

American Palestine

Melville, Twain, and
the Holy Land Mania



HILTON OBENZINGER

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HOLY LAND MANIA

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For Estella Habal

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Preface

Manias and Materialities

AFTER FIRST arranging in England for the British publication of *The Confidence-Man*, Herman Melville arrived in Palestine on January 6, 1857, as part of a modified Grand Tour of Italy, the Ottoman East, and Egypt. After nearly three weeks, much of it spent waiting for passage out of Jaffa, Melville departed. Throughout the course of the next two decades he mulled over the journal entries of that brief encounter, read Holy Land travel books, and recalled his time spent in Palestine. In 1866, at the start of his long tenure as an inspector for the New York Customs House, he began *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, composing the narrative poem intermittently during his first ten years on the waterfront, finally publishing it in two volumes with the financial backing of his uncle Peter Gansevoort in 1876. Most critics derided the lengthy, difficult poem; and so few readers dared to engage its agonized and agonizing religious dialogues couched in strangely constricted Hudibrastic verse that Melville would end up selling the balance of the unsold stock for pulp. He described *Clarel* as “a metrical affair, a pilgrimage or what not, of several thousand lines, eminently adapted for unpopularity”—and unpopularity has been its fate ever since.¹ Melville spent the rest of his days in growing obscurity, remembered if at all as the “man who lived among the cannibals,” the author of *Typee*, publishing nothing more in his lifetime other than small volumes of privately printed verse meant only for family and friends.

Samuel Clemens, only just beginning to be known as Mark Twain, departed Beirut on September 11, 1867, with a small party from the *Quaker City* tour to make his way overland via Damascus to Jerusalem. Mark Twain was engaged by newspapers in San Francisco and New York to supply a steady stream of correspondence from the *Quaker City* excursion, the first such tourist cruise to be organized, and the Wild Humorist of the Pacific Slope joined the staid members of the triumphant Northern commercial and industrial elite as they sought to reassert their Old World cultural legacy after the Civil War in their own extended Grand Tour, which included stops at Tangier, France, Italy, Greece, Russia, and Turkey, as well as the Holy Land and Egypt. As a consequence, Mark Twain entered the Holy Land as part of a very public performance, with his satiric commentaries, burlesque anecdotes, sly jokes, and bumbling exploits all served up as “entertainment” for an avid, overwhelmingly male readership; he would later adapt this material for a national, significantly more female audience, publishing *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim’s Progress* in 1869. Distributed house to house through the somewhat recent innovation of subscription sales, Twain’s fictionalized, satirical travel book became an immense success, selling, as Twain would remark, “right along just like the Bible.”² *Innocents Abroad* would become the unofficial tour guide for Americans traveling to the Holy Land; they employed the book, as did General Grant on his world tour, “right along” with the Bible, assuring the popularity its author had first garnered with his vernacular tale of the celebrated jumping frog, thereby launching the career of “Mark Twain,” a trademark that would

become far more celebrated than the Sam Clemens of its creation.

Both Holy Land books by Melville and Twain reach across the divide of the Civil War, as well as across vast differences in genre, reception, and status, as well as their roles in the careers of each author. While *Clarel* and *Innocents Abroad* have been read within the context of those distinct careers in other places, this study will regard Melville's and Twain's books in the different light of the ongoing preoccupation with the Holy Land that marked Anglo-American settler-colonial culture throughout the nineteenth century. Both books are part of a "subgenre" or field of American Holy Land literature based on direct travel to Palestine, a literature in which representations, controversies, and anxieties involving the certainties of religious and national identities contend upon a heightened field of mythic meanings, with all Holy Land books seeking in one way or other to appropriate Palestine for the American imagination. With America conceived as the New Jerusalem—an association assumed metaphorically if not always enforced typologically—the old Holy Land was encountered as a terrain of crucial cultural dynamics both challenging and reaffirming America's narrative of settlement as divine errand.

Given this, Melville's and Twain's texts remain among the *least* representative while yet the most expressive and revelatory of the multitude of Holy Land books published before the first wave of Jewish colonization began to qualitatively alter Palestine's political history along with the dynamics of the country's representation in 1882. Although Melville's narrative poem could be regarded alongside other biblical verse, such as that by John Pierpoint or Bayard Taylor, and Twain's travel book could be placed alongside travel accounts by J. Ross Browne, William Prime, John Lloyd Stephens, Taylor, or others, what distinguishes both texts is the way each inscribes complex responses, even counternarratives, on the charged tablet that Palestine signified to the sensibilities of Anglo-American, Protestant travelers. Whether popular or unread, both texts engage in religious, cultural, racial, and nationalist discourses in unique ways, starkly revealing certain dark, anxious preoccupations of American culture.

