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Picturesque Portraiture: The Composition of Reality in Hawthorne, Melville, and James

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Throughout the nineteenth century, American artists were tangled in debates regarding the representation of reality. The Hudson River School of picturesque landscape painters tackled this dilemma with a compromise formula which used the real objects of nature to create ideal scenes. This dissertation applies the same picturesque formula to select examples of literary portraiture, studied under the concept of "picturesque portraiture." Whereas the Hudson River compromise resulted in an ideal perception of reality, however, the picturesque portraits composed by nineteenth-century authors Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Henry James attempt to invoke a non-idealized "actual" reality of the portrait subject's person (though in the case of James, it is not reality itself which results, but the appearance of non-idealized "actual" reality).

This integrative study of American literature and fine arts is situated within nineteenth-century epistemological thought, beginning with Ralph Waldo Emerson and his ideal theory, which sees the real as the ideal. Emerson's ideal theory thus stands as the basis against which Hawthorne's, Melville's, and James's epistemological thinking is measured, and to which they are responding in their attempts to render reality in literary portraiture. Each chapter addresses how these authors define reality and, through the application of picturesque portraiture, demonstrates how each uses the Hudson River's compromise formula in literary portraiture to forward their own uses and conceptions of the picturesque and reality, respectively. This work helps acknowledge competing notions of reality throughout the nineteenth century as well as changing ideas about the image with the approach of modernism.

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Introduction — The Composition of Reality

Perhaps the best-known image associated with Ralph Waldo Emerson is the transparent eyeball illustration drawn by Emerson's contemporary, Christopher Pearse Cranch (see figure I-1). The drawing, in turn, represents what is possibly the best-known passage from Emerson's 1836 book-length essay, *Nature*. The passage, which Cranch quotes in part, reads:

> In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. (Emerson, *Essays and Lectures* 10)

These lines capture the two main (though paradoxical) ideas of Emerson's idealism. On one hand, because he is a disembodied "nothing," Emerson simply absorbs everything he perceives. Epistemologically, this means that his knowledge of the world, what he understands to be reality, is passively acquired—the Universal Being circulates through him. On the other hand, he sees all; he is not just a passive observer or receptor after all, but, as an embodied seer, possesses power in what he sees. Rather than Universal Being merely circulating through him, he is a part of God, he plays a role in his perceptions. Here, what Emerson knows to be real is the product of his own creation. It is this second approach which provides the basis for what Emerson calls his "ideal theory," and it is this

Figure I-1. *Standing on the Base Ground…I Become a Transparent Eyeball (Illustration for Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Nature")*, Christopher Pearse Cranch, 1830-92.

notion that "real affinities" are "*ideal* affinities, for those only are real," with which my project is occupied (*Essays and Lectures* 39, 36).

At its simplest, Emerson's ideal theory equates the ideal with the real. Working in part from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's formulation of Immanuel Kant's division between Understanding (sense experience) and Reason (pure consciousness), Emerson posits that the ideal belongs to immaterial subjectivity. In the Coleridgean sense, Aladár Sarbu writes, "the former [Understanding]…denotes the faculty man has for perception of the phenomenal world, the latter [Reason] is his organ of the 'highest and most certain knowledge'—the knowledge of the supersensuous" (30). This sense is echoed in *Nature*, when Emerson writes that "matter is a phenomenon, not a substance" (*Essays and Lectures* 40). Emerson implies that substance resides within the immaterial workings of Reason and consciousness. This does not mean, however, that Emerson dismisses the physical world. Rather, the physical world provides the objects which the mind, according to subjective Reason, uses to create its ideal perception of reality. Emerson writes that nature "is made to serve…It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which we may mould into what is useful," and "One after another, his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes, at last, only a realized will,—the double of the man" (*Essays and Lectures* 28). Emerson thus proves exemplary of Thomas Finan's contention that:

> Antebellum Americans in part participate in a Platonic tradition of the real that locates reality beyond the physical world, but their interest in the extra-actual real does not mean a rejection of the physical world. Instead, it involves a dialogue with the incidents of the physical world, as immediate appearances are tried by the experiencing individual. (2)

Physical reality is no longer understood as the real, but an ideal fabrication of the real. While the ideal is often contrasted with the real, Emerson sees ideal subjective perception as the basis of reality. Because the real has been renamed under the title "ideal," what was once objective reality is now man's subjective creation and perception of his external world. In Finan's summarization of Emerson's ideal, "Things formerly regarded as real become viewed as apparent, and those things that seemed 'visionary' become newly seen as real" (53). In Emerson's epistemology, or what Finan discusses as an "*epistemuthos*, or a myth of knowledge," we are "[invited]…to realize the things of the world as intimately connected to ourselves" (52). It is not just that things are connected to us, however, but that things *are* us. If we are to understand that the ideal is the real, then the world(s) which we live in are the creation of our individual consciousness.

Emerson's notion that we can shape our own reality, and that we can do so by using the objects of the physical world, is not dissimilar to the ideas, practices, and aesthetics that define the nineteenth century picturesque. The history of the picturesque, reaching back to eighteenth century Europe and the thinking of William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Richard Payne Knight, gives evidence to the numerous understandings of the picturesque, both as an aesthetic principle and as applied to landscape architecture and landscape painting. The current project, however, focuses on landscape painting and the later, specifically American understanding of the term as it relates to this genre of art. Because I am concerned with practices of composition, that is, the arrangement of material objects in the creation of an ideal image or scene, I am particularly interested in the aesthetics belonging to the Hudson River School, a group of American landscape

artists recognized for their use of a compositional formula. As a term, the Hudson River School refers to "America's first school of painting" and "defines the landscape artists who painted between 1825 and 1880, notably Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, Frederic Church, Albert Bierstadt, and John Kensett" (Trebilcock, "Hudson River School"). The artwork belonging to this school is a response to the dilemma between the real and the ideal faced by an earlier artist and the father of the American picturesque, Thomas Cole.

American art historian Barbara Novak writes that Cole was "the dreamer, the arch-romantic who preferred to paint Arcadian compositions…rather than specific 'views' of nature" (43, 46). Such romantic visions, however, were unwelcome and uncommon in artwork belonging to this period, in part because of the American desire for "things." Novak writes that "the need to grasp reality, to ascertain the physical *thereness* of things seems to be a necessary component of the American experience" (7). It was not just any "thing" that Americans required in landscape painting, however. Contemporary moral and religious thinking, as well as the desire for uniquely American landscapes, dictated that artwork convey moral value through American scenes largely unmarred by use of imagination. For nineteenth-century Americans, the natural world stood as an image of God and God's work. This made for an "emphasis on the moral value of the aesthetic experience and, in particular, on the moral benefits to be derived from contemplating landscape" which is "vital to an understanding of landscape taste in nineteenth-century America" (Novak 42). The artist looking to convey moral value through landscape, however, was expected to do so without too much manipulation of the landscape; the landscape was God's world, and "God's world…was not to be tampered

with" (Novak 43). Because viewers also wanted something nation specific, the landscapes artists painted were expected to be or look American; landscape paintings were expected to convey moral value through scenes which reflected both God's world and the unique American landscape. The artist, then, was put into a difficult situation where he "must not descend to the level of 'servile' or 'mere' imitation" yet "neither should he exert too forcefully his powers of transformation" (Novak 43). Cole's "art offers an initial statement of a basic dilemma" presented by these criticisms, "a polarity of the real and the ideal" (Novak 43). While Cole never fully realized a solution to this dilemma, his artistic attempts to respond to the need for meaningful ideas and the tangible "things" of an American landscape provide the basis for the solution offered by the Hudson River School.

In response to the needs dictated by the American public and their criticisms of Cole, the Hudson River School developed a "compromise formula" for their landscape paintings (Novak 43). As the name suggests, this formula settles for limited use of imagination. Instead of relying entirely on thoughts rather than things, as Cole aspired, the Hudson River School artists take the tangible "things" of nature and deliberately select and arrange those objects to create scenes which represent an improved landscape. The intent is to create landscapes which appear like a picture, that is, aesthetically favorable compositions which, through artistic principles such as contrast, proportion, and balance, are harmonious and pleasurable to the eye**.** This is precisely what the word "picturesque" means. Malcolm Andrews writes that "The term Picturesque surfaced in English usage…near the beginning of the eighteenth century, simply as a way of denoting

'like a picture,'" and "The term applies to the way in which objects are organised so as to qualify them for representation in a painting" (6). Nineteenth-century art critic James Jackson Jarves summarized and disparaged this formula, and thus the picturesque more generally, in the following remark on Hudson River artists Bierstadt and Church:

> Each composes his pictures from actual sketches, with the desire to render the general truths and spirit of the locations of their landscapes, though often departing from the literal features of the view. With singular inconsistency of mind they idealize in composition and materialize in execution so that, though the details of the scenery are substantially correct, the scene as a whole is often false. Neither manifests any grand conception of nature, nor appreciation of its poetry. Graphic beauty of composition and illustration are their chief points. (234)

Nineteenth-century artist James William Pattison expressed similar feelings. In "A Notable Collection of American Paintings," he critiques Bierstadt generally and his painting "Mount Lander" in particular (see figure I-2).[1] Pattison writes:

> His huge picture of 'Mount Lander' shows us two waterfalls in a mountain gap. Above them the sky was mysterious with mists and over the mists hovered a sharp peak of stupendous size, thrusting its head far into the loftiness of the heavens. There are no such peaks there and the formation of the rock forbids them. I have stood on the spot where he sketched the scene. The two falls are in evidence, but he exaggerated their height. All the remainder of the scene was pretty correctly rendered, barring the peak. Even then people made a joke of it; of this searching the world for scenery and manufacturing side shows for scenery's sake. 'Bierstadt has a faith that moves the mountains,' declared witty folks. (115)

[1] To my knowledge, there is no Bierstadt painting titled "Mount Lander." I do believe, however, that the painting shown in Figure I-2, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, is the image to which Pattison refers. There is a similarly titled painting, *Rocky Mountains, "Lander's Peak,"* from the same year. However, the painting included here is significantly larger than the other, and in Pattison's criticism he refers to the picture as "huge." Furthermore, while to my eye the sky of the other painting is mistier than that of the painting in Figure I-2, the painting shown in Figure I-2 represents the mountain's sharp peak with greater clarity. This image is also incredibly well known. Laura Fry writes that, after his 1863 trip to the California coast with writer Fitz Hugh Ludlow, Bierstadt, "In an outpouring of immense panoramic canvases…expressed the epic scale of the West by combining his precise observations of the land with exaggerated, fantastical peaks dissolving into misty clouds, merging the corporeal with the celestial" (15). *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* is one of these paintings, and it is regarded, by Fry, as Bierstadt's "second great picture…measuring a full ten feet in length" (15).

Figure I-2. *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, Albert Bierstadt, 1863.

Like Jarves, Pattison takes issue with the inherent impossibility and falseness of the scene, as well as the fact that the manufactured sublimity and grossly exaggerated features are employed simply for creating a scene. Both Jarves's and Pattison's criticisms anticipate John Conron's conception of the "picturesque mise-en-scène: the art of transforming [scenes] into 'a little spectacle framed off from everything else'—the art, that is, of *putting things into scenic form*" (70). Unlike Conron, though, who is interested in the use of perspective, framing, and lighting in creating these scenes, Jarves and Pattison are more generally concerned with the intentional manipulation and arrangement of natural objects. Certainly, perspective, framing, and lighting do play a part in Bierstadt's picturesque. Jarves and Pattison, however, are less concerned with such aspects of painterly technique as they are preoccupied with the practice of intentional (mis)composition.

In *Inquiry into the Picturesque*, Sidney Robinson discusses the issue of picturesque composition and the resultant misrepresentation in terms of deception. Robinson writes that "The picturesque used nature deceptively according to some because, although it referred to nature, it was not obedient" (3). Here, the problem with the deception of composition is more specifically a problem of honesty. The picturesque "was attacked for trifling with nature, for masquerading in nature's motley cloak, when it would have been more honest either to present clearly its artifice or to step aside deferentially and let nature stand free" (Robinson 93). The "dangerous deception" of the picturesque practice of "Arranging substantial things like trees and rocks and water to look like a picture" results in "Partial concealment [which] produces uncertainty" (Robinson xiii). While Robinson makes these statements regarding picturesque aesthetic theory and landscape architecture and design, Jarves's and Pattinson's comments show that similar issues existed for viewers of picturesque landscape paintings**.** Neither Jarves's nor Pattison's criticisms indicate concern with uncertainty. Their displeasure with the untruthfulness or unreality of picturesque compositions, however, does speak to the issue of deception on the level of objectivity; while uncertainty may not be an issue, the fact that Hudson River scenes are objectively untrue makes them fraudulent.

While the artists of the Hudson River School thus arrived at a solution to the real-ideal dilemma experienced by Thomas Cole, they did not entirely escape the criticism of creating artwork that wasn't real or true enough. Aside from the issue that Hudson River landscapes lack significance or meaning outside of scenic appearances, they were, to contemporary viewers, too ideal. Like Cole, the Hudson River artists—or, based on the

above examples, Church and Bierstadt, at least—were judged by their contemporaries to lean too much toward the ideal and not represent enough of the real. As applied to the picturesque formula of composition, the ideal refers to the false representation of a landscape designed to convey a scene that appears better than the actual landscape; the ideal of the picturesque formula is defined by the arrangement of a landscape meant to represent a scene which, as the saying goes, is "pretty as a picture." While the ideal is thus the main defining characteristic of picturesque landscapes, it is not correct to say that the picturesque lacks aspects of the real. The real, it will be remembered, is part of the Hudson River School's compromise. The final product, however, is associated with the ideal rather than the real because, while the material objects of nature convey some sense of truth, the finished landscape is too arranged and too picture-like to be considered anything other than ideal.

The Hudson River School's formula of incorporating aspects of real landscapes to create ideal landscape scenes provides the main ground of comparison to Emerson's ideal theory. Like Emerson's theory, the picturesque formula maintains the use of real objects (in Emersonian terms, material objects) as a means to an end. The end is ideal because it reflects an image or world which does not adhere to objective reality, but which represents a subjective view or understanding of reality; like the world which Emerson creates from his agency as a "part or particle of God," the painted worlds crafted by the Hudson River artists belong to subjective perception and intention. Whether these landscape painters believed, like Emerson, that their formula realized a higher or truer reality is a question which requires a study of the beliefs and philosophies of each

Hudson River artist. While such a study would shed light on how these artists approach and understand the picturesque formula, I do not allow space for this inquiry in the current project. Instead, I offer this comparison between Emerson's ideal theory and the Hudson River School formula as a means of establishing an equivalence in meaning between the "ideal" (as understood in Emerson's ideal theory) and the "picturesque" (as defined by the Hudson River School compromise). When I equate these terms in meaning, I do so based on the contents or practices of the terms, on the commonality between the theoretical and the aesthetic in their shared compositional union of the real and the ideal. It is on this basis of equivalence and commonality that I propose that Emerson's ideal theory is a picturesque theory. If by picturesque we are to understand a composition created using the real and ideal, then Emerson's ideal theory is a philosophical embodiment of the picturesque.

Emerson, however, is not the sole literary figure who may be understood to utilize this compositional formula. In this dissertation, I show how the picturesque formula can be applied to the work of three of Emerson's contemporaries—Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Henry James—both in their responses to Emerson's ideal theory and in their own attempts to represent and define reality. Hawthorne, Melville, and James have a complex relationship to Emerson's theory of reality, and, as my analysis of the picturesque formula shows, each agrees with Emerson that reality involves both the real and the ideal. The reality that results, however, is—in the case of each of these three authors—something other than Emerson's idealism. Although this group of authors may thus be shown to embrace the same picturesque formula, their problems with and

responses to Emerson's thinking opens room for their own approaches to reality and the picturesque.

While I include analyses of letters, essays, and prologues in my study of how these authors approach reality, it is not these texts which I turn to for examples of the picturesque. Rather, I locate the picturesque in written, literary portraiture. Nineteenth century Western literature about portraiture is a preferred medium through which to explore ideas about what constitutes the real in art because, as Michal Peled Ginsburg discusses, these narratives "pay as much attention to the painter as to the portrait itself and deal with the circumstances and process of production in addition to the subsequent effects of the portrait" (4). This focus on the artist and his means of artistic creation, as well as a consideration of the final product itself, introduces representational issues regarding mediation, subjective vision, and resemblance—issues which do not exist in seventeenth and eighteenth century narratives about portraiture.[2] Ginsburg writes that, "With the introduction of the painter" in nineteenth century portrait stories, the portrait "can no longer been seen as an unmediated document of the past presence of its subject since it also bears the imprint of its producer, whose way of seeing and view of the subject are inscribed in the portrait" (5). Just as much as the portrait is, "to a certain degree, a portrait of the painter…The represented subject, in addition, is to some extent the construct of the painter" (Ginsburg 5). For these reasons, Ginsburg argues:

[2] According to Ginsburg, there are three reasons why these issues are not pertinent to portrait stories belonging to these centuries. In portrait stories belonging to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the portrait : (1) "appears as an object already existing in the world and about whose producer and process of production not much (most often nothing) needs to be said"; (2) is "perceived as referring unambiguously to a real, existing person"; and (3) "embodies residues of past conflicts and helps bring about their resolution (or dissolution)," all of which render both the artist and his process "irrelevant" (Ginsburg 3, 4).

> the act of viewing, or seeing, can no longer be…a simple identification of the "real subject"…the subject can no longer be seen as prior to and independent of its representations, as having an "identity" of which the portrait is merely a token; rather, subjectivity (of sitter, painter, and viewer) is seen as produced by and in relation to representations. (5)

As Ginsburg's argument suggests, it is not just the reality of the subject which comes into question, but the reality of representation at large. Nineteenth century narratives about portraiture can thus be understood to be tangled in a representational dilemma not dissimilar to that encountered in picturesque landscape paintings.

Doubtless, because the authors included in my study are thinking about the real in relation to people rather than the natural world, their notions of the real and ideal consist of something other than the objects of nature and their favorable, picture-like arrangement. Yet neither do the elements of their picturesque formula consist, as they do for Emerson, of Reason and Understanding, pure consciousness and sense experience. To be sure, James's thinking is the most like Emerson's, primarily in his prioritization of subjectivity in the construction of reality. James, however, uses subjectivity to represent an appearance of reality, whereas Emerson's subjectivity renders reality itself. What stands as the real and the ideal, then, is different for Hawthorne, Melville, and James alike, and is dependent upon how they define the real. The object of this dissertation is thus to grapple with definitions of the real and to study how these authors' conceptualizations of such a nebulous concept can be understood through the lens of portraiture and the picturesque.

Scholarship about art and Hawthorne, Melville, and James is—like the broader study of the relationship between art and literature—well established and plentiful. In

Hawthorne studies there is a large body of work exploring Hawthorne's relationship with and knowledge and uses of the visual arts. This includes research by Judith Kaufman Budz, Rita Gollin, John Idol, and R.K Gupta. Rita Gollin and R.K Gupta have also written about more theoretical aspects of Hawthorne and the fine arts in their studies of Hawthorne's approach and response to aesthetics, and his own theory of art, respectively. Melville scholarship is not dissimilar. Douglas Robillard, Christopher Sten, and Robert Wallace write about Melville and the visual arts. Dennis Berthold and Peter John Brownlee are more specifically interested in Melville and his relationship with genre painting, while John Bryant, Samuel Otter, and Elisa Tamarkin focus on responses to and uses of the picturesque. Elisa Tamarkin's work also includes research on Melville's large collection of prints, his general interest in pictures, and the aesthetic theory which results from his interactions with, and knowledge of art. Scholarship on James and the fine arts includes similar research, though with an overwhelming emphasis on Impressionism (as well as the related though distinct movements in Realism and British Aestheticism). James Kirschke, Adam Parkes, and John Scholar all write about impressions in general and Impressionism in particular as they relate to Jame's approach to fiction. Max Saunders and Peter Stowell do similar work, though with a slightly different approach which studies James as a literary Impressionist and his writing as works of literary Impressionism.

The social, cultural, and intellectual histories with which these interdisciplinary studies are concerned are also present in my study. And while I do use this scholarship to help inform my own understanding of Hawthrone, Melville, and James and their

relationships to fine art, my study is distinct because I approach their written examples of art through an application of a picturesque aesthetic theory; I do not just study these authors and their knowledges and uses of art, but apply an artistic formula to their literary portraiture as a channel through which to explore their epistemological thinking. In some manner, then, this project is an extension of Barbra Novak's study because it explores how the use of literary portraits can be understood as another response to the ideology of the picturesque, particularly as the American picturesque is a genre established as a resolution to the problem of the real-ideal aesthetic. Additionally, and by extension, my focus on the real-ideal dilemma helps realize questions about how reality is known, seen, and represented in artistic representations of the human face.

Because the question of how we know the real is central to this project, it is ultimately a project about epistemological thought, beginning with Emerson in the early nineteenth century. My focus on how the real is realized through vision—how the portrait artist represents the real for visual perception, and how we recognize the real in portraiture—makes this more specifically a project about visual epistemology. While Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, and James all have unique understandings of the real, an overarching definition of the real is thus required. I define the real to mean that which *is* rather than that which appears to be. Raymond Williams, in his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, speaks to this duality between being and seeing in his discussion of "Realism." The word, Williams writes, came into usage in English in the 1850s and "developed four distinguishable meanings," one of which is "as a description of facing up to things as they really are, and not as we imagine or would like them to be"

(199). Although Williams makes this distinction in his summarization of a philosophy, it is a division, I believe, which likewise applies to the real more broadly, not just as a doctrine but as a descriptive quality or state. When I speak of the real and reality, then, I refer to things—or, because I am working with literary portraiture, people—as they really are; the real is the truth of a person or thing, it is an understanding or, in the arts, a representation, which captures a person or thing as they actually exist. To grant as much clarity to this difficult task of defining such a vague concept, I offer the following definition of an inherent and related concept: "truth." By truth I mean that which is in accord with reality; truth is an accuracy or agreement with the actuality of a person or thing. To say that something possesses truth, or is truthful, is to say that it consists of verity, that it aligns with things as they actually are and not as one would like to see them as, or as they appear.

Each of the authors included in this study has their own relationship to these terms, which I explore in each chapter. While Hawthorne, Melville, and James are not in agreement about what constitutes the real in representation, they are alike in that their attempts to achieve reality are a response to the Transcendental notion of reality set forth by Emerson. I thus approach Emerson's ideal theory as the standard for nineteenth-century epistemology. The following discussion of Emerson's intellectual thinking, in turn, stands as the baseline against which I measure and analyze, through literary portraits, the epistemological thinking posited by Hawthorne, Melville, and James.

In Emerson's thinking, reality and truth reside within the individual. Emerson's epistemological thinking, alternately referred to as American Romanticism or

Transcendentalism, is inspired by Kant and other thinkers associated with German idealism who "dwelt on the way that the subjectivity of the human mind can condition what we take to be the material" (Finan 3). The term "transcendentalism" comes directly from Kant, though the term as used and understood by Emerson and other American Romantic thinkers derives less from Kant than from Samuel Taylor Coleridge and other British Romantics who "served as conduits for these philosophical ideas in the United States" (Finan 3). Emerson's conceptualization of Reason and Understanding likewise has roots in Kant, though his interpretation of these concepts is unique to Kant's and, once again, is shaped by Coleridge's rendering and adaptation. The 1825 American edition of *Aids to Reflection*, with an introduction by University of Vermont President James Marsh, was particularly influential for Emerson and other Romantic figures. According to Russell Goodman, this text "was an early source of Emerson's knowledge of the distinction between Reason and Understanding, a distinction that was all the rage in American letters and advanced religious thought in the years after Marsh's edition was published" (154). Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch also note that this edition "achieved the status of a textbook for the American romantics" (324). Undoubtedly, this is not the only text that shaped Emerson's thinking. Nor was Coleridge his only source of inspiration. Goodman and Anderson and Fisch also note the friendship and inspiration Emerson found in Thomas Caryle. Goodman too discusses Madame de Staël as a source of Emerson's thinking about Kant, and Anderson and Fisch and David Greenham point to French thinkers Victor Cousin and Théodore Simon Jouffroy as influential for Emerson's

Romanticism and Transcendentalism at large. As Greenham shows with his study of *Emerson's Transatlantic Romanticism*, there is a long line of

> transmission of Kant's legacy through his German Romantic successors, notably Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, Freidrich Schlegel and Novalis, as they were interpreted, translated and made available across the Atlantic by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle, Frederick Henry Hedge and Victor Cousin. (x)

While Emerson's sources and influences are thus various, I focus on Coleridge because he is the primary figure who brought to America the ideas of Reason and Understanding that are central to Emerson's epistemological thinking.

Briefly, Coleridge's philosophy crafts a vision of the world which is based on more than science and reason. A Romantic, Coleridge unites mind, soul, and imagination. M.H. Abrams writes about Coleridge's attempt to unite science and imagination as

> an alternative world-vision that would suffice to the heart as well as the head, by supplementing science with imaginations; or, as he put it in terms of his faculty psychology, the sense-phenomena ordered by "the understanding" are to be "impregnated" by "the imagination," and so mediated to the requirements of the supreme and inclusive power of the mind that he called "the reason." (215)

Because Reason is the supreme power of the mind, it is here that Coleridge realizes a knowledge of truth, and that truth is achieved through use of imagination; imagination is an intuitive tool by which Understanding is mediated to Reason. As Michelle Kohler writes, Coleridge "turns to the imagination as the virtuosic third faculty that synthesizes the two modes of apprehension, seamlessly transferring the powers of each to the other" (20). Understanding and Reason thus present "two distinct modes of knowing directed at different objects of knowledge—sense data, on the one hand, and spiritual truths, on the other" (Kohler 20). A greater truth results when the two are synthesized through the

imagination. Since Coleridge understands imagination as intuitive, the knowledge of truth is acquired immediately. Coleridge approaches Reason as an "epistemological faculty of intuition that can immediately know spiritual truths that altogether transcend material experience" (Kohler 20).

It is here, in the act of transcendence above or outside of material experience, that Emerson likewise locates knowledge; and that knowledge, furthermore, is accessed through mind and consciousness, not material "things." Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch recognize this emphasis on the internal self as a defining aspect of American Romanticism. "American Romanticism," they write, "rediscovered the life of the soul. It rejected the use of external reason in favor of an internal intuitive sense. It replaced analytical judgment by imaginative creation" (Anderson and Fisch 324). These ideas have already been discussed in the context of Emerson's embodied, will-driven approach to reality. The embodied approach, however, is only one half of Emerson's Transcendentalism; and while this approach conflicts with the disembodied method, the latter is established on the same metaphysical ideas, primarily in the division between Understanding and Reason and the subordination of the former under the latter.

