency form. Despite Sumner's admonition, some sort of "scales" had to be invented in order to "weigh" soldiers' sacrifices. Thus, the Pension Bureau came to rest on a rigid taxonomy of equivalences and correspondences to be authenticated through an appointed committee of healthcare professionals. Since 1864, its regulations specified the exact amounts to be paid for the loss of different fingers and toes. William Henry Glasson compiles all these equivalences in his pioneering *History of Military Pension Legislation in the United States*. Such accurate measurements illustrate the general drive toward quantification [Fig. 8].[26] Unsurprisingly, the stipend increases according to yearly inflation and tries to reciprocate in its amount the gravity of the injury; but what this suggests, above all, is the necessity for the Pension Bureau to monetize Union soldiers' injuries.

Sacrifice was no longer an abstract value but a measurable, taxonomic phenomenon. It was the government, not the ennobling narratives of sacrifice that paid back bodily losses and war injuries. The desire for personal profit rather than mere compensation turned disabled soldiers from patriotic icons to greedy solicitors and budgetary burdens in the popular imagination, a perceptive shift that intensified after

Reconstruction. Since the 1870s, thousands of ex-soldiers delegated their applications on "claim houses," private firms administrated by pettifogging lawyers who charged a percentage of the received pension in return for their services. The rhetorical imprint of their publicizing efforts confirms a total rupture with sentimental modes of sacrifice and retribution. Instead, claim houses emphasized the trade-off possibilities by which veterans could turn their injuries into profit. George E. Lemon, a wounded Captain from Virginia who ran the most successful claim house in the country, published a full-page ad in the *National Tribune* during March 1883. Under the title "Land Warrants," an extract reads: "Survivors of all wars from 1790 to March 3, 1855, and certain heirs, are entitled to one hundred and sixty acres of land … Land warrant purchased for cash at the highest market rate and assignments perfected."[27]

Glasson echoes widespread concerns about the long-term unviability of US pensions. In doing so, he quotes an unidentified Congressional speaker who affirmed in 1899 that "appetite for pensions doth increase by what it feeds on."[28] The historical cycle suggested by this phrase merits some additional analysis before I explain its subversion in Howells's and Kirkland's novels. Indeed, Glasson's retrospective look finds a match in firsthand commentators of the Civil War pension system. In his reports from the postbellum South, influential politician Carl Schurz berates greedy Unionists whom overgenerous pensions have turned into leeches feeding off the government and a majority of hard-working citizens. For Schurz, pension legislation made pensioners "appear as insatiate clamorers …, of which many of them never could get enough." He goes on:

> Have they not thus been made responsible — many of them, no doubt, unjustly — for the creation of the most monstrous pension system the

> world has ever known,—a system breeding fraud without end, contributing largely to the demoralization of our politics, pauperizing a multitude of otherwise decent people, and imposing upon the government an enormous financial burden, which, indeed, can now be borne, but which, if the present pension system becomes a ruling precedent, will, in case we have other wars, grow to intolerable dimensions?[29]

In the views of Schurz and others, military pensions, far from reuniting the nation, planted the seed of future disunion. Their ultimate effect would be to implode, not to secure, a homeostatic body politic.

The possibility for many war veterans to trade their pension money for plots of land raised extra concerns about the legitimacy of their entitlements. Rather than moving there, most beneficiaries speculated with this land, fomenting an expansionist agenda of national aggrandizement.[30] With the Revolution and the War of 1812, the Federal Government started to include bounty land as part of military pensions, thus ensuring a generous draft and pushing the frontier at once.[31] This land belonged at first to the Northwest Territory, in particular to 4,000 square miles configuring the US Military District of Ohio. Thanks to the Louisiana Purchase, bounty land came to include as well thousands of individual plots in the Michigan, Illinois, and Louisiana territories. The Pension Bureau adopted this system of compensations because it was relatively cheap for the government to fragment and dispose of the large territories incorporated through the Louisiana Purchase, the treaty for Oregon and the Mexican-American war. Also, by allocating small parcels of new land to individual owners, Jacksonian Americans would abide by Jefferson's agrarian utopia, diffusing political power across a republic of yeomen farmers. Nevertheless, as historians such as Paul Wallace Gates and Paul Kens have shown, the "federal policy was to survey the land then sell it at auction, usually in

large block to speculators and land companies."[32] This policy instigated a fever of land speculation in which war veterans as well as their relatives became important actors.

Since the value of the land depended on the caprices of the marketplace, those who had made sacrifices in the battlefield obtained in return an asset whose unstable value contradicted many cultural narratives of individual and social rehabilitation. Reconstruction legislators tried to alter this panorama. In order to curb land speculation, Congressmen and Senators—spearheaded by Abraham Lincoln himself—agreed on discontinuing the offer of bounty land in military pensions while subsidizing, instead, prosthetic devices for amputated soldiers among other forms of compensation. Land had become a sort of currency, not to mention a political weapon of the largest caliber. According to Levinson and Sparrow, land was "*the* form of wealth for most of nineteenth-century America."[33] But this land was often taken for its market value. Such measure reflected the government's effort to optimize its resources by offering the right amount of help to its combatants and by minimizing exclusions, measures all attuned to the principles of representative democracy. Pensions became a tool for the government to even up its debts to veterans rather than offering them the means to engage in get-rich-quick schemes. Like the veteran's wounded body, land was thus dematerialized through pension packages.

But the dematerialization of thousands of amputated bodies did not conceal structural inequalities in the distribution of care.[34] In a recent study, R. B. Rosenburg touches on the enormous financial strain caused by Civil War pensions as well as on its devastating toll on the South. "Between 1865 and 1930" Rosenburg adduces, "Federal pensioners received on average $165 per year compared to the annual allotment of $38.50

to the typical Confederate pensioner."[35] This inequality gap widened during the years when Howells and Kirkland were respectively working on *Hazard* and *Company K*. Such an imbalance contradicted the Pension Bureau's mission, which rested on the sacrificial rhetoric outlined by Thaddeus Stevens and others. Even if disability pensions to ex-soldiers were shaped by the widespread acceptance and celebration of the wounded veteran, this popular sympathy should not be taken as symptomatic of a less ableist society or as an endpoint of sectional animosity. Unlike those Northerners entitled to renew their limbs every five years, Johnny Rebs belonged to an antithetical category in which stumps represented the deadlock reached by the Confederacy.

Not that Confederate states did not try hard to look after their injured veterans. Before the war ended, the Confederacy allowed them some minor entitlements and later bestowed lifelong pensions to them and their widows. Also, Southern states' representatives soon learned to read between the lines of Republicans' disability rhetoric. After all, government Republicans vaunted a spirit of reconciliation while pensioning off its own combatants and leaving rebel amputees to rely on their bankrupted state governments for any healthcare and/or compensation. A candidate for Congress in Virginia pleaded, "If the United States Government requires the South to be taxed for the support of the Union soldiers, we should insist that all disabled soldiers should be maintained by the United States Government *without regard to the side they had taken in the war*."[36] The North-South split in this regard proved as insurmountable as that other split between the sentimental portrait of military sacrifice and the existence of the disabled soldier—Yankee Doodle or Johnny Reb—as a financial burden upon the state.

Southern resentment prevented ex-Confederates from accessing the latest prosthetic technology. During Andrew Johnson's presidency, "Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Mississippi, … devoted a fifth of its entire 1866 revenues to artificial legs."[37] Earmarking such a large portion to the reconstruction of ex-Confederate bodies, these states failed nevertheless to prevent a large segment of impoverished empty-sleeves from roaming the countryside in tatters, looking for food and eking out a living as occasional errand boys. The Association for the Relief of Maimed Soldiers (ARMS) was created "to appeal principally to benevolent and patriotic confederate citizens to unite and present to each those deprived of their limbs, an artificial limb not as an act of charity, but of esteem, respect, and gratitude."[38] In the South too, it was important for soldiers to receive their limbs through formal circuits of exchange rather than passed down through charity and paternalism. Additionally, the manufacturing origins of these prosthetic limbs mattered as much as their efficiency. "The prostheses came from 11 Southern or foreign manufacturers," since ARMS "resisted reliance upon Northern limb manufacturers" and Southern veterans would rather choose a limb manufactured in Europe than a "Yankee leg."[39] The material history of postbellum prosthetics thus is not exempted from powerful feelings of resentment or the larger scripts underwriting these feelings.

On the Confederate side too, authorities favored commutations between limbs, land, and money. Virginia started exchanging money for replaced artificial limbs in 1872. Alabama followed suit in 1876, whereas in Georgia, "the 1883 legislature authorized commutations in lieu of artificial limbs and exempted disabled Confederate veterans from the poll tax."[40] Disability thus entered a complex system of valuation oscillating between

commutations, exemptions, and entitlements. Like the Federal government, Southern states also went out of their way to quantify different instances of wounding. In Georgia's 1886 pension law, veterans who returned from the war without a finger or a toe were entitled to five dollars per year, while those "missing both an arm and a leg" received up to $150.[41] These developments mirrored Northern claim houses and pension bartering. Furthermore, whereas the Union had ceased to offer bounty-land compensations, many Southern states continued to do so well into the postbellum period. Louisiana's Act No. 96, signed on 1884 by Governor Samuel D. McEnery (a veteran himself) "offered 160 acres of public land to ex-Confederates whose service-related disabilities disqualified them 'from active vocations of life.'" Governor McEnery understood land ownership as an efficient mechanism for turning disabled veterans—otherwise unable to contribute to the economy as industrial or agricultural workers—into financial actors. Likewise, "in 1881 the Texas legislature had been able to offer disability compensation in the form of land scrip certificates of 1,280 acres to every permanently disabled and indigent Confederate veteran." This land was not thought of as a site for settlement, but as an amount of capital with which to enter the market. In Texas thus, "land certificates could be sold and purchased for between $5 and $400."[42]

And so, we witness a cycle of commutations (disability generates land ownership that generates money) that paralleled the economic activities of Northern veterans. In *Hazard*, Lindau's pension rejection—whose implications have escaped generations of scholars—disrupts these cycles of commutations while keeping the Civil War amputee's irrefragably material body in view.

2. A Hazard of Dependencies

In *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) and mainly in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Howells tackles the overlap between the literal and metaphorical bodies of Civil War veterans. He does so indirectly, by showing how social and political turmoil in the 1890s hinged on the troubled memories and unresolved antagonisms of the Civil War, and by debunking the all-purpose symbolism of war-related disability. One way he accomplishes this is to interrupt the cycle of commutations in which amputees' excised limbs were substituted by prostheses and entitlements, acts of substitution aiming to build a democratic illusion of sameness between former opponents: disabled and non-disabled, blacks and whites, Yankees and rebels. Whereas Kirkland's novel remains virtually unread, *Hazard*'s canonicity as well as Howells's reputation as the heavyweight of American literary realism forces us all the more to wonder why no disability-studies critic has ever taken up its provocative disability stance. Instead, audiences and critics have praised the "war realism" of novels such as Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), which, despite its psychological penetration, presents most disabled characters as allegories.[43]

Besides allegories, the Civil War created an unprecedented number of citizens dependent on official institutions, claim houses, private agencies like ARMS, and on each other. *Hazard* explores this new set of relations while combatting illusions of abstract equality and freedom.[44] The notion of individual accountability in the face of social injustice long obsessed Howells. In *The Minister's Charge* (1887), the writer closes the narrative by having one of his flagship moral characters, Father Sewell, preach a sermon on "Complicity" inspired by the conviction that "everybody seems to be tangled up with everybody else."[45] Through its circulation in print media, Sewell's sermon reaches

members of the working class and ignites several labor strikes across the country. Howells illustrates thus how individual actions bear sociopolitical outcomes. Such a common entanglement enters a new dimension when we consider the relationships between disabled and non-disabled members of society. What, then, if we revisit Howells' exploration of Gilded-Age ethics—or the lack thereof—through the language of caring and dependency? This line of inquiry demands us to stop asking what disability means and to ask instead what does it mean to be disabled. In *Hazard*, this paradigm shift entails refusing to interrogate the symbolism of Lindau's missing hand and asking instead what does it mean for Lindau to live—to survive—with only one hand.

