THE ART OF DISCRIMINATION

BY ARTHUR RISS

In the postscript he claims to have added "reluctantly" to the second edition of *The Marble Faun* (1860), Nathaniel Hawthorne addresses his readers' numerous demands "for further elucidation respecting the mysteries of the story."[1] Although presumably intended to resolve the story's mysteries, this postscript is, for the most part, Hawthorne's lament over the fact that so many of the book's literal-minded readers want to know whether Donatello really is a faun. Standing precariously "between the Real and the Fantastic," this anomalous creature, Hawthorne states, should have "excited [the reader] to a certain pleasurable degree, without impelling him to ask how Cuvier would have classified poor Donatello, or insist on being told, in so many words, whether he had furry ears or no" (*M*, 463–64). Hawthorne's point is clear. If readers translate Donatello into the realist register of comparative anatomy, all they will discover is that they do not know how to read a Romance. Hawthorne urges his readers to let Donatello be what he is: a purely aesthetic creature who incarnates the epistemological instability of the Romance.

Given Hawthorne's insistence that the figure of the man/faun is subject only to the rules of the Romance, it is striking that shortly after writing *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne himself resurrects this creature in his only piece of journalism on the Civil War. In "Chiefly About War Matters" (1862), his ostensibly realistic account of his trip to Washington D.C. to gather firsthand information about the war, Hawthorne comes across a group of fugitive slaves heading North:

> They were unlike the specimens of their race whom we are accustomed to see at the North, and, in my judgment, were far more agreeable. So rudely were they attired,—as if their garb had grown upon them spontaneously,—so picturesquely natural in manners, and wearing such a crust of primeval simplicity (which is quite polished away from the northern black man) they seem a kind of creature by themselves, not altogether human, but perhaps quite as good, and *akin to the fauns and rustic deities of olden times*.[2]

Apparently, the faun has escaped the realm of the Romance and entered the literal premises of Hawthorne's nonfiction. Indeed, even though Hawthorne claims that the seriousness of the Civil War has "compelled" him to "suspend the contemplation" of the "fantasies" he customarily writes, going so far as to assert that it would be "a kind of treason" to think such "idle thoughts in the dread time of civil war," it appears that when he looks closely at slavery—the social and moral problem at the center of the Civil War—he cannot help but apprehend it in terms of the Romance ("C," 299–300).

Although this hyperaesthetic flourish may seem incongruous given the self-professed aims of Hawthorne's essay, it accords with a critical consensus concerning Hawthorne's notorious insensitivity to the historical problem of U.S. slavery.[3] Scholars have long been disturbed by Hawthorne's apparent refusal to take race-based slavery seriously, a refusal marked by his unwillingness to discuss slavery in anything but purely aesthetic terms, as a metaphor for psychological bondage.[4] Typically, such aestheticizing has been approached in one of two ways: either as an unfortunate consequence of Hawthorne's chronic inability to engage the real world—temperamentally detached from his time, Hawthorne is more interested in Puritans than in Abolitionists, more devoted to slavery as an allegorical rather than a contemporaneous practice—or as a deliberate and insidiously conservative political strategy—Hawthorne intentionally constructed texts to encourage despair about concrete political action.[5] If one line of argument sees Hawthorne's interest in aesthetics as blinding him to politics, the other argues that Hawthorne invokes the aesthetic to blind others to political realities. This latter view is the one currently in vogue; Hawthorne is regularly indicted for a "derealizing style," a mode of representation that incites a relentless "indeterminacy" about the substance of politics and thus mystifies the possibility of concrete action.[6] Where once Hawthorne had no politics, all he has now is bad politics.[7] Where once Hawthorne simply wanted to avoid the real world, he now is regarded in more insidious terms, considered to be intentionally misrepresenting the real world.

As scholars have increasingly emphasized Hawthorne's unpardonable politics, this fauning of Black slaves has come to stand as merely the most egregious instantiation of the primary ideological failing of Hawthorne's writing and thought: his use of the aesthetic to excuse, contain, or conceal the political problem of race-based slavery. Thus, Eric Cheyfitz has argued that Hawthorne's aestheticizing of Black slaves provides "an alibi" for the status quo, that is, the continuing

"dehumanization of these people," while Nancy Bentley contends that such aestheticizing allows Hawthorne to simultaneously acknowledge and "safely enclose" an "emblem of the real political crisis," and Evan Carton traces how the complex aesthetics of *The Marble Faun* attempt to repress the "actualities" of race and slavery.[8] It is imagined, in short, that Hawthorne exploits the aesthetic to confound the hard facts of slavery.

To discuss Hawthorne's representation of slaves as fauns in terms of a strategy of disavowal or distortion is to understand Hawthorne's aesthetic as being in competition with the reality of slavery. Such an understanding dismisses the possibility that Hawthorne deploys the aesthetic to produce rather than deny real knowledge about slavery. Taking for granted that the truth of slavery is stable, self-evident, and always already produced, this account simply posits that U.S. slavery obviously misidentifies persons as things. What is lost by such an approach is an appreciation of how it was precisely the question of whether the Negro is a person—a being who naturally deserved inalienable rights—that was being fiercely disputed during the antebellum period.

Although no longer a question for us, questions during the antebellum period about the personhood of the slave were being debated not only in the political and legal arenas (the Dred Scott case and the Lincoln/Douglas debates standing as the most notorious examples), but also in scientific, religious, and, as I will argue, aesthetic discourse. Indeed, numerous scholars have thoroughly chronicled the way this legal and political debate extended into the scientific and religious realms and hinged on the question of whether the Black slave was a person.[9] Thus, the American School of Ethnology, for example, claimed to have developed empirical evidence of the existence of distinct types of human beings, declaring that crucial intellectual, moral, physical, and temperamental differences were fixed and unalterable and passed on from generation to generation. The most influential and respected scientific work of the period, in fact, was dedicated to apprehending, explaining, and ranking the types of Mankind.[10] And, as this nation's most influential scientists were debating the question of whether the Negro constituted a separate species, biblical scholars were heatedly debating the question of whether there were multiple creations.[11] Although the argument between proponents of monogenesis (the theory of a single creation) or polygenesis (the theory that God had created man not once but several times and that the different races had separate

origins) cannot simply be graphed onto an antislavery versus proslavery grid, the intensity of these debates suggests how deeply the conceptual category of the person was being disputed in numerous cultural arenas during the antebellum period.[12]

Once one appreciates how deeply antebellum arguments over the legitimacy of race-based slavery turned on the issue of whether the Negro was a person and how centrally the issue of personification (the question of whether Donatello or the fugitive slaves can become persons) preoccupies both *The Marble Faun* and "Chiefly About War Matters," then these apparently escapist texts start to resonate quite eloquently within contemporary political discourse. Most significantly, it is precisely the deeply political question of whether one can become a person that the purely aesthetic figure of the faun crystallizes in both texts. In *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne invokes the man/faun Donatello in order to raise explicitly the question of whether such a creature can acquire a moral sense and become fully human, and in "Chiefly About War Matters," Hawthorne represents slaves as fauns at the very moment when he explicitly raises the question of whether a Negro slave, now in the liminal space between freedom and slavery, can enter the North and be suddenly transformed (both legally and morally) into a person.[13] It is the self-consciously aestheticized figure of the faun, in other words, that serves as the relay point in these two stories of personification and that foregrounds the question fundamental to antebellum debates over slavery.

In this context, it becomes particularly significant that in April 1862, as Hawthorne was writing "Chiefly About War Matters," slavery was being declared illegal in the District of Columbia, and Lincoln was contemplating issuing a more expansive emancipation decree (something he would do about a month after Hawthorne's essay was published). That is, the central ethical dilemma of *The Marble Faun* is literally being reenacted at the moment that Hawthorne sees these contraband slaves entering the District, moving from slave to potential citizen.[14] It is neither surprising nor coincidental that Hawthorne returns to the figure of the faun at the very moment that he wonders about such a transformation (the title under which the Romance was published in England).[15] It is in terms of this figure that he has already most thoroughly interrogated the problem of what it means to become a person. Foregrounding questions about the moral development of Donatello, *The Marble Faun* can be seen as Hawthorne's preliminary mediation on the question of personification.

Having worked out the problem of this transformation within the imaginary realm of the Romance, Hawthorne then uses what he has learned to understand the problem at the heart of the Civil War. Indeed, if *The Marble Faun* can be seen as an experiment in bestowing personhood upon the man/faun Donatello, then "Chiefly About War Matters" can be seen as Hawthorne's redaction of this literary experiment as an explicitly political one.[16] By aestheticizing slaves, Hawthorne expresses and constitutes rather than represses and avoids knowledge about slavery, race, and personhood. Hawthorne's representation of an essential correspondence between fauns and slaves, in other words, is inseparable from antebellum disputes over what the indisputable reality of the slave is. He participates in this debate by claiming that the political problem of race-based slavery can best be understood as a fundamentally aesthetic problem. Or to put this another way, "Chiefly About War Matters" does not testify to how Hawthorne "finally did respond imaginatively to the centrality of race and slavery in America" but how powerfully he had already responded to these issues.[17]

Since Hawthorne's account of the truth of the Negro slave has been thoroughly superseded—become a debate beyond debate—it has perhaps become too easy to condemn Hawthorne's aestheticizing as a fundamentally inadequate response to the reality of slavery. However, to presume that Hawthorne is making an obvious mistake about what slaves essentially are (displacing or mystifying the truth) is to erase how intensely the facts of slavery were being contested during the antebellum period and to treat the conceptual category of the person as if it were an identity beyond contingency and history. It is, in short, not to take seriously how Hawthorne enters (albeit in a way that we would certainly dispute) into contemporaneous arguments about the essential nature of slaves.[18] In contrast to such decontextualized accounts of slavery and personhood, this essay offers a historicist reading of Hawthorne's aesthetics, taking the personhood of the slave as an object of historical inquiry rather than as the obvious starting point for interpretation. Rather than assume that the truth of slavery is always already settled, I explore how Hawthorne uses the aesthetic to realize (rather than derealize) the facts of slavery. If conventionally critics have set the real (slavery) against the aesthetic (fauns) and have been unsettled to the extent that the aesthetic overwhelms the real in Hawthorne, this essay explores how in *The Marble Faun* and "Chiefly About War Matters" the aesthetic identifies rather than stands external to the reality of

slavery. In both texts the aesthetic explains why the Negro, even though he (like the faun) may seem "really so human," simply is not a person.[19]

II. THE SLAVE AND THE FAUN

The Marble Faun is very clearly a text obsessed by aesthetic issues: it takes place in the galleries of Rome, all its characters are artists or artworks or both, and most of its pages are devoted to the making, discussing, and examining of art.[20] If this text is explicitly about art, it is less obviously but no less about race. Race circulates suggestively throughout the Romance.[21] The Romance's romantic pairs, for example, are simultaneously divided along racial and national lines: the good American couple, Hilda and Kenyon, who are explicitly associated with whiteness, and the genealogically dark European couple, the man/faun Donatello and the Jewish Miriam, about whom it is rumored that there is "one burning drop of African blood in her veins" (*M*, 23).[22] In particular, the metaphoric echoes between the faun of *The Marble Faun*, Donatello, and antebellum accounts of the Negro are quite striking. Donatello is repeatedly described as a primitive being: affectionate, imitative, childish, overly emotional, and quick tempered. He is represented as lacking a developed moral sense. All these qualities were commonly attributed to the Negro race during the period.[23] And all are brought into play in the act that sets the novel's plot in motion: Donatello's impulsive murder of Miriam's mysterious nemesis, known only as the Model, apparently in submission to a vindictive look from Miriam.