In his metaphor of the transparent eyeball, Emerson writes "I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me" (*Essays and Lectures* 10). Universal Being is knowledge, and Emerson acquires this knowledge through vision. This vision, however, is noncorporeal. As Michelle Kohler writes, "although eyesight is the organ of his transcendent epistemology, it is an elaborately immaterial eyesight, for the Emersonian eye sloughs off the body and achieves omniscience and total

consciousness by merging with or soaring above the visible world" (24). This disembodied approach understands that knowledge does not reside within the objects of nature, but within man himself; and it is when man becomes one with nature, when he separates himself from the material world of Understanding and transcends into the world of Reason, that he is able to acquire a greater, truer knowledge of reality. The process of acquisition in this realm of pure consciousness is inactive. Knowledge simply circulates through Emerson without any action of his own. Because it is within the state of Reason that Emerson reaches knowledge, it is ultimately Reason which is responsible for the absorption of knowledge. As Paul Russell Anderson and Marx Harold Fisch write, following Coleridge, Reason was seen as

> an intuitive faculty which acquired truth directly. Man's mind was a sensitive vehicle through which truth flowed and out of which certainty came. The acquisition of knowledge was not a difficult observational trail to follow step by step; it was rather a pleasant experience to enjoy. (324)

Emerson states as much himself in an 1834 letter to his brother Edward, wherein Emerson writes that "Reason is the highest faculty of the soul—what we mean often by the soul itself; it never *reasons*, never proves, it simply perceives; it is vision" (*Selected Letters* 133). Reason is vision and vision is knowledge. All that is required for knowledge of reality is correct vision, a vision achieved by man's merging with nature and his transcendence into pure consciousness.

While Emerson here agrees with Coleridge in his approach to Reason as an intuitive faculty, he differs from Coleridge in his erasure of imagination. For Emerson, Reason's only job is to perceive, to absorb the truth that is before its eye(s). Emerson's acquisition of truth is thus akin to Coleridge's immediate knowledge of spirit and truth.

Their difference lies in Emerson's omission of the imagination as the tool which allows for this free flow of knowledge. Emerson's Reason relies on vision and vision alone, resulting, as Michelle Kohler writes, in a collapse of "empirical and nonempirical faculties, synthesizing them into a figure of seeing, pure and simple, that elides the need for a third unifying faculty" (23). As opposed to the imagination, whose "signature characteristic is its function as an actively creative force, its ability to assemble something new rather than only to reproduce or reassemble sense impressions," Emerson's visual, perceiving Reason "connotes a union that is passively, ineluctably perceived regardless of one's will" (Kohler 22). Unlike the second of Emerson's two-pronged approach to reality—which embodies the seeing eye and turns the contents of pure consciousness outward, making consciousness an active participant in the construction of reality—here, all one must do is be and see. Despite their differences, both approaches see Understanding subordinated to Reason, making Reason the primary epistemological faculty of Emerson's Transcendentalism. As Russell Goodman writes, "In Emerson's *Nature*, reason becomes an epistemological and metaphysical principle that colors or shapes the world" (154). Whether the perceiver is an active or inactive participant in that coloring and shaping, it is his subjective consciousness which provides the basis for reality and his knowledge of that reality.

The problem with this thinking is that neither reality nor our knowledge of reality is certain. If subjective consciousness is the basis for reality and knowledge, then it is impossible to positively know reality as it exists outside of the self. Indeed, external, objective reality may not even exist. While Emerson is aware of this issue, concluding in

Nature that his ideal theory should "stand, then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprize us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world," he appears neither concerned with nor interested in the problems raised by an inability to know or trust reality with any degree of confidence (*Essays and Lectures* 41). Emerson acknowledges that "A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself, whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists," but then questions whether the latter really matters (*Essays and Lectures* 32). He asks, "In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul?"; and proclaims, "Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me, so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses" (*Essays and Lectures* 32). Trying the accuracy of their senses, however, is precisely what Hawthorne and Melville do in their attempts to achieve the real in their literary portraiture, while James is interested in engaging with sense experience in his appearance of reality.

In this dissertation, I use my concept of "picturesque portraiture" to show how Hawthorne, Melville, and James—while in disagreement or difference with Emerson—utilize the same picturesque formula which sees the union of the real and the ideal in the representation of reality. By picturesque portraiture I mean a portraiture which, like the landscapes painted by artists of the Hudson River School, brings together "the details of

scenery" (or, in portraiture, the details of a person's character) in the representation of one complete picture (Jarves, qtd. in Novak 60). Unlike these landscapes, though, which present compositions rather than actual views so as "to render the general truths and spirit of the localities," picturesque portraiture, I argue, uses composition to render the inner truth of the subject portrayed (Jarves, qtd. in Novak 60). Pairing portraiture and the picturesque, or pairing representations of human faces with semi-fictional landscapes, raises similar questions about truth in artistic representation with which contemporary artists and viewers were concerned. The debates that Barbara Novak discusses in the nineteenth century's quest to find a "solution to the real-ideal dilemma" (60) are not dissimilar to Susan Williams's question, posed in *Confounding Images: Photography and Portraiture in Antebellum American Fiction*, about whether "the portrait [was] primarily a factual document that recorded individual character, or was...an art that idealized reality" (17). Portraiture possesses the ability to portray either fact and reality or a vision more ideal. In landscapes belonging to the Hudson River School, it is not so much a matter of representing one or the other so much as it is about uniting the two in one harmonious composition. Both genres thus present a question regarding the tension between the real and the ideal in artistic representation. With my concept of picturesque portraiture, I apply the Hudson River theory of composition to select examples of literary portraiture to study how the tension between the real and the ideal is exercised as a means of realizing the truth or reality of the painted subject's person.

Like the authors who crafted them, the characters and portraits of Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Melville's *Pierre; or the Ambiguities*, and James's "The

Liar" are attempting either to discern or create reality in artistic representations of the human face. The reality that these characters and portraits attempt to achieve is the reality of the pictured individual's person; reality is not aligned with mimesis, but with the visual representation of the individual's true inner person. For Hawthorne and Melville, the harmonious composition brought about through the picturesque union of the real and the ideal does not result in an ideal reality (as in Emersonian idealism), but reality itself. For James, the harmony of the picturesque results in an appearance of reality; like Hawthorne and Melville before him, James engages in a practice which unites the real and the ideal, though for him this union is not meant to capture "actual" reality, but rather an illusion of "actual" reality. The use of the picturesque formula to achieve reality clarifies the complex relationship that Hawthorne, Melville, and James have with Emerson. Despite their differing and varied understandings of reality, and not withstanding their disagreements or complications with the epistemological implications of Emerson's ideal theory, Hawthorne, Melville, and James utilize Emerson's same picturesque union of the real and the ideal. They do so, however, to different effects. All four authors suggest that the ideal is imperative to an understanding of reality, though for Hawthorne, Melville, and James, that ideal is neither reality itself nor enough to found reality upon.

I approach this study chronologically, beginning with Hawthorne and ending with James, to help realize changing ideas about representation leading up to modernity. Each chapter, like the Introduction, begins with a discussion about how the author under analysis defines the real. In Chapter 1 I study Hawthorne's temporal, historical approach to reality in the daguerreotype portraits of *The House of the Seven Gables*. The portraits

are those of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, in which this cold-hearted individual appears both as himself, as he looks and exists within the present moment of the novel, and as his late ancestor, Colonel Pyncheon. In picturing Jaffrey as himself and as the Colonel, the daguerreotypes represent the past and the present. Following Hawthorne's contention that he could not know history until one hundred years had passed, I argue that, in my application of picturesque portraiture, the unknowable present stands as the ideal and the knowable past as the real. As is indicated in "The Old Manse" and "The Custom-House," Hawthorne does not locate reality in either the real or the ideal, but in their fusion. Holgrave's daguerreotypes thus achieve reality through their joining of the past (the representation of Jaffrey as the Colonel) and the present (the representation of Jaffrey as himself). The reality achieved is the truth of Jaffrey's person as an ill-willed individual who, while wearing an outward appearance of warmth and generosity, is in reality just another Colonel Pyncheon.

Chapter 2 is focused on Melville's *Pierre; or The Ambiguities* and the two portraits of the eponymous youth's late father. At the beginning of the novel Pierre possesses a wholesome, innocent view of his father, represented by the drawing-room portrait of Mr. Glendinning as a man established in his ways as father and husband. When Pierre learns about an illegitimate sister, he comes to see this portrait as a lie and begins to consider the fabled truths hinted at in the chair-portrait of his father, a painting which captures Mr. Glendinning as a lovestruck young man. In his quest to find the truth of his father's person, Pierre learns that the first step to attaining truth is destroying any preexisting ideals. Recognizing the idealism of the drawing-room portrait, however, is

not enough. As Pierre learns, the most realistic representation of his father would be a portrait which contains all aspects of his person, represented by the two portraits of Mr. Glendinning. Both images represent *a* truth about Mr. Glendinning's person, yet it is only by combining the two that the greatest truth of his person can be realized. Pierre is not an artist, so rather than create this portrait himself he engages in an internal, conceptual practice of picturesque portraiture. Pierre ultimately fails at this task because he is after certain knowledge, which does not exist; while a picturesque portrait would yield the greatest truth about Mr. Glendinning's person, that truth can never be known with certainty. The desire for certainty coheres with Melville's troubled relationship with truth, wherein he could never fully believe in truth yet felt discomfort in not believing. Pierre's failed attempt at picturesque portraiture suggests that, for Melville, the only truth there is, is ambiguity; the only thing to be known for certain, is uncertainty.

In Chapter 3 I present a different vein of picturesque portraiture with my study of Henry James's short story, "The Liar." In "The Art of Fiction" James addresses his preoccupation with the look of reality. This look is achieved, in part, through Impressionism. Unlike Impressionist painters, however, James does not stop at the impression. The appearance of reality instead results from the conversion of an impression into a meaningful expression. I approach impression and expression as the elements of James's picturesque, wherein the former belongs to the real and the latter to the ideal. Because I, like James in "The Art of Fiction," situate these aspects within Impressionism, my study in this chapter is more specifically a study of picturesque portraiture in the Impressionist mode. This "Impressionist picturesque" is exemplified by

the portrait Lyon paints in "The Liar." While the subject of Lyon's portrait is a known liar, the title of the story also belongs to Lyon himself, whose painting can be construed as a lie because it does not reflect the reality of his subject's person. I argue that, while the portrait does not capture the full truth of Colonel Capadose's person, it is real because it represents both Lyon's impression and expression; Lyon's use and conversion of his real, subjective impression and imaginative, ideal expression achieve a look of reality which is real precisely because it is true to Lyon's perceptions and intentions. Actual reality is less a matter of concern here. More important is an illusion of reality, and because James arrives at this illusion through subjective impression and expression, there simply is no reality that can be known outside of the self or outside of the illusion; knowledge and meaning do not reside in reality, but beyond reality, in the illusions or appearances brought about by the union of real, subjective visual experience and the ideal, meaningful expression of that experience.

In the Conclusion I explore the difference between Hawthorne's and Melville's more material-based realities and the subjectivity-based reality of James. In their picturesque portraiture, Hawthorne and Melville locate the elements of the real and the ideal in external, material objects or people. James, by contrast, locates the real and the ideal within the individual, signaling a return to the subjectivity-based reality witnessed in Emersonian idealism. This return to subjectivity, I argue, loosens the artist's grasp on reality, making for a destabilization of reality. This destabilization is seen in painted works of American Impressionism, especially in comparison to French Impressionism, which I show through a brief example juxtaposing John Singer Sargent and Claude

Monet. The destabilization of reality is then explored and explained historically, through the skepticism which is born out of the Civil War and the movement toward Realism in the second half of the nineteenth century. The destabilization of reality which results from the reprioritization of subjectivity and the epistemological skepticism stimulated by the Civil War and Realism, however, is not particular to the nineteenth century. Modern technologies such as photo editing software and the algorithms used to create deepfake images show that both the real-ideal dilemma and the attendant epistemological questions addressed by the Hudson River School and Hawthorne, Melville, and James, still exist. The inclusion of the ideal in contemporary images further suggests that the ideal is still implicated in modern representations of reality. The compromise formula developed by the Hudson River School, I conclude, thus remains a lasting approach to American artistic representations which attempt to picture, know, and question reality.

Chapter 1 — Temporal Exposures: Time and Reality in the Daguerreotypes of *The House of the Seven Gables*

In a letter written to Horatio Bridge in June 1887, reacting to a letter she'd received from Nathaniel Hawthorne regarding his opinion of the North's involvement in the Civil War, Elizabeth Peabody proclaims that "It was perfectly true what [Hawthorne] often said—that he knew nothing about contemporaneous history, that he could not understand history until it was at least a *hundred years old*!—" (445). While Peabody makes this remark respecting the abolition movement, claiming that Hawthorne "knew *nothing* about slavery," it is a statement which says much about Hawthorne's more general ideas concerning how we know and perceive reality (445). If we are to understand that contemporaneity equates to present day reality, then Hawthorne's temporally bound understanding of his world implies that, because it is unknown, the contemporary world cannot be recognized as either stable reality or the full representation of long-term truth. Rather, it is with the passage of time that the unknowable present becomes the knowable past, and with that knowledge comes the accurate and fixed perception of reality.

Hawthorne's preoccupation with epistemological questions concerning how reality is known, perceived, and represented is evidenced in numerous pieces of his literature. "The Old Manse" and "The Custom-House" provide but two examples,

wherein we not only glimpse Hawthorne's concern with representing reality, but also realize his conception of reality. For Hawthorne, reality results from the union of the real and the ideal, or what he alternatively refers to as the material and the spiritual, or the actual and the imaginary, respectively**.** In "The Old Manse," the introductory text to *Mosses from an Old Manse*, Hawthorne writes about the effect the "glimmering shadows" have on the space between the public road and the house, "a kind of spiritual medium, seen through which, the edifice had not quite the aspect of belonging to the material world" (*CE* X: 3).[3] It is also in this short piece, when considering the difference between the objects of the material world and their reflections as they appear in the water, that Hawthorne questions which representation "was the most real—the pictures, or the original?—the objects palpable to our grossest senses, or their apotheosis in the stream beneath?" (*CE* X: 22). Four years later, with the 1850 publication of *The Scarlet Letter*, the palpability and materiality of the real are complicated by Hawthorne's analogy, in "The Custom-House," between the real and daylight. In this preface, Hawthorne distinguishes the real as the "morning or noontide visibility" by which the objects and details of the material world appear in "their actual substance" (*CE* I: 35). The broad daylight of the real exists in opposition to the moonlight of the spiritual, and it is by way of moonlight that the scene described "has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and the fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (*CE* I: 36). It is also this combination

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all parenthetical citations for Hawthorne's texts reference the pertinent volume of *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (*CE*) followed by the page number(s).

of territories which Hawthorne enacts in *The Scarlet Letter* itself, not having "invariably confined [himself] within the limits of the old Surveyor's half a dozen sheets of foolscap"—representative of the real—but "[having] allowed [himself], as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of [his] own invention"—representative of the ideal (*CE* I: 33). While Hawthorne thus recognizes the real as distinct from the ideal, belonging as it does to the actual and palpable as opposed to the imaginary, he does not propose that the two be separated; Hawthorne is interested in knowing and representing more than mundane facts. This is especially true of Hawthorne's thoughts on art and representation. As R.K. Gupta writes, "idealized or spiritual reality is not less but more real than material reality: the 'poet's ideal' is the 'truest truth'" ("Hawthorne's Theory of Art" 312). For Hawthorne, it is not that reality is unimportant. Rather, he believes that the more truthful representation of reality resides in the fusion of the real and ideal.

This union of dichotomous ideas (the defining characteristic of Hawthornean reality) is implicit in Hawthorne's statement regarding the unknowable present and the knowable past. For the unknown present to become known, it must be joined with the past. If it is not tempered by long history, the contemporary moment is only a false reality. The result is the same in a representation which considers the past in absence of the present. This is the situation that Hawthorne found himself in with *The Scarlet Letter*. In "The Custom-House" Hawthorne reflects upon his having "[flung himself] back into another age" and, in hindsight, believes that:

> The wiser effort would have been, to diffuse thought and imagination through the opaque substance of to-day, and thus to make it a bright transparency; to

> spiritualize the burden that began to weigh so heavily; to seek, resolutely, the true and indestructible value that lay hidden in the petty and wearisome incidents, and ordinary characters, with which [he] was now conversant. (*CE* I: 37)

While the word "reality" is not used by Hawthorne, it is the representation of reality which he is addressing in this reflection. The passage suggests that by immersing himself "back into another age," Hawthorne believed he could create a successful representation of reality. With hindsight, however, Hawthorne maintains that this exclusive immersion in the Puritan past lacked transparency, spirituality, and truth. Instead, the greater representation and knowledge of stable reality lies in the combination of the long-standing past and the comparably recent present.

The troublesome approach ruminated upon in "The Custom-House" is successfully remedied in Hawthorne's second novel, *The House of the Seven Gables*, published one year later. Here, Hawthorne's conception of reality as the union of the real and ideal is explored temporally and pictorially, through Holgrave's daguerreotypes of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. In these daguerreotypes, the Judge appears both as himself and as his ancestor, Colonel Pyncheon, the family member responsible for the house of the seven gables and the ensuing Pyncheon family curse. Because the daguerreotype representations reflect the Judge both as he appears in the present moment and as his late ancestor, the images reflect the past within the present. Following Peabody's contention regarding Hawthorne's inability to know anything without the passage of several years, the daguerreotypes may be understood to represent reality because, in showing Jaffrey as Colonel Pyncheon, they display the passage of some hundred years. Based as it is on visual apprehension, this temporal division as witnessed in the daguerreotypes is also one

about perception; the temporal dichotomy between past and present is also a dichotomy of perception, between the Judge as he actually appears and how he is imagined to appear. Here, then, is a second instance of Hawthorne's blending of the real and ideal as conceived as the actual and the imaginary, respectively. In coherence with Hawthornean reality, it is the daguerreotypes' ability to yoke the past and the present which makes these images the most real, truthful representations of Jaffrey's person. So it is that, as Hawthorne writes in the preface to this novel, "a Legend, prolonging itself, from one epoch now gray in the distance, [is brought] down into our own broad daylight, and [brings] along with it some of its legendary mist," making for "so humble a texture" which is more real than it would be if it contained only either the daylight of the present or the mist of the legendary past (*CE* II: 2).

I argue that the temporal and perceptual unity reflected in the daguerreotypes of Jaffrey stand as an example of picturesque portraiture meant to represent the reality of the Judge's character. Compositionally, the daguerreotypes are picturesque because they bring together two time periods and two perceptions within one picture; like a picturesque landscape painting which represents an arrangement of elements from multiple settings or perspectives, the daguerreotypes contain multiple temporal dimensions structured together within individual portraits. Unlike a picturesque landscape painting, however, the picturesque daguerreotypes do not represent an idealized form of reality, but reality itself, or rather the Hawthornean blending of reality idealized.

As regards the picturesque, this argument may seem objectionable given that Hawthorne did not like the falseness and idealism associated with the picturesque genre.

Hawthorne makes this clear in his travel writings, where, in response to the picturesque landscape architecture viewed on his European tours, he "notes repeatedly that the picturesque scene is laudable in its beautification of nature but also distracting in its artificiality" (Baker 426). As an example, Jennifer Baker refers to how Hawthorne is awestruck by the Villa Pamfili-Doria in Italy, with its "weather-beaten statues and pieces of sculpture, scattered here and there; an artificial piece of water, with up-gushing fountains, cascades, and broad-bosomed coves, and long, canal-like reaches, with swans taking their delight upon them" (*CE* XIV: 145-6). Yet despite this beauty, Hawthorne finds that the "artificial ruin" of which the landscape is composed is "so picturesque that it betrays itself" (*CE* XIV: 145). The crafted scene is too ideal, too structurally perfect to be seen as genuine. How, then, can the picturesque be used to represent reality?

To answer this question, we must consider the value that Hawthorne places in art which represents the genuine while also communicating some greater meaning. While landscape architecture is an art distinct from painting or other fine arts, the fact remains that part of Hawthorne's negative response to picturesque landscapes stems from the scene's overt idealism and artificiality. Landscapes designed and built to be picturesque are so composed that they can no longer pass for reality, and in the absence of reality the scene not only betrays itself, but lacks meaning. Regarding his response to the fine arts, Rita Gollin writes that Hawthorne "liked realistic representation of life as he knew it, conjoined with intimations of the moral values and spiritual truths that he took on faith" ("Hawthorne and the Anxiety of Aesthetic Response" 95). R.K. Gupta likewise discusses how, in Hawthorne's theory of art, "Art may ignore surface aspects of life, it may modify

external reality to convey spiritual truth, but it must remain faithful and true to the fundamental facts of human experience" ("Hawthorne's Theory of Art" 313). Without any basis in human experience, or what we can understand as reality, art, conceptually, is depthless and unreal. It is for this reason that Hawthorne disliked classical artwork. Even though "classical art's idealization of physical form seems to him a valid way of rising above the limitations of the senses and appealing to the idea behind a work of art," Hawthorne found that classical art lacked a clear relationship to truth and connection to lived reality (Budz 170); classical art was too ideal, representing only symbolic ideas rather than containing any truth to nature.

While Hawthorne appears to have drawn similar conclusions about picturesque landscape scenes, as is evidenced from his reaction to the Villa Pamfili-Doria, he admired both Dutch genre paintings and picturesque landscape paintings because of their special blend of the real and ideal. In Dutch genre paintings Hawthorne appreciated the "detailed fidelity to nature," a "truth to nature [which] gives Dutch painting a sensual reality which classical art lacks" (Budz 172). Hawthorne also seems to have known that, as I discuss in my Melville chapter, "Filled as they were with illusions of the real, Dutch paintings at their best nonetheless offer glimpses of the ideal" (Gollin & Idol 35). This does not prove problematic for Hawthorne though, for "These glimpses revealed the artist's intuitive or imaginative perception of the link between the outward world of mundane fact and the inward sphere of spiritual or transcendental truth or form" (Gollin & Idol 35). Unlike the picturesque landscape scenes of Hawthorne's European tour, these Dutch genre paintings

incorporate truth and reality alongside the illusory or the ideal, adding meaning and an overall greater sense of reality to the scenes portrayed.

Yet as Judith Kaufman Budz points out, it was not only in Dutch genre painting that Hawthorne realized this blending of the spiritual and the real, wherein the idealism of the former is mitigated by the latter. As Hawthorne's admiration for the works of Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain suggests, he also found his idea of reality in picturesque landscape paintings (see figures 1-1 and 1-2). Referring to Hawthorne's own reflections on Rosa and Lorrain, Budz writes that "Hawthorne admires both artists because each paints the 'reality of a better earth' while capturing the 'truth of the very scenes around us'"; in Budz's own words, "Both use realistic detail to rise above realism, to mingle the actual and the ideal" (177). So too with Hawthorne.

Hawthorne writes in the preface to the *Seven Gables* that the tale is a Romance, and as a writer of Romance, Hawthorne is subject to the same freedoms of composition enacted by artists of picturesque landscape paintings. Unlike a Novel, which "is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience," the Romance "has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation" (*CE* II: 1). The writer must be cautious, however, and include these aspects of Romance in the proper proportions. As Hawthorne advises, "[The writer] will be wise…to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvellous [sic] rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the Public" (*CE* II: 1). While Hawthorne does not directly

Figure 1-1. *Landscape with Travellers Asking the Way*, Salvator Rosa, about 1641.

Figure 1-2. *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah ('The Mill')*, Claude Lorrain, 1648.

compare this choosing and creating to that of the picturesque painter, he does suggest the likeness between painter and writer when he says that the latter, "If he think fit…may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the light and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture" (*CE* II: 1). While the result is largely and knowingly artificial, it is an artificiality which, when used in proper proportions and in tandem with a fidelity to reality, arrives at the greater sense of reality which Hawthorne locates in the blending of the real and ideal. As such, the picturesque can be understood and used to represent reality to the extent that it employs the artificial and the real to arrive at a greater meaning or higher reality, whether at the hands of the painter or the writer. The picturesque achieves the same ends using temporality when the unknowable, artificial appearance of the ideal present is combined with the time-tested, knowable appearance of the real, historical past.

The portraits of Jaffrey, then, achieve representational reality by depicting the socially constructed image of the Judge as he appears within the present moment of the novel while also exposing him, in his person, as a replication of Colonel Pyncheon. The daguerreotypes are thus picturesque not only because they unite the present and past, respectively, but the external and internal. At the same time as they present a mimetic representation of the Judge as he appears to his contemporaries, the daguerreotypes also proffer a deeper sense of Jaffrey's person as a descendant of the Colonel, as a man who belongs to the Pyncheon family and carries with him that family's long history of wrongs and retribution. Kept within Holgrave's private possession, the daguerreotypes show the greater, more truthful Hawthornean reality through this union of the ideal (the present

social perception) and the real (the historical truth associated with Jaffrey's ancestral past).

Within the present moment of the novel, the Judge appears—by way of his station, dress, and countenance—as a man of means and benevolence. This appearance, however, is simply that—it is an illusion, a social construction generated by the conventions of the local populace and designed to uphold current social idealizations of power and wealth. As a political figure, the Judge is regarded with respect and authority. While we do not see much of the public and thus cannot assess their view of the Judge, the narrator says that the Judge's "eminent respectability" was acknowledged by both church and state and "was denied by nobody. In all the very extensive sphere of those who knew him…there was not an individual…who would have dreamed of seriously disputing his claim to a high and honorable place in the world's regard" (*CE* II: 228). Jaffrey's apparel and accoutrements amplify this social perception, reflecting his gentlemanly aspect as well as his wealth. When the Judge first appears in the novel the narrator says that "One perceived him to be a personage of mark, influence, and authority; and, especially, you could feel just as certain that he was opulent, as if he had exhibited his bank account" (*CE* II: 57). This exhibition is evinced materially, by a "black suit of some thin stuff, resembling broadcloth as closely as possible," which is paired with "A gold-headed cane of rare, oriental wood," an accessory which "added materially to the high respectability of his aspect; as did also a white neckcloth of the utmost snowy purity, and the conscientious polish of his boots" (*CE* II: 116). The authority, respect, and gentlemanliness proffered by Jaffrey's political station and outward attire are also

coupled with a genial countenance, suggesting that he is not only a high-status figure, but a man to be recognized for his good will and warm heart. So it is that Uncle Venner speaks what is surely on everyone's mind the day Hepzibah opens shop, and asks the old woman "why don't Judge Pyncheon, with his great means, step forward, and tell his cousin to shut up her little shop at once?" (*CE* II: 63). As much ought to be expected from the Judge because of both his wealth and benignity. For example, when Phoebe first meets Jaffrey, unaware of who he is and not yet cognizant of him as the subject of Holgrave's daguerreotypes, the Judge is described as possessing a smile that "grew as intense as he had set his heart on counteracting the whole gloom of the atmosphere…by the unassisted light of his countenance," and it is this countenance that Jaffrey wears as he travels up and down Pyncheon street (*CE* II: 117). It is both in his manner (the way he carries himself before society, particularly as a power-wielding public figure) and in his mien (the way he dresses himself, showing off his wealth while also bolstering his powerful image) that the Judge appears to the public as a man of utmost dignity and kindheartedness.