This description intimates how easily what could be regarded as a "preoccupation" with the Bible and "sacred geography" could become a "mania" for those traveling to the Holy Land. In *From West Africa to Palestine*, for example, the early pan-Africanist Edward Wilmot Blyden recounts the story of a black American immigrant who arrived in Liberia in the late 1860s "under the impression that, by some strange and supernatural 'revelation,' he was commissioned to go to Jerusalem by land across the African continent." Dismissing all warnings, "he raved and foamed at the mouth like a madman," insisting that he would travel beyond "the last civilized town" to reach the Holy City. Six months later the "poor pilgrim" was reported to have been killed in Ashantee country, and Blyden, about to embark on his own journey to the Holy Land, is compelled to warn how, "of all crotchets in the world the most mischievous . . . are religious crotchets," bemoaning how otherwise reasonable men are guided by "infallible suggestions" to destruction. Blyden employs the unfortunate American's tale at the beginning of his own account of his Holy Land travels in order to demarcate how he, at least, does not suffer from "Jerusalem on the brain."³

In his journal, Herman Melville records meeting American missionaries and millennialists in Jerusalem who very much keep the Holy City on their brains. Noting how their millennialist anticipation of Christ's return hinges on the eschatological doctrine of "Jewish restoration"—of the necessity of Jewish repatriation to Palestine as a prelude to the return of Jesus—Melville mocks what he calls "this preposterous Jew mania," which he ruefully describes as "half melancholy, half farcical—like all the rest of the world." He names the millennialist Clorinda Minor, "the first person actively to engage in this business," as "A woman of fanatic energy &

spirit,” finding such obsessed religious enthusiasts to be somewhat “sad.”⁴ Yet the extensive entry in his journal devoted to visionary missionaries underscores how the pervasiveness of their “mania” could not be denied or avoided. Indeed, perhaps the most “preposterous” enthusiast he meets is Warder Cresson, who has taken his mania with the Holy Land and Jewish restoration to its most radical extreme by actually converting to Judaism, and Melville, with telling perceptiveness, employs Cresson as the model for his pivotal character of Nathan in *Clarel*.

The “crotchet” or “mania” Blyden and Melville report are only the most dramatic manifestations of the general cultural preoccupation with the Holy Land that persistently infused all of Anglo-American colonial relations from the earliest moments of settlement. The fascination with the Holy Land encompassed easygoing travelers, such as John Lloyd Stephens; skeptical tourists, such as Mark Twain; scrupulous missionaries, such as William M. Thomson; and moderate theologians, such as Stephen Olin; along with more driven, more visionary millennialist colonialists, such as George Adams. There is, of course, a continuum from fascination to maniacal obsession, and not every religious concern became a mania; but I employ the term “Holy Land mania” to emphasize the ways in which what is usually designated as the extreme or exceptional actually sets the standard, how the margins reassert the core narratives of settler dominance in a colonizing society that must will itself into existence constantly or lose its bearings amid its “errand.”

Certainly, the great religious volatility of American society, often noted by de Tocqueville and others, produced a ferment in which the distinctions among doctrinal and experiential innovation, revivalist intensity, millennialist enthusiasm, and fanatical mania were often blurred. Orson Hyde, the Mormon elder sent to Jerusalem in 1841 to officiate a ritual commemorating the restoration of the Jews to the old Holy Land along with the simultaneous restoration of the Latter-day Saints to the new one, appeared quite sober and of sound mind, despite his doctrines, which were peculiar enough to send him on a symbolic journey halfway around the world. Although the followers of William Miller were regularly regarded as lunatics for believing in imminent apocalypse in 1843 and 1844, few were actually committed to insane asylums, while Clorinda Minor, who went to Palestine in part to revise Miller’s calculations to incorporate Jewish restoration into adventist eschatology, writes an account of practical endeavors guided by intense but calm faith. Both Hyde and Minor are part of traditions one could regard as extreme or on the fringes—and yet religious innovation and agitation during the nineteenth century were as much the norm as practical, secular pursuits. Indeed, religious peculiarity and material practicality were often inextricably linked.⁵

To be sure, the notion and reality of “mania” went far beyond the immediate bounds of religious excitations. Melville was well aware of obsessive fixations, as he dramatized in Ahab’s monomaniacal quest, while Twain himself would ride the “manias” of boom-and-bust speculative markets, such as those produced by Nevada silver mines, throughout his life. Volatilities, excitements, agitations, excesses, “rushes”—all of these characterize much of nineteenth-century American culture.⁶ What, therefore, is at stake in employing “Holy Land mania” as the name of the preoccupation I focus on here is to acknowledge the perverse energy through which American expansion lurched toward its western and maritime frontiers, underscoring how radical manifestations such as excited millennialist anticipation, like agitated abolitionist fervor, actually provided patterns that more sedate, more “normal” behavior would end up replicating with only slightly less intensity. Melville and Twain were well aware of how much Palestine was a particular “mania” in the minds of so many Americans, and the fascination, along with the ambivalences and ironies, with which they regarded such intense

involvement with “sacred geography” configure their own texts in decisive ways.

My title includes other ambiguous terms of a geographic sort as well. What constitutes “American” is a major topic of this book’s discussion, and, as unstable and parochial as the term in fact may be, I will assume that its complex ambiguities can be tolerated by readers without disrupting its exposition in the course of these pages. “Holy Land” and “Palestine,” however, are designations that require some explanation, even history, before embarking upon their terrains. The biblical Holy Land, that territory upon which the narratives of the Hebrew Bible and Jesus take place, is usually regarded as embracing such areas as the Galilee, the Dead Sea, and, of course, Jerusalem. Though biblical narratives and consequent sacred associations can also involve Tyre, Damascus, Egypt, Patmos, and so forth, the areas usually designated the “Holy Land” are those associated with the events of the Promised Land, of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judea, and of Jesus’ ministry, which today are administered by the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the Kingdom of Jordan, and during the nineteenth century by the Ottoman Empire.