As a disability socially constructed by the cast of *Hazard*, Lindau's amputated hand is used to tell other stories than its own.[46] Ignoring his ordeal, the cast of *Hazard* rather interpret Lindau's stump as a black hole, a vortex of unpredictable cultural and political transformations that can only be approached with vertigo and estrangement. War trauma, residual sectionalism, urbanization, immigration, labor unrest, and the rise of corporate capitalism connect thematically with Lindau's stump. In the same way as the stump marks an absent bodily site, the new social order it incarnates also lacks a stable referent, frustrating any attempt to define or narrate it. In the words of the novel's central character, Basil March: "He [Lindau] lost a hand in the war that helped to save us and keep us possible, and that stump of his is character enough for me."[47] The unclear grammatical subject of "helped" hints at the faux centrality of Lindau's missing limb. On the one hand, it renders the US nation "possible," on the other, it engulfs Lindau as anything other than an empirical *point d'appui*.[48] Consequently, it synecdochically reduces Lindau to his missing hand.

Critics have shared this predisposition. In their respective analyses of Lindau's amputation, Amanda Claybaugh and Joseph Darda confirm Lindau as a character whose impairment confronts every other character with the changing realities of postbellum America.[49] Against this appropriation of Lindau's absent limb, I foreground the veteran's disabled subjectivity, drawing upon and expanding what Susan Schweik terms a "disability politics of American literary history," predicated on the fact that "'disability' historically has posed itself as the direct rendering of a body as an observed object, but because it is political it has never been reducible to transparent observation of the literal."[50] Resituating the target of inquiry here does not depoliticize Lindau nor does it ignore his material and sentient ordeals as an injured body; it rather invigorates Lindau's potential as a proto-disability activist to renounce his disability pension in order to criticize a straw-men government in the hands of financiers and to stage-manage his abnormal body in ways other than as a "living statue" of nationalist sacrifice—the kind of statue whose silence constitutes its only way of addressing the public.[51]

We trace Lindau's ethics in a few understudied scenes in *Hazard*. In one of them, March visits Lindau's cheap lodgings to offer him a job as translator for *Every Other Week*. This bi-weekly magazine occupies the center of the novel, gathering around it a gallery of representative postbellum types: the well-intentioned liberal (Basil March, editor), the *nouveaux riche* (Mr. Dryfoos, owner), the lost-cause apologist (Colonel Woodburn, contributor), the new woman (Alma Leighton, illustrator), the struggling artist (Angus Beaton, illustrator) and the fiercely congenial entrepreneur (Fulkerson, director). Appalled by Lindau's living conditions at his tenement house, March addresses his former German tutor, who lies in his bedraggled mattress reading a book. Anxious

about whether or not he should assist his amputee friend, March nervously offers his help in the form of an intrusive question:

> "And—and—can you dress yourself?"
> "I whistle, and one of those little fellowss comess. We haf to dake gare of one another in a blace like this. Idt iss nodt like the worldt," said Lindau gloomily.[52]

Lindau's dependency on the tenement children who help him out of bed is heralded earlier in the chapter, when a bevy of them burst into the adjacent kitchenette and collect a few leftovers from Lindau's table. The tenant justifies this intrusion as part of an agreement: "Idt is the children cot pack from school. They gome and steal what I leaf there on my daple. Idt's one of our lidtle chokes; we onderstand one another." "To dake gare of one another" means for Lindau to launch a circuit of tenement solidarity that unfolds on the margins of the national economy. After all, one of Lindau's most memorable statements in his conversation with March is "I ton't needt any money just at bresent."[53] Even if his shabby looks suggest the contrary, Lindau's conviction that the tenement's exchange of favors and services "iss nodt like the worldt" situates him outside a booming market society that has entrapped the rest of the cast with its consumerist drives and class hierarchies.

Lindau's socialist ethics clashes against the Marches' gentility. A few chapters later, the Marches invite Lindau for dinner. In preparation, Mrs. March instructs her daughter Bella to regard Lindau as "a hero who had suffered for her country" and his "mutilation" as "a monument of his sacrifice." Doing so, Mrs. March initiates her daughter into a "sentimental semiotics" in which, according to Mary Klages, characters with disabilities have "traditionally served as silent spectacles, images to be viewed by the non-disabled, whose importance has been in their ability to appear pathetic and to

produce a sympathetic or sentimental response in non-disabled people."[54] Part of Bella's education consists thus in corking up her abhorrence of the mutilated body, a lesson on objectification that echoes Northerners' ambivalent attitudes toward veterans with disabilities. During dinner with Lindau, "the child bravely sat next his maimed arm at table, and helped him to dishes he could not reach, and cut up his meat for him."[55] Unlike the unaffectedness that characterized the exchange of favors between Lindau and the tenement children, this scene of caring raises discomfort in all parties involved. That Bella "bravely" sat next to Lindau's stump betrays her innate apprehension about his stump. Howells is aware of the clash between the sympathy aroused by injured war veterans and the discomfort and confusion—what Ato Quayson has called "aesthetic nervousness"—operative during the contemplation of the disabled body.[56] Observing the scene, Mrs. March fails to reconcile her veneration of Lindau with the "oppression" she feels in the presence of a man who drinks too much beer, speaks a thorny English, and talks politics in a way that is "out of character with a hero of the war."

According to the narrator, Lindau's refusal to serve as the flat corporeal metaphor that would validate Mrs. March's nationalism "outlawed him from sympathy and retroactively undid his past suffering for the country." Mrs. March's double standard appears in full force when she later cautions her husband against Lindau on the grounds that "Germans" are "unscrupulously dependent."[57] Setting himself apart from Mrs. March's prejudice and Mr. March's liberal guilt, Howells transcends their character-flattening of Lindau. His omniscient third-person narrator delivers the tenement scene from Lindau's point of view, making his agreement with the neighbor's children seem a natural and satisfying compact. At the Marches', the writer filters the events through Mrs.

March's biased understanding of disability. He lucidly registers the signifying pliability of physical disability, understood as both a monumental catalyst of positive values and attitudes (after all, Lindau's monumentality procures him Bella's assistance at the table) and, likewise, an uncomfortable reminder of the violence the state exerts against its dissenting citizens. Lindau's status as a sacrificial war hero can be done or undone depending on his willingness to stay "in character," emerging thus as a discursive formation lodged in Mrs. March's nationalist fantasy of sacrifice and retribution. Debunking this fantasy, Howells abstracts and embodies Lindau constantly, forcing him to oscillate between material and symbolic planes. As a flesh-and-bones individual who manifests political dissent and threatens to pass it on to new generations (either the tenement children or the young Marches), Lindau's need for care and assistance translates, for Mrs. March, into a dependency without scruples. His refusal to embrace an individualist ethos becomes ancillary to his agenda.

These two antithetical scenes of caring constitute the typical subject matter of dependency theory, a sub-field of rising importance within disability studies. For Michael Davidson, the notion of dependency is anathema to classic liberalism. Against the latter's valorization of an autonomous individual/citizen/worker/property owner, "the term [dependency] takes on an especially charged character for persons with disabilities … framed as a condition of tragic limit and loss requiring regimes of care and rehabilitation."[58] Whereas most liberal theories regard dependency as evil, neoliberal regimes increase their animosity by conceptualizing dependency as a state of self-negation and utter despondency: dependency on the state marks the ultimate weakness. Countering this backlash, Davidson redefines dependency as a "a constellation of

interrelations whose ultimate trajectory is independence."[59] Further refining these interrelations, Neel Ahuja distinguishes two kinds of dependency: "vertical dependency," in which the dependent party is sustained "through a hierarchical relationship with a provider who is relatively privileged (socially, economically, politically, etc);" and "horizontal dependency or *interdependence*," in which "a shared identity based on disability, race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, or species allows the formation of intersubjective bonds necessary for physical, social, economic, or psychological survival."[60] In *Hazard*, Lindau sidesteps his hierarchical dependence on the goodwill, charity, and bland patriotism of the Marches and Mr. Dryfoos. His lack of interest in ingratiating himself with them rather empowers him to push a radical project of *interdependence* between members of the New York City lumpenproletariat.[61]

A Hazard of New Fortunes strains Ahuja's horizontal/vertical critical paradigm by showing not only how Lindau depends on others to function in the world, but also how middle-class liberals such as Mr. and Mrs. March depend on Lindau as a validating construct for their system of beliefs.[62] To paraphrase Basil, Lindau makes them possible. The same capacity enables Lindau to make them impossible; that is, to point at the cracks in their well-intentioned discursive practices. Whereas the bodily injuries sustained in the battlefield revitalize the national attachment of the injured body, Lindau interprets his bodily loss not as a sacrifice for the nation-state but as a sign of rupture, and the fact that he voices his disunion in a thick German accent further reinforces the abysmal nature of this split: "I wanted to gife you the other handt too," says Lindau after reuniting with Basil, "but I gafe it to your country a goodt while ago."[63] This sentence conjures a failed transaction, not a sacrifice. Accordingly, Lindau strikes a dissonant chord with the spirit

of the times by being extremely suspicious of any economic exchange. Not only does he refuse his pension (being a Union soldier, this could have taken the form of a money sum or a prosthetic limb), he also returns his *Every Other Week* salary *in toto* after clashing against Mr. Dryfoos's anti-union politics. Furthermore, during his period at the magazine, Lindau does not accept checks as payment method. March soon discovers that his friend "did not approve of banks and regarded the whole system of banking as the capitalistic manipulation of the people's money."[64]

Lindau's disappointment with Gilded-Age politics crystallizes in two scenes: his explanation of his pension refusal and the dinner scene in which he confronts Mr. Dryfoos, over workers' rights. Darda argues that "Basil March, Fulkerson, Dryfoos, and others attempt to force him into the background through acts of consecration, exceptionalist nationalism, and remuneration."[65] Yet, despite his lucid take on Lindau's mutilation, Darda forgets that Lindau's "return to the foreground" occurs precisely when he turns down his government pension. Refusing this entitlement as well as his salary from Dryfoos ("his mawney is like boison!") dooms him to poverty and prevents his upward mobility, but it also leaves him untainted by a capitalist culture in which every clog abets class oppression and economic inequality.[66] When Fulkerson taunts Lindau about a hypothetical pension veto, the latter irately responds:

> No bension of mine was efer fetoedt. I renounce my bension, begause I would sgorn to dake money from a gofernment that I ton't peliefe in any more. … When the time gome dat dis iss a free gountry again, then I dake a bension again for my woundts; but I would sdarfe before I dake a bension now from a rebublic dat iss bought oap by monobolies, and ron by drusts and gompines, and railroadts andt oil gompanies.[67]

At first blush Lindau's decision seems economic suicide; however, his refusal launches an alternative economy in which dependency unfolds horizontally, between tenement

neighbors, rather than vertically, between Gilded-Aged tycoons like Dryfoos and the masses of dispossessed workers/consumers subordinated to them. Politics, not disability, impoverishes and eventually kills Lindau. His opposition to a corporate culture of greed, personified in *Hazard* by Mr. Dryfoos, signals his exclusion from the *Every Other Week* venture first, and later his fatal clubbing.