On the surface, this is precisely the Judge that is represented in Holgrave's daguerreotypes; the daguerreotypes give an accurate representation of the Judge in terms of the present state of his body and dress as they have been shaped by contemporary social convention. It is because of this exactness, in turn, that some may consider the images to reflect the reality of the Judge's person. Certainly, Hawthorne's contemporaries thought as much about the daguerreotypes they had taken as well as those they owned or simply saw. While such accuracy was no doubt awe-inspiring, it was also, at times,

somewhat upsetting. According to Richard Rudisill, many of those who sat for daguerreotypes "saw what they recognized happily in the pictures of others, but they rarely welcomed their own images," the daguerreotype representation being "too accurate and too acute" (211, 212). While we are never made aware of Jaffrey's response to his daguerreotypes, we might suppose that, because Holgrave has taken so many likenesses, the Judge had a similar, unhappy reaction. The single daguerreotype that Holgrave shows Phoebe is one of "half-a-dozen attempts" made by Holgrave to capture Jaffrey as he appears within the present social setting of the novel and as the kind man the public knows, the likeness "intended to be engraved" for the upcoming election (*CE* II: 92). Because Holgrave is using the daguerreotypes as evidence for his speculations regarding Jaffrey's character, it seems unlikely that it is the daguerreotypist who is unhappy with the images. Holgrave, then, is taking so many daguerreotypes either for his own collection and research, and/or because Jaffrey is taken aback by the too accurate representation of his person.

The exactness and seeming reality of the images, however, is complicated by the fact that the daguerreotypes, while providing an accurate representation of the Judge in face and dress, do not reflect the kindhearted man all know and respect. The daguerreotypes undoubtedly represent the Judge, as Phoebe eventually comes to realize, but the Judge the images represent is different from the Judge known for his bright features and good will. As Holgrave tells Phoebe upon first showing her one of the portraits, "the remarkable point is, that the original wears, to the world's eye…an exceedingly pleasant countenance, indicative of benevolence, openness of heart, sunny

good humor, and other praiseworthy qualities of that cast," while the image the daguerreotype shows is of "the man, sly, subtle, hard, imperious, and, withal, cold as ice" (*CE* II: 92). This discrepancy between the "real life" Jaffrey and the daguerreotype representation of Jaffrey is due to the daguerreotype's ability to capture more than a mimetic portrayal of external physical appearance. The daguerreotype, in short, exposes Jaffrey as a fraud and his appearance as nothing more than a façade; his present image is a social construct, an illusion created by Jaffrey's power and wealth, and maintained by the social world's obedience to such false values. This is what the narrator is addressing when they claim that the Judge uses the materials of his life to build the "stately edifice" of his person (*CE* II: 229). The Judge uses both tangible and intangible materials of his external world, "such as gold, landed estate, offices of trust and emolument, and public honors," to create an appearance which, because it is built of such "solid unrealities," is distinct from the Judge Pyncheon who exists beneath these social trappings (*CE* II: 229). The Judge's appearance is an ideal which is less reliable than historical truth because it is a social construct built on contemporary "unrealities."

While it is not clear whether the public is aware of the artificiality of Jaffrey's appearance, we should not assume that it takes issue with his masquerade. In adherence with the dictates of polite society and manners, as well as the teachings of contemporary etiquette manuals, nineteenth century individuals intentionally dressed, acted, and presented themselves in a manner that would communicate (a constructed idea of) their person. According to John Conron, etiquette manuals of the period "use the paradigm of dramatic expression to teach urban Americans ways of reading the bodies of strangers,

and of presenting their own, in public places" (46). "Before 1850," he goes on to say, these ways of reading and presenting "assume a moral transparency: an unmediated translation of character into the visible languages of facial expression, gesture, and dress (which can also be read dramatically as costume)" (46). It is not unusual, then, that Jaffrey is relying on such external features as his facial expression and dress to communicate the idea that he is a wealthy, benevolent gentleman. Nor is it unusual that Jaffrey should be doing so falsely, not to convey any actual moral transparency, but to provide a mask for his true morality (or lack thereof). As Conron says, it was no

> later than mid-century…[that] the naiveté of this assumption about moral transparency becomes evident; urban predators learn to read the characters of strangers as a means of potential profit and, at the same time, to conceal their own characters behind deceptive masks. (48)

To expose the predator, the public needs to see beyond Jaffrey's masquerade. To be sure, both Hepzibah and Holgrave are the initial two who see through Jaffrey's mask, and they are none too happy with the contradiction between the way he appears to the public and the man he is when shielded from the public's gaze. In any case, it is the requirements and teachings of present-day etiquette which create a social state which furthers an unrealistic image of the individual. Even if such lessons are meant to assist the public in communicating their inner selves through external means, the image that results is ultimately false because it is socially constructed; etiquette manuals are not just teaching someone how to appear as a proper lady or gentleman, for example, but in doing so they are constructing the very image and idea of a lady and a gentleman. Speaking to the issue of dress, Conron concludes that such thinking "does not so much individuate as idealize character, and even idealizations constitute a socially constructed self" (47). This

applies not just to dress, however, but to the overall appearance which results from the dictates of contemporary manners and etiquette. Contemporary ideas of polite society create a social state in which the attempt to express one's person instead furthers an inaccurate image and ultimately creates a disparity between the true self meant to be communicated and the mask which is presented.

The discrepancy caused by the daguerreotypes' ability to accurately show the Judge's external appearance in face and dress, as well as some hint of his interior existence, deems the representations mysterious if not magical. Contemporary audiences often assigned these qualities to the daguerreotype medium and technology. Lara Langer Cohen says that "Although mid-nineteenth-century Americans eagerly hailed the medium as herald of a new era of technological innovation and sophistication, at the same time they persistently invoked the language of magic to describe it" (49). Susan Williams likewise discusses how, "Even as the daguerreotype achieved the ability to imitate life…it also seemed larger than life, assuming a magical, even mystical quality" which "derived not only from its ability to reveal truths invisible to the human eye, but also from its status as a 'portion of nature' and 'heavenly work'" (54). While the daguerreotype is objectively truthful, recording and representing individuals as they physically appear on the outside, it is also magical and mysterious because of its ability, it was thought, to capture and reveal the subject's private inner person.

Holgrave's daguerreotypes of Jaffrey may be considered magical in this regard, revealing as they do that "This character—which showed itself so strikingly in everything about him…went no deeper than his station, habits of life, and external circumstances"

(*CE* II: 56-7). Perhaps even more magical or mysterious (or in any event, odd) is the daguerreotype that Holgrave later takes of the Judge's corpse.[4] Holgrave says that he has captured the likeness both "as a memorial valuable to [himself]" and "As a point of evidence that may be useful to Clifford" (*CE* II: 303). How such an image can help Clifford in a court of law is not exactly clear, though one possibility, given what we already know of Holgrave's earlier portraits, is that the daguerreotype, with its ability to expose the cold expression that exists beneath the Judge's sunny exterior, will protect Clifford from the suspicion of the Judge's death and absolve Clifford for the murder of the Judge's uncle.

Such magic may not after all belong to the daguerreotypes, but to the daguerreotypist. When Phoebe first sees one of Holgrave's daguerreotypes of the Judge, she mistakes it for an image of Colonel Pyncheon which Holgrave has somehow modernized. "To be sure," Phoebe says to Holgrave, "you have found some way of copying the [painted] portrait [of the Colonel] without its black velvet cap and gray beard, and have given him a modern coat and satin cravat, instead of his cloak and band" (*CE* II: 92). While Phoebe is mistaken, having only glanced at the daguerreotype and not yet knowing the image's actual subject, this moment serves as an example of the wizardry Holgrave potentially possesses as a Maule. According to local stories, the Maule family had an eye which was "said to possess a strange power" which allowed the wizards to "[exercise] an influence over people's dreams," to "look into people's minds,"

[4] This scene is doubly odd because the daguerreotype is taken at night, via moonlight. See Marcy J. Dinius's "Daguerreian Romanticism: *The House of the Seven Gables* and Gabriel Harrison's Portraits" for a full discussion of this point as it relates to Hawthorne's comments on moonlight in "The Custom-House."

and to "draw people into [their] own mind, or send them, if [they] pleased, to do errands…in the spiritual world" (*CE* II: 26, 189-90). If Holgrave does possess any such power, which we may well confirm given the near hypnotic state he places Phoebe under while reading his story of Alice Pyncheon, then we may conclude that it is Holgrave who is magically (or by magical means) prying into his sitter's interior, and that the daguerreotype merely stands as the medium through which he reveals that individual's private character.

This is the type of magic or mysticism that the artist exhibits in "Prophetic Pictures," published as part of the 1837 short story collection, *Twice-Told Tales*. In this story the artist, not a daguerreotypist but a painter, is characterized by Walter, one of the artist's current patrons, as one who "catches the secret sentiments and passions, and throws them upon the canvass, like sunshine—or perhaps, in the portraits of dark-souled men, like a gleam of infernal fire" (*CE* IX: 167). As for the portraits themselves, "In most…the whole mind and character were brought out on the countenance and concentrated into a single look, so that, to speak paradoxically, the originals hardly resembled themselves so strikingly as the portraits did" (*CE* IX: 170). This artist's task, then, is to look into the interiors of his subjects and paint those individuals to reflect their inner being, a task which seemingly involves some sort of magic or wizardry. When Walter first tells his wife Elinor about the artist, she questions whether her husband is "telling [her] of a painter, or a wizard," and even the artist himself professes to Elinor that "It is [the true artist's gift]—his proudest, but often a melancholy one—to see the inmost soul, and, by a power indefinable even to himself, to make it glow or darken upon the

canvass" (*CE* IX: 167, 175). This artist, however, is different from Holgrave in that his paintings reflect what is to become of his subjects: "after he has once got possession of a person's face and figure, he may paint him in any act or situation whatever—and the pictures will be prophetic" (*CE* IX: 172). The portrait painter of "Prophetic Pictures" also feels emotional difficulty in his task, whereas Holgrave takes delight in his work because "there are hereditary reasons that connect [him] strangely with [Jaffrey's] fate" (*CE* II: 303). Yet both the portrait painter and the daguerreotypist exhibit a magic which allows them to know their subjects' interiors, and, arguably, both use their art as the medium through which the truth of that inner being is visually revealed.[5]

Whether the magical qualities of Holgrave's daguerreotype result from daguerreotype technology or hereditary Maule wizardry, it remains that the images present an idea of reality which is different from that that perceived on the surface, a difference which raises questions regarding how we know and discern reality. In the absence of the daguerreotype, the reality of the Judge's person is taken at face value; the

[5] Whether daguerreotypes constitute art and daguerreotypists artists was a matter of contention. Marcy Dinius discusses how "the scientific ideal of mechanical objectivity appealed because it provided a reason for setting the daguerreotype apart from established forms of image making," and that "early responses to the new medium," taking daguerreotypes as superior to other forms of representation, "effectively reversed the aesthetic ideal of an artist's subjective influence distinguishing art works from more 'mechanical,' but still manual, images so that it more closely matched that of scientific image making, which was coming to value the automatism and objectivity of an actual machine" (49). For Hawthorne specifically, "art should enable the artist to open an intercourse with humanity, and that meant finding an art expressive of the spirit, not merely designed to capture surface" (Gollin & Idol 27), while "The artist…seeks to capture the essence, the spirit, the ideal rather than any of its adventitious manifestations" (Gupta, "Hawthorne's Theory of Art" 313). Regarding the *Seven Gables* as an example of these ideas, Gupta elsewhere argues that because Holgrave is a "daguerreotypist—that is, [one who] takes likenesses," he is, "in Hawthorne's view, not a genuine artist because he presents reality in its crude, raw form, untransformed by the shaping process of imagination" ("Hawthorne's Treatment of the Artist" 74). I disagree with Gupta about how Hawthorne is thinking about the workings of daguerreotype images, for while they are crude in their ability to present reality, they are also transformative and magical in their ability to simultaneously show something deeper or other than raw reality.

idea that Jaffrey is "a personage of mark, influence, and authority," characteristics based on his dress and demeanor and as dictated by society, is assumed by both the Judge and the larger public to be the reality of his person (*CE* II: 57). In this way Jaffrey is not dissimilar to the eponymous character of Hawthorne's 1852 short story, "Feathertop." There is no doubt that, in this tale, Feathertop's appearance is due to the wizardry performed by Mother Rigby, who uses "the material at hand" to make her scarecrow "represent a fine gentleman of the period" (*CE* X: 224). Once within public view, Feathertop is unquestionably perceived as a man of some eminence and wealth, and this because of his demeanor and dress; Feathertop represents the ideal values again associated with power and money. None of the onlookers can determine with certainty who Feathertop is or where he might have come from, yet all seem to agree with one woman's excited observation that Feathertop "is a beautiful man!—so tall—so slender!—such a fine, noble face, with so well-shaped a nose, and all that delicacy of expression about the mouth!" (*CE* X: 238). So too does the narrator state that "There needed no other proof of his rank and consequence, than the perfect equanimity with which he comported himself, while the curiosity and admiration of the town swelled almost into a clamor around him" (*CE* X: 239). Feathertop seems to recognize himself in the same vein, and so he does not question who he is or where he comes from, but rather, like the gentleman that both he and the public believe him to be, addresses the crowd by "[making] a stately bend of his body, like a great man acknowledging the reverence of the meaner sort" (*CE* X: 239). Feathertop, like the public, accepts the notion—communicated through his physical appearance and behavior—that he is an established gentleman to be

bowed to and looked upon highly. The situation with Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is similar. It is the public's unquestioned perception of the Judge as a man of "eminent respectability" which, in part, lends to Jaffrey's belief in the reality of his façade (*CE* II: 228). Like the public, "Judge Pyncheon himself, probably, [did not] entertain many or very frequent doubts, that his enviable reputation accorded with his deserts" (*CE* II: 228). So too is he one of those men who, with his money, land, office, and honors, "and with deeds of goodly aspect, done in the public eye…builds up, as it were, a tall and stately edifice, which, in the view of other people, and ultimately in his own view, is no other than the man's character, or the man himself" (*CE* II: 229). As far as the Judge and the greater population on and around Pyncheon street are concerned—and apart from "Hepzibah, and some lawless mystic like the Daguerreotypist, and possibly a few political opponents"—this ideal image of Jaffrey as he appears within the present setting of the novel is the reality of his character (*CE* II: 228).

The Judge wants to use his daguerreotype image to solidify this perception. The portraits are intended for his running in the upcoming gubernatorial election, after all. Jaffrey, then, does not only believe in the truth of his façade, but believes that he can construct that façade in a daguerreotype representation so that, in his portrait, he likewise appears as he wishes to be seen. According to Richard Rudisill, who refers to an 1846 article published in *Littell's Living Age*, this practice of making oneself appear in a particular manner for daguerreotype portraits was considered a "weakness" which several contemporary "sitters fell prey to," using props such as books, jewelry, and musical instruments to "make a false impression for permanent record" (206). Holgrave's

daguerreotypes, however, disrupt this socially constructed idea of reality by presenting an image of the Judge's person which is distinct from the Judge the people know. Here again Jaffrey is like Feathertop, for it is when the latter sees a reflection of himself in a mirror, "one of the truest plates in the world, and incapable of flattery," that he realizes the reality of his person (*CE* X: 244). In Jaffrey's case, however, it is not his reflection as it appears in a mirror which reveals the truth of his person, but his representation as it is reflected on (the mirror-like surface of) a daguerreotype plate. As the *Littell's* article proclaims, the daguerreotype is a medium which aids in "the successful study of human nature," for, "Daguerreotypes properly regarded, are the indices of human character" ("Daguerreotypes" 551). An alternative conception of reality, then, as conceived by the authors of *Littell's* and exemplified in Holgrave's daguerreotypes, is that reality is not established on external appearances or social perceptions, but internal character.

Hawthorne's use of daguerreotypes to explore the temporal aspect of the real-ideal dichotomy coincides with the rise of this technology in America and captures contemporary thoughts regarding this new form of representation. The daguerreotype was created by French artist Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and arrived in America around 1840, roughly one decade before the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables*. By this time, Richard Rudisill writes, "various indigenous needs demanded an ideal recording machine that could stop the passage of time and hold an accurate and complete image to which people could respond in terms of spiritual insight," and the daguerreotype provided the means of achieving these ends (31). More specifically, it is the daguerreotype's ability to stop the passage of time which makes for a representation

which is both accurate and spiritual. On one level, the daguerreotype stops time by creating a permanent image of an individual exactly as they appear within a particular moment; daguerreotype "pictures were retained images which could continue to influence after direct observation was no longer possible," making the daguerreotype "an ideal means to collect affective images otherwise lost in the passage of time" (Rudisill 19-20, 20). In addition to capturing a mimetic image of a sitter, the daguerreotype's stoppage of time also accounts for the more magical or spiritual qualities of the technology, mainly the capacity to see into and reflect a sitter's interior character; daguerreotypes stop time by retaining an exact image of the sitter as they appear in a given moment, and in doing so the daguerreotype also maintains the means of exposing "that subject's very existence" (L. Cohen 59). To nineteenth-century patrons and beholders of daguerreotypes, Susan Williams writes, the technology "reveal[s] truths invisible to the human eye," those truths specifically regarding the individual's private character (54).

In *The House of the Seven Gables*, the representation of internal character is achieved by reflecting the sitter not as he appears within the immediate present, but as a product of the past. Holgrave's daguerreotype portraits attempt to represent the reality of the Judge's character by showing him as he exists within the immediate present, that is, according to his external appearance as it has been constructed according to social standards. However, because that appearance is a façade, the portraits reflect only an ideal representation of his character and stand as only an appearance of reality. Following the alternative conception of reality suggested by the difference between Jaffrey and his

daguerreotype portrait, the actual reality of his character resides inside his person, and that internal character is revealed by representing Jaffrey as the late Colonel Pyncheon.

The idea that the Judge's person is shaped by his ancestral past, and within the image of the Colonel in particular, is indicated early on, with Hepzibah's comparison of the Colonel's portrait to Jaffrey. After seeing her cousin Jaffrey in the street, eyeing both Hepzibah and her new cent shop, Hepzibah retreats to the parlor and gazes upon the old painting of Colonel Pyncheon, fancying that "the face of the picture enabled her…to read more accurately, and to a greater depth, the face which she had just seen in the street" (*CE* II: 59). Upon some consideration of the painting, Hepzibah exclaims that the Colonel as represented in the painting "is the very same man" as Jaffrey (*CE* II: 59). In one sense, Hepzibah is making this comparison on the level of physical appearance. "Put on [Jaffrey] a scull-cap, and a band, and a black cloak, and a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other," Hepzibah exclaims, "then let Jaffrey smile as he might—nobody would doubt that it was the old Pyncheon come again!" (*CE* II: 59). It is upon these grounds of physical resemblance that Phoebe later mistakes Holgrave's daguerreotype of Jaffrey for an image of the Colonel. Hepzibah's comparison, however, goes on to show that Jaffrey is like the Colonel not only in his appearance, but in his person. Hepzibah believes that, despite Jaffrey's genial smile, "there is that look beneath," a look which the Colonel also possesses in his portrait, and which conveys a sense of sternness (*CE* II: 59). Such sternness is what led the Colonel to complete his plan of claiming Mathew Maule's land without regard for the validity of either his proprietorship of the land or Maule's condemnation as a witch. As the narrator says, "Colonel Pyncheon…as we gather from

whatever traits of him are preserved, was characterized by an iron energy of purpose," and endowed as he was "with common-sense, as massive and hard as blocks of granite, fastened together by stern rigidity of purpose, as with iron clamps, he followed out his original design" (*CE* II: 7, 9). For Hepzibah to say, then, that the Judge holds the same look as the Colonel, is to say that the former, in his person, is ill-willed and malevolent.[6]

Phoebe's reaction upon first encountering the Judge is not dissimilar. When he steps foot into Hepzibah's shop, Jaffrey is wearing his great, bright smile, and when he sees not Hepzibah before him but "a young rosebud of a girl," he "smiled with more unctuous benignity than ever" (*CE* II: 117). Yet as soon as Phoebe denies her newfound cousin a kiss, his countenance changes and, "all at once, it struck Phoebe, that this very Judge Pyncheon was the original of the miniature, which the Daguerreotypist had shown her in the garden, and that the hard, stern, relentless look, now on his face, was the same that the sun had so inflexibly persisted in bringing out" (*CE* II: 119). It is in this moment, when Jaffrey's face loses the mask of kindness, that Phoebe recognizes that she mistook the portrait for one of the Colonel because, in his true temperament, the Judge is the

[6] Because Hepzibah arrives at this conclusion by studying the portrait of the Colonel, it might be argued that the Colonel's portrait is an example of the real or true perception as Hawthorne understands it. In point of fact, the narrator says that "In one sense, this picture had almost faded into the canvass, and hidden itself behind the duskiness of age; in another, [Hepzibah] could not but fancy that it had been growing more prominent, and strikingly expressive, ever since her earliest familiarity with it, as a child. For, while the physical outline and substance were darkening away from the beholder's eye, the bold, hard, and, at the same time, indirect character of the man seemed to be brought out in a kind of spiritual relief" (*CE* II: 58). Thus, while Ronald Thomas argues that the portrait of the Colonel "is painted with the intention of presiding over the house as a household deity and a symbol of privileged authority rather than as a representation of truth," the spiritual aspect which is exposed with the wear of paint proves otherwise; truth, or Hawthornean reality, resides in the painting's combination of an authoritative external appearance and, with time, the exposure of the Colonel's inner person—it is both a "stylized portrait" and a representation of truth (Thomas 103).

Colonel; with the rapid change in the Judge's demeanor, Phoebe becomes one of those "susceptible observer[s]" who "might have regarded [the Judge's outward appearance] as affording very little evidence of the genuine benignity of soul, whereof it purported to be that outward reflection" (*CE* II: 116). Having made this connection between the Colonel and the Judge, in part by recalling the earlier viewing of the daguerreotype, it is questioned whether it was:

> therefore, no momentary mood, but, however skilfully [sic] concealed, the settled temper of [Jaffrey's] life? And not merely so, but was it hereditary in him, and transmitted down as a precious heirloom from that bearded ancestor, in whose picture both the expression, and, to a singular degree, the features of the modern Judge, were shown as by a kind of prophecy? (*CE* II: 119)

While Phoebe is able to arrive at these questions, she is not a "deeper philosopher" like Hepzibah, who recognizes that implied in this connection between the Colonel and the Judge is the idea that "the weaknesses and defect, the bad passions, the mean tendencies, and the moral ideas which lead to crime, are handed down from one generation to another" (*CE* II: 119). In this regard, it might be argued that there is no deeper philosopher than Holgrave, who uses his daguerreotypes to give evidence to this conclusion. Part of Holgrave's business with the Judge, as he admits to Phoebe, is to prove that "the original perpetrator and father" of the mischief which marks the Pyncheon family name "appears to have perpetuated himself, and still walks the streets—with the fairest prospect of transmitting to posterity as rich, and as wretched, an inheritance as he has received," and this in the form of Jaffrey Pyncheon (*CE* II: 185). It is through his portraiture that Holgrave evinces as much, himself citing "the daguerreotype, and its

resemblance to the old portrait," the logic being that Jaffrey looks like the Colonel because Jaffrey is the Colonel in his person (*CE* II: 185).

The fact that this inclusion of the past is necessary to correct the ideal representation of Jaffrey suggests that historical truth carries greater accuracy in regards to the representation of reality; the image of Jaffrey as he appears in the present is not wholly false, but because it is an ideal it is in greater need of correction than historical truth, which, as we have seen, can be used to cut through the mask of the current social idealization in order to offer some degree of clarity. If we are to understand that the historical is synonymous with the long or distant past, then both this point and the quote from Peabody with which I opened this chapter suggest that historical representations would not require any tempering. According to Hawthorne's thinking, this is because history has the advantage of being perceived from a temporal distance. A historical representation, in turn, picturing as it may a scene from the distant past, may be supposed to not require any tempering because it represents something which occurred long enough ago to be recognized as knowable and true. An ideal representation, by contrast, requires the inclusion of the past for the image to arrive at some sense of truth or reality. Like Hawthorne's contemporaries, then, Holgrave seems to believe that daguerreotype technology exposes the truth of a person's being, a truth which is otherwise inaccessible. His experience with daguerreotypes, limited though it may be, has taught Holgrave that the disagreeableness which Phoebe locates in "pictures of that sort" is due to the unamiability of the subjects (CE II: 91). "Most of my likenesses do look unamiable," he says, "but the very sufficient reason, I fancy, is, because the originals are so," and it is

daguerreotype technology, or more specifically the process which takes place during the production of a daguerreotype, that evinces such characterization (*CE* II: 91).

It is also on the point of process that Holgrave suggests an important distinction between painted portraits and daguerreotype portraits, a distinction which complicates our understanding (coming from Hawthorne) of truth residing in long history. In a painted portrait, as my chapters on Melville and James contend, the representation of the inner person is worked into the image, and this even if the artist intends to highlight one particular aspect of the inner person, as is seen with the artists of both the drawing-room and chair-portraits in *Pierre* and that of Colonel Capadose in "The Liar." By contrast, a daguerreotype portrait immediately extracts a subject's person by exposing the sitter as they exist without any material or social facades; in a painting, "the painter's deep conception of his subject's inward traits has wrought itself into the essence of the picture, and is seen, after the superficial coloring has been rubbed off by time," while the daguerreotype relies upon the sun to "[bring] out the secret character of the sitter" (*CE* II: 59, 91). Holgrave's interest in the distinctions of processes behind both mediums of portraits—the painting working character *into* the portrait and the daguerreotype extracting character *from* the portrait—addresses an important temporal issue, mainly the fact that daguerreotypes are created with relative speed. While Holgrave does not say as much himself, his remark about paintings exposing truth only after the wear of time implies that daguerreotypes function otherwise, that this medium can arrive at truth immediately, with the prompt chemical reaction brought about when a plate of silver-

coated copper is exposed to the sun.[7] If a daguerreotype can capture a sitter (as well as the sitter's inner person) with near immediacy, then how can it be argued that a daguerreotype representation stands as an example of reality as arrived at through the passage of time? Similarly, if reality can only be obtained at a (temporal) distance, then how can a representation which pries into and reveals man's inner character be considered real?

As regards the former question, it might be argued that, in the daguerreotype process, reality does not reside within the literal passage of years, but within the lengthy exposure time experienced by sitters getting daguerreotyped. While technological advancements to the daguerreotype quickly reduced the sitting time, "within a decade…[decreasing it] to less than thirty seconds in a studio interior" (Morgan, "Photography, American"), early daguerreotypes "Recommended times…within the range of three to thirty minutes," the range of exposure owing "to the time of day, the season of the year, and the weather" (Barger & White 2). During this time, the sitter was positioned in a contraption, what Rita Gollin refers to as "headclamps," designed to hold the sitter's head to avoid any movement during the exposure (*Portraits of Nathaniel Hawthorne* 119). Gollin writes that this unnatural, uncomfortable process made for "poses [which] were still and stereotyped" (*Portraits of Nathaniel Hawthorne* 119), and Richard Rudisill likewise writes that "one source of public dissatisfaction" with early

[7] More specifically, "a sitter's image was reflected onto a silvered and sensitized metal plate set into a camera obscura fitted with a lens; it was then exposed [to the sun], developed by exposure to mercury vapor, fixed, washed, and sealed into a frame whose glass protected it from damage" *(*Gollin, *Portraits of Nathaniel Hawthorne* 119). For a more detailed and scientific discussion of daguerreotype technology and the daguerreotype process, see Susan M. Barger and William B. White's *The Daguerreotype: Nineteenth-Century Technology and Modern Science*.

daguerreotypes "was the rigidity of appearance forced on many sitters…[giving] forth a stiff likeness which was not well regarded" (212). Yet despite this, sitters still maintained that there was something magical about daguerreotypes, exposing as they did that secret, interior portion of one's character which, to the human eye, remains inaccessible. While the daguerreotype process may be fast in comparison to the years that its takes for paint to wear from a canvas, the daguerreotype portrait is still able to attain reality through the exposure time required of the daguerreotype process; the daguerreotype itself is produced relatively quickly, meaning that it is not a product of long history, yet is a medium nonetheless capable of representing the truth of long history because the forced stillness and sitting reduces or eliminates the normal social facades that people are able to construct.