Perhaps the most tantalizing rhetorical correspondence between the African and Donatello is that Hawthorne presents Donatello as biologically distinct from the other characters of the Romance. When Kenyon says that Donatello seems "not precisely man, nor yet child, but in a high and beautiful sense an animal," he rehearses, albeit in more mannered terms, an opinion that members of the American School of Ethnology had declared to be a scientific truth about the Negro: "betwixt man and animal," "[n]either man nor animal," the African is a distinct and inferior species (*M*, 10). This observation resonates powerfully with the work of antebellum ethnologists, who persistently argued that they had scientifically proven that the African was essentially different from the Anglo-Saxon, a distinct species produced in a separate act of divine creation.[24] Donatello, one might say, looks a lot like a statue and feels a lot like a Negro.

This convergence of racial and aesthetic discourse, of course, is not surprising. During the antebellum period, questions about race were never far from questions about beauty.[25] Racial classifications were regularly translated into the hierarchical language of beauty and ugliness, and such standards of beauty were, in turn, considered as offering crucial information about the way in which the political and social sphere should be organized. As might be expected, Blacks were represented as the antithesis of the beauty of the Anglo-Saxon.[26] Not only was the Negro consistently represented as ugly, but the race's intrinsic ugliness was commonly regarded as Nature's determinative proof of Negro inferiority.

However, neither Donatello nor the fugitive slaves are represented as ugly. Donatello, in fact, is conspicuous for his beauty. Both figures disrupt the traditional alignment of racial superiority to beauty. Indeed, Hawthorne is fascinated by the faun, as he makes clear when he discusses in his notebooks several faun statues in the Capitoline Sculpture Gallery (among them Praxiteles's sculpture of *The Faun*), precisely because they cannot be comprehended by conventional narratives about beauty and race:

> I like these strange, sweet, playful, rustic creatures, *almost entirely human as they are, yet linked so prettily, without monstrosity, to the lower tribe*. . . . In my mind, they connect themselves with that ugly, bearded woman, who was lately exhibited in England, and by some supposed to have been *engendered bewixt a human mother and an orang-outang*; but she was a wretched monster—the faun, natural and delightful link betwixt human and brute life, and with something of a divine character intermingled.[27]

Hawthorne's reference to "the lower tribes" and to "the orang-outang" (a creature that, as Edgar Allan Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue" vividly clarifies, was a conventional metaphor for the Negro) makes clear how deeply the figure of the faun constellates questions about race, humanity, and aesthetics.[28] This connection is not unusual; the faun was often seen as a missing link comparable to the Negro. As John Blair Dabney explained in his overview of scholarship on the monkey, satyrs "were not altogether fabulous, but were, doubtless, monkeys in the transition, or chrysalis state."[29] For Hawthorne, however, what is significant about the faun is that this liminal creature does not incite the corporeal horror of an analogously raced and hypersymbolic emblem of miscegenation (the "ugly, bearded woman"). Standing between the human and the nonhuman,

the faun, like the human/orang-outang hybrid, collapses categories that should remain distinct, but the faun, unlike other hybrids, does so without evoking disgust.

III. ANTEBELLUM RACIST AESTHETICS

Although Hawthorne clearly affiliates aesthetics, race, and personhood in *The Marble Faun*, this linkage, as I have suggested, cannot be understood as simply reiterating the well-rehearsed conflation of beauty and racial superiority. Indeed, one can appreciate Hawthorne's racial aesthetics only if it is distinguished from contemporaneous accounts of the relation between race and aesthetics, accounts that tended to focus on the physical characteristics of the African—the thick lips, broad nose, dark skin, and woolly hair—as visible material signs of the race's inner and essential ugliness.

Traditionally, the Negro's morphology was classified as negatively aesthetic, while the Anglo-Saxon's physical nature was regarded as the natural standard of beauty. The obvious ugliness of the Negro provided certain knowledge about the order of things. The aesthetic, in short, was never an autotelic category; it always revealed significant proof of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon in the real world. The process of taxonomizing particular physical signs as representing Blackness, of identifying these signs as absolutely ugly, and of drawing social conclusions from these obvious empirical facts dates back in U.S. political discourse at least to Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785). In the *Notes* Jefferson, citing, among other things, the Negro's monotonous skin color, woolly hair, and inelegant form, summoned aesthetic categories to support his claim that it was impossible to "incorporate the blacks" into the United States. According to Jefferson, the Negro race itself emits physical proof of its aesthetic inferiority: "Negroes secrete less by the kidnies, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour."[30] Jefferson justifies his call for racial nationalism in terms of the aesthetic nature of each race. Jefferson's confidence in the social relevance of ugliness reveals not only that notions of beauty and ugliness were thought to be natural facts but also that the visible differences between the races were regarded as transparent signs of eternal differences, immovable markers of racial essences impervious to alteration by human intention, political action, or history.[31] To abandon the obvious "inferiority of form and features" of the Negro race would be to concede, as William Harper,

Chancellor of the University of South Carolina later declares, that there is "no universal standard of truth and grace and beauty."[32] Since beauty speaks the language of the absolute truth, to deny the proof of beauty is to deny truth.

During the antebellum period, as the moral and political attacks upon slavery increased and as the threat of a free Negro population was emerging as a possibility, the notion of the Negro's self-evident and self-incriminating physical ugliness surfaced as a particularly effective strategy for legitimating the nonpersonhood of the Negro. In *Negro-Mania* (1851), for example, John Campbell explains that

> the grand secret of separation or rather of the separate existence of races is to be found in the love of the beautiful. Man, even savage man will stop to gaze at a beautiful statue or picture, and the fair-haired white caucasian woman has been always sought as a wife by every race; while on the other hand the white race of men have drawn back in disgust from anything like general intermingling with the female of an inferior species.[33]

According to Campbell, who is less interested in legitimating the institution of slavery than in refuting claims for Negro equality, the universal truth of aesthetic categories—embodied, as one might expect, in the figure of the woman—makes clear the inevitability of existing racial divisions.[34] The beautiful and the ugly, Campbell explains, are matters of universal assent, clear even to the African himself. In Campbell's account, this self-evident physical ugliness of the African proves the unnaturalness of any claim that the Negro may have to social equality. Man should not and cannot interfere with the immutable and transcendent principles of aesthetics. He must simply assent to these unalterable and undeniable facts.

Campbell's representation of the transparent ugliness of Black women makes clear the ideological force of aesthetic arguments: Campbell, intent on asserting the inferiority of the Negro, asserts that no white master would rape a Negro slave precisely because the Negro is an intrinsically repulsive and alien species.[35] Claims for the ugliness of the Negro, however, were conspicuous not only in blatantly racist proslavery discourse but also in the objective rhetoric of the scientific community. Indeed, few ethnological treatises of the period lacked a chapter on beauty.[36] It was considered an empirical fact that beauty is a question of "primary importance in the natural history of several species," determining "not only the permanent separation of the species, but the actual advance, retardation, or

retrogression of any, and every species, in moral and intellectual power."[37]

In the assumption that beauty was truth, scientific and personal discourse converged. Thus, Louis Agassiz, the Swiss naturalist who settled in the U.S. in 1846 and gave the American School of Ethnology international respectability, describes in a now notorious letter to his mother how profoundly the Negro's physical appearance repelled him. Upon first seeing the Negro waiters who served him at a Philadelphia hotel, Agassiz could not contain his aesthetic horror:

> In seeing their black faces with their thick lips, and grimacing teeth, the wool on their head, their bent knees, their elongated hands, their large curved nails, and especially the livid color of the palm of their hands, I could not take my eyes off their face in order to tell them to stay far away. And when they advanced that hideous hand towards my plate in order to serve me, I wished I were able to depart in order to eat a piece of bread elsewhere, rather than dine with such service.

Simultaneously disgusted and fascinated by the Negro's anatomical features, Agassiz suggests that only the conventions of polite dining restrained him from fleeing the room. Agassiz draws a profound conclusion from this experience of visceral disgust: "What unhappiness for the white race—to have tied their existence so closely with that of negroes in certain countries! God preserve us from such contact!"[38]

To the extent that the ugliness of the Negro is being represented as inevitable, it precedes and causes social relationships. Such a racist aesthetics claims that the aesthetic is external to politics and thus provides a secure foundation for social and political judgments. Since an individual's disgust with the Negro is natural, any attempt to legislate this response out of existence can only be understood as unnatural. As Calvin Colton succinctly stated twenty-five years earlier in *The Americans* (1833), race prejudice is "doubtless as wrong as it is natural."[39] Or as William Graham Sumner writes about twenty-five years later, state ways cannot overcome folkways.[40] Indeed it is precisely this logic that *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) eventually codifies: racial prejudice reflects the order of things, a natural response antecedent to and independent of the scope of the law.