Finding a way out between sacrifice and exchange, Lindau disallows others to turn him into a legible sign of disability. Howells displays these characters' relentless fantasizing over Lindau throughout the novel, whether Lindau is sacrificed, rehabilitated, monumentalized, pensioned off, or simply dead and gone. This is because Lindau embodies manifold possibilities for the restoration of the US body politic. In clinical and social terms, this yearning translates into a desire for rehabilitation, which Basil March soon mutates into a daydream fantasy:

> He fell into a remorseful reverie, in which he rehabilitated Lindau anew and provided handsomely for his old age. He got him buried with military honors and had a shaft raised over him, with a medallion likeness by Beaton and an epitaph by himself, by the time they reached Forty-second Street; there was no time to write Lindau's life, however briefly, before the train stopped.[68]

Howells uses the everyday rhythms and displacements of the modern city to wake March from his rehabilitation fantasy and to point out its obsolescence. His diction betrays the tension between the different yearnings invested in the term "rehabilitation." Whereas one would understand rehabilitation as a project of individual restoration, a return ticket to the normal, the prospect of rehabilitating Lindau "anew" latches onto a broader, collective longing to transcend old forms and habits into exciting new realms of existence.[69] In his imagination, March completes the ritual sacrifice that Lindau himself

refuses to endure. Lindau redefines sacrifice, removing its ritualistic aesthetics of military panache and insincere mourning.

Howells takes an archetypal figure of disability, the Civil War amputee, and instills in him the "complexity of motive" that he discerned only in the subjects of great realist art.[70] Whereas most characters invest meaning in Lindau's missing hand (Mr. Dryfoos: ""Any man that's given his hand to the country has got mine in his grip for good,") Lindau himself rarely ever fashions himself as a disabled subject.[71] Instead, he points out man's inevitable state of social interdependency while denouncing how a capitalist society corrupts this principle by imposing on individuals the pressure to thrive individually. Before joining the *Every Other Week* venture, he ekes out a living as a bust model. His stately head earns him a reputation among painters and sculptors interested in "biblical pieces," and so Lindau becomes "Joseph, Peter, Judas Iscariot, and the Scribes and Pharisees in the New." Alma Leighton admits that New York City is full of reproductions of Lindau's head in different biblical scenes, further remarking: "It's a good thing people don't know how artists work, or some of the most sacred pictures would have no influence."[72] Ironically, Lindau's "sacred" status also applies to his role as a Union amputee; however through Leighton's speech, Howells hints that Lindau's sacrificial halo is also a work of art: an ultimate fabrication.

Sacrifice welcomes easy hyperbole. Against its sudden, shocking, and transformative power, the routine habits of care and critical citizenship do not stand out. In *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, Bromfield Corey complains that "You can paint a man dying for his country, but you can't express on canvas a man fulfilling the duties of a good citizen."[73] Enraged by the authorities' rushed execution of four anarchists after the

Haymarket Affair in 1887, Howells embraced in *Hazard* the challenge to depict a "good citizen," and Lindau is the closest he got to the mark. Of course, Lindau's nationalism, premised on universal ideas of justice, freedom, and the capacity of the *volk* to overcome oppression, meets a disappointing fate in postbellum United States. Lindau's ultimate exclusion from the body politic he so reluctantly incarnates takes place during a Haymarket analogue: a clash between protesters and the police on the occasion of a streetcar-drivers' strike. Lindau's fatal encounter with the police returns him to the worst case scenario of the Civil War, this time under a new order in which the enemy is no longer the Slave Power risen in arms but corrupted capitalists bending the power of the state to their will. Both Lindau's amputations and death resonate with a larger social strife, turning him into a serviceable metaphor of the body politic's internecine unrest, whether stirred by sectionalism or by class warfare.

But there is a qualitative jump from the first to the second amputation. Whereas Lindau's Civil War disability carries the symbolic weight of national reunion, his second amputation confirms him as a dangerous figure of dissent. In the eyes of those characters who had placed Lindau on a sacrificial altar, the German dissident becomes now expendable, a bad investment/failed return in the symbolic economy of US nationalism. Lindau's fate in this sense debunks the Marxian theory of abstract equality and the false democratic principles invested in it. The main reason for this appreciation is that Lindau does not die alone. Conrad Dryfoos, also present at the strike, is accidentally shot while trying to protect Lindau from the police. Mr. Dryfoos's son does not share his father business-driven creed, opting instead for a Tolstoyan brand of Christian socialism. The secret for safeguarding social justice, he claims, is "to give yourself," not just money.[74]

After hearing the news from the strike, Fulkerson blames fate and the Almighty for "throwing away a precious creature like Coonrod Dryfoos on one chance in a thousand of getting that old fool of a Lindau out of the way of being clubbed."[75] Likewise, when March tells his wife that maybe Conrad did not die in vain, since he might have been able to save Lindau, Mrs. March manifests that "Lindau wasn't worth it!"[76] Lindau now becomes waste, mere surplus devoid of value. The signifying value that his body had accrued as a body politic after the Civil War vanishes once Lindau sheds it off and dies defending an inconvenient cause for the middle-class cast of *Hazard*. In the end, Lindau and Conrad, tenement dweller and fortunate son, are neither exchangeable nor equal.

Deeply inconsequential and redundant, Lindau's second amputation matters in terms of Howells's narrative economy. After the riot incident, Lindau suffers a new amputation in the same arm and shortly after he dies. This re-disabling amputation, devoid of transcendence, resituates Howells's understanding of the disabled body as a social symbol. Against most characters in *Hazard*, Howells refuses to invest any symbolic value in Lindau. In fact, his death changes nothing, in the same way as being wounded during the war did not solve any of the nation's problems. (It simply mutated slavery into wage slavery). Overall, Lindau enables Howells to take up and twist and turn the notion of sacrifice, oscillating between Lindau's victimhood, Conrad's Christian martyrdom, and Angus Beaton's pathetic suicide attempt. Perhaps the only function of Lindau's demise then is to unveil the vast open-endedness of Howells's realism: the defeat of the author's efforts to find some common ground. Amy Kaplan set an authoritative reading of *Hazard* by looking at Howells's formula of literary realism striving "to pave a common ground for diverse social classes by extending literary

representation to 'the other half' while reassuring middle-class readers that social difference can be effaced in the mirror of the commonplace."[77] Howells himself conceptualized realism "as an elaborate balancing act." In his essay "The Man of Letters as a Man of Business," he explains his literary métier as a conscious effort "to reach the heart and soul of the great multitude of your fellow-men."[78] The "great multitude of fellow-men" with one "heart and soul" suggests body politic, a necessary reduction for Howells, yet a fastidious one that he cannot but interpret as a simplifying act of containment. After all, his goal is to find the common, not to impose a common mold on society. Hence his dislike of corporeal metaphor.

If Howells's fiction arises from his need to extract some common ground out of social disunity and conflict, then the disability lexicon lends a useful primer to this task, since deviant bodies signify a kind of difference around which consensus about the norm/normal is easily established. I believe that the conciliatory drive at the heart of Howell's writings speaks to contemporary disability critics who, like Siebers, worry about finding a fitting literary vehicle that would overcome the Scylla and Charybdis of stereotype and skepticism. Like Lindau's body, the novel eschews completion and sidesteps totalizing, all-explanatory systems. Instead, Lindau's two disabilities reflect the transition from a symbolic view of disability toward a realism of the body that pulls up the curtain and unveils the ideological machinery turning the disabled body into a legible proxy for some abstraction. This is to say, even if Howells's realism of the body does not portray bodily phenomena in uttermost detail (as Siebers would have it), it strives to capture the complex tangle of social reactions toward disabled bodies.[79] The target of this

realism is not a mimetic register of the "real" disabled body but a thoughtful exposé of how collective fantasies and phobias about the disabled body *really* do happen.

In *Hazard*, this approach distills a central question: who should care for Lindau? The government, as it lies in the hands of corporations and speculators? Wealthy, philanthropic types like Mr. Dryfoos even if their wish to care emanates from a guilty consciousness rather than from genuine altruism (Dryfoos hired a substitute during the war)? The common man, represented here by Basil March, whose willingness to do moral good clashes against larger, all-encompassing ideologies (domesticity, manhood, respectability, industriousness)? In fact, should Lindau take care of himself? Surely enough that is what he tries to do. Paradoxically, rejecting his pension and his salary turns him into a quintessential American: the kind of self-made individual that the US nation loves to love. And yet, the paradox lies in the fact that Lindau is beaten to death by this same establishment. The sacrifice of nationalist warfare cedes way into punishment for stirring class warfare. Dissent hijacks sacrifice. Realism trumps the romance of reunion. Making a case for the realist novel in order to transcend allegorical romance means, in the case of *Hazard*, fleshing out Lindau as a complex character whose disability stands only for itself. This strategy entails a denunciation of the other characters' efforts to pigeonhole Lindau into the symbolic category of the sacrificial war veteran. The fact that most of these characters are producers of art and literature (they all contribute to *Every Other Week* in one form or another) strengthens Howells's critique of the alluring objectification of the disabled body. Briefly put, Lindau is a realist figure resisting everyone's wishes to turn him into a national allegory.

3. "money cannot pay for such things": Joseph Kirkland's Discontented Soldiers

And so is Will Fargeon. The title character of Kirkland's third and most ambitious novel is also mutilated and also renounces his government pension, which inspires a dialogue between both novels and discloses a conscious rebuke of romances of reunion, sacrificial narratives, and bloody-shirt rhetoric. Unlike Howells, though, Kirkland does not deal with the memories of the war, but with the lives and minds of those Union soldiers who, to paraphrase Stevens, had "become entitled" to a pension. Based on Kirkland's own experience as Captain of Company C, Illinois Twelfth Regiment, *Company K* renders impressionistically famous battles such as Shiloh and includes cameos by General Ulysses S. Grant among other historical figures. Battle and camp-life scenes structure the novel, punctuating Fargeon's psychological transformation as he joins, survives, and leaves the army. Indifferent to his alleged heroism and disgusted by the Pension Bureau's many cases of fraud, a prosthetized Fargeon breaks the ties with the establishment, decides to study medicine and spends the rest of his life working honestly as a doctor who prefers to deal with the actualities of concrete bodies than with the pitfalls of corporeal metaphor.