“Palestine,” of course, has been a contested term throughout most of the twentieth century, but in the nineteenth century the area had no formal geopolitical boundaries.⁷ What American and European travelers knew as Palestine—an area today comprising pre-1967 Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza—encompassed several administrative districts (*sanjaks*) answerable at various times to Acre, Sidon, Damascus, or, in the case of Jerusalem, directly to the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman administration) within the greater Ottoman province (*eyalet*) of Syria. Although Jerusalem is the third holy city of Islam, the notion of Palestine as Holy Land or *Eretz Yisrael* was reserved, albeit with different inflections, for Christians or Jews. Not as important as Anatolia or Egypt, Palestine was still somewhat more than “a derelict province of the decaying Ottoman Empire . . . a sad backwater of a crumbling empire.”⁸ Starting in the late eighteenth century, the area began to develop politically as a distinct, self-identified region in response to broader social, economic, and geopolitical factors, which included local assertions of autonomous power, European efforts to “open up” and dominate the region, and Ottoman policies to counter European intervention with increased centralization.

Because of the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict, the area’s history tends to be skewed. “Palestine’s past has been used by both nationalist forces to construct a legitimizing national historical charter,” according to Beshara Doumani. He argues that the history of Ottoman Palestine has been distorted in order to serve the “legitimizing” interests of both poles of the conflict: most Arab nationalists view “the entire Ottoman era as a period of oppressive Turkish rule which stifled Arab culture and socioeconomic development and paved the way for European colonial control and the Zionist takeover of Palestine,” while “many Zionist historians represent Ottoman Palestine before European Jewish immigration as an economically devastated, politically chaotic, and sparsely populated region.” Although Westerners “bent on ‘discovering,’ hence reclaiming, the Holy Land from what they believed was a stagnant and declining Ottoman Empire” described the landscape and architecture “in excruciating detail,” they “turned a blind eye to the native inhabitants who, at best, were portrayed as nostalgic icons of Biblical times or, at worst, as obstacles to modernization.” With development seen as top-down—mainly through the intervention of European political and economic influence—the native inhabitants are regarded merely as passive impediments to one or another version of progress.⁹

However, recent historical research, pioneered by the late Alexander Scholch, has painted a somewhat different picture. There were increased pressures for local control, such as the Bedouin revolt at the end of the eighteenth century of Shaykh Zahir al-’Umar, who “achieved a high

degree of autonomy, managing to defy the sultan's authority and maintain a semi-independent state in the Galilee for about a quarter of a century."¹⁰ Urban centers and local lords in mountain strongholds, such as Jabal Nablus, effectively resisted Ottoman control for centuries, persisting as cores of semi-autonomous regional power.¹¹ At the same time, folkloric-religious celebrations encouraged local identity, such as the annual Nabi Musa pilgrimage, which attracted up to 10,000 Muslims to the purported tomb of Moses north of the Dead Sea near Jericho, becoming known as a specifically "Palestinian pilgrimage." These tendencies toward autonomous development paralleled the Ottoman state's moves toward increased centralization, which, along with the administration established by Mohammed Ali during his occupation of Syria between 1831 and 1840, sought to make local administrations more effective, in great part to better counter the mounting intervention of European powers. The sultan's *Tanzimat* (reform) decrees—instigated in part by European pressures in the struggle against Mohammed Ali in 1839 and at the end of the Crimean War in 1856—brought about more efficient rule, while the Constitution of 1876 set the grounds for an abortive attempt at parliamentary representation. The *Tanzimat* era also introduced changes in laws pertaining to land ownership, allowing individuals rather than just the Ottoman state to own land, and other capitalist reforms favorable to local notables as well as European interests.

Britain, Prussia, Austria, and France, particularly in the face of Russian ambitions, juggled the competing interests of the "Eastern Question" as a sustained debate on just how much to preserve of the Ottoman Empire, and in what form, in order to protect the European powers from the threat of each other's dominance if it were to collapse. The "Eastern Question" would often involve the religious characteristics of the Holy Land, such as the conflict between Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic interests in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which became a pretense for sparking the Crimean War. But because Palestine belonged to the core of the Ottoman Empire intended for preservation, it was never a candidate for amputation, which meant that European penetration was less a question of territorial control than of influence. Indeed, such influence increasingly came to be the primary force shaping Palestine's destiny, affecting the dynamics of Ottoman policy as well as local development.

For example, Palestine was never governed by one administrative district, according to Scholch, not because the Ottoman political elite failed to see the logic of such a unit, but because the Sublime Porte thought it dangerous, in the face of Europe's insistence, to put all the holy places within the bounds of a single administrative entity. When Mark Twain and other Western travelers labored over the donkey paths that served as the only roads, they were not necessarily aware that proposals to rebuild the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem—even to build a railroad—were regularly rejected by the Ottoman authorities partly as feeble attempts to protect themselves from incursion. As Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha is reputed to have said in 1865, "I shall never concede to these crazy Christians any road improvement in Palestine as they would then transform Jerusalem into a Christian madhouse."¹²