This form of racist aesthetics imagines itself as objective not only because it considers racial hierarchies a universal truth beyond dispute, but also because it is predicated on the stability of the object, on the belief that the material specifics of Blackness are irreducible

attributes, characteristics that resist history and abide with an ontological stability through the generations. As proslavery thinkers were fond of stating, "the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots."[41] The reason that antebellum ethnologists expended such energy on the study of hair, skin color, facial structure, and skull size was that they believed that these morphological features were permanent and specific to particular races, a self-evident expression of race that could always be relied on to categorize racial difference.[42] Antebellum ethnologists assumed that such somatic and physiological features reflected the transcendent taxonomy of Nature. Antebellum ethnologists subscribed to a fundamentally physicalist logic, one predicated on the claim that these material and exterior markers manifested the interior essence of racial difference.[43] Aversive racial feeling is simply an inevitable reaction to these markers.

Racial aesthetes, in other words, depend on the fact that inferiority is permanently written on the surface of the Negro. And although such an account of racial difference can certainly function as an effective guarantee of the social and political hierarchies, it is accompanied by a danger: it requires that the material signs of race justify such certainty. In order for these visible signs of ugliness to signify properly, they must remain clear and unchanging, independent of the observer and of contingency. These somatic structures function as legitimate markers only to the extent that they continue to reflect the object's identity in defiance of the vagaries of climate, social condition, or cultural perspective.[44] Since the antebellum aesthetics of race regarded these racial differences as empirical indices that could be scientifically measured and classified, this discourse fundamentally depended upon the visible, external materiality of racial difference.

IV. CHIEFLY ABOUT WAR MATTERS

If conventional accounts of racial aesthetics assumed that the material markers of race were stable, it is precisely such stability that Hawthorne seems most anxious about in "Chiefly About War Matters" when he represents these fugitive slaves as fauns. Indeed, this essay seems to mock the reliability of the materialist logic that underwrites aesthetic racialism, foregrounding the assumptions that underwrite the dominant aesthetic ideology of race only to weaken any racist account of aesthetics that relies on objective, visible markers.

Hawthorne explains that he "felt most kindly" toward the fugitive slaves he came across because they were still "wearing such a crust of primeval simplicity," such visible inferiority allowing Hawthorne's extension of sympathy. But he continues less affectionately, lamenting that such a natural "crust" has been "quite polished away from the northern black man" ("C," 318). Since these creatures have made no attempt to polish away the natural surface markers of their race, they enchant Hawthorne. Northern Negroes, in contrast, are less appealing precisely because they have attempted, somewhat nefariously it appears, to obscure the exterior signs that identify them as Black. Given that aesthetic judgments about the Negro crucially depended on the stability of the race's visible morphology, one can understand the cultural significance of such efforts to polish away the markers of Blackness: Northern Negroes are dangerous because they threaten the foundation of any racial aesthetics.

To the extent that Northern Negroes undermine the possibility of a racial aesthetics, these fugitive slaves satisfy the fantasy of natural markers of race. Hawthorne's description of their exterior appearance (their clothes, their manners, and their "crust" of simplicity) seems to fulfill with a vengeance the demand that the Negro be categorizable according to stable surface markers. Hawthorne analogizes the clothes and the skin of these slaves: "[S]o rudely were they attired,—*as if* their garb had grown upon them spontaneously" ("C," 318, my emphasis). Hawthorne is representing these clothes as if they were natural garments. Although clothes may appear to be contingent and removable, rather than essential or permanent, signs of identity, Hawthorne nonetheless describes these clothes as a second skin, not exactly replacing skin with clothing but imagining that, at least ideally, the clothing of these slaves should function as a supplemental and natural marker of race, expressing rather than concealing their nature.

If, on one level, Hawthorne is mirroring the widespread assumption that free Blacks take too much pride in their appearance—a pride supposedly excited by their natural love of pretty colors, a pride that incited caricatures in the North depicting apelike creatures absurdly decked out in garish tuxedos and preposterously elegant gewgaws—he is also expressing the deeper anxiety that informed such obsessive concern about Black appearance.[45] His excessively rhetorical conjuring of clothing as epidermal augmentation registers an anxiety about the possibility that there are no immovable signs of Blackness. Hawthorne's privileging of the naturally generated clothes

of the unpolished Blacks suggests not a confidence in material signs but an apprehension that the surface signs of Blackness not only can but, more crucially, are being erased.[46] His fantasy that the manmade coverings of these fugitives are nature's garments foregrounds the extent to which he fears that the empirical markers of Blackness are becoming increasingly unreliable. External evidence of racial difference, these Northern Blacks make all too clear, is not beyond alteration.

One could say that Hawthorne is representing the transitional space between South and North, where he comes across these fugitive slaves, as a sort of metaphysical changing room: these fugitives are about to change from slave to freeman as they simultaneously change from one garb to another. By linking the potential transformation of slaves into citizens to a departure from a realm in which exterior and interior states correspond, Hawthorne suggests that the impending transformation of the slave is superficial, a metamorphosis that should not be mistaken for evolution or true progress, but only as a masking of the slave's nature.

Hawthorne, thus, has not mistaken a social sign (clothes) for a natural one (skin); rather, by conflating clothes and skin, he has drawn attention to the precariousness of ostensibly natural signs. Indeed, at a moment when many slaves did "look" white, such anxiety over the mutable materiality of racial signifiers would be understandable. However, Hawthorne, as will become clear, is not critiquing racist hierarchies; he is critiquing the materialist logic on which such hierarchies have been conventionally predicated. Hawthorne is not abandoning racial hierarchies just because he is questioning a particular (materialist) version of racial aesthetics. For Hawthorne, unlike for many of his contemporaries, the crucial question is not whether the Negro is physically beautiful or ugly, precisely because he is suspicious of the aesthetic itself. Hawthorne can align the Negro with the beautiful precisely because he is interested not in critiquing standards of beauty, but in revealing how the Negro must be understood as a fundamentally aesthetic problem. Hawthorne's understanding of racial aesthetics, in other words, needs to be distinguished from arguments that turned to the self-evidently ugly surface of the Negro as objective proof of Negro inferiority, as well as from those who sought to challenge prevailing claims about Negro inferiority by foregrounding the beauty of the Negro.

Hawthorne establishes a critique of conventional racist aesthetics that looks nothing like the effort of Black intellectuals to invert

hierarchies of racial beauty or to discredit claims about the universality of the aesthetic. Given that notions of beauty were politically charged, it is not surprising that antiracist thinkers sought to contest conventional linkages between the universality of beauty and the naturalness of racial hierarchies. Some Black intellectuals, such as William Wells Brown, sought to undermine the logic of racist aesthetics by asserting that slaves often were "as white as their masters, and a great deal better looking."[47] This strategy challenged any claims of Black inferiority based on the material difference of the Negro, arguing that such material markers were disappearing. If some foregrounded the instability of racial markers, others, such as Dr. John S. Rock, sought to redefine the notion of beauty itself. Rewriting beauty according to a Black standard, Rock asserts that the "fine tough muscular system, the beautiful, rich color, the full broad features, and the gracefully frizzled hair of the Negro" must be contrasted "with the delicate physical organization, wan color, sharp features and lank hair of the Caucasian." Such patent aesthetic deficiencies, Rock concludes, suggest that "when the white man was created, nature was pretty well exhausted—but determined to keep up appearances, she pinched up his features, and did the best she could under the circumstances."[48] Although far from identical, both lines of argument ground their challenge to prevailing arguments about the inferiority of the Negro on the claim that beauty instated meaningful knowledge about the order of things.

The strategy to resignify Black as beautiful, indeed, was crucial to many arguments about Negro personhood. As William Wilson explained in *Frederick Douglass's Paper*:

> At present, what we find around us, either in art or literature, is made so to press upon us, that we depreciate, we despise, we almost hate ourselves, and all that favors us. Well may we scoff at black skins and woolly heads, since every model set before us for admiration, has pallid face and flaxen head, or emanations thereof.[49]

Having internalized a standard of beauty that is implicitly white, Negroes, Wilson laments, too often regularly identify their own race as essentially ugly and thus participate in their own degradation.

Some extrapolated from the way that statements of beauty concealed a racial politics that beauty itself ultimately had nothing to do with universal truths and everything to do with social power. That is, rather than maintain that Black beauty is the true universal, some

maintain that the concept of beauty is itself nothing more than a particular perspective that had become politically dominant and mistakenly inflated into a universal and objective one. As Frederick Douglass explains, he would be handsome "if public opinion was changed."[50] Pretending to espouse radically universal principles, the aesthetic, according to this account, embeds a specific set of interests at its origin but is invoked as if such embedded interests have evaporated.

In contrast to claims that the aesthetic reveals only the contours of existing relations of power, Hawthorne's critique of racial aesthetics neither questions aesthetic standards nor declares aesthetic claims of universality to be counterfeit. As will become clear in *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne relentlessly complicates and repudiates the materialist logic of antebellum racist aesthetics without ever doubting the legitimacy of racial hierarchies or the universality of beauty. He accepts that the aesthetic is a transcendental category. Motivated neither by the claim that aesthetic judgments are actually political judgments nor by the belief that Black could ever become beautiful, Hawthorne's rejection of the materialism that informs prevailing accounts of racial aesthetics is motivated by a suspicion of the aesthetic itself. Indeed, rather than undermining the authority of racial hierarchies, *The Marble Faun* sets out to place racial difference upon a more secure foundation than a materialist logic allows: it explains why the aesthetic and the Negro must be renounced simultaneously. Hawthorne, in essence, rejects the aesthetic in order to preserve racism.

V. THE AESTHETICS OF *THE MARBLE FAUN*

Although many critics have considered it a protopostmodern text, *The Marble Faun* elaborates a very conservative view of art.[51] Hawthorne relentlessly sets up an antagonism between the transcendence of the aesthetic and the materiality of the object. As the opening scene of the Romance immediately makes clear, Hawthorne imagines that the aesthetic exists in tension with the imperfect forms (paint, canvas, or marble) that express it. The Romance's four main characters, standing in the Capitoline gallery, are gazing at "the famous productions of antique sculpture" that are

> still shining in the undiminished majesty and beauty of their ideal life, although the marble, that embodies them, is yellow with time,

> and perhaps corroded by the damp earth in which they lay buried for centuries. (*M*, 5)

Though the physical appearance of these artworks has been seriously compromised, Hawthorne imagines that their aesthetic worth nonetheless remains "undiminished."