In response to the latter issue regarding the distance associated with long history, we need to turn to ideas of composition and perception. Hawthorne's belief that he cannot know the truth of something until one hundred years have passed suggests that he cannot know something if he is too close to it; and getting close is precisely what daguerreotypes do, especially those in the *Seven Gables*. While Hawthorne's concern here is strictly temporal, it is not dissimilar to John Ruskin's consideration, in *Modern Painters I* (which Gollin & Idol say Hawthorne read over the spring and summer of 1848), of distance and proximity in the perception of landscapes, architecture, and fine art. In the section "Of Truth of Space," Ruskin is interested in the details observed with proximity and the unity of those heterogenous details when observed from afar. Using the example of Westminster Abbey, Ruskin writes that if you "Look at it generally," that is, with some

physical distance from the Abbey, then "it is all symmetry and arrangement," but if you "Look at it in its parts," or with closeness to the structure, then "it is all inextricable confusion," (*Selected Writings* 5, 6). The narrator of the *Seven Gables* maintains the same idea, as is evidenced in the moment that they observe Clifford watching a political procession passing down Pynchon street. Here, the narrator says that:

> As a mere object of sight, nothing is more deficient in picturesque features than a procession, seen in its passage through narrow streets. The spectator feels it to be fool's play, when he can distinguish the tedious common-place of each man's visage, with the perspiration and weary self-importance on it, and the very cut of his pantaloon, and the stiffness or laxity of his shirt-collar, and the dust on the back of his black coat. In order to become majestic, it should be viewed from some vantage-point, as it rolls its slow and long array through the centre of a wide plain, or the stateliest public square of a city; for then, by its remoteness, it melts all the petty personalities, of which it is made up, into one broad mass of existence—one great life—one collected body of mankind, with a vast, homogenous spirit animating it. (*CE* II: 165)

Certainly, symmetry, arrangement, and the majestic are preferable to confusion and fool's play, and on these grounds Ruskin and Hawthorne agree about the clarity that results from distance—though, again, for Hawthorne that distance is temporal while for Ruskin it is spatial. With Holgrave's daguerreotypes, though, the only way to realize the details of the Judge's character is to gain proximity to his person; the daguerreotype can achieve the clarity of distance only after gaining access to the "tedious, common place" of Jaffrey's "visage." Perhaps, then, one way to reconcile the proximity of Holgrave's daguerreotypes with the temporal vantage point Hawthorne requires for historical truth is to recognize that the details gained by the daguerreotypes' intrusion into Jaffrey's interior are required if the daguerreotype is to reflect a truthful image of the Judge's whole person; it is only by getting close to him that the long, ancestral history that shapes the

Judge's character can be rendered visible through the veil of the social mask, and this proximity attains to truth by uniting those details into "one broad mass of existence" within the portrait. In this case, it is the portrait which results from the daguerreotype process that represents the distance that Hawthorne requires of truth.

Getting at the truth of Jaffrey's character is also what Holgrave wants, but unlike Hawthorne's contemporaries, Holgrave is not interested in exposing this side of Jaffrey's character as a means of keeping the past alive. Rather, the daguerreotypes are used to show that Jaffrey, in his person, is simply another Colonel, another one of those "descendant[s] of the family, gifted with a portion of the hard, keen sense, and practical energy, that had so remarkably distinguished the original founder" (*CE* II: 19). Having succeeded in revealing Jaffrey's soul (thus absolving Clifford of his guilt) and also having revealed the land title, Holgrave is able to let go of the past. While Hawthorne's contemporaries were pleased to have portraits to remind them of the past, Holgrave is just as pleased to use his portraits to stop the past from "[lying] upon the Present like a giant's dead body," to stop both himself and the remaining descendants of the Colonel from "[wasting] all [their] strength in carrying about the corpse of the old giant…who died a long while ago, and only needs to be decently buried" (*CE* II: 182-3).

As eager as Holgrave is to do away with the past, this aspect of his daguerreotypes is imperative to our understanding of his portraits as an example of picturesque portraiture because, as we know from multiple of Hawthorne's prefaces, the internal character exposed through the inclusion of historical truth is not enough to constitute reality. While it may seem that the daguerreotypes' representations of Jaffrey as

the Colonel are the reality of his character (or, at the least, are more real than the ideal appearance put on by the social façade Jaffrey wears in the contemporary moment), the greater reality lies in the daguerreotypes' combination of both this internalized historical truth and the present social ideal. It is also this process of combination that makes the daguerreotypes picturesque. The formal process of combination enacted by the daguerreotypes, whereby the long past is brought alongside the contemporary moment, reflects the harmonious union of the real and the ideal witnessed in picturesque landscape paintings. Here, though, the elements of the composition are not natural materials (the rocks, trees, mountains, and other such objects which constitute picturesque landscape paintings) but temporal exposures of character (the Judge as he appears as his late ancestor and the Judge as he appears to contemporary society). In traditional picturesque artwork, any change or manipulation to the real is made to create a more idealized image of reality. Arguably, this is what is happening with Holgrave's daguerreotypes, for the ideal image of the Judge is changed or manipulated by the inclusion (or rather, exposure) of his real person. Whereas picturesque artists use such a change to create an ideal reality, though, the change to reality brought about here by the inclusion of long history renders Holgrave's daguerreotypes representations of reality itself; unlike the traditional picturesque, what results from the daguerreotypes' manipulation of the mimetic is not an idealization of reality, but the actual reality of the Judge's person.

The emphasis I have placed on this concept of the real as it is achieved through picturesque practices of composition is troublesome when juxtaposed with the tale's picturesque closing scenes. These last moments and the images they kindle are

picturesque in that they suggest a scene which is perfect and idyllic. We may here refer to "the elegant country-seat of the late Judge Pyncheon" to which the remaining members of the Pyncheon family, along with Holgrave and Uncle Venner, plan to retire (*CE* II: 314). While no more description is proffered about this domestic abode, Phoebe's verbal illustration of the cottage, where they invite Uncle Venner to reside, presents a bucolic image. The cottage is situated in the garden, Phoebe says, and it is "the prettiest little yellowish-brown cottage you ever saw; and the sweetest-looking place, for it looks just as if it were made of gingerbread" (*CE* II: 317). The picturesque property that lies ahead is coupled with a generally blissful ending—Phoebe and Holgrave are to be married, Hepzibah no longer needs to endure the shame of opening shop to make ends meet, Clifford recovers at least partially from "his former intellectual apathy," and Uncle Venner gains a home and position among the family as their beloved philosopher, whose "words of wisdom…are like golden dandelions, which never grow in the hot months, but may be seen glistening among the withered grass, and under the dry leaves, sometimes as late as December" (*CE* II: 314, 318). While these last are situations and events rather than physical scenes, the circumstances that conclude the novel—in addition to the scenery and landscape of the country house and cottage—together make for a traditionally picturesque situation.

While this picturesque quality is distinct from the picturesque qualities of Holgrave's daguerreotypes (the former working with the customary concept of the picturesque as an image or rustic scene which is "pretty as a picture" and the latter being concerned with the composition involved in crafting such idealized scenes), the ideal

conclusion serves to reinforce Hawthorne's idea of reality by situating this idealism against the reality exposed by the daguerreotypes. Unlike some of his contemporaries, such as Emerson, Hawthorne does not believe that reality ends at or in an ideal. Rather, the ideal is only one part of Hawthorne's conception of the real. While the tale's concluding turn to more conventional ideas of the picturesque may thus seem odd or troublesome, it must be recalled that this idyl is to be balanced with the reality achieved by Holgrave's picturesque portraiture, a reality born of the union of the real and the ideal. We should also recall Hawthorne's preface, where he establishes this tale as a Romance, that is, as a composition which takes aspects of reality and alters them according to the author's own choosing. As much as Hawthorne may have been "engaged with what Emerson called 'the lubricity of all facts,'" then, meaning that "He thought the visible world was…little capable of definitive and entire comprehension," his estimation of reality as both the real and ideal suggests that Hawthorne had a bit of belief in, or at least a desire for, some degree of reliability in the objective world (Abel 69). As Judge Pyncheon shows, though, even the objective world contains appearances, and for Hawthorne, it is only when that feigned objectivity is united with the real that stable reality may be obtained.

Chapter 2 — The Certainty of Obscurity: Ambiguity as Truth in the Portraiture of *Pierre*

In 1851 Melville wrote to Hawthorne about "visable [sic] truth," which Melville explains as "the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not, though they do their worst to him" (*Correspondence* 186). Despite this brief description, what exactly Melville means by "visable truth" remains unclear. This is due to the lack of clarity regarding his attendant concept of an "absolute condition." Because of its relation to truth in Melville's definition, the absolute suggests certainty, verity, and objectivity. As a condition, the absolute refers to the state of something, the "present things," as visually perceived. "Visable truth," then, may be conceived as the unquestionable understanding of material reality as ocularly viewed; "visable truth" is an impartial perception of things as they actually exist.

Whether Melville believes in the attainment of such an incontrovertible condition, however, is another matter. One year earlier Melville wrote in "Hawthorne and his Mosses" that "in this world of lies, Truth is forced to fly like a scared white doe in the woodlands; and only by cunning glimpses will she reveal herself…even though it be covertly and by snatches" (*The Apple-Tree Table and Other Sketches* 28). While the truth that Melville writes about here is distinct from the more specific "visable truth" he wrote about to Hawthorne, this passage indicates that Melville fought, throughout the 1850s,

with the concept of truth and the possibility of its discernment. Hawthorne noted as much about his friend in his personal notebooks, writing in November of 1856 that "[Melville] can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other" (*The English Notebooks* 433).

The same may be said of Melville's Pierre Glendinning, the eponymous character of what is possibly Melville's least popular novel, published one year after the author's statement on "visable truth." It seems likely that Melville was thinking about *Pierre; or The Ambiguities* while writing to Hawthorne, for it is the unambiguous truth of his father's person which Pierre desires to apprehend, explicitly through sight. Throughout the novel, Pierre relies upon portraiture—and the act of looking upon portraiture—to gain knowledge of his father. Prior to Isabel's arrival at Saddle Meadows, Pierre recognizes the drawing-room portrait as a truthful, accurate representation of the late Mr. Glendinning. Following Isabel's declaration of kinship, however, Pierre sees the drawing-room portrait as a false representation and questions the actual condition of his father's person. Pierre thus expands his perception to include the chair-portrait, an earlier representation believed to picture his father as a young man involved in a love affair. Pierre battles to find the truth about his father, and he does so through "visable" means, relying on his perceptions of portraits to convey to him the unquestionable, objective truth of his father's person.

Following an imagined suggestion from the chair-portrait, Pierre learns that truth resides in neither portrait, but in a representation which unites the two; truth is born of a representation which includes all aspects of Mr. Glendinning's character, both the good

and the troublesome. It is from this premise, I argue, that Pierre engages in an internal practice of picturesque portraiture. While Pierre is not an artist and does not paint any portraits, his conceptual practice of the picturesque is like paintings of this genre in that it brings together disparate elements to create one whole, complete image. In this example of picturesque portraiture, the two portraits of Mr. Glendinning constitute the elements of the picturesque. Here, however, the union of elements is not performed for the sake of creating an ideal image, as is typical of picturesque landscape paintings, but for the realization of the absolute, true condition of the deceased Mr. Glendinning's person. The conceptual picturesque portraiture which Pierre attempts to construct, in other words, results from the fusion of the two representations of his father into one single image, one which combines multiple perceptions into a single picture which more accurately approaches the truth of his father's person than either picture does alone.[8]

This approach to Melville's picturesque is distinct from other studies of this genre of artwork, as well as the use of this artwork in Melville's writing. In his study of Melville's picturesque, for example, John Bryant argues that Melville uses the picturesque to balance and expose both the bright and dark sides of his contemporary

[8] Based as it is upon two images, this fusion may also be related to the stereoscope, invented by Charles Wheatstone in the early 1830s. The stereoscope is a device which allows for the viewing of two dissimilar images as one single, three-dimensional image. In Wheatstone's own words, the stereoscope shows that "the mind perceives an object of three dimensions by means of the two dissimilar pictures projected by it on the two retinae" (quoted in Wade, 112). While the Wheatstone stereoscope was well established by the time that Melville was writing *Pierre*, he may have been better acquainted with the Brewster stereoscope, introduced in 1849. All stereoscopes, though, whether reflecting like Wheatstone's or refracting like Brewster's, allowed for the study of stereoscopic depth. Whether Melville was familiar with this device would require further study. I make note of the stereoscope here as a point of comparison between the picturesque union of the two paintings and the union of two images in the stereoscope. Again, while further study would be required, it is possible that there is a further relation, wherein the truth born of Pierre's picturesque union of paintings may be comparable to the enhanced appearance of reality which results from stereoscopic depth.

social world. Melville, Bryant says, "would become an artist that fused the elusive brightness of immateriality and the impenetrable darkness of matter—of faith and doubt—into one sense of being, to frame it like a picture, and yet to 'tone down' the strange and variable emotions associated with that fusion" (855). Melville's picturesque, then, "generates a tense repose felt when we contemplate alien irregularities contained within a frame" (858). Samuel Otter locates a similar practice of fusion and exposure in his analysis of *Pierre's* Saddle Meadows. For Otter:

> Melville's Saddle Meadows is a Hudson River and Berkshire landscape with a twist, or rather a tilt. From one angle, that is, read from the perspective of explicit statement, it seems simply to celebrate the apotheosized, imperative American land. However, read with attention to the strange stylistic motions, the topography of Saddle Meadows…tells the story of how the past suffuses and encumbers the present, how the present is scored over and over with the lines of the past. (207)

While there are aspects of both Bryant's and Otter's discussions which appear in my analysis of picturesque portraiture—mainly the fusion of difference within one space or frame—this study shows how portraits are working towards a different end. When applied to portraiture rather than society (as Bryant studies) or landscapes (as Otter explores), the picturesque comes to be concerned with man. Here, then, what is at issue is not exposing the truth of external reality, but realizing truth as (or, perhaps more aptly, through) the destruction of an internal ideal understanding. In this formulation truth is shaped by a negative framing of reality, a framing which implies that Pierre can never find the certainty he's after. The subtitle of the novel suggests as much, too. On one level, "the Ambiguities" refers to the enigmatic aspects of Mr. Glendinning as witnessed by Pierre in the chair-portrait. At the same time, however, the ambiguities also reference the idea that there is no such thing as the Truth, only inquiry after truth. I argue that the

portraits in *Pierre* function as an example of this negative conception of truth, exposing Pierre to this idea that, in the face of perpetual ambiguity, the only thing that can be known for certain, is uncertainty.

Prior to the arrival of Isabel's letter, in which she proclaims that Pierre is "not the only child of [his] father" and that "the hand that traces this is [his] sister's," Pierre relies upon the principle of ancestral Glendinning pride as the basis of his perceptions and knowledge (Melville, *Pierre* 63). This familial pride is defined, in part, by honor, strength, and valor, particularly as realized in Pierre's paternal great-grandfather and grandfather, both military men. Of his great-grandfather it is said that, "in that [Indian] battle," he "sat unhorsed on his saddle in the grass [and], with his dying voice, still [cheered] his men in the fray," while it was Pierre's grandfather who, during the Revolutionary War, "for several months defended a rude but all-important stockaded fort, against the repeated combined assaults of Indians, Tories, and Regulars" (Melville, *Pierre* 5-6, 6). Founded as it is upon these military men and their sustained efforts during war, Glendinning pride equates to nationalism, courage, and distinction, to possessing a sense of dignity for the American nation and doing whatever is necessary to defend and uphold that nation.

While it does not seem that Pierre's father was in the military, Mr. Glendinning is just as highly esteemed as his father and grandfather before him, especially for his great manliness, morality, culture, society, and religiosity or faith, five more traits that factor into the concept of familial pride. It is for this reason that Mary Glendinning (rather poetically**)** tells her son to "always think of him and you can never err; yes, always think

of your dear perfect father, Pierre" (Melville, *Pierre* 19). While the image and idea of pride is thus largely connected to Pierre's paternal lineage, Mrs. Glendinning also stands as an example of family pride. Indeed, her pride and haughtiness are established early on, and time and again she is characterized as "a lady who externally furnished a singular example of the preservative and beautifying influences of unfluctuating rank, health, and wealth," as well as "a noble creature, but formed chiefly for the gilded prosperities of life…bred and expanded, in all developments, under the sole influence of hereditary forms and world-usages" (Melville, *Pierre* 4, 89). Glendinning pride, then, is both hereditary and trained, it is a principle that is naturally passed down through the family, but which also is realized (or enhanced and perfected) through nurture and education.

Nor was such a breeding withheld from Pierre. Pierre developed culture by "[spending] long summer afternoons in the deep recesses of his father's fastidiously picked and decorous library" (Melville, *Pierre* 6). Faith, perhaps the simplest of qualities associated with Glendinning pride, is a requirement of gentlemanliness. Here Pierre adheres to his father's maxim, which was that "all gentlemanhood was vain…unless the primeval gentleness and complete texture of the character, that he who pronounced himself gentleman, could also rightfully assume the meek, but kingly style of Christian" (Melville, *Pierre* 6-7). With his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before him, Pierre believes he could not but have the "gentleness" and "texture" required of a gentleman, and so it is that, "At the age of sixteen, Pierre partook with his mother in the Holy Sacraments," and by so doing accomplished his faith (Melville, *Pierre* 7). While Pierre thus learned culture and religiosity or faith at Saddle Meadows, growing up solely

in the country risked a breeding that "would have been unwisely contracted" (Melville, *Pierre* 6). Coupled with his upbringing and education at Saddle Meadows, then—and in order to learn the Glendinning requirement for society—Pierre's youth and early adulthood consisted of "[accompanying] his father and his mother—and afterwards his mother alone—in their annual visits to the city; where naturally mingling in a large and polished society, Pierre had insensibly formed himself in the airier graces of life" (Melville, *Pierre* 6). It is through such forming, not only in the graces of life and society, but culture, learnedness, and religiosity, that Pierre was thus groomed into the character and image of Glendinning pride.[9]

While heredity and breeding situate familial pride within the Glendinnings themselves, it is also true that their pride is manifested materially, in the landscape and estate at Saddle Meadows. As the narrator says, "All the associations of Saddle-Meadows were full of pride for Pierre," and "not only through mere chances of things, had that fine country become ennobled by the deeds of his sires, but in Pierre's eyes, all its hills and swales seemed as sanctified through their very long uninterrupted possession by his race" (Melville, *Pierre* 6, 8). Anything owned by the Glendinnings contains and exudes pride by nature of its belonging to the Glendinnings, the arbiters and representatives of honor

[9] On the point of character formation and grooming, we might also recall the poetic language Mrs. Glendinning uses in telling her son to always think on and remember his father. Mrs. Glendinning's rhyme is just one example of the heightened rhetorical speech used throughout the novel, especially by the characters who belong to Saddle Meadows and those who maintain a similar social status, such as Lucy. In the idyllic world of Saddle Meadows, the people are so refined that they not only possess such qualities as faith, culture, and society, but a sense of refinement reflected in their elevated speech. When associated with the Glendinning pride inherited by and taught to Pierre, this heightened rhetorical speech becomes part and parcel of the ideal worldview Pierre upholds.

and valor, gentlemanliness and morality, among other traits. While teaching and heredity thus internalize familial pride, the land externalizes pride, making it visible not only in the people who occupy Saddle Meadows, but in the very landscape upon which they reside.

Founded as they are upon this one prescribed principle, the Glendinnings and Saddle Meadows both stand as ideals. It is because his internal and external worlds are based upon this limited perspective that Pierre, in turn, mistakenly understands his perfect, ideal world as truth; Pierre's illusion of reality stems from the singularity of his perception, in which Pierre is only aware and knowledgeable of the one paternal genealogy and the one image of pride associated with the paternal name. In this way, Pierre's breeding may have been rather "unwisely contracted" after all, for it is this singular view that is responsible for the "delicate and poetic mind" which Pierre is said to possess, a mind which has prevented Pierre, "though now arrived at the age of nineteen," from "[becoming] so thoroughly initiated in that darker, though truer aspect of things" (Melville, *Pierre* 5, 69). It was, for example, while he was establishing associations of Saddle Meadows with pride that, "Thus loftily, in the days of his circumscribed youth, did Pierre glance along the background of his race; little recking of that maturer and larger interior development; which should forever deprive these things of their full power of pride in his soul" (Melville, *Pierre* 6). Similarly, it was while delving into his father's books and developing a "finer culture" that, "with a graceful glow on his limbs, and soft, imaginative flames in his heart, did this Pierre glide toward maturity, thoughtless of that period of remorseless insight, when all these delicate warmths should seem frigid to him,

and he should madly demand more ardent fires" (Melville, *Pierre* 6). The singularity that results from a worldview established solely on Glendinning pride locks Pierre into a secure world where he does not, or cannot, mature his perspective. As Edgar Dryden contends, Pierre "seems to enjoy the security of a family circle within which he can define and fix himself and at the same time remain free of the fear of any challenge of his originality or authority" (149). Ancestral Glendinning pride thus does nothing more than reinforce the idealism with which Pierre perceives his world and the people in it, especially his father.

The pedestal—or, in Melville's language, the pillar—that Pierre places his father on reflects the same singular perspective applied to the rest of the Glendinning family. The "shrine" which Pierre holds in his "fresh-foliaged heart" provides the most telling metaphor for the singularity with which Pierre has built this naïve image (Melville, *Pierre* 68). This shrine, it seemed, "was indeed, a place for the celebration of a chastened joy," and:

> though…mantled, and tangled with garlands, this shrine was made of marble—a niched pillar deemed solid and eternal, and from whose top radiated all those innumerable sculptured scrolls and branches, which supported the entire one-pillared temple of [Mr. Glendinning's] moral life; as in some beautiful gothic oratories, one central pillar, trunk-like, upholds the roof. (Melville, *Pierre* 68)

Here, Pierre's singularity of thought is manifested materially, in the single pillar upon which Pierre places his father. This singularity is amplified in the moral life which the pillar upholds, a morality which is characteristic of ancestral Glendinning pride. In his memory of his father, Pierre internalizes the perspective of Glendinning pride and casts it into the metaphorical, material form of one individual pillar upholding one image of his

father cast within the mold of the one, all defining characteristic of the Glendinning family.

This concept of singularity is not dissimilar to the monomania exhibited by Ahab in *Moby-Dick*. Ahab's central preoccupation, of course, is the white whale itself. Also implicated in this obsession is Ahab's narcissism. His monomania, in short, is somewhat twofold. Ahab is as fixated on Moby-Dick as he is preoccupied with his role or centrality in all things, including his possession of that creature. "The Doubloon" offers but one example, wherein Ahab "seemed to be newly attracted by the strange figures and inscriptions…as though now for the first time beginning to interpret for himself in some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in them" (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 430). In this moment, Ahab reflects Ishmael in that he is using the pictorial arts to arrive at meaning. That meaning, however, is entirely focused on Ahab. As Ahab himself proclaims, "There's something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things," and the tower, the volcano, and "the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab" (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 431). This monomania results in an ideal. In "this round gold," Ahab says, "is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self," and in that reflection Ahab sees himself ideally, that is, as the meaning of everything (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 431). To some extent, this is true about all the characters who look upon the doubloon. To be sure, not everyone sees themselves like Ahab sees himself, yet all arrive at a particular meaning that is linked to their individual perspective. As Jeremy Tambling writes, the coin "gives to each person brought under its

spell—made into a Narcissus—the sense that it means something unique" (119). Efrian Gomez likewise writes that the doubloon "reflects, when gazed upon, a variety of images depending on the personality of the gazer" (645). Ahab seems to be aware of this, too, for it is he who compares the doubloon to "a magician's glass," a comparison which suggests that what the viewer sees in and derives from the coin is not reality, but an illusion particular to himself. Despite this acknowledgment of the magic of subjective perception, Ahab remains solipsistic and arrives at meaning by relating the doubloon and all figures therein back to himself. Like Pierre's idealism, Ahab's mania and narcissism result in a sort of illusion. Susan Dyer argues that, both in his person and as a self-proclaimed figure of grandiosity and omnipotence, Ahab "represents the promise of an impossible ideal," and that "This illusion is threatened at every turn by reality" (23, 24). Efrain Gomez similarly posits that Ahab is blinded by his pride, and that in this state of blindness "he fails to see his 'mild,' tormenting images, he sees only his grandiose distorted self" (645). Catherine Ferrante uses similar language when she writes that Ahab "has a myopic viewpoint filtered through a singular, self-informed lens," a "self-obsession" which "results in the delusion that meaning is found only in relation to the self" (4, 3). Neither Ahab nor Pierre perceives the truth of their situation because of a singular, internalized fixation which distorts reality. Pierre, too, as regards his father, does not just possess this singularity of thought within his mind's eye, but witnesses it in painted portraits.

The drawing-room portrait pictures Mr. Glendinning exactly as the proud, gentlemanly, perfect man Pierre believes him to be. While Pierre is intrigued by the smaller chair-portrait, he deems the former a more accurate representation of his father

because it “had been painted many years after the other, and therefore brought the original pretty nearly within his own childish recollections” (Melville, *Pierre* 72). Mrs. Glendinning also prefers this portrait for it is the one which she “held to do justice to her husband, correctly to convey his features in detail, and more especially their truest, and finest, and noblest combined expression” (Melville, *Pierre* 72). Unlike Pierre, though, who sees some value in the chair-portrait (even if he does not yet know what to make of the representation), Mrs. Glendinning maintains that this smaller painting “did signally belie her husband,” representing him as someone other than the man she knew, loved, and married (Melville, *Pierre* 72). For both Pierre and his mother, the truth of Mr. Glendinning’s character is evident in the drawing-room portrait because the painting reflects the man as they knew him, as a father and husband who exhibited the spotless image of Glendinning pride.