Acting as a catalyst to "open up" Palestine to European interests, Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt and Syria in 1798 and his subsequent defeat at Acre in 1799 with the help of British forces prompted surveys by British and other European explorers and missionaries. When Mohammed Ali, the Albanian who had become pasha of Egypt in 1801 and who occupied Palestine from 1831 to 1840, threatened to advance on Anatolia, he was pushed back to Egypt only with the military assistance of European powers in exchange for further concessions. Britain opened the first consulate in Jerusalem in 1838 during Mohammed Ali's occupation, but after the reassertion of Ottoman control, other European powers followed suit. The main instrument for

asserting political influence by the consuls was the *millet* system, which allowed each Western power to assume the role of protector of minority religious communities. The French and the Austrians sought the Catholic communities as protectorates, while the Russians naturally gravitated to the various Eastern Orthodox churches. In 1841, Britain and Prussia established a joint Episcopal see in Jerusalem in anticipation of forming a Protestant community drawn primarily from Jewish converts, and in 1850 Protestants were recognized as an official community who were, along with the Jews, placed under the protection of Britain.

At the time of Melville's visit, after the Crimean War and the return of Ottoman garrisons, Palestine was entering an era of greater political stability, particularly in rural areas where tribal revolts against Turkish rule, rivalries between local lords, nomadic bedouin depredations against settled peasants, and attacks on travelers had all declined considerably, although violence never entirely disappeared from the Levant, as demonstrated by the bloody Maronite-Druze conflict, instigated in part by the French, as well as the massacre of Christians in Damascus in 1860. Palestine was increasingly integrated into an international market dominated by the economies of capitalist Europe. If one of the effects of the California gold rush was to create, overnight, as Frederick Engels observed, "large new markets out of nothing"¹³ fueled by real gold mixed with the myths of El Dorado, then the Holy Land was quickly emerging from its undeveloped condition enveloped by its biblical narrative, experiencing "a remarkable economic upswing in the two and a half decades following the Crimean War."¹⁴

Most American Holy Land authors depict the land in ways similar to the way in which it was described by Mark Twain, who laments that "Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes." Although the country was only just entering the orbit of capitalist relations and had suffered repeated natural disasters, such as the earthquake of January 1, 1837, which devastated the Galilee, "the conventional wisdom of an economically stagnating, unproductive and neglected Palestine before 1882 (i.e., before the beginnings of foreign colonization on a significant scale)" is, at best, a distortion. In fact, as Scholch asserts, "Palestine produced a relatively large agricultural surplus which was marketed in neighboring countries, such as Egypt or Lebanon, or, increasingly exported to Europe."¹⁵ The manufacture of devotional articles and the production of soap were a part of this economic upswing, but the increases in the agricultural sector, particularly of grains, were particularly significant. Escalating English demand for cotton initiated a cotton boom in the 1850s. Due to the American Civil War, Palestinian farmers in 1863 sowed three times the amount of cotton they had grown in the preceding year to meet the huge demand. However, there was a collapse of more than 100 percent in cotton prices at the end of the Civil War, along with a plague of locusts in 1865 and 1866, which may have accounted, along with lands purposely left fallow to avoid the depredations of Ottoman tax collectors, for much of the "sackcloth and ashes" Twain observed in 1867. With successive bad harvests until 1872, the country was plunged into economic crisis.

During the periods of Melville's and Twain's visits, a commercial bourgeoisie had begun to emerge in Jerusalem and the coastal towns, composed mostly of Lebanese Christians, Jews, Europeans, and their protégés, while Arab merchants had long flourished in the agriculturally productive mountainous areas like Nablus and Hebron. As well, notable families were becoming medium and large landowners as a result of Ottoman sale of previously undeveloped, uncultivated land. At the end of the Crimean War a building boom in Jerusalem began, sparked mainly by Western powers seeking to establish religious "interests" by erecting stone monuments, new churches, facilities for pilgrims, and the like, with Scholch reporting that "[l]ong lines of camels approaching Jerusalem with heavy loads of lime and stones, grain and wood, were a daily

spectacle.”¹⁶ In 1845, about 5,000 pilgrims visited the Holy Land; by 1858 there were nearly 10,000. During the 1870s, Jerusalem would count between 10,000 to 20,000 pilgrims a year.¹⁷

The accelerating building activity, the growing troop of pilgrims, the vast output of literature in all European languages (estimated at 5,000 published items between 1800 and 1878),¹⁸ and, eventually, the establishment of active European colonies, were all manifestations of increasing religious agitation as part of what was called the “Peaceful Crusade,” a movement for “the gradual ‘reconquest’ of the ‘Holy Land’ for Christianity through religious, cultural, and philanthropical penetration.”¹⁹ Such “reconquest,” which often involved mass pilgrimages, aroused mythic identification with the Crusaders along with characteristically nineteenth-century manifestations of imperial expansion through colonization, even if such private projects exceeded the immediate demands of official policy to preserve the core of the Ottoman Empire. “It is not enough to conquer,” one French cleric observed in the 1860s, “to keep what you have, you must colonize.”²⁰ Soon after the American survivors of the Adams colony fled Jaffa on board the *Quaker City*, the German Templars founded their first of four settlements in 1869, reenacting Teutonic crusader mythology, while the American Colony in Jerusalem would be established in the early 1880s. The ways Americans would regard the land, melding acquisitiveness and practical improvement with millennialist expectation, harmonized with this “Peaceful Crusade,” and American visions, whether merely entertained or actually implemented, participated in European colonizing activities that began to flourish.