In order for this version of aesthetic experience to be possible, the literal surface must never become the object of the viewer's attention; it must be clearly segregated from and wholly subordinated to the unchanging "ideal life" of the aesthetic. The aesthetic tenor of the art object, Hawthorne suggests, emerges only if the viewers are engaged in this process of hierarchization. According to this essentially allegorical model of the aesthetic, the only relation that temporal objects must have with the aesthetic is purely vehicular: they carry the viewer to the ideal sphere of the aesthetic that is eternally protected from the vagaries of history and from the inevitable damage and change that define the temporal world. The miracle of art is that, even though the vehicles of the aesthetic decay, the aesthetic endures.

Hawthorne's account of the aesthetic experience allows for no mediation between the materiality of the object and the transcendence of the aesthetic: the chasm is unbridgeable because the material is represented as inexorably corrupting the aesthetic. Given this absolute opposition, it is perhaps not surprising that the model Hawthorne sets up is consistently confounded. Characters in the Romance cannot stop themselves from being fixed by the materiality of the object itself. For example, even Hilda, whom the Romance holds up as the ideal observer of art, acknowledges the difficulty of placing the physical aspects of an object out of the picture. After scrutinizing the *Faun* of Praxiteles for a while, she realizes that she has become so conscious of the statue itself that the aesthetic experience has vanished: "I have been looking at him too long," she laments, "I see only a corroded and discoloured stone. This change is very apt to occur in statues." Kenyon, her fellow countryman and a sculptor, immediately adds, perhaps feeling his medium is being singled out, "And a similar one in pictures, surely!" (*M*, 17).

If the aesthetic requires that the material surface of the art object be strictly governed, Hawthorne repeatedly shows the difficulty of establishing this governance in Rome, where every art object is besmirched by dirt and marked by decay. Art objects, in essence, become the occasion for the transcendent and material to collide

uncomfortably. What the aesthetic ultimately requires, according to Hawthorne, is not only the subordination of the material to the transcendent but also, more significantly, the subordination of the viewer. The Romance, in other words, represents the aesthetic as besieged both by the transience of its materials and by the inconstancy of its viewers.

Hawthorne repeatedly foregrounds the reader's power to disrupt aesthetic experience.[52] As the American sculptor Kenyon declares, "It is the spectator's mood that transfigures the Transfiguration itself. I defy any painter to move and elevate me without my own consent and assistance" (*M*, 17). Hawthorne, in fact, repeatedly acknowledges the extent to which the aesthetic depends upon the viewer:

> A picture, however admirable the painter's art, and wonderful his power, requires of the spectator a surrender of himself, in due proportion with the miracle which has been wrought. Let the canvas glow as it may, you must look with the eye of faith, or its highest excellence escapes you. There is always the necessity of helping out the painter's art with your own resources of sensibility and imagination. (*M*, 335)

Although Hawthorne shows the aesthetic to be threatened simultaneously by the materiality of its object and the particularity of the viewer, it would be a mistake to see *The Marble Faun* as anxious about the fragility of the aesthetic. Rather, the aesthetic is itself the problem. It becomes a problem precisely because the subordination of materiality (required by the aesthetic) is inseparable from the subordination of the viewer. Indeed, since Hawthorne establishes the transcendent universality of the aesthetic as a fundamental threat to the individual subject, he is ultimately more concerned with the fragility of the individual than with the fragility of the aesthetic experience.

Hawthorne's representation of Hilda, the Romance's ideal artist and viewer, most clearly foregrounds the degree to which the Romance imagines the assertion of the aesthetic and the assertion of the individual as ontologically opposed. Hilda, Hawthorne explains, becomes "incomparably the best copyist in Rome" by "sacrificing herself to the devout recognition of the highest excellence in art" (*M*, 59). Although one might expect that Hilda's skill as a copyist would express itself as a perfect mimesis, she is, in the most literal sense, a very poor copyist. What she paints is not visible in the original: "[S]he had been enabled to execute what the great Master had conceived in his imagination but had not so perfectly succeeded in putting upon

canvas" (*M*, 59). Her copies, in short, look nothing like the original.[53] What Hilda imagines as copying, therefore, looks a great deal like creation. Paradoxically, Hilda's "generous self-surrender" to "the Old Masters" allows her to paint what they never could (*M*, 60).

Hawthorne's seemingly confused description of Hilda's copying as creation, however, is precisely the point. For Hawthorne, copying and creation are identical acts, indistinguishable because both are predicated on the subordination of the individual to the universal. Hawthorne replaces a romantic aesthetic that aligns self-expression with creativity with the classical notion that the aesthetic demands self-abnegation. The price of both producing and reproducing great art, Hilda demonstrates, is the loss of a personality. Indeed, the distinction between creation and imitation, originality and reproduction, is predicated upon the very assumption that the Romance is dedicated to repudiating: that the aesthetic can ever be connected to the expression of individuality.

Hawthorne thus repeatedly emphasizes how completely Hilda's devotion to the aesthetic blocks her from becoming an individual. Although such a "sensitive faculty of appreciation" and "generous self-surrender" may seem to mark Hilda as an ideal of the feminine—devoted, humble, and pure—her aesthetic bondage to the Old Masters actually exiles her from the true concerns of women (*M*, 56, 60). As long as she is "the handmaid to the Old Masters," Hilda will never marry, never tend to her family's rather than the Virgin Mary's hearth, and never be, according to Hawthorne's conventional Victorian imagination of the feminine, a complete woman (*M*, 334). "Hilda," as Kenyon sadly reflects, "does not dwell in our mortal atmosphere" (*M*, 121). And as long as Hilda continues to sacrifice herself to the universality of the aesthetic, she will neither recognize Kenyon's love for her nor exist herself as more than an imaginary figure.

Hilda, however, is redeemed. For, after witnessing the murder of Miriam's mysterious tormentor, known only as the Model, Hilda loses her sublime negative capability. The murder compels her to think about temporal matters and contemplate her particular situation. And it is only when she begins to think about her particularity that she can escape her bondage to the Old Masters. Her depression and self-absorption may ruin her skill—she is no longer able to "yield herself up to the painter so unreservedly as in times past"—but she gains a self-consciousness that preserves her individuality from the tyranny of the aesthetic. "Her character," the narrator explains, now

"developed a sturdier quality, which made her less pliable to the influence of other minds" (*M*, 375).

In Hilda's experience, Hawthorne clearly aligns the restoration of individuality with the reassertion of the materiality of art objects. It is precisely at the moment that she begins to think about herself that Hilda suddenly sees the paintings that she had previously worshipped as "empty" and apprehends the painters whom she had previously "venerated" as seduced by "venal beauty" (*M*, 338):

> Heretofore, her sympathy went deeply into a picture, yet seemed to leave a depth, which it was inadequate to sound; now, on the contrary, her perceptive faculty penetrated the canvas like a steel probe, and found but a crust of paint over an emptiness. Not that she gave up all Art as worthless; only, it lost its consecration. (*M*, 341)

Hilda's redemption requires that the art objects become material and coarse. That Hilda's fall from the aesthetic is fortunate becomes obvious when, on the "very afternoon" after experiencing "the emptiness of Picture-Galleries," Kenyon "felt Hilda's hand pulling at the silken cord that was connected with his heart-strings" (*M*, 343). Finally, Hilda can recognize her love for Kenyon and begin to think proper thoughts about home and marriage.

Although the gender-inflected character of Hilda's devotional stance towards the aesthetic cannot be dismissed, it is important to note that Kenyon, Hilda's fellow expatriate, recapitulates this conflict between individuality and the aesthetic. Near the end of the Romance, Kenyon, hoping to find Hilda, who has mysteriously disappeared, follows the instructions of an anonymous communication. Instead of Hilda, Kenyon discovers the fragments of a statue. Collecting the fragments, Kenyon reassembles the figure, a lost model for the celebrated *Venus de Medici*. Reattaching the head, he appreciates his find:

> [T]he effect was magical. . . . The beautiful idea at once asserted its immortality, and converted that heap of forlorn fragments into a whole, as perfect to the mind, if not to the eye, as when the new marble gleamed with snowy lustre. . . . The world was richer than yesterday, by something far more precious than gold. Forgotten beauty had come back, as beautiful as ever; a goddess had risen from her slumber, and was a goddess still. . . . [A]n Emperour would woo this tender marble, and win her as proudly as an imperial bride! (*M*, 423–24)

For a moment the aesthetic overwhelms the gross materiality of the marble—"nor was the impression marred by the earth that still hung upon the exquisitely graceful limbs, and even filled the lovely crevice of the lips" (*M*, 424).

If for a moment this decayed marble bride seems to replace Kenyon's desired bride, as soon as Kenyon remembers Hilda, the statue loses its aesthetic force. As Kenyon's individuality returns, so does the materiality of the object. At the moment that Kenyon's immediate desires surface, the narrator explains, Kenyon "could hardly, we fear, be reckoned a consummate artist, because there was something dearer to him than his art," and, "by the greater strength of a human affection, the divine statue seemed to fall asunder again, and became only a heap of worthless fragments" (*M*, 424).[54] Kenyon simultaneously proves himself a deficient artist and a worthy man.

In *The Marble Faun*, to state the case most boldly, Hawthorne imagines both aesthetic creation and aesthetic appreciation as precluding self-expression.[55] Hawthorne affiliates subjectivity and materiality because of their common role in thwarting aesthetic expression. Both need to be subordinated for the aesthetic to be realized. If, in *The Marble Faun*, this subordination never completely occurs, and thus great paintings are repeatedly reduced to flecks of paint and classic sculptures transformed into chunks of stone, this failure of the aesthetic is ultimately a good thing. Rather than troubling to Hawthorne, the recalcitrance of material forms is the key to saving the individual.[56] Having set up a choice between the aesthetic and individuality, Hawthorne repudiates the aesthetic in order to choose individuality.