The idea that a person’s character can be communicated in or through portraiture, however, is not exclusive to the portraits of Mr. Glendinning. Early in the novel it is said that the portrait of “grand old Pierre Glendinning,” Pierre’s grandfather, “possessed the heavenly persuasiveness of angelic speech; a glorious gospel framed and hung upon the wall, and declaring to all people, as from the Mount, that man is a noble, god-like being, full of choicest juices; made up of strength and beauty” (Melville, *Pierre* 30). Together, the drawing-room portrait and that of Pierre’s grandfather suggest that portraiture allows the viewer to see not just the external appearance of the subject pictured, but by way of that appearance to know his internal character.

As naïve as it may seem to believe that a portrait representation indicates the subject's internal character—and as problematic as this proves for Pierre, who later "cannot contemplate a single picture, whether his father's portrait or a literary illustration, without speculating into Isabel's parentage"—this practice of looking and associating external appearance with internal character was common throughout the first half of the nineteenth century (Clinton 7). As I discussed in my Hawthorne chapter, etiquette manuals in circulation during this period "assume a moral transparency: an unmediated translation of character into the visible languages of facial expression, gesture, and dress" (Conron 46). The transparency and translation of characters through facial features and expression is further exhibited in contemporary physiognomic manuals for reading character. Rachel Walker writes that, "Between the 1770s and 1860s, physiognomy (the study of the human face)…took the transatlantic world by storm" and, along with phrenology, it was a "popular [science] rooted in a deceptively simple premise: people's heads and faces revealed their intelligence, personality, and character. Physiognomists and phrenologists suggested that eyes, noses, cheeks, and lips could all convey important information about the human mind and soul" (3, 3-4). It was in physiognomic manuals written by these (pseudo)scientists that people learned how to read faces and, through that assessment, make transparent the true character hidden within.

Pierre stands as an example of someone who relies upon such corporeal assessments to realize character. However, because the only character that Pierre knows is associated with ancestral pride, his readings yield an ideal type. It is not just Pierre's limited perspective which makes for this ideal, though. The fact that Pierre arrives at

Glendinning pride through his perception of the drawing-room portrait implies that the portrait also represents a type. Indeed, the use and appearance of character types is common in American artwork belonging to this period, especially in the genre paintings which "flourished during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, when the young nation sought images and narratives to define and bolster its developing identity" (Brownlee 9). This developing identity was echoed in alterations taking place in the market economy, alterations from which "certain recognizable character 'types' emerged in print and popular culture to facilitate the exchanges between divergent groups of people to help viewers sort out the implications of cultural change" (Brownlee 9). Melville would have seen these genre paintings as well, for it was "During the 1840s [that] the Art-Union exhibited more and more genre pieces to New York audiences" (Berthold 226), and it was here, in 1847, that Melville met American artist William Sydney Mount, a "quintessential painter of humble and humorous scenes of everyday life" (Brownlee 12). It was also in this year that "the membership print selected was George Caleb Bingham's *The Jolly Flatboatmen*," a popular work of American genre painting (Berthold 226, see figure 2-1).

However, as much as viewers may have understood genre paintings to be "realistic depictions of ordinary life, virtually a textbook definition of genre painting," these works of art are anything but truthful representations (Berthold 220). While American genre painting is distinct, "[addressing] the new realities of life in the United States," it is nonetheless a successor of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting (Brownlee 10). These paintings, like their much later American counterparts, possess

Figure 2-1. *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, George Caleb Bingham, 1846.

a "stunning lifelikeness," and yet, as Wayne Franits discusses, "beyond their strikingly naturalistic appearance, genre paintings simultaneously weave clever fictions, because they synthesize observed fact with a well-established repertoire of motifs and styles to create what are, in essence, fabricated images" (269, see figure 2-2). What is more, the fabricated images represent "conventionality," a term which "refers not simply to the repetition of specific styles and motifs but especially to the restricted number of themes that artists depicted, ones which were continually repeated, often over several generations" (Franits 271). Both the characters and the scenes which they populate, then,

Figure 2-2. *Country Fair*, David Vinckboons, 1629.

"owe less to the recording of real life than to pictorial traditions," rendering the paintings ideal (Franits 275).[10]

[10] It is for this reason that Dennis Berthold's assessment of Melville's use of Dutch genre painting techniques is problematic. Melville, Berthold asserts, was greatly influenced by seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings, and recognition of this influence "suggests a line of thought in his career that cherishes these commonplace virtues and that expresses them with descriptions and motifs employing a distinctively Dutch iconography" (219). Certainly, such iconography may be interpreted from Melville's well-known letter to Sophia Hawthorne—sent January 1852, six months before the publication of *Pierre*—in which Melville reassures her that "The next chalice [he] shall commend, will be a rural bowl of milk" (*Correspondence* 219). For Berthold, "the pastoral setting of *Pierre*" is that "rural bowl of milk," a setting which "invited genre techniques" (229). Douglas Robillard likewise mentions the novel as this bowl of milk, arguing that "Much of the painterly argument in *Pierre*…centers about," among other artistic objects and topics, "rustic genre scenes" (28). While we may think about the novel, and especially the introductory Saddle Meadows setting, within the terms and characteristics of genre painting, we cannot, as Berthold does, maintain that these rural scenes work towards creating an image of reality because reality is not what is represented in genre paintings. If genre painting is to be applied to this novel, it is both more correct and more effective to use it as a means of better understanding how Pierre sees the ideal as the real, and to understand how that illusion has its basis in typology.

This is precisely the situation with the drawing-room portrait. While there is no family story recalling the portrait's creation, as there is with the earlier chair-portrait, it is known that the drawing-room portrait is a commissioned piece of work which, Aunt Dorthea says, Mrs. Glendinning "paid I don't know how many hundred dollars for" (Melville, *Pierre* 80). The fact that the portrait was commissioned suggests that the artist might have been more concerned with producing a suitable image for a wealthy client than painting the truth of his subject; because he is representing and getting reimbursed by a person of means, the artist is more likely to paint his client in a favorable light which supports his social status, albeit that means rendering a typological representation which is less truth-telling.[11] Even if the artist of the commissioned painting did have a particular intention though, Mr. Glendinning was aware that he was sitting for the portrait, a knowledge which would have provided him the opportunity to appear, both in dress and demeanor, in a manner reflective of Glendinning pride. In this case, it is not just the portrait artist, but Mr. Glendinning who is responsible for the representation of a type.

Because he did not know his father when he was a young man, Pierre does not—indeed, cannot—see the same type in the chair-portrait, which was painted without Mr. Glendinning's knowledge—"cousin Ralph was stealing his portrait" (Melville, *Pierre* 77). Yet this is not to say that the chair-portrait does not also represent Mr. Glendinning as a type. While the chair-portrait was painted with a different intention than that of the

[11] John Singer Sargent's commissioned paintings of wealthy women, discussed in my chapter on Henry James, offer an example of this representational complicity. Often, Sargent would not just paint suitable representations of these women but would go so far as to bolster their images, painting them to look even wealthier, even more beautiful, or of an even higher social status.

drawing-room portrait, the former likewise represents only one piece of Mr. Glendinning. According to the family story, as told to Pierre by Aunt Dorothea, the artist, cousin Ralph, "fancied it would be a very fine thing if he could paint [Mr. Glendinning] as [the mysterious French woman's] wooer" (Melville, *Pierre* 77). To capture Mr. Glendinning as this wooer, Ralph asked Mr. Glendinning to speak of the French emigrants while he was busy painting, "wishing, you see, to get [Mr. Glendinning's] thoughts running that supposed wooing way, so that he might catch some sort of corresponding expression" (Melville, *Pierre* 77). Because Mr. Glendinning was lost in thought, he is not capable of controlling his demeanor, as he presumably was with the drawing-room portrait. In this way the expression represented in the chair-portrait is more honest or true, although it remains that Ralph achieved the expression by directing Mr. Glendinning's thinking. It seems that Mr. Glendinning would have been aware of the differences in expression and the broader notion that facial expressions offer transparency, given the presence in his room, noted by Ralph, of "a very wonderful work on Physiognomy, as they call it, in which the strangest and shadowiest rules were laid down for detecting people's innermost secrets by studying their faces" (Melville, *Pierre* 79). The story behind the chair-portrait indicates that, despite this knowledge, Mr. Glendinning was not the one in control, that the look and intention of the portrait were studied and entirely at Ralph's command. With this intention to capture Mr. Glendinning solely as a wooer, Ralph engages in a single-minded painting practice similar to Pierre's singular perspectival viewing of the drawing-

room portrait. In both cases, what results is an ideal, typified portrait which represents only one aspect of Mr. Glendinning's character.[12]

Given these distinctions between the portraits, it is not surprising that "to Pierre these two paintings seemed strangely dissimilar," though for Pierre this difference stems less from the intentions of the paintings than from the fact that he does not recognize the man in the chair-portrait as his father (Melville, *Pierre* 72). Despite Pierre's inability to know the subject of the chair-portrait, he locates a difference between this and the other painting which gives further evidence of the idealism of each. Between the two Pierre notes a

> wide difference of styles of the respective artists, and the wide difference of those respective, semi-reflected, ideal faces, which, even in the presence of the original, a spiritual artist will rather choose to draw from than from the fleshy face, however brilliant and fine. (Melville, *Pierre* 72)

While to Pierre the drawing-room portrait seems the more accurate representation of his father, this statement makes clear that neither this nor the chair-portrait represent anything more than an ideal portion of Mr. Glendinning's person. The faces are different, for certain, yet both are only "semi-reflected" and "ideal" because they were painted by

[12] While this discussion is focused on types in portraiture, it is worthwhile to also consider Pierre as a type. In her study of women and sentimental culture, Karen Halttunen presents the concept of "the sentimental typology of conduct," wherein women reinforce the image and idea of the sentimental type by their involuntary emotional transparency (58). Susan Williams expands upon this premise and argues that a character who embodies a sentimental typology of conduct is one who "looks at idealized images in order to learn how to appear to others, thereby becoming a standard oneself" (47). To be sure, Pierre is not a woman, and while it may be arguable whether he is a sentimental character, his visual engagements with and uses of portraits make him a good example of the typology of conduct more broadly considered. It is not clearly indicated whether Pierre uses the portraits as didactic tools. It is known, though, that he has been groomed in the image of Glendinning pride. In this way Pierre is already a type. It does not seem implausible, then, that he would use an image representative of that pride as an instructional aid.

artists who captured an idea of a face rather than having represented the face as it existed before them.

This tension between subjective ideas and objective reality points to competing notions of realism at work throughout the nineteenth century, the question being which is most real. Because Pierre is engaged in an internal practice of picturesque portraiture, wherein the ideal perception he holds of his father needs to be destroyed for him to realize a more real representation of Mr. Glendinning's person, it may be concluded that Melville places greater value on actuality. As much is implied in his statement on "visable truth," as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. This puts Melville at odds with Henry James, who, as I discuss in Chapter 3, sees the illusion of reality as the goal of artistic representation. For James, even if a portrait represents an ideal, the image is judged successful if that ideal achieves the look of reality as realized through subjective interpretation. Pierre does not begin to consider such theories of reality in art until the end of the novel, when he encounters a painting titled "A stranger's head, by an unknown hand." Rather, in this moment of comparison between the two portraits, Pierre, perhaps more simply and unknowingly, points to the ideals and typology of each portrait as inscribed by the artists.

Overall, this ideal image of Mr. Glendinning is well maintained, and yet there are moments when, even prior to Isabel's arrival, the typology is shaken. This happens when Pierre ponders too long over the chair-portrait, with the face looking out "frankly, and cheerfully, as if there was nothing left concealed; and yet again, a little ambiguously and mockingly" (Melville, *Pierre* 80). In these moments, Pierre does not accept the "ineffable

hints and ambiguities, and undefined half-suggestions" he confronts, but denies those suggestions by countering them with happier thoughts; Pierre negates any potential evidence of the truth of his father's person by burying that evidence under happier memories, thus reinforcing his ideal image. For example, when Pierre witnesses his father, on his deathbed, call out and extend a hand for his daughter, he maintains that the outburst "belonged to the spheres of the impalpable ether; and the child soon threw other and sweeter remembrances over it, and covered it up; and at last, it was blended with all other dim things, and imaginings of dimness; and so, seemed to survive to no real life in Pierre" (Melville, *Pierre* 7). This incident occurred before Isabel's arrival, and thus Pierre at the time had no reason to question the validity of his father's action; and yet Pierre felt the need to bury the incident over other remembrances which, we may presume, adhere to the more perfect view maintained by Pierre and reflected in the drawing-room portrait. The typology of this painting is strong, and until Isabel's entrance, so is Pierre's dedication to and belief in that typology.

As this example makes evident, Pierre's approach to maintaining the ideal image of his father consists of bringing together only those aspects which constitute Mr. Glendinning as the man Pierre wants him to be. However, while this approach may have worked in the past, "[leaving] all Pierre's thought-channels" undisturbed and uncongested by the suggestions forwarded by the chair-portrait, such a technique proves untenable in the face of Isabel's letter, the news of which shatters Pierre's singular perspective and sets him on the path of picturesque portraiture (Melville, *Pierre* 85). As Eric Sundquist rightly contends, the "impossible ideal" that Mr. Glendinning has been transformed into in

Pierre's memory "only becomes human after it is inscribed with a deep flaw," and it is Isabel's proclamation of herself as Pierre's sister which performs this inscribing (154). Combined with her letter, that "one single, untestified [memory]" of Mr. Glendinning on his deathbed "[sufficed] to enkindle such a blaze of evidence, that all corners of conviction [were] as suddenly lighted up as a midnight city by a burning building," the result being a complete annihilation of Pierre's ideal worldview (Melville, *Pierre* 71). As much is foreshadowed by the narrator, wherein the impending fall of Pierre's marble shrine acts as a metaphor for the humanizing of which Sundquist speaks. "Judge, then," the narrator says, "how all-desolating and withering the blast, that for Pierre, in one night, stripped his holiest shrine of all overlaid bloom, and buried the mild statue of the saint beneath the prostrated ruins of the soul's temple itself" (Melville, *Pierre* 69). Pierre's newfound recognition of his father as a sexual being rather than (or not only as) the image of Glendinning pride reflects a rupturing of the singular perspective he grew up with; the humanizing effect brought about by Isabel's proclamation of kinship shatters Pierre's ideal, singular perspective and exposes him to the reality of the multiplicity of perspective. Following this knowledge that his father's character consists of more than pride, Pierre's new task is to bring the multiplicity of his father's person together into one image which, through the union of perspectives, pictures Mr. Glendinning's true character, a task which engages Pierre in a mental practice of picturesque portraiture.

Pierre imagines his father urging him in this practice immediately following his reading of Isabel's letter. The chair-portrait, Pierre fancies, tells him to "believe not the drawing-room painting; that is not thy father; or, at least, it is not all of thy father.

Consider in thy mind, Pierre, whether we two paintings may not make only one" (Melville, *Pierre* 83). Because the suggestion is offered regarding only two portraits—the drawing room and chair-portraits—this means that all the pride of the former must be considered alongside all the immorality of the latter, the idea being that, when appraised together, the image which results will reflect the entirety of Mr. Glendinning's person. This picturesque technique implies that, should either aspect of his person be left out of the imagined, combined portrait (or should Pierre include only those aspects that he wants to see, as was previously done), the image represented therein will be less than truthful, whole, or complete.

This transition of approaches, from the selection of only the desired character traits to the inclusion of multiple and all traits, initiates Pierre's progression toward a Ruskinian perspective. In *Modern Painters II* (which, as Merton Sealts records, Melville read in 1848), John Ruskin distinguishes a work of composition from a work of the Imagination. "In this operation," Ruskin says of composition, "if it be of little sensibility, it regard only the absolute beauty or value of the images brought before it; and takes that or those which it thinks fairest or most interesting, without any regard to their sympathy with those for whose company they are destined" (*Modern Painters* 24-5). Furthermore, it is only those chosen images which the composition artist represents, for "he is at liberty to remove some of the component images, and others foreign, and re-arrange the whole" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters* 23). However, Ruskin argues, the re-arranging of disparate images does not create one congruous entity. If such is the goal, "the artist must induce in each of its component parts…such imperfection as that the other shall put it right…Both

must be faulty when separate, and each corrected by the presence of the other" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters* 28-9). The resultant image will not only be harmonious, but beautiful, because "it will be whole, an organized body with dependent members" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters* 29). This practice, not of composition, but harmony, defines an act and work of the Imagination, or the "imagination associative" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters* 30).

For an illustration of these principles Ruskin refers to J.M.W. Turner's *Procris and Cephalus* as it appears in the *Liber Studiorum*, a book of seventy-one prints by Turner (see figure 2-3). Ruskin says that he "[knows] of no landscape more purely or magnificently imaginative, or bearing more distinct conception of the parts" than that of *Procris and Cephalus*, and he invites the reader to test this claim by

> first [covering] over with his hand the two trunks that rise against the sky on the right, and [asking] himself how any termination of the central mass so *ugly* as the straight trunk which he will then painfully see, could have been conceived or admitted without *simultaneous conception* of the trunks he has taken away on the right? (*Modern Painters* 53)

Ruskin then tells the reader to repeat the process, the second time "[concealing] the whole central mass," and yet again a third time to "remove from the trunk its two arms, and try the effect" (*Modern Painters* 53, 54). While Ruskin is able to offer a description of the print through this process, his larger task is to involve readers in a practice which reveals that, "in each case…[the reader] had destroyed a feature on which everything else depends" (*Modern Painters* 54). This practice of hand placement lends tangibility to Ruskin's idea of harmony as the interaction between individual parts and the ways in which they communicate with each other as a whole. Working from Ruskin's definitions,

Figure 2-3. *Procris and Cephalus,* J.M.W. Turner, Plate 41 from *Liber Studiorum,* 1812.

we might then say that Pierre's earlier confrontations with the chair-portrait reflect him as a composition artist, or one who perceives compositionally, while the chair-portrait's suggestion for picturesque portraiture is an illustration of the work of the Imagination. Before Isabel entered his life, Pierre maintained the image and idea of ancestral Glendinning pride by recalling only those memories which adhered to the ideal Glendinning and father types. As such, the image Pierre held of his father was more specifically a composition. The drawing-room portrait might also be considered a composition because this painting represents only those aspects of Mr. Glendinning which inform his pride. By contrast, a portrait which joins the images of Mr. Glendinning as he appears in both the drawing-room and chair-portraits adheres to the work of the

Imagination. The theoretical representation which the chair-portrait calls for requires a yoking of the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly. The chair-portrait's imaginary suggestion thus directly echoes Ruskin's own claim—and the defining condition of the Imagination—that "the two imperfections must be co-relatively and simultaneously conceived" (*Modern Painters* 30). Given the fact that such a simultaneous conception need must include Mr. Glendinning's illicit love affair, it seems likely that the resultant portrait would be less than beautiful, at least in Pierre's estimation. As the chair-portrait implies, though, the inclusion of this immoral deed is necessary if the truth of Pierre's father is to be represented; and indeed this "absolute truth" is one of Ruskin's "final tests…of the work of associative imagination," alongside "its intense simplicity [and] its perfect harmony" (*Modern Painters* 59). What Pierre needs to learn through a mental practice of the Imagination is that a truthful portrait "may be a harmony, majestic or humble, abrupt or prolonged, but always a governed and perfect whole" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters* 60). The principles of harmony, wholeness, and simultaneity which constitute Ruskin's ideas regarding the work of the Imagination, then, can also be understood as the founding principles of picturesque portraiture as presented to Pierre by the chair-portrait.

Implicitly, this introduction of picturesque portraiture advances a new conception of truth. Before, when he still possessed the singular perspective, Pierre took the ideal for truth, as does Emerson in his ideal theory. Now, with picturesque portraiture, truth comes to mean the opposite of ideal; the task using picturesque portraiture is to disregard everything that Mr. Glendinning is not (the perfect figure of total Glendinning pride), and to realize and harmonize everything his father is (a mix of both pride and immorality).

Following the chair-portrait's suggestion of picturesque portraiture, then, Emersonian idealism is dismantled as Pierre comes to recognize truth as the destruction of the ideal.

While Pierre is excited by these new realizations, this negative conception of truth puts him into a rather tenuous situation regarding the certainty of ever knowing a positive truth. Up until this moment, Pierre believed that he knew who his father was, and he took that knowledge for truth. However, as both Isabel's letter and the chair-portrait's suggested picturesque portraiture help Pierre realize, that truth was unreal. To attain the real truth, Pierre must destroy everything that (seemingly) is. This task proves difficult though, because the negative conception of truth suggests an inability to ever know, with certainty, any positive truth. What Pierre once took for truth turned out to be an ideal illusion, so how, then, can he possess any certainty about anything that he believes to be true? How can he positively know whether that which is, is actually true? In his analysis of *Moby-Dick*, Aladár Sarbu presents a similar set of implications. In Melville's theory of reliability, Sarbu states, "it is by no means certain that one will strike at the truth," and "It is by no means certain that one can discover the truth" (155). This means that "there are no guarantees that the knowledge thus obtained is a hundred percent correct," and so "one has to resign oneself to the sad fact of the subjective, therefore unreliable, nature of knowledge" (Sarbu 155). The same conclusion applies to both the negative conception of truth and to Pierre, who, like Melville, is troubled by the inconclusiveness of unreliability.

Pierre, however, devotes himself to the truth despite his inability to accept its unreliability, and in so doing he becomes so fixated on exposing truth that his theoretical

practice of picturesque portraiture extends far beyond his desire to know his father's character; engaging in practices of picturesque composition becomes Pierre's way of attaining knowledge about his father as well as knowledge about external reality at large. Pierre vows as much when he proclaims that "From all idols, I tear all veils; henceforth I will see the hidden things; and live right out in my own hidden life!—Now I feel that nothing but Truth can move me so" (Melville, *Pierre* 66). So it is that, after his first interview with Isabel, Pierre applies the concept of picturesque harmony to Isabel's being. During his troubled meditations beneath the Memnon Stone, "He strove to condense her mysterious haze into some definite and comprehensible shape" (Melville, *Pierre* 136). A similar situation occurs later too, when

> Pierre now for an instant eyes [Isabel]; and in that one instant sees in the imploring face, not only the nameless touchingness of that of the sewing-girl, but also the subtler expression of the portrait of his then youthful father, strangely translated, and intermarryingly blended with some before unknown, foreign femininenes. (Melville, *Pierre* 112)

The condensing and combining seen in Pierre's attempt to know Isabel's person is later applied to Pierre's writing. The purpose of Pierre's philosophical text is "to deliver what he thought to be new, or at least miserably neglected Truth to the world," and he attempts to do so by "[engaging] in a comprehensive compacted work…digestively including the whole range of all that can be known or dreamed" (Melville, *Pierre* 283). In each example, Pierre is working to harmonize multiple aspects (either of character or worldly knowledge) in order to arrive at truth.

What Pierre does not understand, though, is that there is no one, single truth. Rather, the only truth there is, is ambiguity; because nothing can be known for certain,

and because there is no way to assuredly know a positive truth, truth is uncertain. As devoted as Pierre is to the truth, then, his conception of truth remains flawed because it is founded upon the irrefutable. Pierre realizes as much when he encounters one final portrait, "A stranger's head, by an unknown hand." This final portrait, as the title indicates, reintroduces all the ambiguities which Pierre has fought to overcome with his application of the picturesque. Here, neither the subject of the portrait nor the artist is named—by its title, everything is strange and unknown. However, as Pierre's response to the portrait indicates, it is not just this painting that is unknowable, but quite literally everything.

The unknowability that Pierre realizes from the anonymous portrait is foreshadowed by Pierre's reaction to the rest of the (largely fake) paintings in the gallery, "bungling modern incompletenesses" which he sees leading up to the unnamed artist's work (Melville, *Pierre* 350). To Pierre, "All the walls of the world seemed thickly hung with the empty and impotent scope of pictures, grandly outlined, but miserably filled," and even those smaller paintings with superior execution, "though touching him not unpleasingly, in one restricted sense, awoke no dormant majesties in his soul, and therefore, upon the whole, were contemptibly inadequate and unsatisfactory" (Melville, *Pierre* 350). At the very least, what appears to be missing here is the wholeness and harmony which Pierre first began to desire with the combination of the drawing-room and chair-portraits. However, as soon as Pierre sees the stranger's head and realizes that "perhaps there was no original at all to this second portrait; [that] it might have been a pure fancy piece," it becomes evident to Pierre that there is much more missing (Melville,

Pierre 353). If a portrait can picture someone who does not even exist, then it is impossible to know with certainty the person represented therein, let alone the character of that person. It is at this moment, therefore, that Pierre begins to question his belief in Isabel's claims of siblinghood as well as his own embodiment of picturesque portraiture. In admitting to himself the faulty evidence which he brought together to shape certain knowledge, Pierre uses such words as "nebulous," "uncertainty," "presumption," and "inconclusive," a vocabulary which solidifies the notion, realized in Pierre's viewing of the stranger's head, that truth is ambiguity (Melville, *Pierre* 353). Pierre's response to the stranger's head destroys his belief in both the ability to attain certain knowledge and the very possibility of that knowledge. What he is presented with instead is the idea that the only truth there is, is the strangeness and the unknown, the ambiguity and the uncertainty which Pierre believed he could conquer through picturesque portraiture.

Pierre's failure to recognize that certainty could not be obtained through picturesque portraiture results from his misunderstanding of the conceptual practice of the picturesque as proffered to him by the chair-portrait. The painting's "word to the wise" is that "Something ever comes of all persistent inquiry; we are not so continually curious for nothing…not for nothing do we intrigue and become wily diplomats, and glozers with our own minds…and afraid of following the Indian trail from the open plain into the dark thickets" (Melville, *Pierre* 84). "With this," as Marcy Dinius claims, "we understand that Pierre is supposed to persist in his curious inquiries and indulge in his midnight reveries and that persistent, unending inquiry is the only truth, not the path to 'Truth'" (102). Yet, as Dinius implies, it is we, the readers, who understand this, not

Pierre. While Pierre's knowledge of his father's illicit love affair undoubtedly exposes him to the "dark thickets" of reality and piques his desire to expose the truth behind illusion, his misapprehension of the chair-portrait's wisdom prevents him from realizing that the reality of picturesque portraiture is not the Truth, but truth as the persistence of ambiguity. Pierre's inability to understand this philosophy reinforces his belief in one all-encompassing idea of truth, resulting in a reversion to the singular perspective from which he strove to break free. His belief in Truth is indicated early on, when Pierre vows that "Henceforth I will know nothing but Truth; glad Truth, or sad Truth; I will know what *is*, and do what my deepest angel dictates" (Melville, *Pierre* 65). In this small but significant moment, Pierre suggests that he will know all truth. The use of "or," however, immediately indicates that Pierre is still thinking within the singular perspective first taught to him with the idea of ancestral Glendinning pride. The argument that Pierre did not understand the chair-portrait's "word to the wise" locates this, the moment of misunderstanding, as the source of Pierre's error.