Perhaps because of his direct involvement in the war, Kirkland indicts sentimental war accounts even more ferociously than Howells.[80] His satirical portrait of Sally Penrose and the Burden-Sharers, which opened this chapter, exemplifies his efforts to demystify the war experience at home and in the front. In the same way Howells presented the hypocritical Mrs. March in the presence of Lindau, Kirkland uses Sally to denounce a double-standard treatment of soldiers with disabilities. A middle-class heiress from Chicago, Sally typifies the excessive mawkishness of the sentimental mode. Never hiding

her discontent when reality contradicts her saccharine assumptions, she even reproaches Fargeon, "Why are you not like a novel hero?"[81] As already seen, a big part of the Sharers'—and Sally's—discredit is caused by their preoccupation with the injured body politic of the Union felt in tandem with a generalized repulsion of injured bodies. Sally herself cannot stand to look in the eye a disfigured Irish soldier, Mark Looney, who later serves his regiment honorably and proves Fargeon's loyal friend. Looney's very presence exasperates Sally, "unable to disguise her instinctive repugnance" at Looney's "repulsive countenance, marred with a dreadful facial deformity which, because of the lowness of the sphere wherein he was born, had never been treated to remove or mitigate his ugliness."[82] In Sally's worldview, war only produces heroes, not deformities.

Countering this worldview, Kirkland makes *Company K* a novel openly concerned with its own historical accuracy and with the difficulties of fiction to convey a disability consciousness. Distancing himself from the Burden-Sharers' fear of bodies, Kirkland refuses to monumentalize or sentimentalize his soldier characters. His attempts to avoid these traps become noticeable in several authorial intrusions that add a level of meta-commentary to the story. These meta-comments intensify as Company K becomes more involved in pivotal episodes of the Civil War, which strategically interrupt the novel's romantic subplot between Fargeon and Sally. On the eve of one of the bloodiest scuffles, Kirkland paints a panoramic camp scene of the company men making arrangements for their tentative demise, organizing their possessions, and penning last-minute wills. Kirkland loses his authorial restraint and retorts, "God! If I wanted to magnify the pathos of all this, what could I say that I would not belittle it?"[83] It is a genuine question.

If Howells once lamented that Secession had "laid upon our literature a charge under which it has hitherto staggered very lamely," Kirkland accepts this crippled condition of literature understood as its inability to capture the experience of combat and to offer totalizing explanations of social change.[84] Such an acceptance—also palpable in *Hazard*—pushes Kirkland to introduce veterans with disabilities in radically non-conventional ways. For example, the writer depicts soldiers in the act of duty actively fantasizing about being injured and remunerated for the rest of their lives. Will Fargeon is no exception. Early in the novel, readers gain access to his convulsed mental state as he faces Southern gunfire for the first time: "Oh, God! Send a bullet through my hand—my arm! Then I could lose a limb and go back home—my dear home—where I belong."[85] While everybody else in the company marches toward the front lines, Fargeon undergoes an embarrassing paralysis. Reaching the climax of his predicament, he embraces the fantasy of being dismembered by the enemy's artillery. The myth-making machinery of war heroism is offset by the question of profit bestowed on the sacrificial soldier: a life-long salary, protection for his family, perhaps even some land. Far from an isolated incident, Fargeon's fantasy of disability is widely shared across his regiment. In a previous camp scene, Lieutenant Mac jokes about the meerschaum pipe that Fargeon has received from his fiancée. "Well, now,"—says Mac—"if any woman—any white woman—under fifty—were to send me a pipe like that, I'd go and get my leg shot off so I could get discharged, go home and marry her, and live on my pension—twenty dollars a month."[86] Mac's banter illustrates a larger trend: In *The Captain of Company K*, soldiers do not daydream about performing heroic deeds but about hobbling their way back to a

middle-class domestic arena. Amputation in this text does not present an opportunity to shine with valor, but to exchange bodily matter for "twenty dollars a month."

Why then does Fargeon refuse his pension? The answer becomes clear once Kirkland depicts the pension system as an institution drawing ex-soldiers into an ultra-competitive economy while safeguarding national progress. Staring at the wounded soldiers in a hospital camp, Fargeon's "fancy pictured the last wounded man going through life with a maimed, misshapen, hideous, useless right hand; a burden to himself and the world."[87] Throughout the novel, Will continues to see disability as a double "burden" that incapacitates the individual and, in agreement with Glasson and Schurz, takes an excessive toll on the nation's finances. Speaking through Will and Mac, Kirkland denounces how pension legislation spurs veterans' avarice and paves the way for them to engage in chicanery and fraud. Thus Kirkland aligns himself with Glasson's skepticism toward the pension system and the welfare state it stands for: an institution that "increases by what it feeds on." The novel's most sympathetic characters deliver several polemics against the parasitic behavior of disability pensioners. Lieutenant Mac says: "The fine fellows get killed and wounded and the skulkers live forever, and their widows draw pensions afterward."[88] Uttered during the aftermath of Company K's first serious scuffle, Mac's bitter statement counter-narrates the official discourse about the pension system, best grasped in Sumner's monumental soldiers for whom any of society's compensation would fall short. In *Company K*'s moral universe, pensions are not a fair indemnification for bodily sacrifice but an undeserved premium for skulkers and deserters. At the end of the novel, Will Fargeon ratifies Mac's anti-pension stance. Their hypercritical standpoint somehow disagrees with the widely held thesis that

applying to a pension usually showed "manly devotion" and an "affirmation of manliness" on behalf of the applicant veteran.[89] Kirkland suggests the contrary. The novel's truly manly characters (Mac, Fargeon and Mark Looney) never apply for a pension, even if they would easily qualify for one. These characters remove disability pensions from the true altar of national sacrifice: the battlefield strewn with the bodies of young soldiers.

Kirkland prefaces these deliberations with an intriguing tale of self-sacrifice and dependency. Colin Thorburn, a friend of the Penroses and thriving businessman, prompts a pivotal moment earlier in the novel by persuading Fargeon to enroll in the Union army. Later on, when Fargeon returns home without his leg and ponders about his future, Uncle Colin shares this enigmatic cautionary tale, worth quoting in its entirety:

> Once there was a 'puir simple body' who thought, as Sally thought, that mankind would care for its servants, small and great. He tried many experiments in the line of rendering public benefits which nobody seemed to appreciate; he himself growing poorer and poorer as time went on. At last, one day, when he was starving, he observed that a certain park gate was an obstruction to travel, thousands of persons being obliged to open it for passage every day. He seized his opportunity, posted himself at the gate, and, with a bow and a smile, opened it for every comer, large and small, high and low, rich and poor. Then his wants were relieved, for they put him in a mad-house.[90]

The pathological altruism of the tale's protagonist, his firm belief in the moral obligation to help others disinterestedly, saves him in the end, but the details of this salvation merit a second look, as the price he pays to avoid starvation is being confined within a mental institution. The anecdote shifts uneasily from the uncomplicated terrain of allegory to the blunt realism of the conclusion: "they put him in a mad-house." What started out as an "experiment" in community service ends up reinforcing the vertical-dependency model of medicalization and institutionalization conceptualized by Michel Foucault.[91] Sally's and

other humanitarians' notion that "mankind would care for its servants" ends up institutionalizing its adherents in an asylum whose very existence derives from the same humanitarian imperative to care for others. Here, vertical dependency wins. And it would win again were Fargeon to accept his pension. Uncle Colin's strange wisdom ushers in the negative portrait of the pension system in *Company K*'s final chapters. His anecdote tangentially touches on ongoing debates around the state's accountability, taking up central questions discussed ad nauseam by politicians and public administrators: To what extent should the government take care of disabled soldiers? And how was "care" to be defined and implemented? Was a financial compensation enough? Could the Federal government remedy the pandemics of Civil War-related amputations simply by investing capital in pensions, arrears and prosthetic limbs?

Superseding Howells's critique of the politics of pensions, Kirkland unveils a cause-and-effect relationship between pensions, the taxation they necessitate and postbellum expansionism. The bureaucratic process for obtaining a pension relies on the premise that many soldiers might want to turn themselves into disability cons and take advantage of the system. So happens with Caleb Dugong, Company K's least likeable member. Interestingly enough, Kirkland exposes Dugong's fraud in the very same paragraph where he describes the Union's growth during the war years. His association between individual fraud and US expansion is revealing enough to justify, once again, full quotation:

> The nation is forty per cent. Bigger than when the war closed, and a million per cent. more booming than any other nation ever was, ever dared to be, or ever will be. Fifty per cent. of the taxes collected are yearly paid out in pensions. Fifty per cent. of the dead are forgotten; so that the rest of the world (and to them) it is all the same, within twenty-five per cent. as if nobody had been killed at all. As to the wounded, each of those who still

> survive has come within from forty to sixty per cent. of becoming accustomed and reconciled to his disability; and this last-named percentage is further mitigated by the pensions paid—including one to Private Dugong, who is supposed to have strained his back carrying a wounded officer off the field at Shiloh; whereby he feels forced to walk quite bent over on four several days in the year — those on which he goes to draw his pension. He lately got an increase (including large arrears), on its being shown that he was once a corporal, though not so at the time he incurred his injury.[92]

The capital raised by and for pensions drives forward the United States as a "booming" nation with no equivalent in the globe. In a deliberate move, the actual embodiment of US exceptionalism is not Will Fargeon or any of the other redeemable characters; on the contrary, the face Kirkland assigns to the body politic is that of a treacherous skulker who has no trouble walking "on four" in order to cheat the system. Furthermore, the passage's fractured syntax and odd punctuation betray Kirkland's effort to capture the aesthetic variation brought about by disability. The incoherent language becomes symptomatic of a new stylistic register in the antipodes of both allegorical construction and romance of reunion. Disability cripples, then, the traditional literary forms so conducive to its simplification.

Like Howells, Kirkland considers alternative models of care that grate against the ableist, individualist, and expansionist creed of the Gilded Age. Outraged by the double standards of the pension system, Will Fargeon redeems himself by renouncing to his pension and barely making a living as a self-trained doctor. Even decades after the war, once the novel switches tenses to the present, Kirkland's protagonist "irrationally says that for support he does not need the pension (though he does need the other leg), and as to taking the country's money as pay for his services — money cannot pay for such things; they bear no more relation to money than the Aurora Borealis does to a pig's

eyebrow."[93] Through this lapidary statement, Fargeon collapses the systems of commutations advocated by agencies like the Pension Bureau. By preventing Fargeon from accessing this cluster of commutations and speculations and by making him tell us that "money cannot pay for such things" as the amputation of a limb, Kirkland halts the nationalist-capitalist engine behind these transpositions, forestalling also an expansionist US ideology that uses land to pay for soldiers injured fighting wars in order to graft more land.[94]

Will Fargeon's fate negates this prospect. The professionalization of care in Kirkland's novel suggests a third way, an alternative to the hollow care of the Burden-Sharers and the dehumanized bureaucracy of the pension system. By the novel's conclusion, when Fargeon is already married to Sally and has established a minimally safe position for himself in society, the possibility of upgrading his artificial leg comes up every once in a while. Whenever this happens, Fargeon mordantly considers "whether he shall get a new leg fitted, or keep the old leg and get a new man fitted to it."[95] Nothing short of innocent, Will's—and Kirkland's—riposte cautions audiences about the transformation of the US into a dehumanized, industrial nation in which artificial contrivances and persons have become equally replaceable: a *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory of abstract equality outlined by Marx and deployed by the American bourgeoisie to justify the commodification of everything. Evidence for this claim appears in the novel's final scene, as the text closes with the onomatopoeic echo of Fargeon's hobbling steps and his prosthetic leg stumping against the floor: "So he treads through the world the even tenor of his way; step—clump; step—clump; step—clump; step—."[96] This aural cue downplays a national telos of wealth, beauty and democracy.