Most American writers of Holy Land books stayed in Palestine only briefly. They were travelers, explorers, adventurers, pilgrims, and tourists passing through the Levant, observing the natives and their peculiar customs, visiting shrines, “reading sacred geography” with the Bible either in their hands or firmly planted in their heads—and almost all of them soon returned to the United States to inscribe their experiences in books. Consequently, the reports on economic conditions, local culture, and even geography by American Holy Land writers are often less than accurate or complete. Americans viewed Palestinian reality through American eyes, through the “window” of the New World experience of the rawest, most extreme, most violent settler-colonial expansion in the world, as well as through the lens of the Bible, Crusader myths, and *Arabian Nights*. What these writers “saw” often spoke to the formation of American cultural structures and had little to do with what was actually the Palestine before their eyes. This is not to deny that Palestine was undeveloped; that much of it was desert; that sanitary conditions were poor in congested, walled cities; that large tracts of arable land would lie fallow; or that the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem would be rebuilt only in the 1870s. But the scenes an American literary traveler, such as Melville and Twain, would set on paper would often be only partially informed by an understanding of Palestinian realities.

This preface hardly fills the gap, but the short explication here at least sketches the broad outline of an actual country and its inhabitants who, unable to escape the implications of mythic narratives to shape their destiny, nonetheless developed their own distinct identities. While American travelers criss-crossed the country and Western powers, Ottoman authorities, and local notables maneuvered for dominance, the ordinary people of Palestine of all religious communities—peasants, artisans, merchants, laborers, nomadic tribes—continued centuries of daily life shaped by dense social, cultural, and religious patterns of rich complexity. I hope, at the very least, that the ensuing discussion of how *Clarel* and *Innocents Abroad* pertain to the development of America’s covenantal settler-colonial culture involves a sense that actual people lived within the imagined “sacred geography” that Melville, Twain, and many others constituted upon Ottoman Palestine.

Acknowledgments

SOON AFTER I arrived at Stanford University I sat on a curb leaning against one of the pillars of the arched porticoes of the celebrated Quad to admire its Romanesque Spanish Mission architecture. I delighted in the tile roofs and sandy facades that had become such a characteristically Californian style when the campus was first built at the turn of the last century. Across the vast courtyard I could see the facade of Memorial Church with its Italian mosaic depicting a scene that, although often mistaken for the Sermon on the Mount, actually represents Jesus returning to Bethany after his resurrection to bless the people one last time before his final ascent. Jesus, with flowing blond hair and beard, has his arms upraised at the apex of the triangular design, while the assembled masses, arrayed on both sides in standard biblical robes, reach forward, fall to their knees, prostrate themselves, or otherwise marvel at the miraculous reappearance of the Savior. Toward the left, above Jesus, a large palm tree tilts, with smaller palms situated on either side, while craggy granite monoliths loom in the more distant background.

I took in the theatrical scene, mildly amused at the typically Nordic representation of Jesus. But then I was startled to notice that I had been viewing the vivid biblical tableau through the fronds of actual palm trees towering from several large circular planters that punctuate the capacious Quad. Actual palms blurred into mosaic palms, confusing foreground “reality” with background “representation.” As I peered more closely at the scene, I was further startled to realize that the granite outcrops framing Jesus from behind bore a striking resemblance to those of Yosemite Valley. Suddenly, the large dome-like cliff to the right of Jesus seemed a dead ringer for *El Capitain*. At that moment California dissolved into Palestine from both before and behind the image of Jesus, and I marveled at the tightly wound typological coil that powered the perceptual mechanism of the mural that allowed the old Holy Land to collapse into its newer, Californian incarnation with unassuming ease. The effect appeared clearly intentional, patently constructed, although the equation of identity made itself so comfortably natural as to be almost unnoticed by the streams of students who, dwarfed by the Quad, passed beneath Jesus’ outstretched hands of benediction; at the same time, the Mediterranean-inspired architecture set amid the mild, Mediterranean-like hillsides of Palo Alto seemed only to reaffirm the basic ideological fact proclaimed by the mosaic on the church: California is itself the Holy Land.

I chuckled. “This is the place!” I mimicked Brigham Young, and I knew then that Stanford University would be my own “new Zion.” Here I would readily research and write *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania*, for the locale itself manifests the ways nineteenth-century representations of Palestine appropriated the Holy Land to an imagined American national identity energized by a sense of providential destiny. Of course, Stanford supplied me with far more than geographic and artistic iconography to consider America’s persistence in supplanting Palestine as the new Holy Land. The university allowed me the privilege of engaging with an outstanding intellectual community, and I am deeply grateful to the many scholars who guided me through the rigors of interdisciplinary scholarship in order to complete this project for my doctorate in the Modern Thought and Literature Program.

Above all, I wish to thank my dissertation director, Jay Fliegelman, who provided me with

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Here convention usually requires that the author, having acknowledged the scholarly assistance and critical acumen provided by mentors and associates alike, takes full responsibility for all errors and waywardness of thought. I do not veer from this tradition, and I underscore that the views here elaborated, no matter how mistaken or ill-conceived, cannot be ascribed to those who were kind enough to assist me.

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PART ONE

Excavating American Palestine



From a stereoscope of "Fountain of the Virgin at Nazareth," by William E. James, 1867. Courtesy of Brandt Rowles and the Mark Twain Papers in The Bancroft Library.