In addition to misunderstanding the chair-portrait's wisdom—or, more aptly, not fully understanding it, for certainly Pierre does heed the suggestion to combine the portraits and goes on to use this approach outside of portraiture, as has been discussed—Pierre is an enthusiast, which causes him to misperceive the evidence (or lack thereof) before him. Towards the end of the novel the narrator says that "Of late to Pierre, much more vividly than ever before, the whole story of Isabel had seemed an enigma, a mystery, an imaginative delirium" (Melville, *Pierre* 353-4). Surely, the "Mystery of Isabel" is noted by Pierre throughout the entirety of the novel (Melville, *Pierre* 126). Yet,

prior to seeing the portrait of the stranger's head, Pierre believes everything that Isabel tells him, even if it is enshrouded in mystery. Pierre's disregard for the ill-founded evidence of her stories is representative of "those strange oversights and inconsistencies, which the enthusiastic meditation upon unique or extreme resolves will sometimes beget in young and over-ardent souls" (Melville, *Pierre* 175). Pierre's desire for a sister is one of the prevailing causes of his oversights, and, like the enthusiast, it is "By his eagerness [that] all objects are deceptively foreshortened; by his intensity each object is viewed as detached; so that essentially and relatively every thing is misseen by him" (Melville, *Pierre* 175). This misperception essentially means that Pierre sacrificed his life, his mother, and his fiancée for nothing; and according to Plotinus Plinlimmon, while

> certain minor self-renunciations in this life [man's] own mere instinct for his own every-day general well-being will teach him to make…he must by no means make a complete unconditional sacrifice of himself in behalf of any other being, or any cause, or any conceit. (Melville, *Pierre* 214)

Certainly, in the absence of any significant evidence, Isabel's story is nothing more than a conceit.

While both Pierre's enthusiastic character and inability to fully grasp the chair-portrait's wisdom provide strong explanation for his incorrect perceptions and uses of picturesque portraiture, Pierre's innate inability to accept ambiguity as truth must also be considered. Unlike either Lucy or Isabel, Pierre is unable to sit comfortably in ambiguity. After Lucy develops her resolve to live with Isabel and Pierre in "mute wooing…with no declaration; no bridal," Pierre says that "she desires not, in any way, to verify the presentiment [concerning his situation with Isabel]; content with the vague presentiment only" (Melville, *Pierre* 310, 314). This attitude is even more developed in Isabel, who

tells Pierre that she "[comprehends] nothing," and "[goes] all a-grope amid the wide mysteriousness of things" (Melville, *Pierre* 314). Isabel also goes so far as to encourage this attitude in Pierre, telling him that "better, a million times, and far sweeter are mysteries than surmises," and "though the mystery be unfathomable, it is still the unfathomableness of fullness; but the surmise, that is but shallow and unmeaning emptiness" (Melville, *Pierre* 153). Time and again, too, the narrator indicates that Pierre knows it is hopeless to try and find certain knowledge. Following Pierre's first interview with Isabel, for example, the narrator says that Pierre "now vaguely felt, that all the world, and every misconceivedly common and prosaic thing in it, was steeped a million fathoms in a mysteriousness wholly hopeless of solution" (Melville, *Pierre* 128). Somewhat later Pierre realizes "the inadequateness of both his own and Isabel's united knowledge, to clear up the profound mysteriousness of her early life," and so "To the certainty of this irremovable obscurity…bowed himself, and strove to dismiss it from his mind, as worse than hopeless" (Melville, *Pierre* 137). With the writing of his "mature book" too, "Pierre saw the everlasting elusiveness of Truth; the universal luring insincerity of even the greatest and purest written thoughts" (Melville, *Pierre* 339). The idea that certain truth can be known or hoped for thus seems to be the "world's trick" of which Millthorpe speaks (Melville, *Pierre* 319). "The whole world's a trick," Millthorpe says, and if you "Know the trick of it, all's right; don't know, all's wrong" (Melville, *Pierre* 319). As these several passages indicate, Pierre is highly aware of the trick, and yet it is because he cannot exist within ambiguity that his practice of picturesque portraiture does not prove successful.

Pierre's book provides the strongest evidence of his unease, for it is with this text, as has already been addressed, that Pierre soothes his "burning desire to deliver what he thought to be new, or at least miserably neglected Truth to the world" (Melville, *Pierre* 283). Here, we see that knowing ambiguity as truth is not enough for Pierre. Rather, "because Pierre began to see through the first superficiality of the world, he fondly weens he has come to the unlayered substance," and he believes this knowledge must be published for all humankind to consume, so that they too can be awoken to confront reality as Pierre now understands it (Melville, *Pierre* 285). In fixating on ambiguity and proselytizing ambiguity as truth, though, Pierre "[follows] the trail of truth too far" and "entirely [loses] the directing compass of his mind" (Melville, *Pierre* 165). While Pierre believes that he is now firmly grounded in reality, his attempts to accept that reality convert him into an apostle of the "Transcendental Flesh-Brush Philosophy" (Melville, *Pierre* 295). Following this philosophy, Pierre "is fitting himself for the highest life, by thinning his blood and collapsing his heart," until "at last the idea obtruded, that the wiser and profounder he should grow, the more and the more he lessened his chances for bread" (Melville, *Pierre* 304-5). Pierre's inability to sit with ambiguity thus results in an ironic reversal wherein he is no longer aligned with the real, but the transcendental, or what Plinlimmon distinguishes as "things terrestrial (horological)" and "ideas celestial (chronometrical)," respectively (Melville, *Pierre* 214); and just like all of the other artists of the Church of the Apostles, Pierre spends his days "resolutely reveling in the region of blissful ideals" (Melville, *Pierre* 267). In this way too, then, Pierre returns to something of a singular mentality and unwittingly trades one ideal for another.

This inference is in line with Aladár Sarbu's observation regarding Pierre's great plan to protect his "sister from adversity, and his mother from the shock that the disclosure of his father's youthful indiscretion would cause" (195). Because Pierre has only married Isabel in name, Sarbu argues, "he creates an appearance—that is, an illusion," and by denying his mother knowledge of the truth, "he preserved an appearance—that of the virtuous father" (195). As a result, "Pierre's heroism, or what passes for it, is inseparable from his determination to keep up appearances" (Sarbu 195). While Pierre eventually does succumb to the idea that ambiguity is truth, both Pierre's misunderstanding of the chair-portrait's wisdom and several aspects of his character reveal that, as much as he believed he was engaging in picturesque portraiture, numerous of his actions did nothing more than reinforce the very mentality which he sought to escape. Ever the enthusiast, Pierre cannot "find the talismanic secret" which, for him, is certain knowledge, and thus his world cannot be reconciled "with his own soul, [and] there is no peace for him, no slightest truce for him in his life" (Melville, *Pierre* 208).

Pierre realizes several of these faults when standing before the stranger's portrait and solidifies this comprehension in his jail cell, just before his death. Here Pierre speaks to himself and says that "Had I been heartless now, disowned, and spurningly portioned off the girl at Saddle Meadows, then had I been happy through a long life on earth, and perchance through a long eternity in heaven" (Melville, *Pierre* 360). Even with these sudden, mounting realizations, though, Pierre also sees that "It is ambiguous still" (Melville, *Pierre* 360). Marcy Dinius rightly contends it is for this reason, because Pierre is "Ultimately unable to sustain such radical skepticism or to embrace the inevitable

ambiguity, contingency, and meditation of either subjectivity or representation," that he "nihilistically recognizes death as the only means of attaining fixity and certainty" (111). Ambiguity still reigns though, even in the face of death, rendering uncertainty inescapable. Indeed, after his death Isabel proclaims that "All's o'er, and ye know him not" (Melville, *Pierre* 362). All there is, and all that Pierre leaves behind, is ambiguity.

While Pierre does begin to transition toward a Ruskinian perspective through picturesque portraiture, then, he never achieves this perspective because he cannot accept any degree of uncertainty. Rather, it is Melville's earlier protagonist, Ishmael, who provides a stronger understanding of picturesque portraiture as philosophically applied. This is evidenced early in *Moby-Dick*, with Ishamel's response to the "thoroughly besmoked" whale painting at the Spouter-Inn (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 12). While he appears unimpressed with the painting, describing it as "A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted," Ishmael remains drawn to the canvas because the scene it represents, as well as its meaning, are not immediately known (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 12). Because the painting is indecipherable with its "unaccountable masses of shades and shadows," taking an oath to find the meaning therein means making a "diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and [a] careful inquiry of the neighbors" (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 12). Both these statements and Ishmael's own "earnest contemplation, and oft repeated ponderings" reflect his desire for knowledge as he understands it to be attained through pictorial art. Presented thus early in the novel, "Ishmael's persistent engagement with the bewildering painting, even to the point of

asking other people what they think about it, initiates the dynamic of his truth-seeking quest throughout the novel" (Wallace 351).

As the Spouter-Inn passage suggests, however, the truth which Ishmael seeks in representation is not the mere replication of reality. Indeed, the whale portrayed in the painting is described as "a long, limber, portentous black mass…hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast," and yet Ishmael remains convinced that there is some truth to be deciphered therein (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 12). This is because Ishmael finds truth in a representation that is at least somewhat accurate while also (and more importantly) incorporating spirit. Of the "Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales" which Ishmael discusses, "by far the finest" are two French engravings, "though in some details [they are] not the most correct" (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 266). Unlike the English and the Americans, who "seem entirely content with presenting the mechanical outline of things," these French artists "have furnished both nations with the only finished sketches at all capable of conveying the real spirit of the whale hunt" (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 267). In his assessment of the last of these three consecutive chapters detailing portraits of whales—"Of Monstrous Pictures of Whales," "Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales, and the True Pictures of Whaling Scenes," and "Of Whales in Paint; in Teeth; in Wood; in Sheet-Iron; in Stone; in Mountains; in Stars"—Christopher Stein claims that Melville "was insisting on a sense of immediacy and honesty in the creation of any work of art—a feeling of liveliness, or of something beyond what the eye can see, as well as accuracy of representation" (11-2). In this way,

Ishmael is not unlike John Ruskin, who understands truth in representation as that which, in landscape painting:

> [gives] the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision, rather than that of the physical facts, and [reaches] a representation which, though it may be totally useless to engineers or geographers, and, when tried by rule and measure, totally unlike the place, shall yet be capable of producing on the far-away beholder's mind precisely the impression which the reality would have produced. (*Selected Writings* 88)

Furthermore, because he does not need to know the exact truth or reality of what he learns (or rather, decides) is a whale, Ishmael is able to sit among a certain level of ambiguity as regards his knowledge of the painting. Certainly, Ishmael does work to decipher the subject, yet it is his inability to do so (at least initially, and never with any certainty) that draws him to the painting. There is something in this painting, "some sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity," Ishmael says, which "fairly froze you to it," and it is for this reason that, though the painting may be bad or undecipherable or inaccurate, it is worthy of consideration (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 12-3). A similar sense of the indefinite and unimaginable ignites Pierre's interest as well, particularly when gazing upon the chair-portrait of his father. Unlike Ishmael, though, Pierre finds neither beauty nor repose in the ambiguities proffered by that painting.

Ending as it does on the note of all being over, without any knowledge having been gained, the novel itself proves a practice of the chair-portrait's wisdom regarding all persistent inquiry. *Pierre* is an example of Melville's own attempt to reconcile the falsity of ideality with the unreliability of reality. Of Melville's search for the spiritual Aladár Sarbu says that, as Melville "never abandoned his vision of what the world ideally should and could be, much of the quest was conducted in the hope of finding at least a

theoretical fusion of the (so far illusory) ideal and the (so far morally objectionable) real" (149). Melville's use of the picturesque in portraiture provides this fusion, whereby the ideal practices of picturesque composition are used to reveal reality not as that ideal, but as that which simply cannot be known, not with any certainty.

Chapter 3 — Beyond Picturesque Portraiture: Impressions and Appearances in "The Liar"

Unlike Hawthorne and Melville, Henry James is not interested in the representation of reality. Instead, he is concerned with representations which convey the look of reality, or what in "The Art of Fiction" he calls "the air of reality" and "the illusion of life" (510). Exemplary for James in this regard is Anne Thackeray Ritchie, the "woman of genius" that James alludes to in the same 1884 essay ("The Art of Fiction" 509). Ritchie tells James that she had been "much commended for the impression she had managed to give in one of her tales of the nature and way of life of the French protestant," an impression which resulted from Ritchie having caught a glimpse of some "young Protestants…seated at table round a finished meal" (James, "The Art of Fiction" 509, 510). The glimpse is key to Ritchie's appearance of reality, for "The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience," and it is her experience which Ritchie "converted…into a concrete image [that] produced a reality" (James, "The Art of Fiction" 510). Importantly, it is not reality which results from this process, but *a* reality; emerging as it does from Ritchie's individual experience, the reality represented cannot be objective reality, but a singular idea of reality born of Ritchie's subjective perception, in short Impressionism.

James here suggests that Impressionism is the answer to the supposed paradox of the artist intentionally using appearances to arrive at an idea of reality, and that the appearance of reality results from the artistic conversion of an impression. Whereas Hawthorne and Melville attempt to represent actual reality, then, James strives for the look of reality as it is situated within and arrived at through impressions. This Impressionist context casts James's picturesque portraiture into a different mode, what I refer to as the "Impressionist picturesque." In this mode, the picturesque is exercised within a different vocabulary. The real and ideal are still involved in the picturesque equation (meaning that James is an inheritor of the compositional practice of uniting the real and ideal in representations of reality), but the picturesque as a term—as well as the attendant terms, real and ideal—are comparatively absent.[13] While the absence of this earlier vocabulary distinguishes James from Hawthorne and Melville, the epistemological and representational quandaries realized through the picturesque remain; although James has moved beyond the picturesque, his attempt to create an "illusion of life" through Impressionism reflects the same perplexities as those raised by Hawthorne and Melville as regard our knowledge of reality.

[13] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, use of the term "picturesque" does not begin to decline until 1900 ("Picturesque, Adj. & N."). As was discussed in the introduction, however, the American picturesque art movement developed by the Hudson River School concluded slightly earlier, around 1880. Perhaps, then, the absence of this vocabulary in the present analysis is because James wrote "The Art of Fiction" and "The Liar" after the peak of the American picturesque. Alternatively, the disparity in vocabulary may be due to geographical and cultural difference, to the fact that James was largely situated in Europe, where the picturesque movement occurred much earlier and where, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Impressionism was a popular genre of art. From an American historical perspective, the difference in vocabulary might also be understood in relation to the Civil War, which likely cast doubt or imposed questions on picturesque notions.

In the discussion that follows, the idea of Impressionism is limited to the conceptualization forwarded by the Impressionist art movement and exercised by artists of Impressionism, both of which gained prominence in Paris during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. By juxtaposing James's idea of impressions with that of Impressionism, I situate myself against researchers such as John Scholar, who contends that "associating James's impressions with impressionism…leads to too dominant an analogy with painterly impressionism, which James vocally criticized" (11). While it is true that James frequently criticized Impressionism, it does not stand that he is not doing something similar with his conception of the art of fiction. James acknowledges the connection between impressions in fiction and those of Impressionism in his comparison of the writer to the painter. He writes that "the air of reality…seems to me to be the supreme virtue of the novel," and it is in his attempt to "[produce] the illusion of life" that the author both "competes with life" and "with his brother the painter, in *his* attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle" ("The Art of Fiction" 510-11). To be sure, James does not specify that the painter is an Impressionist. It may be argued, though, that he is suggesting as much when he refers to the painter's attempt not to render things exactly, but to render the *look* of them. Whether James is in fact referencing Impressionism, however, is of little importance. The larger concern is the agreement James establishes between fiction and painting as regards the idea of impressions. The "look" which belongs to the painter is equal to the competition with life and air of reality which James assigns to the author. The work of the painter and author

alike is to convey an appearance of a reality which represents, and which is born of, the artist's impressions.

The impressions of Impressionism are short-lived visual experiences used by the artist to represent his perception of external reality. In his definition of Impressionism, Richard Brettell writes that it is an art "interested principally in the transcription of visual reality as it affects the retina of the painter within a discrete, and short, period of time" (16). In explaining the features of his analysis, Max Saunders likewise writes that "Impressionism foregrounds visual experience" (204). It is because it is based on individual visual experiences that the image which results from—or which represents—impressions is an appearance of reality. Both Brettell and Saunders note this aspect of Impressionism in their definition and analysis of the art, respectively, giving emphasis to the distinction between Realism and Impressionism. The name of the movement itself, Brettell writes, "has come to define Impressionism as an offshoot of Realism" (15-6). "Offshoot" implies that there is some reality, or some Realism, to Impressionism. While the art of Impressionism does represent reality, it is not an art which belongs to Realism because it relies more upon subjective sense response than objective mimesis. Both Peter Stowell and Adam Parkes note this difference in their discussions of literary Impressionism. In his study of Anton Chekov and Henry James, Stowell refers to "the subjective objectivism of literary impressionism," a characterization which highlights the realism and subjective reality which belong to Impressionism (4). Parkes more directly defines Realism as "an accurate representation of everyday life" and Impressionism as the attempt to "capture the encounter between external reality and consciousness"

("Naturalism, Realism, and Impressionism" 187). Saunders arrives at the same conclusion in his short discussion of the non-spiritual content of Impressionism, writing that:

> secularizing tendencies paradoxically propel Impressionism in paint away from literal realism or verisimilitude and toward the psychological; away from the attempt to represent perceived objects with photographic realism, and toward the process of perception, the subjective experience of vision. (205)

Impressionism, then, is neither an art about realism nor the representation of objective reality, but an art concerned, as was Henry James, with the representation of an appearance of reality to a consciousness.

Henry James's brother, William, provides an apt idea of the impression in a letter sent to Henry in April of 1868. Among other news, William shares that he has received Henry's last story, "A Most Extraordinary Case," and writes in response that:

> It makes me think that I may have partly misunderstood your aim heretofore, and that one of the objects you have had in view has been to give an impression like that we often get of people in life: Their orbits come out of space and lay themselves for a short time along of ours, and then off they whirl again into the unknown, leaving us with little more than an impression of their reality and a feeling of baffled curiosity as to the mystery of the beginning and end of their being, and of the intimate character of that segment of it [which] we have seen. (*The Correspondence of William James* 46)

The impression as William discusses it here is equal to Ritchie's glimpse as discussed by Henry in "The Art of Fiction"—an impression is the idea we get of someone when we are offered and left with a partial, momentary glance of their person. William's language reinforces the conviction that art which results from the experience of impressions cannot represent "actual" reality. Because the person who is glimpsed is there for a short time—or because we see them just briefly—we can gain only a sense or an impression of their

reality; the full reality of a person's character cannot be known when perceived at a glimpse alone, and so all that the perceiver is left with is their idea of (a part of) that person's reality. As Jesse Matz writes, "In everyday parlance, [an impression] is a feeling, an inchoate sense of things, an untested belief at once tentative and convincing," and "'taking impressions,' as people used to do when traveling or looking at art, similarly means making incomplete or passive observations that nevertheless convince" (15-6). Although the impression is inherently limited in this way, it succeeds (in and according to Impressionism) at communicating and representing a person's character because the impression is based on the perceiver's experience with the person, even if that experience is short lived.

Had William written this letter roughly a decade later, when "the first sustained attempt to define literary impression appeared in print," he might have recognized his brother's fiction as works of literary Impressionism, a genre which aims to "emphasize how the sense of reality depends on the perceptions and reflections of an individual human observer" (Parkes, "Naturalism, Realism, and Impressionism" 187, 189). Paul Amstrong presents a similar notion about Impressionist authors, writing that "As they play with the workings of representation, the literary Impressionists explore how we construct reality by interpreting it" (1). While I am not interested in whether James is an Impressionist and his work examples of literary Impressionism, I do believe it is important to recognize that, although James's focus on perceptions, reflections, and the interpretations of sense experiences do align with Impressionism, neither James's art nor his notion of fiction stop at the rendering of impressions.

For James, art which only represents impressions is unimaginative and ineffective. John Scholar writes that after attending the second exhibition of Impressionist paintings held in 1876,

> James criticized the painterly impressionists for presenting their raw sense impressions as finished works of art. He thought their impressions were unimaginative and unworthy of record, and needed to be finished through the formal activity of the imagination; they were too receptive, and insufficiently projective. (27)

James forwards these ideas in his letter "Parisian Festivity," writing that the artists of Impressionism "are partisans of unadorned reality," and that their "proper field of study is simply the actual, and to give a vivid impression of how a thing happens to look, at a particular moment, is the essence of [their] mission" (*Parisian Sketches* 131, 131-2).[14] The Impressionists are concerned with their unrefined perception to such an extent that they've become, in James's eyes, "absolute foes to arrangement, embellishment, selection, to the artist's allowing himself…to be preoccupied with the idea of the beautiful" (James, *Parisian Sketches* 131). In only representing their visual experiences, these artists lack creative power. "They send detail to the dogs," James writes, "and concentrate themselves on [the] general expression" of raw sense impression (*Parisian Sketches* 132). This overwhelming focus on the general expression of an impression not only makes the artist unimaginative but requires that the viewer likewise "be provided

[14] This critique appears in a letter James wrote to the *New York Tribune*, sent in April of 1876 and published by the *Tribune* the following month. It is this version of the text, as it is published in *Parisian Sketches: Letters to the New York Tribune, 1875-1876*, which I cite here. A shorter version of the letter, isolating only these criticisms of Impressionism, appears in *The Painter's Eye* under the oft cited title "The Impressionists."

with a plentiful absence of imagination" if he is to embrace the Impressionist artist, the Impressionist doctrine, and Impressionism (James, *Parisian Sketches* 132).

Admonitory in these regards, for James, is the work of American artist James McNeill Whistler (see figure 3-3). In "Picture Season in London" James writes that he will not speak to the selection of Whistler's work on display "because I frankly confess they do not amuse me," and this because "to be interesting it seems to me that a picture should have some relation to life as well as to painting," and "Mr. Whistler's experiments have no relation whatever to life; they have only a relation to painting" (*The Painter's Eye* 143). As James Kirschke's list of Impressionist techniques[15] attests, the focus on painting is one of the defining characteristics of Impressionism, and it is this art movement with which James associates Whistler, writing in "The Grosvenor Gallery" that "[Whistler's] manner is very much that of the French 'Impressionists'" (*The Painter's Eye* 143).[16] James takes issue with the Impressionist's overwhelming concern with the painterly techniques used to represent visual impressions. With this as his sole focus, Whistler neither employs nor invites use of the imagination. "[F]or James," Kim Bartel writes, "Whistler's paintings were not so much objectionable as they were uninteresting in their perfect embodiment of the idea that painting should be viewed as

[15] Kirschke writes that "the Impressionist style consists of six major techniques. And they are as follows: 1, rendering the direct and fleeting impression; 2, painting in the open air with emphasis upon seizing the effects of light and color; 3, moving around a subject and painting it from several different angles; 4, using broken brushwork which requires viewing from a distance; 5, juxtaposing colors to establish artistic effects; 6, presenting scenes in a hazy atmosphere" (4).

[16] Associating Whistler with Impressionism may seem questionable given that Whistler was situated in Britian, seat of the contemporaneous art movement, British Aestheticism. As Elizabeth Prettejohn acknowledges, however, by mid-nineteenth century "both Aestheticism and the more French-oriented style of younger painters, increasingly called 'Impressionists' in the press, had claims to represent the advanced section of British art. Whistler could be linked to either Aestheticism or Impressionism" (50).

self-contained arrangements of color" (181). James thus sees Whistler's works as objects rather than "true" paintings. Concerned as they are with technique, Whistler's paintings are nothing but paint, productions which "are pleasant things to have about, so long as one regards them as simple objects—as incidents of furniture or decoration," rather than "pictures" (James, *The Painter's Eye* 165). James implies that, to be considered pictures, Whistler's works need to contain and invite use of the imagination—they need to be about more than the look and means by which paint is rendered on the canvas.

As imperative as the impression is to James's position that the most realistic representation is one which consists of appearances, the impression alone is not enough to constitute the air of reality which he calls for. Situating the failure of Impressionism in technique or execution, John Scholar writes that "the impressionists' attempts to record their immediate perceptions through hasty, broad brushstrokes had not, in James's opinion, produced art. Art must be more than just perception: the artist must convert his impression into an expression" (27). For James, expression is meaning or substance; expression moves beyond impression to represent something which carries weight and says or signifies something more than raw sense impression. James establishes the connection between expression and meaning in his comparison of the author to the painter. The latter "attempt[s] to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle (James, "The Art of Fiction" 510-11). Linked as it is with meaning and "the substance of the human spectacle," the expression that James desires elevates his impressions beyond the insignificant sense impressions of Impressionism. The

insignificance of impressions is what John Scholar is referring to when he says that, for James, the Impressionists "were too receptive, and insufficiently projective" (27). Unlike painted Impressionism, then, which is focused exclusively on the representation of subjective visual experience, James's representations require more thought, intention, and involvement; James's art of fiction demands that an unrefined perception be converted into an expression to capture a meaningful representation of reality.

Imagination is the mechanism of this conversion. Jesse Matz writes that "James made the impression the basis of an aesthetic vision that discovers truest realism in the most fertile imagination" (86), and according to Elissa Greenwald, "for James the exercise of imagination is the clearest and closest way to capture life. James sees the products of unconscious desire and fancy not as imaginary but actual" (25). James himself writes that "when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations" ("The Art of Fiction" 509). The "pulses of the air" are the impressions, for "If experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions are experience, just as…they are the very air we breathe" (James, "The Art of Fiction" 510). Revelations, then, are the expression; revelation or meaning results when the imagination is used to convert impressions into expressions. It is through this act of conversion, too, that Anne Thackeray Ritchie achieves the air of life.

The illusion of reality thus results from neither impression nor expression, but from both, from the conversion, through the imagination, of the impression into an expression. It is here, at last, that we arrive at the Jamesian elements of picturesque

portraiture, wherein the impression (based as it is on subjective visual perception and experience) is linked to the real and the expression (associated as it is with the imagination) is coupled with the ideal. In the great Jamesian conflict between Life and Art, impression is the former and expression the latter.[17] The combining of sense-based, experiential Life and expressionistic, meaningful Art is noted by Elissa Greenwald. As she makes clear, James's definition or "formulation of the novel, as a 'personal, a direct impression of life'" suggests that truth is "constituted by correspondence to life" as well as "fidelity to the novelist's personal vision…'personal' and 'impression' emphasize subjectivity, while 'direct' and 'of life' emphasize a closeness of depiction and correspondence to life" (Greenwald 19). While she uses a different vocabulary, Greenwald also acknowledges the act of unity when she writes that "James captures the extreme of art through a combination of romance and realism, which become the opposites that provide richness for his representation" (25). Jesse Matz (again using a different vocabulary) similarly writes that "'The Art of Fiction' tried to unify two divergent goals of the Victorian novel: to mimic life and to fashion art" (90). While the picturesque union of elements is thus present, the conceptualization of James's picturesque portraiture is distinct from that of Hawthorne and Melville because James is

[17] A counterargument presents itself here, for in his criticism of Whistler, James writes that the artist's "experiments have no relation whatever to life" (*The Painter's Eye* 143). The "life" that James speaks of here, though, refers to the same ideas of meaning and substance which constitute his notion of expression; all Whistler's art is, is paint. Whistler's artwork thus lacks Art because of his exclusive preoccupation with the representation of raw, unrefined perceptions. It is this exclusivity of focus, in turn, which makes the paintings oversaturated with Life; the intent to represent subjective perception puts Impressionists in direct contact with life and lived experience, but because they do nothing more significant or imaginative with those impressions, their artwork is overly steeped in Life and deficient in Art. To successfully achieve the air of reality, the artist needs both Life and Art, or the union of impression and expression.

working from the basis of Impressionism. His understanding and use of impressions coincides with the idea of the impression as forwarded by the Impressionist painters, and his position that the creation of an appearance results in a realistic representation is a paradox answered by Impressionism. For James, Jesse Matz writes, impressions "are the indirect perceptions that lead more directly to life as art sees it" (91). The following example of picturesque portraiture, then, is more specifically an example of picturesque portraiture in the Impressionist mode, or what we might call the "Impressionist picturesque."