4. Conclusion

In their refusal to be traditionally prosthetized/rehabilitated/pensioned off, Berthold Lindau and Captain Will Fargeon become dissenters who anticipate the kind of realism summoned by Siebers and the interdependency ties extolled by Ahuja. For Siebers, "disability activists have no reverence for conventional economic policy, which represents people with disabilities as a small but needy group that requires more resources than it deserves."[97] Fending for themselves (and for others), whether by exchanging favors with their neighbors or learning the medical trade late in life, Lindau and Fargeon sidestep this category. They also deliver an insightful commentary on our metaphorical appropriation of veterans with physical disabilities. The cultural production of the era that stretches between the Civil War and the end of the nineteenth century shows that amputation and, by extension most war-related injuries, acquired many valences outside its clinical realm of interpretation. Far from a straightforward tragedy, amputation awakened different responses from different social agents (healthcare providers, politicians, speculators, nurses, wives, military commanders, etc). Ongoing Congressional and social debates on the rehabilitation of Civil War soldiers confirmed that the body politic could no longer treat amputation as an extraordinary circumstance prone to symbolize other phenomena, but as an urgent reality that demanded a plan of action and an agile system of remunerations. This system was materialized in the Pension Bureau and in the legislative measures that updated its outreach and protocols. The ideology that emanated from the Bureau, nonetheless, aimed to suture national identity by rehabilitating the individual bodies of soldiers. This gesture, though, relied on a

sentimental understanding of disability that perpetuated the disabled condition as a metaphorical—not a sentient—experience.

Howell's and Kirkland's mapping of disability across several social strata and ideological positions hijacks both the romanticized construct of war-related disability and the mercantilist logic of transaction—with its attendant convertibility between money, body parts, and land. Portraying disability in his realist fiction does not imply finding a new expressive channel, but undoing flawed ones. This disposition keeps its relevance in a day and age suffused with disability stereotypes (poster children, telethon beneficiaries, nanny-state parasites, etc). Siebers himself admits that "the real" has a bad reputation nowadays: "the theory of social construction has made it impossible to refer to 'reality' without the scare quotes we all use so often. Advocates of reality risk appearing philosophically naïve or politically reactionary."[98] Howells was no strange to these accusations, often vilified for his moral ambition to mediate and reconcile—perhaps simplify—a social landscape too vast and complex for one writer to tackle. Kirkland's marginal position in the canon of Civil War literature evinces a similar reception. Nonetheless, in their attempts, both writers succeed in reversing cultural constructions of disability while winking at dependency relations that would constitute the superstructure of a disabled counterpublics.

Notes

[1] Louisa May Alcott, *Hospital Sketches and Camp and Fireside Stories* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1881): 29.

[2] Joseph Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, (Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1968): 240. Kirkland manifested his hankering to counter sentimental and inflated accounts of the war in a letter to his friend and fellow writer Hamlin Garland: "The 'courage' of our army commanders (Grant for instance) is only the 'courage' that stands in safety and

sends other men into the jaws of death. Wait till my war novel comes out!" Qtd in Clayton A. Holaday, "Kirkland's Captain of Company K: A Twice-Told Tale." *American Literature* 25:1 (March 1953): 64.

[3] Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, 245.

[4] Qtd. in Brian Matthew Jordan, "'Living Monuments': Union Veteran Amputees and the Embodied Memory of the Civil War," *Civil War History* 57.2 (2011): 148.

[5] Lisa Long, *Rehabilitating Bodies*, 3-6.

[6] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 48.

[7] Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 65-68; Russell, *Reading Embodied Citizenship*, 73.

[8] J.R. Bagby, "The Empty Sleeve." *War Poetry of the South*. Ed. William Gilmore Simms (New York: Richardson and Company, 1866): 347.

[9] Ambrose Bierce, "An Affair of Outposts," *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians and Other Stories* (New York: Penguin, 2000): 72.

[10] Qtd. in Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993): 55.

[11] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 39-64. See also Gregory S. Jackson, "'A Dowry of Suffering': Consent, Contract, and Political Coverture in John W. De Forest's Reconstruction Romance" *American Literary History* 15:2 (Summer 2003): 276-310.

[12] Russell Conwell, *Magnolia Journey: A Union Veteran Revisits the Former Confederate States* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974); Joel Chandler Harris, "A Story of the War," *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2005): 203-15.

[13] Robert Ingersoll, *Great Speeches of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll*. Ed. J.B. McClure (New York: Cosimo, 1895, 2009): 108.

[14] Qtd. in W. E. B Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 1860-1880 (New York: The Free Press, 1998): 247.

[15] Thaddeus Stevens, *The Selected Papers of Thaddeus Stevens. Vol.2: April 1865-August 1868*. Eds. Beverly Wilson Palmer and Holly Byers Ochoa, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998): 19.

[16] On the role of military compensations in Reconstruction debates, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988): 235.

[17] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 338.

[18] Charles Sumner, "The national security and the national faith; guarantees for the national freedman and the national creditor. Speech of Hon. Charles Sumner at the Republican state convention, in Worcester, September 14, 1865." University of Michigan Digital General Collection, 2005. Accessed 7 June, 2014 http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;idno=ABZ4293.0001.001

[19] Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Human Wheel: Its Spokes and Felloes." *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston: Ticknor and Field, 1864): 307.

[20] "Statutes at Large, 41st Congress, 2nd Session", *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: US Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875* Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 25 April 2012. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage

[21] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. Trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin, 1993): 30.

[22] Ibid., 240-41.

[23] David Zimmerman, "Democratic Exchange: Wall Street, Race, and Travel Writing after Emancipation." *Organization of American Historians Annual Conference*, San Francisco, 31 March 2005.

[24] Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 6-7.

[25] Ibid., 18.

[26] William Henry Glasson, *History of Military Pension Legislation in the United States* (New York: Ams, 1900): 77. On disability quantification and application procedures, see also Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck, *Race, Ethnicity and Disability: Veterans and Benefits in Post-Civil War America*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 18.

[27] Qtd. in Logue and Blanck, *Race, Ethnicity and Disability*, 119. Since the received benefits were always commutable for their cash value, the pension legislation often contributed to the speculative bubbles and the resultant financial panics of the Gilded Age (1873 and 1893).

[28] Qtd. in Glasson, *History of Military Pension*, 108. The congressional debate in question dealt with the Arrears Act (1879), whose passage was made possible through heavy lobbying on behalf of the Grand Army of the Republic, the biggest organization of Civil War veterans, and which made it easier for ex-soldiers to increase their monthly allotments. For more on the Arrears Act, see Logue and Blanck, *Race, Ethnicity and*

Disability, 94-97. Glasson's *History* is far from unbiased, composed as it was during the aftermath of the Spanish American War and in the midst of US imperialist fervor.

[29] Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*. v.3 (London: John Murray, 1909): 135.

[30] Governmental institutions invited speculative practices. After Independence and "since the Confederation had no available funds, the officers received not money but commutation certificates, payable to them or bearer and drawing interest at six per cent." Because of the unstable market value of these commutation certificates, "many officers were driven by necessity to part with their certificates for what they could obtain, and their cash value in the market soon fell to twelve and a half cents on the dollar." Glasson, *History of Military Pension*, 22.

[31] Glasson, 25-51. Today, search sites like www.ancestry.com have entered most of the bounty land warrants from the Revolution and the War of 1812 into comprehensive databases. "US War Bounty Land Warrants, 1789-1858", *Ancestry.com*, 25 April 2012, http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1165. A limited case file of pensions and bounty-land applications from the War of Independence is also available at the National Archives website. 1 June 2012 http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/topics/revolutionary-war/index.html#pension

[32] Paul Kens, "A Promise of Expansionism,"150. See also Paul Wallace Gates, "The Role of Land Speculator in Western Development." *The Public Lands: Studies in the History of the Public Domain*. Ed. Vernon Carstensen (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963): 349-361.

[33] Levinson and Sparrow, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 16.

[34] Like ex-Confederates, African Americans confronted an endless succession of hurdles in their way to secure war pensions. Little mattered that they had supplied the unpaid labor that fueled the national economy during the antebellum years and that more than 200,000 of them had served in the ranks of the Union army. Logue and Blanck explore how the Pension Bureau minimized African Americans' (especially African American women's) chances of securing financial support. Whereas the Pension Bureau's "policies" were "on their face largely race neutral," the administration of such policies through the Bureau activated racialist filters that discriminated black applicants. In addition, African Americans' conscious decision to activate their citizenship status and, so, to whisk away their slave names also prompted the Bureau's disfavor, since its committee members had no obligation to accommodate applicants who no longer went by their slave names or who had married and changed their family names. Freed blacks' higher mobility after the war did not make it easier for them to reconnect with their previous locations and to produce the authenticating narratives that could guarantee them a pension. Finally, widespread illiteracy among African Americans ended up complicating an already excruciating application process. Therefore, the "increasing

liberality" observed by Glasson represented a mere de jure category whose democratic self-fashioning hardly ever yielded any accomplishments. See Donald R. Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004): 119-43.

[35] R.B. Rosenburg. "Empty Sleeves and Wooden Pegs: Disabled Confederate Veterans in Image and Reality." *Disabled Veterans in History*. Ed. David A. Gerber (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012): 220.

[36] Qtd. in Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 144-45.

[37] Rosenburg, "Empty Sleeves and Wooden Pegs." 208.

[38] Qtd. in Rosenburg, 207.

[39] Rosenburg, "Empty Sleeves and Wooden Pegs," 225.

[40] Ibid., 210.

[41] Ibid., 218.

[42] Ibid., 211

[43] The "red badge" in Crane's title already advances a symbolic perception of wounds and wounding. In an early battle scene, the protagonist Henry Fleming meditates on his relationship to the army as analogous to the prosthetic subordination of the limb to the body. This analogy underlines the existence of amputation as a trope in Crane's novel: "He felt that something of which he was a part—a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country—was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire. For some moments he could not flee no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand … perhaps he could have amputated himself from it." Stephen Crane. *The Stephen Crane Reader*. Ed. R.W. Stallman (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1972): 207-08. On Crane, bodies and representation, see *Michael Fried, Reading, Writing, Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): 91-205.

[44] Several critics have pointed at the economic and business terminology through which Howells explores ethical dilemmas of complicity and responsibility. See Brook Thomas, *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997): 124-25; Wai Chee Dimock, "The Economy of Pain: Capitalism, Humanitarianism, and the Realistic Novel." *New Essays on The Rise of Silas Lapham*. Ed. Donald E. Pease (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 67-90; Augusta Rohrbach, "'You're a Natural-Born Literary Man': Becoming William Dean Howells, Culture Maker and Cultural Marker," *The New England Quarterly* 73:4 (December 2000): 625-653.

[45] William Dean Howells. *Novels, 1886-1888*: *The Minister's Charge, April Hopes, Annie Kilburn*. (New York: Library of America, 1989): 308.

[46] In *Hazard* neither Lindau nor March nor Howells's narrator disclose any details regarding Lindau's original dismemberment.

[47] William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (New York: Penguin, 2001): 134.

[48] In a private communication, Howells confessed "a tenderness for [Berthold Lindau] which I feel for no other in this book," often averring that "Lindau should be seen as 'almost the protagonist.'" This marginal centrality evinces the ambivalent position of disability itself in US literature. Qtd. in Jonathan Bauch, "Public German, Private Jew: The Secret Identity of Berthold Lindau in Howells' *A Hazard of New Fortunes*." *American Literary Realism* 41:1 (Fall 2008): 14.