Having opposed the aesthetic and the individual, *The Marble Faun* seeks to protect the individual from the hazards of the aesthetic. And in this sense, *The Marble Faun* does not follow the common trajectory of nineteenth-century aesthetic history. Hawthorne's discussion of art does not become less objective and more subjective, less oriented toward the characteristics of things and more focused on individual psychology. In fact, he deliberately foregrounds aesthetic transcendence not as an ideal instantiation of personhood but as the absolute abomination of personhood. Rather than formulate an aesthetic theory that can reconcile the subjective and objective elements of the aesthetic, Hawthorne writes *The Marble Faun* in order to elaborate the irreconcilability of the universal and the particular.[57] Rather than aligning the aesthetic with the constitution of the individual subject, he positions the aesthetic as the primary antagonist of the subject and turns to the materiality of the art object

to save the subject. To the extent that *The Marble Faun* carefully lays out the process of aesthetic expression and then thoroughly rejects this process, it is unsurprising that it is Hawthorne's last completed Romance.

VI. ROME AND THE RULE OF THE AESTHETIC

Indeed, Hawthorne begins his repudiation of the aesthetic in his preface to *The Marble Faun,* where he isolates art in the foreign world of Rome. Hawthorne firmly localizes the Romance in Rome, taking particular care to exile the twilight of Romance from the "commonplace prosperity" and "broad and simple daylight" of "our stalwart Republic." Italy, he claims, rather than the United States, provides the perfect place for a Romance: it is "a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon, as they are, and must needs be, in America" (*M*, 3). Despite the modern critical tradition that claims (almost reflexively) an essential relation between the Romance and U.S. culture, Hawthorne in his last completed Romance has set the United States against the Romance.[58]

I want to take seriously Hawthorne's claim that the United States is no place for Romance. Hawthorne, after having not written a Romance for six years, repudiates the genre of the Romance for the same reason that he rejects the aesthetic: both imperil individuality. It is because Hawthorne is so intent on disconnecting the Romance from the United States that he makes the seemingly outrageous statement that, in his "dear native land," there "is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong" (*M*, 3). In particular, Hawthorne locates Rome as the ideal realm for a Romance because, unlike the United States, Rome is devoted to the erasure of the empirical and the particular. As Hawthorne explains,

> [T]he state of feeling experienced most often in Rome . . . is a perception of such weight and density in a by-gone life, of which this spot was the centre, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half real, here, as elsewhere. Viewed through this medium, our narrative—into which are woven some airy and unsubstantial threads, intermixed with others, twisted out of the commonest stuff of human existence—may seem not widely different from the texture of all our lives. (*M*, 6)

Rome offers itself as "a place where actualities are not so terribly insisted upon" because in Rome "actuality," having already been processed by the aesthetic, simply disappears. Rome is not a "neutral

territory," a space "where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet," but a space where everything becomes imaginary.[59]

Rome, in essence, universalizes everything, collapsing all differentiations into a fully aestheticized form of life. Embedded in history so thoroughly that the force of the past overwhelms the present and attenuates the seriousness of subjective experience, "individual affairs and interests are but half real, here." Here the aesthetic holds sway, and the particularity of everything and everyone is transformed. That is, not only is Rome a land of ruins, it is also the land that ruins individuality. The exuberantly figurative atmosphere of Rome is, as one would expect, incomparably productive of art and destructive of particularity. Rome initiates the possibility of universal analogies: the chance that everything can seem to be something else. Hilda, the pure and innocent "daughter of the Puritans" (*M*, 54), and Miriam, the dark and fallen European, both look remarkably similar to Guido Reni's portrait of Beatrice Cenci; Miriam's tormentor, who works (at least part-time) as an artist's model, looks eerily similar to Guido's Demon; this mobile relationality, of course, climaxes in Donatello's resemblance to the *Faun* of Praxiteles. In both Rome and the Romance the restraining force of the particular and the individual is erased so thoroughly that nothing limits the resemblances one notices or the metaphors one can make.

VII. THE FALL

Although Rome may promote art, it certainly does not promote morality.[60] Indeed, *The Marble Faun* culminates by foregrounding the serious moral problems raised by the aesthetic environment of Rome. Miriam, near the Romance's conclusion, offers Kenyon an explanation, one that most critics have seconded, of what *The Marble Faun* is ultimately about: "The story of the Fall of Man! Is it not repeated in our Romance of Monte Beni [the subtitle of *The Marble Faun*]?" (*M*, 434). In making this claim, she makes clear how deeply the problem of becoming a person lies at the heart of the narrative. And having noticed that Donatello has developed a moral sense after having sinned, Miriam then extrapolates from her observation of a resemblance between Donatello and Adam: "And may we follow the analogy yet further? Was that very sin,—into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race,—was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter, and more profound happiness, than our lost birthright

gave?" (*M*, 434). Miriam asks whether Donatello's murder of the Model was a blessing in disguise, was it "a means of education, bringing a simple and imperfect nature to a point of feeling and intelligence which it could have reached under no other discipline?" (*M*, 434). Donatello, according to Miriam, merely performs an archetypal transgression. Reenacting the Fall of Man, Donatello's murder cannot be simply condemned and perhaps can even be justified as necessary for his moral development.

Miriam, it seems, is simply asking a rather traditional theological question: if sin is not educational, why else would God permit it to continue? But within the context of *The Marble Faun*, her hypothesizing is represented as profoundly scandalous. Kenyon replies that he finds her line of speculation "too dangerous" (*M*, 435). Inferring that Miriam may be suggesting that we ought to imitate Adam—or worse Donatello—and sin deliberately in order to learn, Kenyon declares that he will not follow her into the "unfathomable abysses, whither you are tending" (*M*, 434). Despite this refusal, Kenyon remains intrigued by Miriam's theory and adopts her argument when he and Hilda are contemplating the significance of Donatello's sudden development of a deep moral sense:

> "Here comes my perplexity," continued Kenyon. "Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is sin then,—which we deem such a dreadful blackness in the universe,—is it, like sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his?" (*M*, 460)

Hilda adamantly repudiates this version of the story, demonstrating "the white, shining purity"—the militant orthodoxy that has so consistently vexed modern critics (*M*, 287).[61] She responds to the sculptor's question with horror. "Oh hush!" she cries,

> shrinking from him with an expression of horrour which wounded the poor, speculative sculptor to the soul. "This is terrible; and I could weep for you, if you indeed believe it. Do not you perceive what a mockery your creed makes, not only of all religious sentiment, but of moral law, and how it annuls and obliterates whatever *precepts of Heaven are written deepest within us*? You have shocked me beyond words!" (*M*, 460, my emphasis).

Hilda's disgust galvanizes Kenyon. He quickly retracts his statement, says he was just joking, and asks Hilda to marry him and guide him home to the United States "with that white wisdom which clothes you" (*M*, 460).

One wonders why Hilda is so shocked by what seems not only platitudinous, but so clearly the manifest theme of the Romance. As Richard Brodhead has asked, "What are we to make of a novel that so prominently hushes the speech it seems designed to express?"[62] It is a mistake, however, to regard Hilda's rejection of Kenyon's version of the story as motivated by her aversion to the doctrine of the Fortunate Fall itself. For when Kenyon paraphrases Miriam and asks Hilda the question of whether they have witnessed a reenactment of the Fall of Man, he is not merely asking a theological question. He is reminding her of what she literally witnessed: she watched Donatello throw the Model from the summit of the Tarpeian Rocks.

The issue of the Fall lies at the center of the Romance in two very different senses. The abstract problem of the Fall of Man is set against the literal fall of one man—the Model's fall from the Tarpeian Rocks. To Hilda, the story of *The Marble Faun* is the story of the fall of a man, not of the Fall of Man. Hilda is disgusted by the possibility that Kenyon could aestheticize a murder, allegorize an event that she has literally witnessed. Hilda is unwilling to forget Donatello's literal act.

The Romance thus sets up a competition between the literal and the figural accounts of the Fall. Hilda's unqualified repudiation of a Romance reading of the Fall suggests how dangerous any confusion of the literal and the figural can be. Hilda reacts so strongly not to the doctrine of the Fortunate Fall, but to the notion that Donatello's murder could be transformed from the literal act of murder into an abstract theological question. Hilda, in short, is disgusted by Kenyon's aestheticizing, more than by his theosophizing. This climactic scene reveals the extent to which the aesthetic in general, and the Romance in particular, are dangerous precisely because each depends on the effacing of the literal and the erasing of the individual (in this case the Model). In this text, aestheticizing looks a lot like murder.

VIII. FAUNING SLAVES

Given this account of the aesthetic abstraction, it is clearly a victory for morality when, at the conclusion of *The Marble Faun*, Hilda and Kenyon abandon the "shadow" and "gloomy wrong" of

Rome and return to "the broad and simple daylight" of the United States. Or to put this another way, Hilda and Kenyon leave the old world of the romance for the literal new world. But there they will discover, as Hawthorne does two years later, that the figure of the faun is no longer indigenous to Rome or to the Romance. The United States may be a place "where actualities" are "terribly insisted upon," but nevertheless, it is not without its fauns. Thus, if we return to the question that began this essay (what does it mean that Hawthorne represents Negro slaves as fauns?), it becomes clear that to link slaves to the faun is to define them as essentially aesthetic creatures. Rather than dehumanizing the Negro, Hawthorne is identifying what a Negro is, explaining why the Negro never was or will be a person. This hyperfigural gesture signifies the extent to which Hawthorne deploys the aesthetic not to avoid political issues, but to make a thoroughly political statement about race. To link the Negro slave to the aesthetic is to explain—not evade—why the Negro cannot become a person even if the race is emancipated. Hawthorne, in short, is less interested in how the slaves are like animals than in how the decisive mark of Negro identity is the race's aesthetic nature.

As I have argued, Hawthorne's account of aesthetics undermines the materialist logic of antebellum racist aesthetics, but this critique does not lead Hawthorne to abandon the aesthetic as a source of knowledge. According to Hawthorne, the aesthetic remains profoundly enlightening. What it reveals, however, is not the truth of beauty but the danger of the aesthetic itself. Indeed, since Hawthorne opposes the category of the aesthetic to individuality, it is ultimately immaterial whether the Negro is beautiful or ugly. All that matters is that the Negro is a fundamentally aesthetic creature. By aestheticizing the Negro, in short, Hawthorne crystallizes his understanding of the Negro problem: the Negro is ineligible for personhood not because of how the Negro looks, but because the Negro incarnates the aesthetic experience itself.