CHAPTER ONE

Holy Lands and Settler Identities

HERMAN MELVILLE'S faith-doubt poem *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* and Mark Twain's travel satire *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim's Progress* challenge the religious, cultural, and literary conventions of the extensive literature produced by Americans traveling to Ottoman Palestine before the beginnings of modern Jewish settlement in 1882. Although they are quite dissimilar in style and reception, both are "infidel" books, in nineteenth-century terms. Travel to Palestine allowed Americans to "read sacred geography," to experience an exegetical landscape at the mythic core of Anglo-America's understanding of its own covenantal mission as a New Israel, yet Melville's dark pilgrimage and Twain's explosive laughter create narratives that run counter to the dominant ones of typological destiny and millennialist restoration. Through *Clarel's* obsessive poem-pilgrimage toward covenantal failure and *Innocents Abroad's* "touristic" vision of violent parody, comic irreverence, and the commodity consumption of "marketable sentiments," Melville and Twain write their own sacred geographies. Both books, shaped by "frontier" encounters from maritime and western contact zones, undermine the assumptions of American exceptionalism, even as they remain complicitous with colonial expansion.

American Holy Land literature—those texts based on personal experience in Ottoman Palestine—consists of hundreds of books and an extensive array of newspaper and magazine articles from the beginning of the nineteenth century to 1882. A considerable archive embodying an insistent American religious and cultural involvement in Palestine and the Ottoman Empire becomes readily evident, particularly when one also includes consular documents, illustrations, panoramas, photographs, and other nonliterary representations. Examples of such would include John Banvard's theatrical Holy Land panoramas, Frederick Church's Holy Land paintings, Robert Morris's sales of "Holy Land Cabinets" of bits of stone, wood, flowers, seeds, and other items, and even the large-scale Holy Land garden erected along the shores of the lake at the Chatauqua Assembly, the institution launched in 1874, according to the son of its founder John Heyl Vincent, as "a gigantic Palestine Class."¹ Holy Land literature draws from a deep cultural preoccupation that actually intersects several genres: religious text (such as tracts, sermons, memorials, exegeses, jeremiads, Sunday school "illuminations," and missionary journals), travel book, exploration narrative, archaeological and topographical treatise (particularly those seeking "evidences" of biblical prophecies), and even historical romance and poetry. Such a literature, despite its uniquely "American" qualities, springs from the larger library of Western involvement with Palestine available to Americans, including centuries of British Holy Land books and translations of accounts by C. F. Volney (1781), Ulrich Seetzen (1810), Viscount F. A. de Chateaubriand (1811), Johann Burckhardt (1822), Alphonse de Lamartine (1835), and other Continental travelers and explorers.

A distinctly American Holy Land literature began to flower with the publication of the correspondences to the *Missionary Herald* as missionaries Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons departed

in 1819 to “occupy” Jerusalem for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Throughout the century, articles and books by missionaries performed a steady *basso continuo* to the counterpoint of other texts. For example, William M. Thomson’s *The Land and the Book* (1859), written after his sojourn of twenty-five years in Palestine and Lebanon, became a fixture in countless Sunday school libraries and one of the most popular books ever written by a missionary. Religious innovators and millennialist colonists composed another stream of documents, such as Elder Orson Hyde’s brief account of his sacred journey to Jerusalem in 1841 to perform the Mormon Church’s first official act: a ritual signaling the imminent restoration of the Jews to the old Holy Land in Palestine and the Latter-day Saints to the new Zion in North America. The extension of biblical knowledge produced other, more descriptive or scientific texts, such as Edward Robinson’s *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petraea* (1841), the first attempt at a scientific archaeology of sacred sites, while Lieutenant Commander William Francis Lynch’s *Narrative of the United States’ Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849), the account of the expedition undertaken in 1847 during the enthusiasm for Manifest Destiny arising from the war with Mexico, allowed readers to cultivate patriotic sensibilities as the disinterested quest for knowledge.²

Earlier, John Lloyd Stephens, an “amateur” gentleman traveler, much more like Geoffrey Crayon than was Washington Irving, published his *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (1836), its great popularity launching the secular Holy Land travel book. By the time Melville traveled to Palestine in 1857, the production of Holy Land travel books had achieved boom proportions, with newspaper correspondences and volumes by J. Ross Browne, William Cullen Bryant, George Curtis, William Prime, Bayard Taylor, and numerous “adventurers,” “gentlemen” (and occasionally “ladies,” such as Sarah Haight), and others not associated with missionary societies, cultic movements, or millennialist projects appearing during the decade of crisis before the Civil War. After the war, bourgeois tourism, that “tide of a great popular movement” that swept Twain onto the *Quaker City*, converged with the “Peaceful Crusade,” propelling ever greater numbers of Americans to join Europeans in imposing themselves upon the Palestinian landscape.³ As Jerusalem was increasingly turned into a “Christian madhouse,” the Holy Land travel genre expanded dramatically, with articles and books by Samuel “Sunset” Cox, Charles Dudley Warner, and scores of others, including genteel women travelers such as Twain’s friend and confidante Mary Fairbanks.