[49] Amanda Claybaugh, "The Autobiography of a Substitute: Trauma, History, Howells." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 18:1 (2005): 48-49; Joseph Darda, "The Sacrificial Enterprise: Negotiating Mutilation in W.D. Howells' *A Hazard of New Fortunes*." *American Literary Realism* 46:3 (Spring 2014): 211.

[50] Susan Schweik, "Disability Politics and American Literary History: Some Suggestions." *American Literary History* 20:1-2 (2008): 225.

[51] I borrow the term "living statue" applied to Civil War veterans from James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011): 19.

[52] Howells, *Hazard*, 171.

[53] Ibid., 168-69.

[54] Mary Klages, *Woeful Afflictions: Disability and Sentimentality in Victorian America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): 17, 2.

[55] Howells, *Hazard*, 264-65.

[56] Based on the uneasy sight of disabled bodies and minds by non-disabled observers, the concept of "aesthetic nervousness" enables Quayson to explore how "charity and fear" become mutually constitutive. Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007): 7.

[57] Howells, *Hazard*, 265-66.

[58] Michael Davidson, "Introduction." *The Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*. Special Issue on Dependency Theory.1:2 (October 2007): i-ii.

[59] Ibid., i.

[60] Ahuja, Neel. "The Contradictions of Colonial Dependency: Jack London, Leprosy, and Hawaiian Annexation," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*. 1:2 (May 2007): 15-16.

[61] Given that he works as a translator for *Every Other Week*, Lindau's efforts to set up horizontal dependency bonds also play out linguistic and transnationally. For an interpretation of Lindau's potential along these lines, see Russ Castronovo, *Beautiful Democracy*: *Aesthetics and Anarchy in a Global Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007): 66.

[62] On Basil March as a paradigm of American liberalism, unable to reconcile moral and commercial success, see Charles Hamon, "*A Hazard of New Fortunes* and the Reproduction of Liberalism," *Studies in American Fiction* 25 (1997): 183-95.

[63] Howells, *Hazard*, 80.

[64] Ibid., 286.

[65] Darda, "The Sacrificial Enterprise," 212.

[66] Howells, *Hazard*, 327.

[67] Ibid., 288.

[68] Ibid., 134.

[69] For Claybaugh, "*Hazard* both enacts the project of national reconstruction and resists it. This resistance is figured as amputation" ("Autobiography of a Substitute," 54). Due to its signifying pliability, amputation can signify resistance to wholeness, but it can also index national wholeness. It is in this metaphorical sense that the empty sleeve becomes a generative symbol whose many open fronts (erotic, territorial, political, social) fail to return bodies and the body politic to an original state of wholeness, but rather push them toward constant enlargement. For more on the social fantasies of rehabilitation, see Henri-Jacques Stiker, *A History of Disability*, Trans. William Sayers (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997): 132-33. Stiker builds large part of his claims around Michel Foucault's theories on confinement. Foucault identified a turning point in the seventeenth century, which he described as the beginning of "the great confinement." During this era, "confinement" institutions had become the "natural abode" of the insane. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard (Routledge: Oxon, 2005): 35-36. Stiker complicates this model through what he calls "the era of rehabilitation," which "entails fusing abnormality with the normality that is established and recognized by social consensus. We are obliged to note that this

constitutes a new confinement. Specificity and aberrancy are thereby forbidden and condemned" (136).

[70] William Dean Howells, *Criticism and Fiction, and Other Essays* (New York: New York University Press, 1965): 56.

[71] Howells, *Hazard*, 289.

[72] Ibid., 96.

[73] William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971): 204.

[74] Howells, *Hazard*, 209.

[75] Ibid., 401.

[76] Ibid., 392.

[77] Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988): 46.

[78] Howells, *Criticism and Fiction*, 305.

[79] Siebers models his definition of the "new realism of the body" after gritty passages like this, by Cheryl Marie Wade: "To put it bluntly—because this need is blunt as it gets—we must have our asses cleaned after we shit and pee. Or we have others' fingers inserted into our rectums to assist shitting" (qtd. in Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 65). While I welcome the subversive possibilities of this level of explicitness, I also fear that a new paradigm of disability authenticity might arise out of this narrative mode, occluding and/or discrediting alternative approaches. If social constructionism risks defining disability as a mere identity signifier, this "new realism" does not allow for a lot of possibilities in terms of literary explorations of disability; it rather points obsessively toward an aesthetic of the unpleasant.

[80] Howells knew Kirkland and reviewed the latter's first novel, *Zury* (1887), favorably in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 77 (June 1888): 152. Nonetheless, even if both worked on these two novels at the same time, there are not any archival remnants of any conversation between them concerning their respective projects or their personal takes on the Civil War and its impact on US letters.

[81] Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, 163.

[82] Ibid., 35.

[83] Ibid., 220.

[84] Qtd. in Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001): 319.

[85] Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, 97.

[86] Ibid., 75.

[87] Ibid., 119.

[88] Ibid., 114.

[89] See Logue and Blanck, *Race, Ethnicity and Disability*, 17, 108. Similarly, Shaffer describes African Americans' persistent efforts to enjoy their legitimate pensions in terms of a "battle for manhood after the Civil War." *After the Glory*, 4. While both sources rely their claims on an impressive and sophisticated array of data, they also tend to bypass the emasculating aura of the disabled pensioner at a time of aggressive individualism, economic competitiveness and a generalized social admiration for self-made men. Cultural texts like Kirkland's novel offer a peek into these feelings of emasculation and their strong ties with disabling conditions and experiences.

[90] Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, 168.

[91] See note 67. For a more detailed analysis of confinement and the asylum in US culture, see Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*; and Reiss, *Theaters of Madness*.

[92] Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, 346-47.

[93] Ibid., 347.

[94] Kirkland's animosity against the capitalist commodification and speculation might have originated early in his life. In 1835, his father, William Kirkland, acquired through a speculative scheme a land tract close to the Michigan frontier, moved there with his family, and unsuccessfully attempted to establish a frontier town. As a child, Joseph Kirkland witnessed his father's failure and experienced firsthand the rough conditions of frontier life. Joseph's mother, Caroline Kirkland, fictionalized the family's efforts in two volumes of what Sandra Zagarell has described as "domestic realism": *A New Home; Who'll Follow?* (1837) and *Forest Life* (1842). See Sandra A. Zagarell's "Introduction" to Caroline Kirkland, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* Ed. Sandra A. Zagarell (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999): xi, xv. In his first novel, *Zury: the Meanest Man in Spring Country*, Kirkland builds on his mother's footsteps by demystifying romantic visions of the frontier.

[95] Kirkland, *The Captain of Company K*, 351.

[96] Ibid., 351.

[97] Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 67.

[98] Ibid., 64.

Coda: Disability Crisis

Fantasies of disability do not end with the nineteenth century. As this dissertation has shown, the rise of the United States into global hegemony during this period paves the way for our current framings of disabled bodies politic. This happens because, as I have remarked, fantasies of disability confound national pasts, presents, and futures. This temporal dislocation owes to a collective desire for regeneration, eventually mutating into a desire for collective disability—the loss and/or malfunction that necessitates rehabilitation. Disability emerges then as the precondition of nationalist desire and its attendant corporeal fantasies. Today literature, film, and popular culture continue to concretize and disseminate these fantasies. For example, Charles Stratton's embodiment of antebellum innocence predates *Forrest Gump* (dir. Robert Zemeckis, 1994), whose eponymous protagonist updates a quintessentially American narrative of Adamic non-guilt. An ideal child-citizen of the General Tom Thumb kind, Gump's intellectual disability (a symbolic mental dwarfism) prevents him from understanding the violent nation-making he is complicit with.[1] On a related front, the Vanishing American might seem to have finally vanished, although current discourses on Indian alcoholism, especially Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, reinvigorate this mythic presumption of Indians' biologically-programmed disability as well as the racist and eugenicist ideologies undergirding it.[2]

Contemporary renditions of military disability showcase the most obvious continuity with the fantastic cultural work of nineteenth-century veterans, mainly after the Civil War. A case in point: In 2007, as the post-invasion phase of the Iraq War reached its highest death toll and public opinion increasingly demanded the withdrawal of

US troops, Nina Berman's wedding portrait of burn survivor Tyler Zeigel and her gloomy fiancée Renee Kline won the first prize in the "Portraits" category of the World Press Photo. Titled "Marine Wedding" [Fig. 9], the photograph circulated widely, stirring debates about a military intervention whose end seemed far from sight. The jury's validation at the World Press Photo, a non-profit organization linked to Human Rights Watch, ascribes "Marine Wedding" to the traditional portrayal of injured soldiers in progressive arenas: a living testament to the horrors of war and an injunction of 21st-century US imperialism. The prominent "Marine" in the title along with the cynosure status of Zeigel's uniform inscribe the disfigured soldier as the face(lessness) of the national corporation, sharing thus the same representational logic that Howells's and Kirkland's veteran characters tried to eschew. Even more starkly than these predecessors, Zeigel sees any trace of his subjectivity erased in the canvas-like, puckered skin that makes any discernible facial gesturing outright impossible. Zeigel is all uniform, the epitome of the unknown soldier, telling a story that is not his own.

Notwithstanding early receptions of "Marine Wedding" as a decidedly anti-war statement, both the political right and left have claimed Zeigel's wounds. Such is the symbolic pliability of the disabled body in a nationalist context—a capaciousness that constitutes this project's subject matter. What elements in the image, then, invite us to read it as an anti-war statement, a patriotic adhesion, or both? The answer can only be the extraordinary blankness of Zeigel's disabled body: a pre-text in that it lacks the usual signifiers of facial expressivity and a pretext in that it can be appropriated to defend either an anti-war stance or its opposite. Framed in these terms, Ziegel's pre-textual body eventually becomes a statement in and of itself, as commentators and audiences highlight

and then fill its blankness. A *New York Times* reviewer depicts thus Ziegel's "dead white-face" as "all but featureless, with no nose and no chin, as blank as a pullover mask."[3] The text of the review, centering on the opening night of Berman's *Purple Hearts* exhibit, follows the headline "Words Unspoken are Rendered on War's Faces," confirming Ziegel's capacity to invite and disavow language. The alleged openness of the portrait also manifests itself in the daunting silence of the newlywed couple. Mr. and Mrs. Ziegel's glances never meet. The bride's downcast eyes focus on some unlikely line of exit from the scene of her betrothal, averting both her husband and her audience. The bouquet symbolizes their union as much as it occludes any physical contact between the two.

Many domestic audiences have nonetheless interpreted this portrait as a patriotic celebration of the road toward collective and personal healing, an interpretation reminiscent of those romances of reunion from early Reconstruction. Same as in these romances, the road toward recovery here traverses the marriage institution as the means of reinserting Zeigel into the normative ranks of middle-class citizenship. And so, a Facebook profile was created with "Marine Wedding" as the profile image. Next to it, the caption reads: "This man served our country. Like for respect." Or like for fantasy, we may add. What kind of relief is gained by celebrating as romantic closure an image whose aesthetics point in a much less complacent direction? This hurried, uncritical reading of "Marine Wedding" quickly evolved into a full-scale institutional fantasy of disability once the Zeigels' home state of Illinois memorialized their union by declaring their wedding day a state holiday. October 7 became Renee and Tyler Zeigel Day. Such effort to monumentalize their wedding as a ritual of national cohesion seemed all the

more preposterous when the Zeigels filed for divorce four months later. Once again, disabled individuals and their politicized anatomies travel different roads. The gap between materiality and metaphor remains insurmountable.