The Negro becomes simultaneously a social and moral problem in Hawthorne's account precisely because the race reproduces the aesthetic experience. In contrast to conventional racist rhetoric, Hawthorne does not declare the Negro a "mud-sill" class, too material and too obdurately embodied to be beautiful; rather, he represents the Negro as inferior because the Negro lacks individuality, does not possess an essential material fixity.[63] According to Hawthorne, the Negro does not belong in America precisely because the Negro, like an aesthetic object, inaugurates a tension between the

literal and the figurative, the material and the transcendent, the interior and the exterior. By linking the Negro race to the aesthetic, Hawthorne isolates the danger of the Negro as fundamentally analogous to the danger posed by the aesthetic.

Indeed, by rendering Black slaves as analogous to aesthetic objects, Hawthorne rewrites contemporary debates about what to do with a free Negro population as itself an effect of the Negro's inevitably confusing and confused being:

> I felt most kindly towards these poor fugitives, but knew not precisely what to wish on their behalf, nor in the least how to help them. For the sake of the manhood which is latent in them, I would not have turned them back; but I should have felt almost as reluctant, *on their own account*, to hasten them forward to the stranger's land. ("C," 319, my emphasis)

This passage establishes Hawthorne's sympathy with these fugitive slaves but at the same time it establishes a homology between one's reaction to the Negro and to an aesthetic object: both initiate a conflict between the instability of surface markers and a more stable core, between the visible and the invisible, the particular and the transcendent. That is, Hawthorne's confusion about how to engage the sympathy he feels for the Negro ultimately reveals more about the ontological status of the object than it does about the sympathizing subject. The moment crystallizes how Hawthorne understands his divided sympathy as symptomatic of the Negro problem.

This moment, in essence, aligns the Negro with the threat of the aesthetic experience: the Negro, like the aesthetic object, confuses an individual's relationship both to oneself and to the material world. The only way to appreciate the "manhood" which is "latent" in the Negro, according to Hawthorne, is to suppress one's knowledge about the Negro's present condition. By representing Negro "manhood" as fundamentally distinct from the Negro's present material situation, Hawthorne encapsulates the moral danger that the Negro presents. Hawthorne, in other words, structures this moment according to the aesthetic logic he elaborated in *The Marble Faun*, opposing his sympathy for the Negro to his recognition of the Negro's material circumstance. He establishes an analogy between the Negro problem and the problem of the aesthetic. To think beyond the Negro's obvious lack of education, civilization, and preparation for life in the North is to forget the literal, existing world and to enter the ethically perilous and essentially foreign realm of the Romance. Or to put this

problem in terms of the lesson of *The Marble Faun*, the imagined personhood of the Negro can be expressed only if Hawthorne subordinates himself to the Negro, if he denies his individuality for the sake of the Negro's. In the end, Hawthorne's point is not that these slaves look like fauns (they clearly do not), but that both reproduce the logic of the aesthetic.

Hawthorne understands Negro slaves not simply as noncitizens and nonpersons, but as figures that threaten the very premises of citizenship and personhood. The Negro's fundamentally unstable nature designates the Negro as the antithesis of the individual, but, even more importantly, it reveals how inevitably the Negro provokes an aesthetic response. According to this understanding, the exile of these inherently aesthetic creatures becomes a patriotic act, one necessary to preserve the nation's moral character. It is not by accident, therefore, that the liminal space in which Hawthorne situates these fugitive slaves is simultaneously the evanescent aesthetic space of the Romance, the transitional political space between slave and potential citizen, and the geographic space between South and North. The Negro is excluded from citizenship for the same reason that the Negro is included in the realm of the Romance: the Negro is essentially a figural creature. It is not the aesthetic inadequacy of the Negro but the race's aesthetic excess that prevents the Negro from finding a home in the United States. Locating the Negro on the side of the aesthetic rather than the particular and the individual, Hawthorne designates the Negro as outside the literalist and materialist premises of this nation. Because the Negro's essential character is to ignite a confusion between the material and the transcendent, the Negro presents an imminent danger to individuality and America.

IX.

Although such a complex account of Negro aesthetics is certainly not explicit in Hawthorne's texts, what I have been adumbrating are the assumptions (both conscious and unconscious) that frame Hawthorne's knowledge of what the Negro is. Hawthorne in these texts demonstrates a sustained engagement with the problem of the Negro becoming a person, an engagement that has not been appreciated precisely because we assume that knowledge about the personhood of the Negro is inevitable. Hawthorne marks the possibility that things might be other than they are.

Most suggestively, by linking the aesthetic to an ineligibility for citizenship and personhood, Hawthorne disrupts the association between aesthetic universalism and personhood that currently characterizes readings not only of Hawthorne's politics but of liberal citizenship itself. In contrast to modern claims that rights are distributed in terms of a "rhetoric of the bodiless political citizen, the generic 'person' whose political identity is *a priori* precisely because it is, in theory, non-corporeal," Hawthorne obsessively desubstantializes the Negro in order to classify him as a noncitizen and as morally disruptive.[64] He understands the indeterminate materiality of the Negro as the primary signifier of the race's ineligibility for personhood. Hawthorne, in short, comprehends the conceptual category of the person in terms we do not or, more precisely, according to terms we no longer recognize.

That is, if we currently consider appearance as having a purely extraneous relation to personhood, imagining liberal personhood in purely disembodied terms, Hawthorne's representation of the Negro registers the historical specificity of this account. Rather than identify persons with the privilege of disembodiment, he represents the impulse to move beyond literality (an impulse incarnated by the Negro) as the problem incited by the Negro. Lacking a stable appearance, the Negro becomes ineligible for the right to citizenship. To the degree that the Negro can embody disembodiment, the Negro is not a person. This account marks a significant discontinuity between the mechanics of antebellum and modern liberal thought.[65] The abstract person at the heart of modern liberalism is, for Hawthorne, exactly what must be disavowed. According to the logic Hawthorne develops, the universality of the aesthetic is not the model of subjectivity, but its antithesis.

Thus, although we regularly assume that Negroes were denied personhood because they were represented as possessing a surplus corporeality (as unable to submerge their inherently ugly bodies), *The Marble Faun* requires us to historicize the model of personhood that underwrites liberal representation. Instead of posing a stumbling block to the privileges of (white) personhood, the body of the Negro slave poses a problem precisely to the extent that the Negro lacks a fixed body and this changing surface ominously causes others to look beyond the body and beyond the literal. What Hawthorne's affiliation of aesthetics and race eventually suggests is that he is operating with a substantially different model of the person from the one we assume. Rather than enabling the extension of rights, the pull of abstraction

identifies the limits of Negro identity. Rather than being the primary sign of American citizenship, abstraction endangers the ethical character of the nation. For Hawthorne, the Black body is too obligingly vehicular, offering itself too readily as a means to proliferate abstract meanings rather than as an obstacle to the production of such meaning.

The Marble Faun, in other words, represents the aesthetic as inseparable from the question of emancipation. And in this respect, Hawthorne is not unique. Indeed, Thomas R. Dew, in his classic account of the Virginia legislature's debates over emancipation following the Nat Turner rebellion (1831), a text that collected and inaugurated many of the arguments over slavery that would come to dominate antebellum culture, also found the aesthetic the most effective means to express the problem of Negro emancipation. Dew, quoting Senator Canning, explained the difficulty of liberating the Negro by turning to literature:

> To turn him [the Negro slave] loose in the manhood of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of recent romance; the hero of which constructs a human form with all the physical capabilities of man, and with the thews and sinews of a giant, but being unable to impart to the work of his hands a perception of right and wrong, he finds too late that he has only created a more than mortal power of doing mischief, and himself recoils from the monster which he has made.[66]

Although I am not arguing that Hawthorne, like Dew, is explicitly rewriting Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in the service of a proslavery argument, I am suggesting that Hawthorne imagines the Civil War as threatening to give birth to an analogous kind of monster (albeit not as ugly a one). These two texts are responding to the fear that scientists and politicians are now able and willing to try to make persons. And both texts refuse to sanction the ethics of such acts of personification.

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NOTES

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun: or The Romance of Monte Beni* (1860) (New York: Penguin, 1990), 463; hereafter abbreviated *M* and cited parenthetically in the text by page number. The text of the Penguin edition is that of volume 4 of the *Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Thomas Woodson and others (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1968).

[2] Hawthorne, "Chiefly About War Matters," in *Tales, Sketches, and Other Papers* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1883), 318, my emphasis; hereafter abbreviated "C" and cited parenthetically by page number.

[3] See Jonathan Arac, "The Politics of *The Scarlet Letter*," in *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), 247–66. Arac's essay is the classic formulation of this problem. For a representative example of recent attacks on Hawthorne's politics, see Eric Cheyfitz, "The Irresistibleness of Great Literature: Reconstructing Hawthorne's Politics," *American Literary History* 6 (1994): 539–58.

[4] For an overview of this absence, see Jean Fagan Yellin, "Hawthorne and the American National Sin," in *The Green American Tradition: Essays and Poems for Sherman Paul*, ed. H. Daniel Peck (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1987), 75–97. See also Jennifer Fleischner, "Hawthorne and the Politics of Slavery," *Studies in the Novel* 23 (1991): 96–106. For a contemporaneous example of this problem, see George William Curtis, "The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne," *North American Review* 99 (1864): 539–57.

[5] The idea that Hawthorne was detached from his own age characterizes even some of the best historicist work on Hawthorne, such as the work of David Levin, "Shadows of Doubt: Specter Evidence in Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown,'" *American Literature* 34 (1964): 344–52; Michael D. Bell, *Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971); and Michael J. Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne's Early Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984).

[6] Arac, 258. Hawthorne writes, as Arac felicitously puts it, "propaganda—*not* to change your life" (251).

[7] For an important departure from this trend, see Brook Thomas, "Civic Hester: *The Scarlet Letter* as Civic Myth," *American Literary History* 13 (2001): 181–211.