In James's 1888 story "The Liar," the artist Lyon engages in a malicious practice of Impressionist picturesque portraiture meant not only to convey his perception of his subject, Colonel Capadose, but to exact revenge on Everina, the Colonel's wife and Lyon's former love interest. That Lyon wants to paint such a portrait is evidenced by his desire to "draw [Capadose] out," to "set him up in that totality" which reflects the Colonel as a liar (*NT* XII: 355).[18] The language used to describe Lyon's intent undoubtedly suggests "legitimate treachery" and the design to cast Capadose in a certain light (*NT* XII: 355). Lyon does not propose to paint Capadose as he sits, but schemes to put the Colonel into a position which allows the artist to expose and get what he wants out of his subject. Lyon's use of the Colonel "to salve his hurt pride and to force Everina to admit she made a mistake in marrying Capadose" is but one instance of Lyon's objectification of the Colonel (Funston 434). Whereas Judith Funston sees this

[18] In-text citations for "The Liar" and "The Real Thing" refer to the pertinent volume of *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* (*NT*) followed by the page number(s).

objectification as an example of Lyon's failure to engage with his direct impressions—and thus his failure to succeed at rendering the illusion of life--I maintain that, in intent and execution, Lyon uses both impression and expression to arrive at an accomplished appearance of reality.

Lyon's reliance on impressions is indicated immediately upon his arrival at Stayes. As soon as Lyon entered his room "He foresaw that the proprietors of Stayes would do him very well," and he anticipated as much because he "looked first at the books on the shelf and the prints on the wall…things [which] would give in a sort the social, the conversational value of his hosts" (*NT* XII: 313). Before Lyon meets his hosts, he develops an impression of them based on his perception of the material goods they possess. While Judith Funston is not incorrect in reading this moment as an example of the way that Lyon "often blurs the distinction between people and objects," her approach discounts the possibility that the books and prints may have been selected by the proprietors to give a singular impression (432). In his *Professions of Taste*, Jonathan Freedman discusses the "hypercommerical 'aesthetic craze'" of late nineteenth century America, "a craze that…centered on the design and decoration of the home" (105). While Oscar Wilde's 1882 American tour gives evidence to this craze, Freedman locates the earlier American publication (1872) of Charles Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste* as the source of America's preoccupation with aestheticism. Eastlake forwards the concept of the "House Beautiful"—what Freedman refers to as a trope which "suggests the extensiveness of the intersection between the British aesthetic movement and transformations in American interior design"—and "[emphasizes] the home as a place of

public self-presentation, rather than as an efficient, utilitarian locus of family nurture" (Freedman 106, 105). These and other of Eastlake's ideas, alongside other social factors including increasing wealth and changing ideals, made "a wide-scale assent to the proposition that the 'House Beautiful' was something to be avidly sought and painstakingly created, that the home itself could and should be seen as a work of art" (Freedman 106). Although the proprietors of Stayes are not American, we still might consider this historical preoccupation with self-presentation through interior design when responding to Lyon's impressions of the proprietors' material goods. Lyon clearly forms impressions of people based on these goods, exemplifying how he conflates people with objects. If we are to understand that the books and pictures have been intentionally placed, however, then it might also be argued that Lyon, as visitor to and outside perceiver of the estate, is also the receiver of impressions designed to give a distinct idea about his hosts.

Lyon's impressions, however, are not limited to material objects. When Lyon arrives at the dinner table and encounters his hosts and their numerous other guests, the artist engages in people watching, an "amusement," the narrator calls it, which provides a more human basis for his impressions (*NT* XII: 316). Seated as he is between a "pretty woman…engaged with her neighbor" and a "gentleman…[who] looked detached and degenerate," Lyon has the opportunity "to lose himself in his favourite diversion of watching face after face," a pastime which "gave him the greatest pleasure he knew" (*NT* XII: 316-7). Lyon finds this activity pleasurable, it seems, because it presents the opportunity to assess "the human mask," to make impressions of people based on the way

they present themselves (*NT* XII: 316). The notion that people wear masks and display themselves to the public is not dissimilar to the concept of the House Beautiful. Just as interior design is used to convey a certain look and idea about the residents, the human mask is used to create a look which communicates (or disguises) an individual's character. In both situations the intent is to make a given impression. The act of people watching thus provides another instance where Lyon not only makes his own impressions but is impressed upon; observing the human mask means observing impressions designed for the outside gaze.

Arguably, Lyon's impressions are different from those belonging to Impressionism because his are made over a longer period. Certainly, Lyon has a finite amount of time to study the guests' faces. Even the length of a meal, however, provides more time for observation than that suggested by a "glimpse" or "glance." Lyon's people watching occurs over long enough periods that he loses himself in the activity; the artist does not just note faces but engages in a full study of them. Yet it remains that these studies are impressions because they are incomplete perceptions built upon only those aspects which Lyon sees. Regardless of how long he looks upon a face, the perception he takes away does not encompass the whole person. Furthermore, in Lyon's estimation, it is not just faces which he studies, but masks. The ideas Lyon develops about a person are partially shaped by the mask that the individual creates and wears in a particular social setting. Lyon's perceptions are thus doubly incomplete because of his own limitations as an outside observer and because of the masks individuals present before the public. Both

the subjectivity and incompleteness of Lyon's perception render his facial studies visual impressions.

As an observer Lyon is very capable of receiving impressions, whether of material goods or his fellow humans, and it is these impressions which constitute Lyon's lived reality, or what we can understand as Jamesian Life. As an artist out for retribution, however, Lyon is more concerned with making something out of his impressions than he is interested in representing impressions themselves; while his impressions may shape his visual experience, Lyon uses his artwork to make his impressions into more significant expressions meant to fulfill his vengeance. This preoccupation with expression in painting explains Lyon's need for sitters who are characters, as well as his desire to paint characters. If we understand a "character" as someone whose person needs to be revealed, exposed, or—to use language which better adheres to James's necessity for expression—interpreted, then Lyon's want for characters may be understood as an inclination for sitters who allow space for the artist's imagination, the tool by which impressions are converted into expressions.

Lyon sees the Ashmores as individuals who lack character, and so he is unimpressed by them and judges the couple unsuitable subjects for portraiture. Mr. Ashmore is described as "a fresh-coloured thick-necked English gentleman" who could not be represented as anything but, even if "he might have been a farmer [or]…a banker" (*NT* XII: 316). He is so much a gentleman, and a gentleman through and through, that "you could scarcely paint him in character" (*NT* XII: 316). Thomas Otten rightly contends that "Arthur Ashmore is not a subject because he's a subject; the passage

describes him in pictorial terms that, it then goes on to insist, make him unfit to serve as the subject of a picture" (70). The same can be said of Mrs. Ashmore, who is likewise described in pictorial terms, appearing to Lyon "as if she were already rather a bad though expensive portrait, knocked off by an eminent hand" (*NT* XII: 316). Like her husband, Mrs. Ashmore is not an appropriate subject because she already appears as a subject with nothing left for interpretation.[19]

Judith Funston sees this insistence on character as ironic, for "in painting a 'character,' whether farmer or banker or old man, the artist misses the sitter's true character and fails to render 'a personal, a direct impression of life,' which James sets forth in 'The Art of Fiction'…as the test of art" (433). This argument is partially correct, but it is not because he is not painting a sitter's "true character" that Lyon does not render direct impressions. In her analysis of Lyon's initial impression of Capadose, Funston understands the truth of "true character" as the recognition of an individual as a person. Funston argues that "Lyon is not concerned with the subtleties of personality," that he has an "inclination to be seduced by superficial details," and that he "cannot respond to the Colonel as a person, but only as a collection of paintable 'characters'" (433). The truth that Funston is concerned with, then, is different from the idea of truth suggested by James's notion that experience equates to impressions, and that impressions are the air we

[19] Lyon's idea of character and his response to the Ashmores's visual appearance make his opinion of Sir David as a "beautiful subject" somewhat surprising (*NT* XII: 342). In Sir David's opinion, "a gentleman should be painted but once in his life," and "The proper time for the likeness was at the last, when the whole man was there, when you got the sum of his experience" (*NT* XII: 342). Normally, Lyon would say that this concept of "the whole man" is "not a real synthesis—you had to allow so for leakage" (*NT* XII: 342). It is Lyon's perception, however, that "there had been no crack in [his] crystallisation," suggesting that all of Sir David's person is in fact visible on his face, a quality which goes against Lyon's contention of what makes someone an appropriate subject (*NT* XII: 342).

breathe. Nor is capturing the sitter's "true character" the intention of rendering direct impressions. In *Henry James and Impressionism*, James Kirschke writes that:

> an art which accords with such a vision [of the moment and relation to things whose properties are non-committal and changeable] will stress not only the fleeting perceptions of the world, will see in man not only the measure of all things, but will pursue the basis for truth in the "here and now" of the individual. (12).

When understood from the point of Impressionism, then, rendering direct impressions means representing unrefined visual experience, it means that the artist represents his vision of someone rather than representing the truth of who that person is outside of the artist's visual experience**.**

Lyon's insistence on character suggests his desire to make something of his impressions rather than just paint those impressions. It is for this reason that, even before Lyon knows about Capadose's mendacity and his relationship to Everina, the artist finds the Colonel so intriguing. Rather than some such individuals whose faces are "only the legible door-plate of [their] identity," Lyon is taken by those like Capadose as he first appears to Lyon (*NT* XII: 317). In this first impression of Capadose, Lyon finds that:

> What was odd in him was a certain mixture of the correct and the extravagant: as if he were an adventurer imitating a gentleman with a rare perfection, or a gentleman who had taken a fancy to go about with hidden arms. He might have been a dethroned prince or the war-correspondent of a newspaper: he represented both enterprise and tradition, good manners and bad taste. (*NT* XII: 317-8)

While Lyon as yet has no desire to paint a portrait of Capadose, his perception of the Colonel's odd mixture of personalities (making him something more than a mere door-plate) suggests that he would make a good portrait subject. Furthermore, this initial impression suggests that there is something about Capadose's character which remains

secret or unexposed. So it is that he is said to be "imitating" a gentleman, or, in the event that he actually is a gentleman, he is one with "hidden" arms. At the same time, he might be of royal descent or a journalist. The language of mimicry and secrecy, as well as the lack of certainty indicated by the multiple uses of "or," encourage the idea that there is something of the Colonel's identity which has yet to be revealed. Lyon's initial impression of Capadose as an enigmatic individual presents the opportunity for the artist to use his imagination in rendering the Colonel as a character, to turn his impression into an expression.

Had Lyon painted here, at the point of the impression, the result would not have been dissimilar to the chair-portrait in Melville's *Pierre*. The artist of the chair portrait captured an expression on the father's face which, to Pierre's eye, conveys a look of ambiguity. There is something ambiguous about the Colonel, too, in that his personality cannot easily be pinpointed. However, whereas the ambiguity of the chair-portrait results from Mr. Glendinning's secret affair, the look of ambiguity in Capadose's portrait would have been the result of Lyon rendering his direct impressions; had Lyon painted his portrait as a representation of his raw impression of Capadose, he would have created a work of Impressionism which reflected the Colonel as an ambiguous figure who is not quite an adventurer or a gentleman, yet also neither a prince nor a war-correspondent.

Of course, the portrait Lyon paints is not a work of Impressionism, representing as it does far more than his unrefined impression. In the space between first seeing Capadose and painting his portrait, Lyon learns that the Colonel is married to Everina and, perhaps more importantly, that he is a habitual liar. Lyon's knowledge of Capadose

as a fabulist wedded to Everina provides the material or the "donnée" for Lyon's expression. Whatever it is that the artist intends to express about his sitter, in other words, constitutes the subject of his portrait, or "what the French call his *donnée*" (James, "The Art of Fiction" 513). An artist's subject, to reiterate, refers to both the individual sitting for a portrait and the meaning or expression that the artist intends to represent in said portrait, and it is this latter understanding of the subject which defines the donnée. According to Kimberly Vanderlaan, "The 'subject' should be inseparable from his *donnée*. High art, for James, should portray a subject worthy of artistic replication but that subject should also be part of the *inspiration* for the artistic process which gives it shape" (6). With his portrait of the Colonel, then, Lyon converts his impression of Capadose (Lyon's physical subject) as an enigmatic individual into an expression of the Colonel as a liar (Lyon's artistic donnée), and in doing so he points toward fabulism as the mysterious trait of Capadose's figure.

The Colonel's fabulism first becomes evident when Lyon hears two different stories—one from Capadose and one from Everina—regarding what happened to Lyon's old portrait of Everina. While it is possible that Everina is the liar, both Everina's bewilderment concerning her husband's story and Lyon's contention that "preparing a version…wasn't her line of old, and indeed there was no such subterfuge in her eyes-today," convince Lyon that it is her husband who has fabricated the story regarding "the beautiful old Indian vase" (*NT* XII: 333). This speculation also explains Lyon's observation of the other men, who after dinner paid little attention "to the Colonel's remarks" and, in due time, did not bother "heeding his new friend's prodigies" (*NT* XII:

324, 326). Capadose's mythomania is later confirmed when Lyon learns from Sir David that lying is Capadose's "monstrous foible," that "He pulls the long bow—the longest that ever was" and "simply can't give you a straight answer" (*NT* XII: 344). Lyon's personal interaction with Capadose, his observation of the other men with the Colonel, and Sir David's remarks all suggest that it is because he is a fabulist that Lyon cannot easily recognize Capadose's character.

For Lyon, this fabulism is the defining trait of Capadose's person, and it is this single aspect of his character which he sets out to represent in his portrait. To be clear, it is not that Lyon's impression of Capadose has changed. Instead, the artist's initial impression of the Colonel is explained by his propensity for lying, and it is this character trait which Lyon attempts to give expression to in his painting. Lyon, however, does not just want to paint the Colonel as an enigmatic figure. The artist wants to create a portrait which represents Capadose as someone whose fondness for lying not only explains his mysteriousness but defines his whole person. Because the expression is not based on the reality of Lyon's impression, but is instead built on Lyon's wants or desires, the expression is an ideal. In the Impressionist picturesque of Lyon's portrait, then, the impression maintains the position of the real because it is founded upon the artist's subjective visual experience, while the expression stands as the ideal because it is contrived and determined. While there are any number of things that Lyon could have done to make something more out of his impression, his overwhelming fixation on representing Capadose as a liar stems from Lyon's being imbittered by Everina having denied his proposal only to marry a spinner of yarns. Surely Everina knows this about her

husband, since "it was too evident that the account [Capadose] gave of things must repeatedly have contradicted her own knowledge" (*NT* XII: 346). In painting the Colonel as a liar, Lyon intends to discover whether Everina's love for Capadose runs so deep that she will defend or permit his lies, and to gain retribution on Everina for denying his love.

While Lyon's main concern with the Colonel's lying is Everina's implication in the lies and what that says about her character, James seems to use Capadose's fabulations to criticize another artistic type: the romantic. As Sir David attests, not all of Capadose's lies are romantic in nature, fibbing as he does "about the time of day, about the name of his hatter" (*NT* XII: 344). Yet Lyon is not wrong when he characterizes the Colonel as one who "revels in the miraculous," fabricating and exaggerating as he does fantastic tales about a time in Ireland when "he had been pitched out of a dogcart, had turned a sheer somersault and landed on his head," causing him to go into a three month coma; about a friend in India, "a fellow who was supposed to have died of jungle-fever and whom they clapped into a coffin," burying him alive until the Colonel "came and hauled him out"; about the parting of Lyon's old portrait of Everina to "the Grand Duke of Silberstadt-Schreckenstein" (*NT* XII: 344, 325, 326, 328). These fanciful, improbable tales reflect Capadose as a romantic storyteller and, it may be argued, are meant to present his tales as examples of romantic storytelling. In adherence to James's aesthetic judgements, what is at issue here is not the fact that the Colonel's lying results from his use of imagination, but that he is too imaginative; Capadose's lying embodies too much Art, rendering him a romantic and his stories too romantic or ideal. In opposition to realistic artwork, which James finds empty because of its lack of imagination, romantic

art is entirely lost in imagination and lacks Life. [20] Elissa Greenwald writes that, "For James, such aspects of romance as supernaturalism, symbolism, and pictorialism initially seem to conflict with realism" (27). It is not just that there is a conflict with realism, though, but that, in some instances, there is no relation to realism whatsoever. "It seems a great pity," James writes, "that a painter should ever reproduce a thing without suggesting its associations, its human uses, its general sentimental value" ("Art" 372). While Realism has too much Life, the romantic completely lacks it; romantic art so is full of imagination that there is no Life. All it is, is unrelatable Art.

Several scholars present the same argument about Lyon's finished portrait of Capadose. Although they do not use the language of James's Life and Art in their analyses, these critics see Lyon's narrowed focus resulting in an imaginative work of art which does not relate to the reality of Capadose's person. As we know from Capadose's

[20] According to Kim Bartel, "the work of mid- and late-nineteenth-century American realists seemed intent on promoting what seemed to James to be a fundamentally reductive and oppressive way of seeing," and "In the 1870s, the artist whose works most seemed to exemplify this trend for James was…Winslow Homer" (172). While there is something compelling about Homer which draws James towards his work, it remains that James found Homer's paintings unengaging. With Homer, "It was not just the simplicity of these paintings or their lack of conventional beauty that bothered James…[but] their ability to instill a kind of blankness in the viewer by refusing to solicit his interest in any personalized or personalizable way" (Bartel 172). Between the blankness and lack of anything personal, a confrontation with Homer's paintings "could have only been viewed as a refusal of engagement, even a form of disempowerment" (Bartel 172). Indeed, as James himself explicitly states: "Mr. Homer goes in, as the phrase is, for perfect realism, and cares not a jot for such fantastic hair-splitting as the distinction between beauty and ugliness. He is a genuine painter; that is, to see, and to reproduce what he sees, is his only care; to think, to imagine, to select, to refine, to compose, to drop into any of the intellectual tricks with which other people sometimes try to eke out the dull pictorial vision—all this Mr. Homer triumphantly avoids. He not only has no imagination, but he contrives to elevate his rather blighting negative in a blooming and honourable positive. He's almost barbarously simple, and, to our eye, he is horribly ugly" (*The Painter's Eye* 96). Because they are so simple the paintings neither require nor invite imaginative engagement, let alone interest, and without any relation to the viewer—or rather, without providing any material for the viewer to relate to on the personal level—Homer's artwork lacks relation to life and lived experience.

response to the portrait, the painting is realistic in terms of verisimilitude. To say that Lyon's portrait does not relate to reality then, is to say that it does not accurately represent the entirety of Capadose's person. (Indeed, representing the totality of a subject's person is how reality is achieved in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* and Melville's *Pierre.*) Thomas Getz argues that Lyon's technique of painting Capadose as a liar—getting the Colonel to talk while Lyon paints, thus allowing Lyon to paint him in the act of lying—"assures that [Lyon] will get what he wants, but only what he wants" (48).[21] Judith Funston offers a similar reading of Lyon's painterly approach. Lyon's technique, she writes, is using "selective detail…to confine character to a quirk, reducing portraiture to caricature" (Funston 434). While the painting that results is "lifelike, it is not true to life because the artist attempts to define the whole man by a single foible" (Funston 435). In both analyses, Lyon's portrait fails as a representation of reality because it is was painted using techniques meant to adhere to Lyon's selective focus, and because he intentionally applied such techniques to enact a pictorial form of assuagement (for himself) and retribution (toward Everina). Lyon is a solipsist and a liar, Getz and Funston conclude, respectively, and Lyon's portrait, they suggest, nothing but an imaginative, ideal picture of who Lyon thinks and wants Capadose to be.

It is true that Lyon does not represent all the Colonel's person, and that in disregarding much of his character to emphasize a single point of interest, Lyon paints an ideal. Because the ideal is created from Lyon's imagination, it is also not wrong to say

[21] Here again we can recall the chair-portrait in Melville's *Pierre*, where the artist gets Mr. Glendinning to think on and talk about love, the artist's intention being to capture his subject as a wooer.

that Lyon is lying. In Getz's and Funston's arguments, the issues presented by these details are a matter of morality. For Getz, "'The Liar' explores the moral dimensions of an art which leaves out too much, thereby dehumanizing its subject" (47). Funston similarly argues that Lyon's "obsession with masks," and especially his "inclination to be seduced by superficial details," prevent him from connecting with those around him and "recognizing the humanity of those he observes" (432, 433, 432). It is James himself, however, who unreservedly states that "questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution; questions of morality are quite another affair" ("The Art of Fiction 519). The concern with artistic execution as it relates to the representation of character is not necessarily particular to James but is a priority central to many artists writing and painting in the late nineteenth century. As David Lubin writes:

> in the case of those earlier novelists [such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville], characterization was subsidiary to moral allegory or aesthetic symbolism, and for the portrait painters it was secondary to the goal of certifying social, moral, or political rank. Beginning more or less in the 1880s, however, characterization—particularly when performed by James or [Thomas] Eakins—became a primary goal in itself, equaled only by the goal of technically mastering the medium in which the characterization was being cast. (2)

Admirable in this regard, for James, is the work of John Singer Sargent (see figure 3-1). In his 1887 essay, "John S. Sargent," James writes that:

> There is no greater work of art than a great portrait—a truth to be constantly taken to heart by a painter holding in his hands the weapon that Mr. Sargent wields. The gift that he possesses he possesses completely—the immediate perception of the end and of the means. Putting aside the question of the subject (and to a great portrait a common sitter will doubtless not always conduce), the highest result is achieved when to this element of quick perception a certain faculty of lingering reflection is added. I use this name for want of a better, and I mean the quality in the light of which the artist sees deep into his subject, undergoes it, absorbs it, discovers in it new things that were not on the surface, becomes patient with it,

> and almost reverent, and, in short, elevates and humanizes the technical problem. (691)

The faculty of lingering reflection which brings about a subject's person is the work of expression. This faculty is an active one, consisting of seeing, undergoing, absorbing, discovering, and elevating. In short, it performs more than the impression, which is the immediate or quick perception. By engaging in these actions, the artist reveals his subject's person but also makes the subject his own. In James's estimation, representing the artist's subjective expression of a subject's person is precisely what a great work of portraiture does. More important than the morality of Lyon's portrait, then, is the artistic process which Lyon enacts to successfully illustrate his intent, to represent an imaginative, significant impression of Capadose's character.

When approached from the point of art rather than morality, none of the issues which Getz and Funston locate in Lyon's portrait are that problematic. This seems to be part of what James is trying to address with his contention, discussed by Kim Bartel, "that the realist adherence to the actual was effectively imposing violent, normative constraints on marginalized ideas," a "defense of art's autonomy [which] contained implicit recognition of the idea that art can afford license to unlawful ideas precisely on the basis of its presumed factiousness" (171, 172). Let us begin, then, with Lyon's choice to represent only one aspect of Capadose's person. This decision would prove troublesome if Lyon were trying to represent the Colonel's "true character." It has already been discussed, again in response to Funston, how picturing a subject's true character is not the object of rendering direct impressions. Neither is "true character" relevant to the

Figure 3-1. *Lady with the Rose* (*Charlotte Louise Burckhardt)*, John Singer Sargent, 1882.

artist's expression. In converting his impression into an expression, Lyon seeks to communicate a distinct idea that he has arrived at through his own visual experience, not to communicate the truth of Capadose as he exists outside of Lyon's vision and imagination of him.

It is for the same reason that the ideal portrait which results from Lyon's expression is not so concerning. Because the ideal results from Lyon's expression, the ideal is inherently part and parcel of artistic expression. As Moshe Ron writes, "The most general truth a penetrating reader can come away with from this particular fable about a portrait is that the portrait is not a likeness of the other but a reflection of one's desire in the likeness of the other" (233). For James, this aspect of (ideal) desire is necessary if the artist is to do something substantial with Life and reality, if he is to make Life into Art. The ideal proves unproblematic, then, because it is born of the artist's expression, and expression is necessary not only for adding substance to Life, but for achieving James's appearance of reality.

Lying is likewise associated with expression, rendering this third and final claim unproblematic. Lyon's portrait is a lie because it does not depict a truthful image of reality, and Lyon a liar because he chooses to represent Capadose unrealistically. The artist knows he is a liar too, as is indicated by his comparison of himself to Capadose. Before he proposes the idea of painting Capadose's portrait, Lyon acknowledges that he and the Colonel are alike in that they use their respective talents (if habitual lying can be recognized as such) to create art. Recognizing his own motivations in this depiction of Capadose as an artist, Lyon concludes that Capadose "lays on colour, as it were" and

asks, “what less do I do myself?” (*NT* XII: 350). Capadose’s art is directly resultant of his imagination. Capadose, Lyon says, “has an inner vision of what might have been, of what ought to be, and he helps on the good cause by the simple substitution of a shade” (*NT* XII: 350). The “shade” is the lie, and Lyon understands that the Colonel uses the lie to help fabricate the stories he has constructed in his imagination; the Colonel’s “inner vision” is the stories he imagines, tales “of what might have been, or what ought to be,” and the lie is but an authorial tool he uses to create his art. So too with Lyon. The artist’s inner vision is of Capadose as a liar. This vision is made into a lie following Lyon’s conviction that lying defines Capadose’s person, and the portrait is a lie because of its representation of the Colonel as a liar.[22] Referring to the type of art and artist that James calls for in “The Art of Fiction,” Funston concludes that it is this, Lyon’s “inability—or refusal—to render ‘a direct impression of life’ [which] earns him the tale’s title of liar” (434). The lie, however, is also Lyon’s expression. While we might rightly imagine that Capadose’s character consists of more than his capacity for lying, this fact is irrelevant to both Lyon and his painting because picturing Capadose in this way is Lyon’s expression. Because the expression is at least partially born of Lyon’s imagination, and because it makes something out of his impression, the expression also stands as Art, as a creative work which belongs to something more or other than raw reality.

[22] Despite their similar uses of lies, there is an important difference in the lies Lyon and Capadose tell. While the Colonel’s lying is insignificant, Lyon’s lie is designed to cause emotional harm; Capadose’s stories are “art for art,” or what Judith Funston refers to as “harmless fictions,” whereas “Lyon’s stories are deliberate lies told to salve his hurt pride and to force Everina to admit she made a mistake marrying Capadose” (434).