All of this literary production, no matter its secular or religious orientation, illumines an ongoing obsession with the Holy Land that insistently entwines itself with secular constructions of national destiny. This is an interweaving of transcendent values with colonial settlement expressed in the idiom of sacred landscape, including the “benevolent disinterestedness” to convert the land’s inhabitants by the early missionaries, the Enlightenment empiricism to measure and “read” sacred sites by archaeologists and explorers, the voluntarist compulsion to “facilitate” prophecy by religious enthusiasts, and the literary ambition to edify and entertain middle-class readers by worldly travelers.

While the persistent preoccupations with the Bible and biblical geography stood at the ideological core of American colonial expansion, actual travel to Palestine allowed Americans to contemplate biblical narratives at their source in order to reimagine—and even to reenact—religio-national myths, allowing them, ultimately, to displace the biblical Holy Land with the American New Jerusalem. In particular, the Protestant doctrines of Jewish conversion and restoration central to the millennialist eschatologies of most travelers provided originary models for America’s narratives of continuing settlement and expansion: if the elect though cursed *ur-*

nation of Israel could be restored, so too could fallen Anglo-America, the typological new Jews, be “restored” as a racialized chosen people.

Consequently, Holy Land literature—and the entire cultural “mania” with the Holy Land—became a crucial forum for negotiating American settler identity, a site rendered even more complex by the jarring disjuncture between imagined biblical narrative and the actualities of a non-Western, “fallen” Palestine. The discrepancy between land and text was heightened by the advent of Darwinism, higher criticism, Enlightenment “Hegelized” Jews, scientific archaeology, geology, and other challenges to revealed religion and identity in the post-Civil War period. By situating Melville and Twain within this complex of religio-national myths, along with the disjunctures of actual travel, *American Palestine* examines the ways both of their books run against the dominant grain of typological destiny and millennialist restoration as each text seeks new grounds for faith and identity.

Clarel’s obsessive poem-pilgrimage demands that readers embark on their own pilgrimage ordeal through engaging Melville’s strange and difficult Minnepean satire as primarily a religious rather than secular literary experience. This pilgrimage leads to death and the failure of all covenants, including the promise of New World restoration, with such exhaustion of meaning and emptying of promise ironically providing the only cause for hope. At the core of all failures is what Melville in his journal calls the “preposterous Jew mania,” the millennialist obsession with the original chosen people and God’s covenant, which gives the poem and Melville’s critique of America a distinctly anti-Judaic cast.

Innocents Abroad, in a performance that simultaneously embodies and explodes Anglo-American “frontier” identities, provides a uniquely incisive comic appropriation of the Holy Land. Twain—and here I should acknowledge I am more interested in the invented persona rather than that other, far more elusive fiction of Samuel Clemens—inscribes a “touristic” vision of violent parodic desanctification and commodification whose “realism” still dominates the way readers regard Ottoman Palestine today and whose laughter ridicules the pretensions of Anglo-American identity along with the sacred.

American Palestine also examines other key texts that intersect the central focus on Melville, Twain, and the encounter with the Holy Land. For example, one chapter interrogates the characterization of Jews and of “that strange pervert” Nathan in Melville’s poem, and another provides a close reading of *The Key of David* (1851) by Warder Cresson, the American convert to Judaism and proto-Zionist, upon whom *Clarel’s* pivotal character is based. Similarly, I unravel Twain’s racial constructions, including his conflation of Arabs with Indians and the telling absence of African-Americans, while also examining *From West Africa to Palestine* (1873) by Edward Wilmot Blyden, the Liberian colonizationist and early pan-Africanist, whose travels and career paralleled Twain’s. In this way, *American Palestine* regards the books by both canonical authors not only within the body of their works, but within the full range of Holy Land literature and the “mania” that produced seemingly marginal yet actually central enactments of settler-colonial identities.

Most literary studies have examined *Clarel* and *Innocents Abroad* as part of each author’s oeuvre and not in conjunction with each other or within the broader field of Holy Land literature. Melville and Twain sit on opposite sides of what, in terms of literary studies, is the often impassible divide of the Civil War, while those few critical studies that have sought to read each against the other, such as Franklin Walker’s *Irreverent Pilgrims* (1974), provide important historical perspectives on Melville’s and Twain’s travels but without acute conceptual frameworks concerning American religious ferment or colonial encounters.⁴

At the same time, the America–Holy Land Project at Hebrew University, initiated in the early 1970s by Moshe Davis, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, Robert Handy, and other Israeli and American scholars, transformed the study of the American relationship with pre-1948 Palestine, including the involvement of Melville and Twain, into a self-consciously distinct interdisciplinary field. Although a number of important historical and cultural studies, such as David Finnie’s *Pioneers East* (1967), were produced before its inception, the invaluable archival and bibliographic resources developed by the project, including the extensive series of facsimile reprints of key America–Holy Land texts published by Arno Press, gave intellectual coherence and concrete resources to what had previously been a somewhat diffuse, even neglected, area of concern. The project has inspired or influenced numerous cultural, historical, and religious monographs and book-length studies, the most comprehensive of which at this time remains Lester Vogel’s *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (1993). However, Davis, Ben-Arieh, Handy, and many others share a similar perspective, tending to view the nineteenth-century history of the region as Israeli prehistory, the proper study of which tends to validate the Western “rediscovery” of Palestine and the various pre-Zionist, Christian notions of “Jewish restoration” in the historical inevitability of the founding of the Jewish state. Moreover, the American sense of providential destiny and typological identification as a New Israel, though seriously addressed, is often accepted simply as a given or as an interesting, even quaint, biblicalism, while a deeper critical sense of how such Holy Land dynamics have affected the formation and extension of America’s particular form of colonizing culture tends to get downplayed.⁵