[8] Cheyfitz, 556; Nancy Bentley, *The Ethnography of Manners: Hawthorne, James, Wharton* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 59, 24; Evan Carton, *The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Transformations* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 109. Bentley, who has certainly written the most important essay on this recurring figure, understands the faun as a means to bring "closure and control" over a disturbing social situation (65). According to Bentley, the figure of the faun does not incarnate "a wish to escape a conflicted reality" but speaks to Hawthorne's ability to find an image (she calls it a fetish) that can contain (in both senses of the word) the anxieties raised by the race problem (25). That is, the symbol of the faun reveals Hawthorne to be driven by an aesthetic of reconciliation, by the urge to "reign in potentially disruptive energies" (61), to express destabilizing and "volatile energies" at the same time that such energies are kept "at a distance" (65). The faun, for Bentley, is an archetypal symbol that links "powerful, contradictory assertions" at the same time that it allows Hawthorne to avoid "choosing in any final definitive sense" (26, 27). In contrast to Bentley's understanding of Hawthorne's aesthetic as a reconciling medium, a place where a potentially dangerous, repellent, or monstrous actuality can be entertained and "safely enclosed," I am interested in how Hawthorne deploys the aesthetic to define what that actuality is (59). That is, the faun does not exemplify how Hawthorne's aesthetic defers making a decision about a "real political crisis" (slavery), but marks how Hawthorne uses the aesthetic to identify the substance of the real (24). If Bentley substitutes containment where previous critics saw avoidance, I am arguing that Hawthorne is not using the faun either to escape or

to manage the reality of slavery, but as a means to explain exactly what the reality of slavery is (61). In this sense, Bentley continues the tradition of seeing the aesthetic in competition with real social facts. In contrast, I am interested in how the aesthetic works to constitute social facts. See also Mark A. R. Kemp, "*The Marble Faun* and American Postcolonial Ambivalence," in *Modern Fiction Studies* 43 (1997): 209–36. Kemp follows Bentley in claiming that Hawthorne's "recurring uses of the faun suggest its use as a safe metaphor, harmless, because fanciful" (218).

[9] See, for example, George Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1971); William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815–1859* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960); Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981).

[10] *Types of Mankind* is the title of the period's most important and most respected work on the races. See Josiah Nott and George Glidden, *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1855).

[11] See Richard H. Popkin, "Pre-Adamism in 19th Century American Thought: 'Speculative Biology' and Racism," *Philosophia: Philosophical Quarterly of Israel* 8 (1978): 205–40. See also Stephen Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002).

[12] For example, although Dr. Samuel George Morton's work on the physical differences of crania of the races was crucial in developing the American School of Ethnology, a school that became increasingly allied to the proslavery argument, Morton himself was not a supporter of slavery. Similarly, although it might seem that monogenesis would inevitably undermine the legitimacy of slavery, Southern society, for the most part, turned away from the polygenetic arguments of science in order to embrace a principally religious defense of slavery. The strongest monogenetic arguments, in fact, were formulated in the South, an occurrence perhaps made most dramatically clear in the famous debate between John Bachman (a proslavery Southern minister) and Morton over the question of polygenesis. See Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1998), for a discussion of this debate.

[13] I am deliberately using the superannuated term "Negro" to emphasize how thoroughly historical identity categories are.

[14] This potential citizenship, of course, is a theoretical and not a legal possibility, since the Dred Scott decision declared U.S. citizenship for the Negro unconstitutional.

[15] Hawthorne, as was his habit, was notoriously ambivalent about any title for his Romances. And although he strenuously protested the title *The Transformation* in some letters, he also suggested this title. Hawthorne, *Letters 1857–1864,* in *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne,* vol. 18, ed. Thomas Woodson and others (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1987), 222, 226.

[16] Thus, unlike Evan Carton, I am not arguing that "Chiefly About War Matters" expresses what *The Marble Faun* attempted to repress: the problem of race-based slavery. See Carton, The Marble Faun*: Hawthorne's Transformations* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), esp. 109–16. Like Carton, I read backwards, using "Chiefly About War Matters" to establish the centrality of race and slavery in *The Marble Faun*. But, unlike Carton, I do not argue that the resurrection of this image from *The Marble Faun* reveals how racial slavery is "the repressed element of the

novel" (110). If, for Carton, the uncanny repetition of the faun suggests how deeply this issue was present "in Hawthorne's consciousness" but remained a repressed element, an actuality that could not be directly confronted, I argue that Hawthorne deliberately turns to the aesthetic logic of *The Marble Faun* to understand the problem of slavery (111). In "Chiefly About War Matters," according to Carton, there is "a return of the repressed" (115). Whereas Carton, claiming that the aesthetic is a strategy for repressing the problem of slavery, traces how this strategy eventually fails when the actuality of race-based slavery returns with all the force of the repressed, I am exploring how in both texts the aesthetic expresses rather than represses the problem of slavery.

[17] Yellin, "Hawthorne and the Slavery Question," in *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Larry Reynolds (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 157. This essay is a revised version of Yellin's 1987 essay "Hawthorne and the American National Sin."

[18] I want to make clear that my argument should not be taken as relativist. To claim that the facts of slavery are in dispute is not to say that all facts are equal. It is only to say, in neopragmatic fashion, that facts are symptomatic of rather than above history and politics and to say that the political history of some facts has been forgotten.

[19] Traveling through Connecticut in 1838, Hawthorne came across a Negro in the Temperance Hotel in Hartford. When he overhears another man discussing how he wished he had "a thousand such fellows," Hawthorne writes that this statement made a "queer impression on me—*the Negro was really so human*—and to talk of owning a thousand like him" (my emphasis). The Negro, although not quite human, nonetheless strikes Hawthorne as a remarkable simulacrum of the human. See *American Notebooks*, *Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. 8, ed. Claude M. Simpson and others (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1973), 151.

[20] Although Donatello is not an artist, he is named after an artist.

[21] For a powerful discussion of how the issue of race-based slavery circulates as the subtext of this Romance, see Carton, "Practicing Theory, Theorizing Practice: Critical Transformations of *The Marble Faun*," in *Teaching Contemporary Theory to Undergraduates*, ed. Dianne F. Sadoff and William E. Cain. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1994): 141–53. In addition to Bentley and Kemp, Blythe Ann Tellefsen discusses the racialization of Donatello and Miriam. See Tellefsen, "'The Case with my Dear Native Land': Nathaniel Hawthorne's Vision of America in *The Marble Faun*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 54 (2000): 455–79.

[22] Although the Romance is manifestly preoccupied with issues of aesthetics and morality, it is implicitly a book with race and nationality on its mind. Indeed, the distinctive place of *The Marble Faun* in Hawthorne's corpus, as Henry James noted, is that it is the first book written by an American with the international theme (James, *Hawthorne* [1879] [Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966]). This Romance, unlike Hawthorne's previous Romances, is obsessed with national rather than local questions, as if Hawthorne, having spent the four years before he wrote *The Marble Faun* as the United States' Consul at Liverpool, has now decided to represent Europe to the United States. In it Hawthorne makes little attempt to hide the racist tenor of his jingoism: the American (Hilda explicitly linked to whiteness and Kenyon implicitly associated with whiteness, since he is a "Man of Marble") versus the darkly raced Europeans, the United States without "shadow" or "gloomy wrong" versus the dirt and decay of Italy, the morality of the Puritans against the mysteriously evil Catholics.

[23] See, for example, Lindley Spring, *The Negro at Home: An Inquiry After His Capacity For Self-Government And The Government of Whites* (New York, 1868). The tradition of seeing both Africans and Africa as infantile, of course, reaches beyond the United States. Hegel, for example, asserts that

> Blacks must be understood as an infantile nation which has not transcended its disinterested or uninterested ingenuousness. . . . Good natured and harmless when in a passive state, they commit the most horrible bestialities in a state of sudden frenzy. (Hegel, *Philosophy of History* [New York: Dover], 94)

[24] Samuel Cartwright, *Slavery in the Light of Ethnology* in *Cotton is King*, ed. E. N. Elliot (1860) (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969). Nott offered so-called empirical proof that the African was a separate species.

[25] For a historical description of accounts of Blackness and Africans in the German aesthetic tradition, see Sander Gilman, *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1982).

[26] See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), esp. 77–99, for a powerful theoretical discussion of ways in which values of beauty and ugliness are racially defined and instituted. See also Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 79–81.

[27] Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks*, vol. 14 of the Centenary Edition, ed. Thomas Woodson and others (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1980), 173–74 (my emphasis).

[28] It was thought by some that the Negro race was born when a white woman was "*frightened*" (perhaps a euphemism) by "some hideous black monster of the antediluvian woods," most likely an orangutang. Thus, "as some have supposed, the negro race was produced, forming an entire new class of human beings, and distinguished from the nature, color, and character of the parents, by a fright of the mother." See Josiah Priest's introduction to *Bible Defense of Slavery* (Glasgow, KY: W. S. Brown: 1852), iii–iv.

[29] John Blair Dabney, "The 'Whisker' Order," *Southern Literary Messenger* 8 (1842): 131.

[30] Thomas Jefferson asks whether the Anglo-Saxon's superior ability to blush is not profoundly "preferable to the eternal monotony,—that immovable veil of black which covers the emotions of the other race?" Jefferson continues:

> the flowing hair, a more elegant symetry of form, their own judgment in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oran-ootan for the black women over those of his own species. . . . Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a different race. . . . [for example] Negroes secrete less by the kidnies, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable ordour.

Jefferson concludes, quite logically given his assumptions, that since "[t]he circumstance of superior beauty is thought worth attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals, why not in that of men?" (Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden [New York: Norton, 1972], 138).

[31] Indeed, Jefferson is careful to distinguish between the inseparable barriers between the races that behavior and history have established and those that Nature has ordained. For Jefferson, the problem is so difficult precisely because it is not simply political. If it were, mankind could effect change.

[32] William Harper, *Memoir on Slavery* (1838), in *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830–1860*, ed. Drew Gilpin Faust (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1981), 131.

[33] John Campbell, *Negro-Mania: Being an Examination of the Falsely Assumed Equality of the Various Races of Men* (Philadelphia: Campbell & Power, 1851), 547.