John Singer Sargent's portraits of socially elite women offer a similar application of lies. Elizabeth Prettejohn writes that Sargent's "portraits revel in the sitter's figurative make-up, the 'masks' they wear before the world, including marks of social status more or less artfully assumed" (52). Like Lyon, who is denounced by fictional characters and literary critics alike, Sargent faced censure for the lies his masks portrayed. Prettejohn writes that "Sargent's creation of 'masks' for his sitters has frequently been dismissed as mere flattery" (52), a statement echoed in Paula Marantz Cohen's discussion regarding how "Sargent was derided for being mercenary in painting so many commissioned portraits [of high society individuals], and for being facile and pandering in presenting his sitters in a way that pleased them more than it pleased the art establishment" (70). The lies that Sargent paints in these portraits, then, reinforce the lies his sitters already communicate through their make-up and dress. By making these women look (more) beautiful and elite, Sargent builds up his sitters' masks—that is, he paints lies—to bolster the lies these women already present to society. Sargent's paintings thus adhered to the women's (desired) sense of self while also having "seemed uncannily to match the social selves they were expected to project in real life" (Prettejohn 62). Because Sargent's lies reinforce the sitter's desired perception and societal expectation, his lies may seem less harmful than Lyon's. As the conflict surrounding Sargent's 1883-1884 portrait of Virginie Gautreau shows, however, even these "positive" lies can have damning consequences (see figure 3-2).

Rather than "[presenting] the signs of class identity as 'natural' characteristics of the individual sitter," Sargent here "flaunts the artificial contrivances with which the sitter

Figure 3-2. *Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)*, John Singer Sargent, 1883-84.

stakes her claim to elite status" (Prettejohn 26). In doing so, Sargent "[uses] her individual appearance as the vehicle for his compelling presentation of the social type, 'professional beauty'" (Prettejohn 27). Prettejohn reads Gautreau's embarrassment through William James's concept of the social self. In the first volume of *The Principles of Psychology* (published some five years later, in 1890), William James discusses "A man's Social Self" as "the recognition which he gets from his mates," and posits that "To wound any one of these images [of the social self] is to wound him" (293, 294). The wound, in turn, results from individuals who form the "distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares," for "It is his image in the eyes of his own 'set,' which exalt or condemns him as he conforms or not to certain requirements that may not be made of one in another walk of life" (W. James, *Principles of Psychology* 294, 294-5). Sargent, Prettejohn argues, realizes the lie of Gautreau's appearance and standing within society, "[projecting] a 'social self' that did not please the sitter, and more so, perhaps, as it was recognised so easily by a groupe of people about whose opinion she cared" (61-2). Possibly, Sargent did not mean to cause this harm in rendering the lie of Gautreau's person. It is clear, however, that this is precisely what Lyon means to do with his portrait.

While some of his sitters and the art establishments may not have applauded this aspect of Sargent's work, James seems not to have had a problem with such artistic fibbing, concerned as he was "not for strict realism…but rather for the 'direct, independent, unborrowed impression' which he found in the best works of John Singer Sargent" (Bowden 15). James acknowledges as much in his 1887 essay on Sargent, wherein he writes that:

> [portraits] such as those of Lady Playfair and Mrs. Henry White…possess, largely, the quality which makes Mr. Sargent so happy as a painter of women—a quality which can best be expressed by a reference to what it is not, to the curiously literal, prosaic, Philistine treatment to which, in the commonplace work that looks down at us from the walls of almost all exhibitions, delicate feminine elements have evidently so often been sacrificed. ("John S. Sargent" 691)

James's critique of Sargent's painted women suggests, as Edwin Bowden discusses, that "Great art always, no matter what its native ground, had for [James] a suggestive quality in relation to the life about it" (12). So it is that it does not matter whether the artist lies in his representation of reality, so long as those lies suggest something beyond a literal rendering of the object or person portrayed.

When evaluating Lyon's portrait from the perspective of art, the lie also proves unproblematic because lying, broadly speaking, is the artist's donnée, and in "The Art of Fiction" James discusses the donnée as the basis of judgement for a work of art. "We must grant the artist his subject," James writes, and "our criticism is applied only to what he makes of it" ("The Art of Fiction" 513). James is not stating that our criticisms are based on whether we agree with the artist's subject or intent. Indeed, he goes on to clarify that he does not mean to say "that we are bound to like [a work of art] or find it interesting" ("The Art of Fiction" 513). Rather, criticism is applied to the artist's execution of his donnée. If a work of art is deemed a failure, it is not because of what the artist intended to represent but how he executed his representation, or how he went about expressing that intention. "[T]he general and only source of the success of a work of art [is] that of being illustrative," and if a work does not illustrate the artist's subject, then "the failure will have been a failure to execute, and it is in the execution that the fatal weakness is recorded" (James, "The Art of Fiction" 511, 513). Everina's reaction to

Lyon's portrait clearly proves that the artist did not fail in execution. From the security of his studio balcony Lyon witnesses Everina, in agony, proclaim, "It's all there—it's all there!...Everything there oughtn't to be—everything he has seen. It is too dreadful!" (*NT* XII: 374). What is dreadful about the portrait is not the representation itself, but what Lyon accomplished at expressing in the representation. Everina seems to recognize this, despite her agitation. As much as she dislikes the portrait or finds it dreadful, Everina is confident that Lyon will send the piece to the Academy, "it's so good!" (*NT* XII: 375); and it is "so good" because it succeeds at rendering the artist's donnée, because Lyon has accomplished his intent (stated directly to Everina) of painting Capadose's "inner man" (*NT* XII: 360).

Everina's mixed reaction to Lyon's portrait also recalls Adam Parkes's discussion of judgment and justice in James's response to the Whistler-Ruskin scandal of the late 1870s. Briefly, the scandal began in 1877, when Ruskin wrote a scathing review of Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (see figure 3-3). Whistler, upon publication of the review, "sued Ruskin for £1,000 in damages for libel and so provoked the celebrated trail of November 1878" (Parkes, *A Sense of Shock* 21). In his response to the trial, James "identified some crucial problems concerning art and its relation to the spectator, about artists and their relations with critics, that helped to shape a variety of impressionism that characterized much of his own writing in this period" (Parkes, *A Sense of Shock* 21). These problems, in turn

Figure 3-3. *Nocturne in Black and Gold, the Falling Rocket*, James McNeill Whistler, 1875.

> were informed by…paradoxes that turned (like the trial) on the conflict between subjective perception, or the immediate sensory impressions of a singular perceiving consciousness, and collective judgement, or the cognitive and moral forms within which impressions are translated into knowledge. (Parkes, *A Sense of Shock* 21)

James pairs Whistler and his position to subjective perception and Ruskin and his argument to moral forms. In Parkes's words, "James linked Whistler's position with an Impressionist emphasis on the subjective vision of the artist and Ruskin's with an anti-impressionist demand for moral social judgment" (*A Sense of Shock* 21-3). The division of judgment which Parkes sees James addressing in his response to the scandal is echoed in Everina's mixed response to Lyon's portrait. Everina's initial reaction is one of horror and shock because Lyon painted Capadose in a less than favorable manner, and because he did so intentionally, to hurt Everina. On another level, though, Everina's negative reaction can be read as a larger social judgment of what defines "good" art. From this perspective, Everina responds in the way she does because Lyon's portrait does not uphold the standards of good art; in representing the Colonel as a liar, Lyon does a disservice to his sitter and neither reflects the reality of Capadose's person nor paints Capadose as he wants to be seen. This is precisely the moral issue indicated by Judith Funston and Thomas Getz. Everina's second reaction, however, coheres with the judgment of subjective vision. Upon seeing Lyon's portrait, Everina realizes that Lyon has seen that side of Capadose which he was not supposed to, that Lyon possesses knowledge of the Colonel as a fabulist. As dreadful as this may be, she still deems the portrait successful. This second reaction can be understood as a judgement based on the degree to which Lyon has succeeded at representing his subjective vision of Capadose. As

much as Lyon fails at "the apparently more public or social idea of judgment, which depends on some norm or set of conventions," in this case those of aesthetics, he does succeed at doing justice to his "personal sense of fidelity (as in 'doing justice to' something)"; from the point of subjective vision, the portrait is judged good because it accomplishes Lyon's donnée (Parkes, *A Sene of Shock* 23).

It is not just the donnée that is achieved, however, but the look of reality. It is for this reason, Judith Funston argues, that:

> Lyon makes no attempt to save his masterpiece [from Capadose's violent attack]…he has attained his purpose: Everina's cry indicates that she recognizes her husband's mendacity, and so her pain becomes a measure of Lyon's skill in rendering—to use James's words in "The Art of Fiction"—"the look of things." (431)

In terms of picturesque portraiture, Lyon's subjective vision of Capadose is thus united, through imaginative conversion, with the ideal associated with Lyon's expression and donnée. Because the look of reality begins with Lyon's impression of Capadose, the picturesque portraiture which results is more specifically a work of Impressionist picturesque portraiture. From the beginning, then, Lyon could not create a work representing reality itself; because Lyon's painting has origins in his raw sense impressions, the representation of "actual" reality is never an option. James's notion that reality is built upon sense impressions brings him into proximity with Emerson, whose ideal theory likewise recognizes that "actual" reality is unattainable. The important distinction, however, is that James applies this belief to the look of reality whereas Emerson applies it to reality itself. The understanding of reality posited by James in "The Art of Fiction" and enacted by Lyon in "The Liar" thus suggests that illusion or

appearance is the only reality, or it is the only reality with any depth. In "The Liar," though, Lyon is too preoccupied with executing his intent to be aware of either this philosophy or its implications for our understanding of reality. These larger questions are left for the artist of James's later story, "The Real Thing," published in 1892. By way of conclusion, then, I explore the epistemological implications of a reality founded upon appearances by leaving behind "The Liar" and offer a short discussion of how the idea of reality is revisited in "The Real Thing" to different results.

Like Lyon, this artist is preoccupied with what makes a good subject for a work of art, be it a portrait or an illustration. In this tale, however, the constitution of a good subject is discussed regarding models and how they are used and compare to "the real thing" that they are made to represent. While his subjects are different from Lyon's, this artist is similar to Lyon in that he does not like individuals who already appear as subjects. James's unnamed artist states as much while reflecting upon his first sight of the Major and Mrs. Monarch. The former, the artist says, "would have struck me as a celebrity if celebrities often were striking. It was a truth of which I had from some time been conscious that a figure with a good deal of frontage was, as one might say, almost never a public institution," a "paradoxical law" that the artist is reminded of when his sight moves from the Major to Mrs. Monarch, for she likewise "looked too distinguished to be a 'personality'" (*NT* XVIII: 307). To the artist, the couple look too much like what they are—(former) personages of the upper class—to be made into anything else.

While the Monarchs deem themselves favorable models for the artist, the artist discovers that he cannot work with the Monarchs because they give him the real thing. In

the language of "The Liar," the Monarchs are legible door-plates who do not allow the artist space for use of imagination or the creation of Art. As the artist comes to realize, "'the real thing' is always artificial," and the greater reality lies not in replication, but appearance; a greater look of reality is accomplished when the artist can render an expression, when he can do something more with reality than furnish a copy (Otten 72). For example, when the artist uses the "freckled cockney" Miss Churm for a model, he has to dress her up in costume and make her appear, or give an expression of Miss Churm, in one instance, as a Russian princess (*NT* XVIII: 321). By contrast, Mrs. Monarch, as her husband says, is "already made" (*NT* XVIII: 322). Mr. Monarch uses this fact as a selling point, one which Mrs. Monarch likewise sees value in. Unlike the artist's drawings of Miss Churm, his drawings of the Monarchs represent the couple exactly as they are. As Mrs. Monarch proudly announces, "the drawings you make from *us*, they look exactly like us" (*NT* XVIII: 334).

Eventually, though, the artist comes to "[recognize] that this was indeed just their defect," that the reason his "drawing[s] looked like a photograph or a copy of a photograph" is because in being presented with the real thing that he is illustrating, the artist does not need to do anything but draw the couple exactly as they are (*NT* XVIII: 334, 326). Thomas Otten writes that "Because they really are upper-class, the Majors are too artificial to serve as models for a realist aesthetic, while the lower-class woman [Miss Churm] lacks all aesthetic polish and so can mold herself into a convincing semblance of the real thing" (72). The artist's frustration with this fact is representative of one of his perversities—"an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the

defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation" (*NT* XVIII: 317). As he says of Mrs. Monarch, "She was the real thing, but always the same thing," meaning that no expression could be made, that nothing could be made of her (she lacked representation), even when "placed…in every conceivable position" (*NT* XVIII: 326). More believable and thus more realistic is someone like Miss Churm, who "had no positive stamp" and, as such, "could represent everything, from a fine lady to a shepherdess" (*NT* XVIII: 328, 321). As James Kirschke summarizes:

> what James's artist renders are his impressions of the figures that model for him. Like most good artists working in representational media, James's artist uses his models in the way that they are perhaps best used; namely, as plastic figures to be fixed in whatever manner the artist chooses. (241)

A representation which only replicates reality is not a representation at all. The artist must use and create appearances to represent and express a believable image of reality.

In coherence with James's understanding, this idea of representation and appearances suggests that representational reality resides in the illusion of reality. So it is that the artist of this story "liked things that appeared; then one was sure" (*NT* XVIII: 317). Surety resulting from appearances and reality subsisting within illusion means that that which is deemed "real" cannot be trusted, and indeed that such reality does not exist in the first place (or perhaps *because* the real does not exist in the first place). Again, this Jamesian approach to the real is not dissimilar to Emersonian idealism. Whereas Emerson sees the real as the ideal, though, James sees it is as nothing more than appearance. The real is neither ideal nor concrete, and that which is concrete is not to be trusted. Rather, the real is the illusion of life, the look of things as we experience and know them. While we may think that we know reality, then, even greater knowledge, or at least more

meaningful knowledge, resides in the illusion of the real. As the artist of “The Real Thing” shows, there is nothing to be gained from only working with what we see. To gain knowledge or arrive at meaning, we must move beyond reality and into illusion.

Conclusion — The Destabilization of Reality

Henry James's move beyond the picturesque and his casting of picturesque portraiture into the Impressionist mode re-prioritizes subjectivity in the creation and knowledge of reality. This returned emphasis on subjectivity, espoused earlier in the century through Emersonian idealism, helps realize a marked difference between James, writing after the Civil War, and the Antebellum Hawthorne and Melville. When James submits to subjectivity, not in the creation of reality, but in the appearance of a reality, he reflects a willingness to loosen the grasp on tangible reality, a willingness not evidenced in the more material-based realities of Hawthorne and Melville.

These differences in material- and subjectivity-based realities are evidenced in the elements which constitute Hawthorne and Melville's picturesque portraiture, and James's Impressionist picturesque. Whereas Hawthorne and Melville align the elements of reality (the real and ideal) with external objects, James situates the real and ideal within the self. In Melville's *Pierre*, the eponymous youth neither knows nor bothers to confirm whether the story of Isabelle's illegitimacy is true yet chooses to recognize it as truth. In the real-ideal picturesque formula, then, the real is aligned with the story of late Mr. Glendinning's secret love affair and illegitimate daughter. Before it is shattered, Pierre's ideal image of his father is also established in external material objects. Pierre knows his father to be an upstanding man because he is a Glendinning, and the landscape and house

at Saddle Meadows, as well as assets such as portrait paintings and books, are all tangible objects which help constitute the false reality Pierre maintains. This outward, material recognition of the real and ideal is also evinced in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, where the real is linked to the past and the ideal to the present. This temporally bound understanding of the picturesque elements of composition is admittedly abstract. Notions of past and present, however, are materialized in the physical persons of Colonel Pyncheon and Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, respectively. These corporeal bodies, furthermore, are witnessed in the tangible portrait of the Colonel and the daguerreotype plates of Jaffrey.

Both Melville's and Hawthorne's alignment of the real and ideal with physical objects rather than individual self can be understood as a radical reaction to and/or against Emersonian idealism. In an attempt to show that the real is not the Emersonian ideal, Melville and Hawthorne locate all aspects of reality outside of subjectivity. This approach to reality reinforces Barabra Novak's thinking about the American desire for "things," and her claim that "the need to grasp reality, to ascertain the physical *thereness* of things" is a fundamental fact of the American experience (7). While the ideal may thus be perceived as something purely aesthetic, spiritual, or abstract, Melville's and Hawthorne's establishment of the ideal within material things—landscape, home, portraits, persons—makes the ideal into something more concrete.

When James adopts (and amends) the ideas of Impressionism as the foundation of his art of fiction, he affects a devotion to subjectivity in general and subjective visual experience in particular. For James, the elements which define the real and ideal in his

Impressionist picturesque portraiture—impression and expression, respectively—are likewise rooted in subjectivity and individual perception. Because James assigns the real and ideal to internal sense impressions and the intentions of the donnée, neither characteristic is tangible or concrete; the picturesque elements of James's literary portraiture do not, to borrow from Novak, give anything palpable to grasp onto. James, then, presents a readiness, not to let go, but to loosen the grasp on material reality.

This same loosening or destabilization of reality can be seen in artwork by American Impressionists, including one of James's favorites, John Singer Sargent. Barbara Novak writes that "Sargent [seems] to have perceived [his] world in terms of atmosphere, stroke, and fluid space," and yet "when, in oils, he attempted the sensational objectivity of the Impressionists, he gave away his American proclivities, revealing his inability to dissolve form and local color" (Novak 202, 203-4). An intriguing example, discussed at length by Elizabeth Prettejohn, is his painting, *A Morning Walk* (see figure C-1). In subject, this painting is remarkably similar to Claude Monet's earlier painting, *Woman with a Parasol* (see figure C-2). Despite the similarity in subject, Sargent's painting contains more clear-cut lines and detail, adding a sense of stillness and concreteness absent from *Woman with a Parasol*. This is especially true of the human figure in Sargent's painting. While the texture of the grasses is similar across his and Monet's paintings (indeed, the background and foreground material in both are painted with loose, broken brushstrokes characteristic of Impressionism), the woman in Sargent's is markedly more distinct. In her discussion of these two paintings, Elizabeth Prettejohn

Figure C-1. *A Morning Walk*, John Singer Sargent, 1888.

Figure C-2. *Woman with a Parasol – Madame Monet and Her Son*, Claude Monet, 1875.

writes that, in Sargent's, "The closer view of the figure and the more definite facial features reinterpret Monet's composition, shifting the focus from atmospheric effect to the human figure, seen from a high viewpoint that eliminates the airy expanse of the sky in Monet" (51). It is not just that the focus has been shifted to the human figure, though, but that the figure carries more weight. "[With] the utmost subtlety of light and shade," Prettejohn writes, Sargent "reasserts the figure's solidity" (51). The solidity noted by Prettejohn corresponds to Novak's concluding thoughts on Sargent and American Impressionists. Novak writes that "adherence to the integrity of local color and unfractured shape characterizes most American attempts at French Impressionism in the last decades of the nineteenth century," a claim, I believe, which is also realized in the subjectivity-based, Impressionist picturesque portraiture of Henry James (204). Like Sargent, James allows for some rupture from objective reality while nevertheless requiring that the artistic representation not fully splinter from that reality; the illusion of life need not ape reality, yet neither should it fully separate from it.[23]

While reality is thus not completely fractured, either in painted works of American Impressionism or in James's Impressionist picturesque portraiture, reality is

[23] James's unwillingness to fully fracture reality can be further understood from the point of Pragmatism as developed by William James. That Henry submits to his brother's thinking is evidenced in a 1907 letter to William, wherein Henry reflects on his reading of Willliam's newly published book, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, and writes "I was lost in the wonder of the extent to which all my life I have…unconsciously pragmatized. You are immensely and universally *right*" (*Letters of Henry James* 82). Most relevant to the current discussion is William's principle—as summarized by James Pendleton—that "man is free to believe what he *wills* to believe about the world, so long as his belief does not contradict either his practical experience or his scientific knowledge" (4). While William's book and Henry's letter were both written in the twentieth century, this connection to Pragmatism helps realize how Henry was working through similar thinking earlier, here via Impressionism. In his art of fiction, James wants that the artist need not (indeed, ought not) strictly adhere to actual reality, though the reality that is represented must adhere to the reality established by experience.

destabilized by the reprioritization of subjectivity.[24] This destabilization is also witnessed historically, with the skepticism which resulted from the rise of Realism in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the years leading up to and immediately following the advent of the Civil War there were numerous scientific and technological advancements which, because of their undebatable objectivity, caused people to question their subjective knowledge and perception of reality. While these developments and practices do not prioritize subjectivity, the factuality presented by science and technology unsettles previously held notions of reality and raises questions regarding the ability to accurately know truth. In *Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1850-1920*, David Shi discusses Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and scientific positivism as just two sources of contemporary advancements which brought established beliefs into question. Darwin's study of nature and "his emphasis on material causes of natural phenomena…challenged established beliefs about nature and cherished assumptions about providential design and life processes" (Shi 68). In the face of such abundant and convincing evidence and facts which "hardened into accepted truths, religious faith dissolved into skepticism" (Shi 68, 69). The scientific positivism of Darwin's work intensified following the Civil War, when "the authoritative premises of scientific positivism invaded every bastion of the nation's intellectual life" (Shi 70). As opposed to the intangible, abstract faith of Antebellum idealism, then, value was realized by

[24] This is not to say that James renders reality loosely, or that his representations of reality are loose or destabilized. Rather, his focus on subjectivity as the locus of an appearance of reality makes for an approach to the real which, because it is located within the individual, is less solid than realities which (like Hawthorne's and Melville's) adhere with material reality.

scientific positivism and positivists in that which "could be counted, measured, [and] weighed" (Shi 71). For Americans living during this Postbellum period when science claimed a "cocksure advance across every field of knowledge," there simply appeared to be nothing which could not be known with certainty or unquestionable objectivity (Shi 73). Science helped realize a reality different than that previously maintained, making for skepticism regarding the ability to accurately know, trust, and perceive.

Similar skepticisms resulted from new and developing technologies such as the picture camera. I have already discussed, in my chapter on Hawthrone, the arrival of the daguerreotype in America around 1840. The daguerreotype, however, is only one of many photographic methods and print productions which arose throughout the nineteenth century; and while the arrival of this technology was greeted with notions of mystery and magic, it was also recognized for its incredible accuracy and objectivity. It is these latter qualities of photographic technology which were emphasized during the Civil War. "By the onset of the Civil War," David Shi writes, "the quality of photography had improved enormously," and images taken by figures such as Matthew Brady, perhaps the most famous Civil War photographer, "provided Americans—north and south—with thousands of images revealing the visual facts of war" (54). Like Darwin's work and the quantifiable facts presented by positivists, the images brought home by Civil War photographers exhibited "the camera's terrible objectivity and scientific exactitude" (Shi 54). The photograph's ability to bring the battlefront to the home front, as well as its ability to present unquestionable visual proof of death and violence, destabilized perceptions of the battlefield as "all spectacle and glory" (Shi 47). With this technology,

"innocent visions of glory and gallantry" were replaced with unwholesome images of death, images which, because they were made by science rather than the subjective hand of the painter, could not be argued against (Shi 47).[25]

What Realism helps to realize, in short, is the limits of perception. What was once held to be true was, in the face of Realism, realized to be false, illusory, or ideal. While scientific and technological advances made fact and truth known (or knowable), these developments created skepticism about the individual's ability to recognize reality. The inability to depend, know, or trust in subjective perceptions thus loosens or destabilizes reality. To be sure, some of this skepticism was witnessed earlier, prior to the Civil War and Realism. We see this, for example, in my analysis of Melville, wherein I discuss how Pierre cannot begin to realize reality until his ideal perceptions are undermined. The shattering of his false reality puts Pierre into a similar situation as Americans living in the wake of the Civil War and Realism. The knowledge that Pierre's father is not the man he believed him to be makes Pierre realize that what he had taken as the truth of his father's person was actually a very limited, ideal perception. Pierre is thus put into a position where he can no longer know, without skepticism, how to judge reality or trust his perceptions. Perhaps Melville's own epistemological uncertainty accounts for his alignment of reality, in *Pierre*, with material objects. In the situation that reality (or, at

[25] This short discussion does not consider the fact that, while the image is created by a technology recognized for its ability to copy reality, the artist is still involved in how the image is captured. In choosing what gets included in the picture frame, and in dictating the arrangement of the picture by choosing how the scene is situated within the lens, daguerreotypists and other artist working with picture cameras play an active role in what and how reality is portrayed in terms of aesthetics.

least, our knowledge of reality) feels uncertain, the material objects of the external world provide something tangible to hold onto.

Epistemological skepticism and the destabilization of reality, while heightened following the Civil War and in the movement toward Realism, are thus not limited to the Postbellum period. Neither are these issues limited to the nineteenth century. Contemporary technologies in image making and image editing intimate that the same epistemological concerns tackled by Hawthorne, Melville, and James are as pertinent today as they were throughout the nineteenth century. In the current age of deepfakes, for example, algorithms are used to create intentionally falsified images which appear real, raising epistemological as well as ethical questions about the ability to know reality and the implications of making and disseminating knowingly fictitious images, respectively. While the uses of deepfake images suggest more concern with politics and social commentary than aesthetics, the technological capabilities of cell phone image editing software provides a captivating example of how the real and ideal are manipulated and exercised in photographic representations and thus also give rise to an inability to know whether these photos picture truthful representations of reality. Numerous (if not all) cell phones now possess technology which allows users to remove people or objects from their photographs, making for a "better" image unmarred by anything judged ugly, irrelevant, or generally unwanted. Other phones also allow users to pick from among several photographs the one which best represents their face. The selected image can then be put onto one of the other original photographs which, aside from the face, has been deemed "good." The replacement of the original face with the preferred face, it is judged,

makes for a more pleasing, or perhaps even "perfect" photograph. The user's ability to manipulate reality not only realizes epistemological questions like those addressed by the Hudson River's real-ideal dilemma, but makes the user akin to the picturesque artist, selecting as he will those objects which, when composed in a particular manner, render an ideal image of reality.

The individual's ability to construct, through technology, their own representation of reality reinvigorates the epistemological issues raised by Hawthorne, Melville, and James two centuries ago. An exploration of the ramifications of a reality built either partially or entirely of subjective vision or intention, then, is not limited to the nineteenth century. Nor is the real-ideal dilemma grappled with by Thomas Cole and the picturesque artists of the Hudson River School. Perhaps more interesting than this continuation of epistemological thinking and the real-ideal dilemma, though, is the simultaneous, continuing presence of the ideal in artistic images.[26] As much as Americans depend on the tangibility of something real, then, as Barabra Novak contends, there also seems to be a need for something of the ideal. The formula developed by the Hudson River School of artists, while initially created in response to debates surrounding the real-ideal dilemma in art, thus becomes a lasting approach to composition as Americans continue, throughout all the nineteenth century and into the twenty-first, to realize what and how to constitute reality in artistic representations, and question how that reality can be known**.**

[26] Referring to deep fakes and cell phone photographs as artistic raises the question of what qualifies as "artistic." I mean to use the term in the broadest, or perhaps the simplest sense, meaning images which are created at the hand of an individual (or, in the case of deepfakes and works generated by computers, algorithms and artificial intelligence, respectively). Whether these images constitute "art" is the matter of another discussion.

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