My contribution in the previous chapters has been to chart the strategic convenience of this gap for US nationalism and its attendant myths, as well as to acknowledge its subversive potential for anti-nationalist critique. The separation of materiality and metaphor in fantasies of disability has systematically enabled "the rites of assent" that Sacvan Bercovitch identified as integral "to America's capacity to incorporate *and exclude*, and more precisely to incorporate by exclusion."[4] Disabled bodies politic are included in national life as two-dimensional icons, left out as sentient human beings with complex needs and alternative ways of navigating the world. Ziegel's disabling encounter with a suicide bomber outside the Iraqi town of al-Quaim can be read as a crisis-event typifying the collective loss and trauma springing from the war in Iraq. But it can—and has!—also be seen as a monument of sacrifice: the normative genre of the wedding portrait signals Zeigel's return to the habitual channels of contemporary Americanness. Despite its dissonant reception, "Marine Wedding" manages to remain essentially American both in its articulation of patriotic assent and in its—no less patriotic—dissent. On both fronts, though, "Marine Wedding's" iconicity contrasts against the widespread inattention to war veterans *as* bodies, as seen in VA wait-time and medical-neglect scandals such as the one at Walter Reed Medical Center. There,

> [s]oldiers suffering from traumatic brain injuries or stress disorders, others with amputated limbs, have languished for weeks and months on end in vermin-infested quarters waiting for a decision on their military status and a ruling on the level of benefits they will receive if they are discharged and transferred to the civilian-run Veterans Administration (VA) healthcare system.[5]

Then and now, the centrality of the disabled body in the symbolic production of national identity rests on the systematic exclusion of bodies disabled through nation-making.

Disability, I would like to conclude, renders an optimal political metaphor because of its status as a universal index of crisis. The word "crisis" derives its current usage both from the Greek verb "*krinesthai,*" meaning "to explain," and from the suffix "*krei*," meaning, "to discriminate" and "to distinguish." Under this definition, any moment of crisis, no matter how excruciating, contributes a moment of lucidity, a revelatory glance at the way things *really* work. Our maladies arrange opportunities for doctors and scientists to investigate our bodies' inner workings and homeostatic processes. Likewise, the crisis of disability also explains a fair deal in the domain of cultural representation, and it does so precisely by discriminating normal, desirable bodies from their defective, nightmarish counterparts. This dynamic is best understood, I believe, if we frame the crisis of disability as a three-fold phenomenon. First, disability is often perceived as the conspicuous aftermath of a specific crisis-event: a car accident, an unfortunate fall, a doomed chromosome, etc. The common denominator here is that something (birth, an accident, a diagnosis) befalls someone (deserved or undeservedly) turning her or him into a disabled person. The disabling crisis-event severs a soon-to-be-longed-for "before" from a tormenting "after" in the life of the disabled subject. Secondly, through a system of analogies and metaphors, this individual crisis also illustrates a social breakdown. That is why, for instance, supremacist groups adopt the pandemic metaphor and refer to immigrants as sources of infection. This second dimension of disability conflates individual and social ails. Last but not least, since the experience of disability eludes its own representation, it also marks a referential crisis

(The "words unspoken" rendered in Ziegler's visage). Because disability is at once private and public, an intimate ordeal—as in the non-communicable experiencing of physical pain—and a socially constructed identity, it is much easier for us to rather use it as the trope for something else.

The mapping that I am proposing discloses the category of disability in a fundamental, threefold crisis that aligns: 1) the enunciated disabled object, 2) the enunciator able-bodied subject who interpellates it, and 3) the nationscape containing them both. Fluctuating between individual and public spheres, between personal ordeals and political convulsions, the crisis of disability lends a useful signifier to things we cannot quite comprehend. It offers fantasy instead. From Benjamin Franklin's "MAGNA Britannia" to Berman's "Marine Wedding," its depictions have spoken for and against the nation they incarnate; their respective impairments visualize a national crisis and thus lend an evocative, pathos-filled corporeal metaphor to both supporters and detractors of US nationhood. Nevertheless—and this is the crucial part—their (anti)nationalistic meanings tend to occlude another kind of national crisis: one in which the government fails to accommodate the material-sentient needs of impaired citizens. If disabled bodies tend to symbolize social inadequacies that need to be redressed and normalized (in one word, rehabilitated), I aim toward a methodology that decrypts a different, more subversive message: the disabled body incarnates the damages to be repaired, but it can also unveil an alternative view of the nation as an indelibly disabled body, one made of incoherent Lacanian *imagos* no longer contained into a fictional gestalt through fantasies of communal damage-amelioration.

Bodies, like nations, need boundaries. The term "boundaries" here plucks a double string. On the one hand it acknowledges the material-geographical confines of bodies and nations—the well-drawn spaces they are meant to occupy; on the other, it hints at the identitarian markers of gender, race, and ability that organize individuals within their communities. Lacking these boundaries throws bodies and nation-states into a permeable, non-normative realm of indefinition. Although theorists of the body and of disability have already charted this specious realm as well as some of its subversive possibilities, *Crippling the Body Politic* has located such contestations in the crisis-events that fragment, open-up, and redefine—in one word, unbind—bodies and nations. The crisis of disability might then be a "*crisistunity*," to borrow the portmanteau with which Homer Simpson replies his daughter Lisa after she tells him that "the Chinese use the same word for 'crisis' as they do for 'opportunity.'"[6]

Seizing the *crisistunity* of disability means being attentive to the latest developments in the field of disability studies, especially in its recent intersections with queer studies, critical race theory, biopolitics, medical humanities, animal studies, and cognitive theory.[7] Like these fields, disability studies asks what its objects of study should be and, more importantly, how to empower these "objects" into volitional subjects. To this end, I have grappled with fantasy as a productive force rather than a gateway into political quietism and evasion. In future scholarship, fantasies of disability will be best explored by tracking them across a strand of post-positivist realism in literary studies. Post-positivist critics have contended that objectivity should be kept as an ideal target of inquiry.[8] For disability scholars Alison Kafer and Michael Davidson, postpositivism suggests a fertile middle ground between social constructionism

(disability is a fabricated category) and the clinical model (disability is an objective, immanent phenomenon lodged in certain bodies). Tackling—and overcoming—this impasse from the angle of political fantasy help us revert the metaphorical uses of disability. In time, this critical gesture will allow us to imagine alternative master narratives of social change ungoverned by corporeal metaphor: politically aware bodies rather than bodies politic.

Notes

[1] I owe this deft reading of *Forest Gump*'s nation-making fantasies to Lauren Berlant. See *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1997): 180-86.

[2] The closest current scholarship has come to a critical cultural exploration of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is Janet Lynne Golden, *Message in a Bottle: The Making of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). That said, the time is ripe for an analysis that connects Vanishing American discourses in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American literature with this contemporary phenomenon and how Native American writers have subverted its racist presentation.

[3] Holland Cotter, "Words Unspoken are Rendered on War's Faces." *New York Times*. 22 August 2007.

[4] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993): 14.

[5] Barry Grey, "Walter Reed scandal lifts lid on neglect of wounded US troops." *World Socialist Web Site*. 10 March 2007. http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2007/03/reed-m10.html

[6] Mark Kirkland (dir.), "Fear of Flying." *The Simpsons*. 18 December 1994.

[7] By investigating the cognitive aspect of metaphor (that is, how we internalize metaphorical language no matter how ableist in its presumptions), scholars Amy Vidali and Jay Dolmage are setting a new direction that is neither moralistic (don't use disability metaphors) nor defeatist (there's no way out of metaphor, so we have to keep on using ableist language). See Amy Vidali, "Seeing What We Know Disability and Theories of Metaphor." *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 4:1 (2010): 33-54; Jay Dolmage, "Between the Valley and the Field: Metaphor and Disability." *Prose Studies* 27.1–2 (2005): 108–119.

[8] Michael Davidson, "Cripping Consensus: Disability Studies at the Intersection." *American Literary History* 28:2 (Summer 2016): 433-53.

APPENDIX

Fig. 1. Ensign, Bridgman, and Fanning, *The World at One View* (New York: Ensign, Bridgman, and Fanning, 1854)

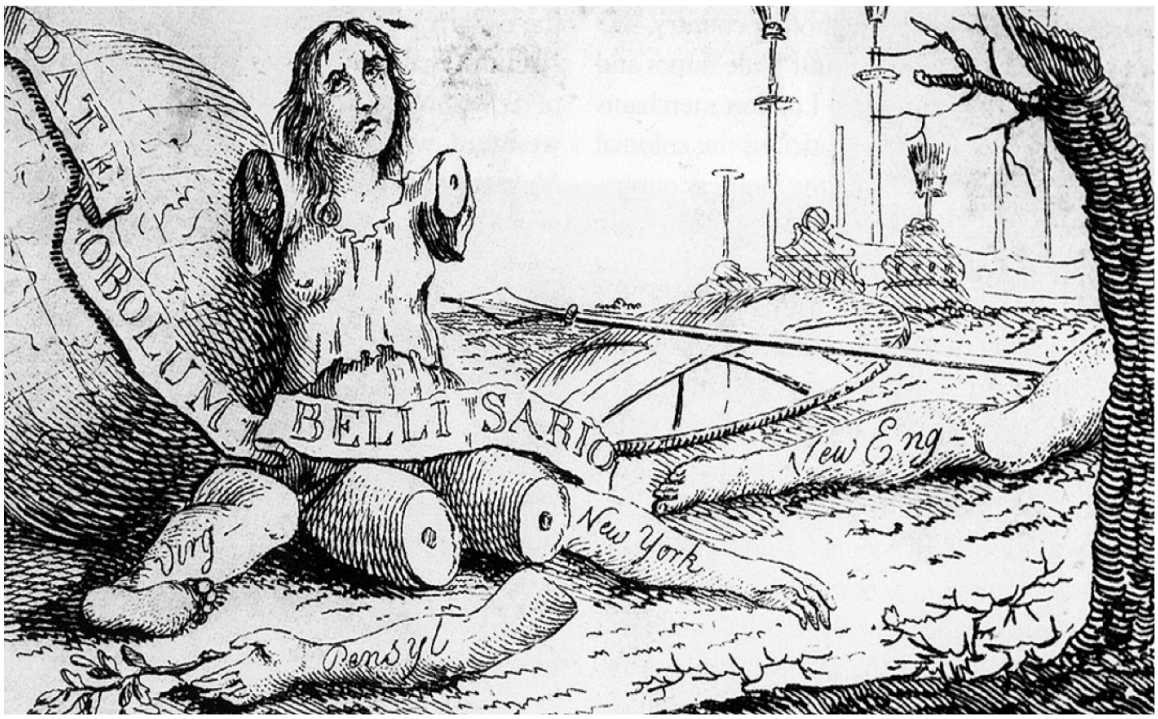
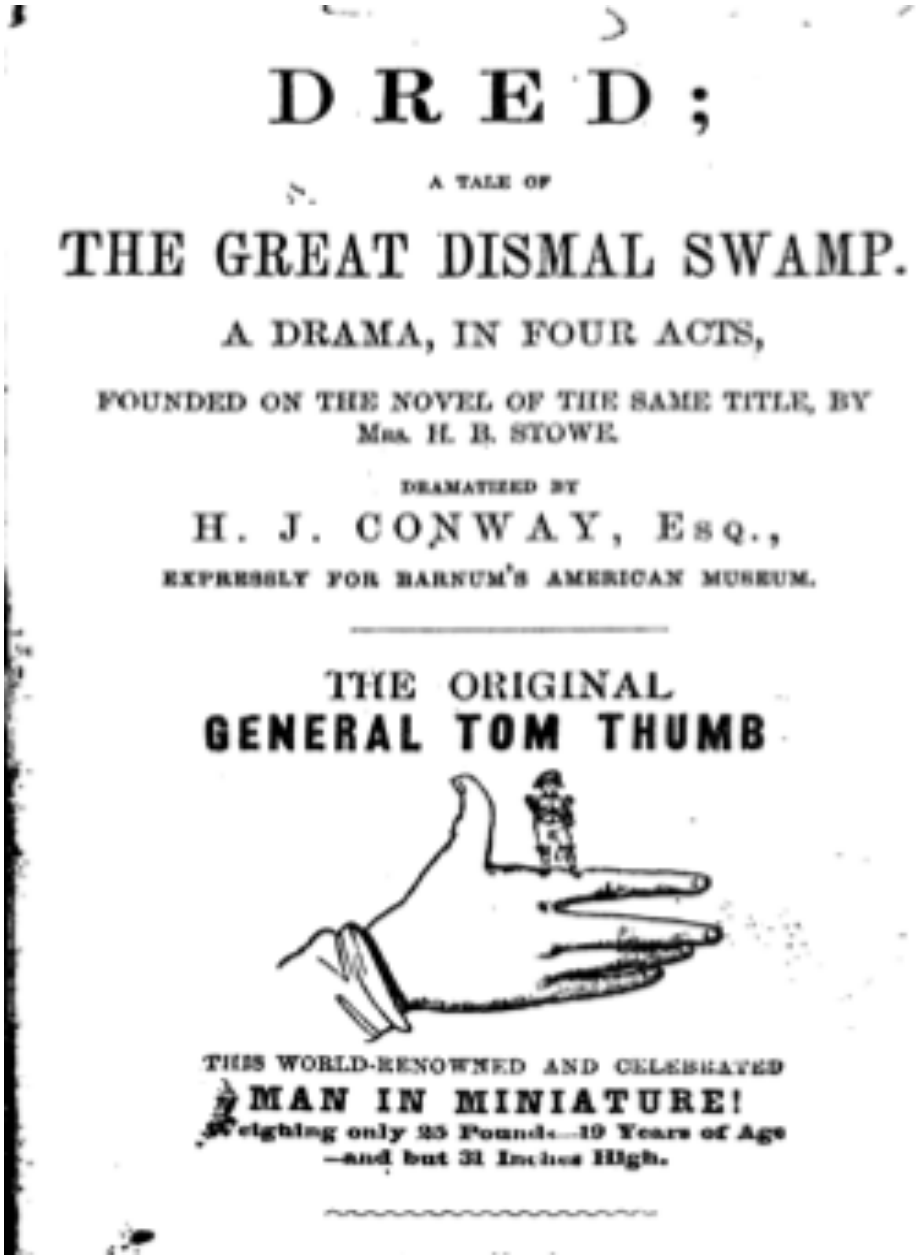