[34] Campbell asserts, "I do not say one word concerning the question of slavery, that is entirely foreign to the nature of my book" (11). But he is quick to point out that "I loathe that hypocrisy which claims the same mental, moral, and physical equality for the negro which the whites possess" (11). Campbell's de-aestheticizing of Black women must be considered in the context of the numerous white slave owners who raped their Black slaves—one suspects that at least part of the motivation behind Campbell's account of the ugliness of the African woman is to convince his audience both that such intercourse is wrong and, perhaps more importantly, that sexual violations simply do not occur.

[35] In contrast, abolitionists, intent on establishing the personhood of the Negro, repeatedly foregrounded the beauty of Negro women and the sexual desires of white masters.

[36] Both Nott and Cartwright, for example, discussed the aesthetic appearance of the African.

[37] William Frederick Van Amringe, *An Investigation of the Theories of the Natural History of Man* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1848), 642. See the chapter on beauty, 640–740.

[38] Quoted in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981), 45.

[39] Calvin Colton, *The Americans* (London, 1833), 382.

[40] William Sumner, *Folkways: A Study of Mores, Manners, Customs, and Morals* (1906) (New York: Dover, 2002).

[41] See, for example, Thomas R. Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature, 1831–1832*, reprinted in *The Pro-Slavery Argument; as Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States* (1852) (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), 447.

[42] Perhaps most notoriously, even body lice were seriously considered as a possible way to determine racial difference. In 1861, Andrew Murray collected lice from the inhabitants of various countries. Finding that these lice differed in color and structure, he concluded that the body lice of some races could not live on the bodies of other races. This study is reported in Thomas F. Gosset, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York: Schoken Books, 1965), 81.

[43] For an alternative expression of this physicalist logic, see antebellum accounts of phrenology. See, for example, Orson S. Fowler, *Practical Phrenology* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1849); Robert H Collyer, *A Manual of Phrenology* (Dayton: B. F. Ellis, 1842). For a discussion of leaders of phrenology and of the theory behind the movement, see Madeleine B. Stern, *Heads and Headlines* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1971).

[44] One could argue that theoretically this racist account of Negro appearance, though it may seem to depend on the physical features of the Negro, ultimately imagines these physical features in formalist and idealist terms. Projecting an essence onto these physical markers, it represents ugliness as an essential trait, and then looks for visible markers. Ultimately this aesthetic logic need not have anything to do with the way that the Negro really looks. Although the claim that all human

beings share a natural reaction to the intrinsic ugliness of the Negro may seem to be grounded in the material markers of race, it is grounded actually in an essentialist account of what the Negro is. Its reference to materialism is ultimately metaphysical. Thus, in theory, this aestheticism could imagine ugly insides as easily as it imagines ugly outsides.

[45] For an example of these caricatures, see Gary Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988).

[46] One could argue that during the antebellum period anxiety increased over the mounting evidence suggesting that Black was indeed becoming white. The material markers of race were placed under strain and growing suspect, and racial transformations were becoming far from unthinkable. Although earlier, such accounts of transformation were not nearly so threatening, during this period the possibility that the signs of Blackness were disappearing created anxiety for some and hope for others (see, for example, Benjamin Rush's 1792 discussion of Black skin as leprosy, in particular his account of the case of Henry Moss, the "diseased" Negro spontaneously "cured" and his black skin restored to its "natural" and "healthy" whiteness [quoted in Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 29]). Abolitionists, seeking to overturn the racial logic supporting slavery, frequently put forth the claim that there no longer existed a pure Black race. As Frederick Douglass contended, "[I]f the lineal descendants of Ham are alone to be scriptually enslaved, it is certain that slavery at the south must soon become unscriptural" (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, ed. Houston A. Baker [New York: Penguin Books, 1982], 50). Moreover, the problem of passing became a topic of increasing anxiety in both the South and the North. The stories, written by both Black and white authors, about men and women who thought themselves white only to discover that they were actually Black developed into a genre of the period. See, for example, Richard Hildreth, *The Slave; or Memoirs of Archy Moore* (1836; reprint, 1852) (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1972). See also the work of E. D. E. N. Southworth, Rebecca Harding Davis, Epes Sargent, Gustave de Beaumont, Harriet Jacobs, and William Wells Brown that presented Tragic Mulattoes or Mulattas who discovered they were white. In short, during the antebellum period it became increasingly difficult to depend on the fixity of Black appearance as an authoritative basis for aesthetic judgments about race.

[47] Brown, *A Description of William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave, From His Birth in Slavery to His Death or His Escape to His First Home of Freedom on British Soil* (London: Charles Gilpin, no date), 7. See also Brown, *Narrative of William Wells Brown, A Fugitive Slave* (1847), in *I Was Born a Slave: An Anthology of Classic Slave Narratives*, ed. Yuval Taylor (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999), in which Brown describes a "beautiful girl, apparently about twenty years of age, *perfectly white*" who is being sold into slavery (690, my emphasis).

[48] John S. Rock, *Liberator*, 12 March 1858. Reprinted in *A Documentary History of the Negro People of the United States*, vol. 1 of *Colonial Times through the Civil War*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (New York: Citadel Press, 1968), 405.

[49] William Wilson, *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, 11 March 1853.

[50] Douglass, *The North Star*, 7 April 1849.

[51] See Henry Sussman, "*The Marble Faun* and the Space of American Letters," in *Demarcating the Disciplines: Glyph Textual Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Samuel Weber

(Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), 129–52; Jonathan Auerbach, "Executing the Model: Painting, Sculpture, and Romance-Writing in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*," *ELH* 47 (1980), 103–20; and John Michaels, "History and Romance, Sympathy and Uncertainty: The Moral of the Stones in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*," *PMLA* 103 (1988): 150–61.

[52] Wendy Steiner offers a reader-response interpretation of *The Marble Faun* in her *Pictures of Romance* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), 91–120.

[53] Hilda's devotional stance towards the Old Masters clearly also carries with it a resonance with Catholicism. Hilda is the Virgin Mary, the artist the Holy Ghost. She incarnates what had been only imaginary.

[54] It is important to note that Donatello and Miriam think that this statue will take Kenyon's mind off Hilda.

[55] Jehlen, in one the most compelling accounts of the Romance, argues that *The Marble Faun* "pushes the dilemma of American individualism to . . . a final paralyzing extremity" and culminates the dominate American aesthetic and ideological tradition of positing an "inextricable connection between creation and destruction"; in the Romance, "[i]t does not seem possible to be a good artist and also good" (159, 160, 153). According to Jehlen, the version of "liberal individualism" that develops in the United States is a "remarkable creed" which names all "authentic" creation as "*blasphemous* creation" (18). Jehlen represents the liberal ideology dominating America as demanding that "since the New World encompasses all possibilities, and in that way is 'infinite,' it also definitively precludes *more* new worlds, and in that way is absolutely prohibitive" (16). My reading of *The Marble Faun*'s rejection of aesthetics shares much with Jehlen's, but, in contrast to Jehlen, I approach the problem of the aesthetic as a problem of individual repression, not expression. That is, I see Hilda as Hawthorne's paradigmatic artist, not Miriam, and read the novel not as a repudiation of individual autonomy but as its rescue. That is, to the extent that Jehlen's reading of *The Marble Faun* lines up aesthetic creation and individual expression, my reading opposes them. See Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986).

[56] The closest that Hawthorne comes to proposing a way to reconcile the individual and the aesthetic is his account of incomplete form. An ontologically open work, Hawthorne suggests, promotes a delicate form of self-restraint because it could both anticipate and allow space for the individual's subjective experience. As Hilda states, the "highest merit" of art is its "suggestiveness" (379). Indeed, as many critics have noted, the fragment governs the design of *The Marble Faun* itself. The fragment structures not only the Romance's unwillingness to provide the reader with answers to the questions it explicitly raises (What is Miriam's reputed crime? Is Donatello a faun? Where does Hilda go when she disappears? Who is the mysterious "model" who torments Miriam?), but also the Romance's aesthetic hierarchy: the unfinished bust of Donatello is presented as the ideal art object. According to the logic of *The Marble Faun*, this bust allows the viewer the interpretative space in which to write one's own story.

[57] Because Hawthorne refuses to entertain the possibility that the literal and the figurative, the particular and the universal, can be reconciled, it is appropriate to call *The Marble Faun* a fundamentally anti-Catholic text. It is a repudiation of the notion of incarnation.

[58] For a discussion of how the Romance has been identified as particularly central to the development of U.S. literature, see Richard Brodhead, *The School of Hawthorne* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986); John P. McWilliams, Jr., "The Rationale for 'The American Romance,'" *Boundary 2* 17 (1990): 71–82; and George Dekker, "Once More: Hawthorne and the Genealogy of American Romance," *ESQ* 35 (1989): 69–83. For a discussion of the insidious origins of the Romance tradition, see Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985). The Romance tradition of American literature, of course, has been articulated most influentially by Richard Chase, *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (New York: Anchor Books, 1957). See also Lionel Trilling, "Reality in America," in *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: Anchor Books, 1953), 1–19.

[59] Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, in *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. 1, ed. William Charvat, Roy Harvy Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson (Columbus: Ohio Univ. Press, 1962), 36. The notion that the Romance exists as a place between the Real and the Imaginary is, of course, the definition of the genre Hawthorne establishes in "The Custom-House" introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* and extended in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), in *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. 2, ed. Thomas Woodson and others (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1963).

[60] The Roman atmosphere during the course of the novel, of course, is literally unhealthy: it is malarial.

[61] For one of the most strident condemnations of Hilda, see Milton R. Stern, *Contexts for Hawthorne: The Marble Faun and the Politics of Openness and Closure in American Literature* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1991). Stern, for example, calls Hilda a "moral fungus" (106).

[62] Brodhead, 77.

[63] Mud-sill theory was made famous in James Henry Hammonds's "Speech in the Senate, March 4 1858," *Congressional Globe*, 35th Congress, 1st Sess., App., 71.

[64] Lauren Berlant, "National Brands/National Body: *Imitation of Life*," in *Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text*, ed. Hortense J. Spillers (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112.

[65] There is, of course, a large archive of work on the link between disembodiment and citizenship. See, for example, Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1997); Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992): 377–401; and Russ Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2001).

[66] Dew, 449–50.