Fig. 2. Benjamin Franklin, William Temple Franklin, "MAGNA Britannia: her Colonies REDUC'D," *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, v. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1818): 219.

Fig. 3. "General Tom Thumb, after 1860," Victoria and Albert Museum, London



DRED;

A TALE OF

THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP.

A DRAMA, IN FOUR ACTS,

FOUNDED ON THE NOVEL OF THE SAME TITLE, BY
Mrs. H. B. STOWE.

DRAMATIZED BY

H. J. CONWAY, Esq.,

EXPRESSLY FOR BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM.

THE ORIGINAL
GENERAL TOM THUMB

THIS WORLD-RENOWNED AND CELEBRATED
MAN IN MINIATURE!
Weighing only 25 Pounds—19 Years of Age
—and but 31 Inches High.

Fig. 4. H.J. Conway, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp. A Drama, in Four Acts*. New York: John W. Amerman, 1856

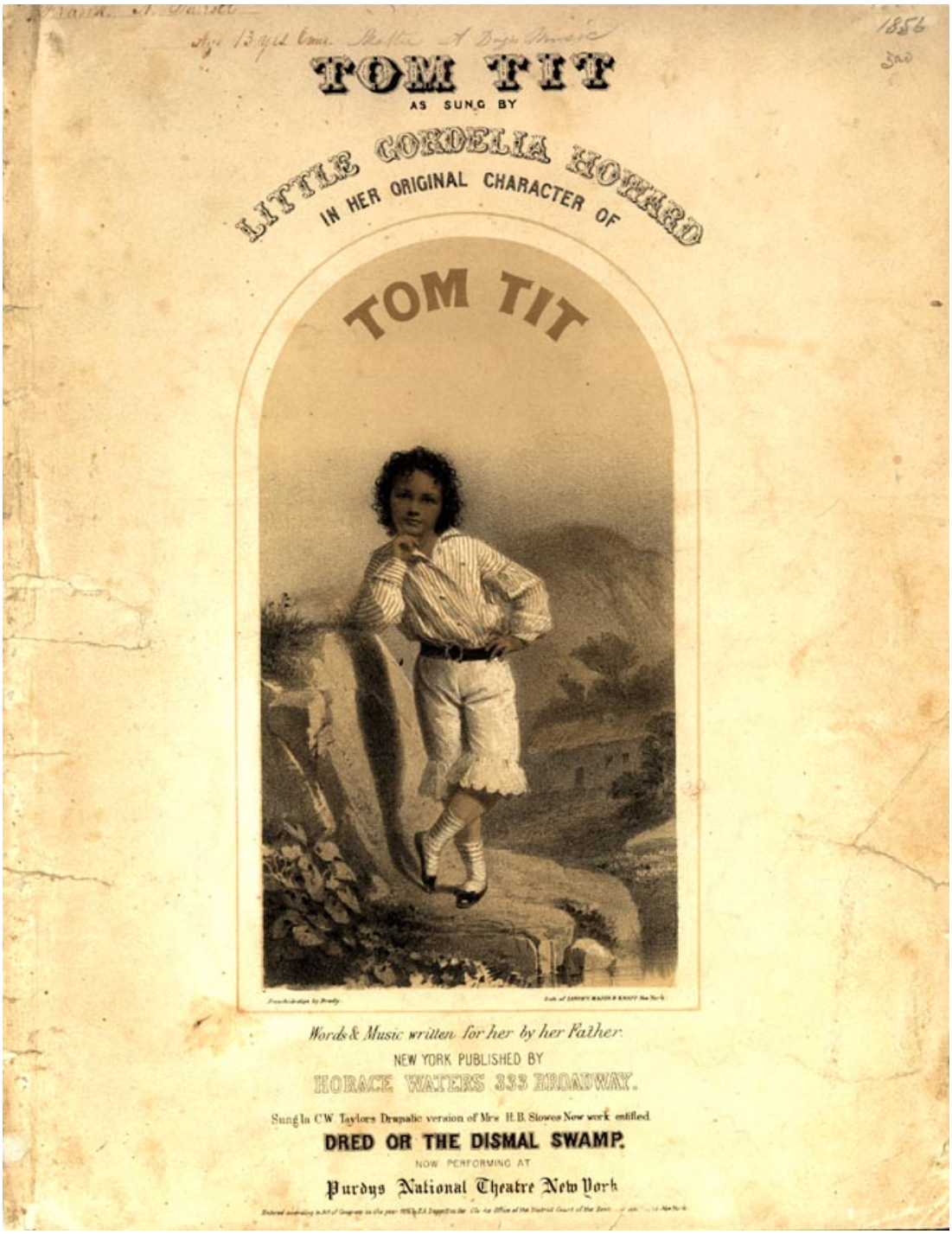


Fig. 5. G. C. Howard, *Tom Tit as Sung by Little Cordelia Howard*. New York: Horace Waters, 1856. Performing Arts Encyclopedia, Library of Congress.

Fig. 6. "Dred," Houghton Library Theatre Collection, Harvard University

Fig. 7. "General Tom Thumb's gravestone in Mountain Grove Cemetery, Bridgeport, Connecticut," Photo by Staib (2006)

Rates and Disabilities Specified by Law.	From July 4, 1864.	From Mar. 3, 1865.	From June 6, 1866.	From June 4, 1872.	From June 4, 1874.	From Feb. 28, 1877.	From June 17, 1878.	From Mar. 3, 1879.	From Mar. 3, 1883.	From Mar. 3, 1885.	From Aug. 4, 1886.	From Aug. 27, 1888.	From Feb. 12, 1889.	From Mar. 4, 1890.	Act of July 14, 1892.
Loss of both hands	$25	...	...	$31¼	$50	...	$72	.....	...	.....	...	...	$100	...	....
Loss of sight of both eyes	25	...	...	31¼	50	...	72	.....	...	.....	...	...	...	...	....
Loss of both feet	20	...	...	31¼	50	...	72	.....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Loss of sight of one eye, the sight of the other lost before enlistment	...	...	$25	31¼	50	...	72	.....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Total disability in both hands	...	...	25	31¼	50	...	72	.....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Regular aid and attendance (first grade)	...	...	25	31¼	50	...	72	.....	...	...	...	...	....	$72	[*]
Periodical aid and attendance	...	...	...	.....	...	...	..	....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	†$50
Loss of a leg at hip joint	...	...	15	24	...	...	...	$37½	...	.....	$45	...	....	...	....
Loss of an arm at shoulder joint	...	...	15	18	24	...	...	.....	$30	$37½	45	...	....	...	....
Loss of an arm at or above elbow, or a leg at or above knee	...	...	15	18	24	...	...	.....	30	.....	36	...	....	...	....
Loss of a leg above the knee causing inability to wear an artificial limb	...	...	15	24	...	...	...	.....	30	.....	36	...	....	...	....
Loss of one hand and one foot	...	$20	...	24	...	$36	...	.....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Total disability in one arm and one leg	...	...	15	18	...	...	...	.....	24	.....	36	...	....	...	....
Total disability in one hand or one foot	...	...	20	24	...	36	...	.....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Total disability in both feet	...	...	20	31¼	...	...	...	.....	...	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Loss of a hand or a foot	...	...	15	18	...	...	...	.....	24	.....	30	...	....	...	....
Total disability in one hand or one foot	...	...	15	18	...	...	...	.....	24	.....	30	...	...	...	....
Incapacity to perform manual labor	...	...	20	24	...	...	...	.....	30	.....	...	...	....	...	....
Total deafness	...	...	...	13	...	...	...	.....	...	.....	...	$30	....	...	....
Disability equivalent to the loss of a hand or a foot	...	...	15	18	...	...	...	.....	24	.....	...	...	....	...	....

* Seventy-two dollars from June 17, 1878, only where the rate was $50 under the Act of June 18, 1874, and granted prior to June 16, 1880. First grade proper is $50, amended by the Act of March 4, 1890, which increases rate to $72.

† From date of medical examination held after July 14, 1892.

Fig. 8. William Henry Glasson, "Rates and Disabilities Specified by Law," *History of Military Pension Legislation in the United States* (New York: Ams, 1900): 77.

Fig. 9. Nina Berman, "Marine Wedding" (2007) http://www.ninaberman.com/marine-wedding

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