Certainly, Edward Said’s critique of Orientalism and imperialism in the formation of Western cultural and power relations in *Orientalism* (1978) has qualitatively countered the shortcomings of colonialist teleology in such projects as those of Davis and Ben-Arieh. Said and other postcolonial critics and Americanists such as Sacvan Bercovitch have opened vital new perspectives on the visibility of Arabs and Islam, the critical interrogation of the discourses of colonial domination, and the tropes of the American covenant. However, the postcolonial and Americanist projects have yet to situate Melville’s and Twain’s texts—and American literature more broadly—within the settler-colonial dynamics historically shared by other societies, such as those in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Israel, and even Liberia, which have also employed covenantal paradigms.⁶

American Palestine examines American Holy Land literature within an overall framework that regards American society and its culture as manifestations of covenantal settler-colonialism, with this descriptive frame or proscenium heightened even to the point of an “alienation effect.” Such a perspective may serve as a corrective to other analytical frameworks that ignore or blur the dynamics of colonialism within American cultural development or that regard the United States as becoming uncomplicatedly “postcolonial” after 1776 until the acquisition of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and other colonial territories allowed the country to join the European imperialists as a new colonial power. Although such an “alienation effect” holds the danger of reducing the rich complexity of American social and cultural development to a sole dynamic, I do view settler-colonialism as a process (or, more accurately, a multiplicity of processes) that qualitatively affects all aspects of American society in the nineteenth century, even in the developed urban centers of the eastern seaboard. I regard the “frontier” in ways similar to those described by Annette Kolodny as “an inherently unstable locus of . . . environmental transitions and cultural interpenetrations” and not as an uncomplicated westwardmoving line of demographic, economic, and technological domination.⁷ Consequently,

I examine this literature as a phenomenon of colonial discourse, and although I may focus on the same texts and preoccupations as other Holy Land scholars, such as those who study the American Protestant fascination with Jewish restoration, I do so with very different aims and emphases.

While I do not want to exaggerate the role of this particular type of literature nor ignore the impact of other cultural and literary trends, I hope I have sufficiently suggested the importance of Holy Land literature in articulating certain key features of American culture. The intersection of texts by Melville, Twain, and others with religious preoccupations and colonial encounters creates a fertile field for many self-conceptualizations and structures of feeling that form part of the bases for nineteenth-century American identities, many of which are pertinent today. For example, the discourses of typological identity, of “civil religion,” and of American support for the State of Israel all still employ covenantal rhetoric: Ronald Reagan and other politicians can regularly invoke “a city upon a hill”; *Biblical Archeology Review* can entertain speculations about lost tribes and ancient Hebrew inscriptions purportedly discovered in Tennessee; and Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Hal Lindsey, and other evangelical Protestants can call for ardent support of Israel as a part of elaborately constructed apocalyptic narratives that end in the death of most Jews and the return of Jesus, while an American Jew living along the border of Lebanon can respond to then-Congressman Jack Kemp’s query as to why he made *aliyah* (emigrated) to Israel with the seemingly transparent statement, “Congressman, it was just the American thing to do.”⁸

The popular historian Barbara Tuchman, in a 1984 preface to her 1956 *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour*, illustrates the ways in which identification with the mission of colonial domination of Palestine remains a central Western imperative. Tuchman, who believes that “the Jews have been singled out to carry the tale of human fate,” regards the considerable accomplishments of the Zionist movement not only as impressive or even crucial to ending Jewish persecution but as essential to the very survival of Western civilization. Noting the similarities in colonial experience between the United States and Israel, Tuchman excoriates critics of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as “Americans with short memories of how Texas was settled and then annexed.”⁹

My own approach—of regarding American culture and literature as manifestations of covenantal settler-colonial development—places the similarity Tuchman correctly perceives in a different light. Mine is precisely an approach with long memories of settlement and annexation, one that places expropriation of land and destruction or expulsion of indigenous cultures—along with solutions to settler “labor problems” through chattel slavery or other forms of forced labor, the importation of “free labor” through immigration, individual settlement, and other manifestations of expansion—at the core of American cultural experience. The settler-colonial process leaves its mark on all forms of American life, even when the Indian is merely a ghost in Bartleby’s New York. It is not simply a question of reading “race” into American narrative even when Indians or Arabs are apparently absent, but of perceiving the persistent cultural grid of covenantal identification, whether in religious or secular modes, which underlays this particular settler society, a grid rendered more visible through encounters with the Holy Land, particularly those by Melville and Twain.

In order to claim descriptive and analytical efficacy for considering the United States as a “settler-colonial” society, I expand upon the categories of colonialization developed in *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* by D. K. Fieldhouse, elaborated by George M. Fredrickson in his essay “Colonialism and Racism,” and employed by

Gershon Shafir and other sociologists and historians, and it is important here to sketch the outlines of such a taxonomy. Fieldhouse divides the dominant tendencies in European colonial formations into four categories—occupation, mixed settlement, plantation, and pure settlement—which Fredrickson develops as “ideal types” or models from which variants, such as the United States, could be described as “deviant versions or hybrids of the basic types, rather than simply varieties of them.”¹⁰

Occupation colonies are those in which the colonizing power supervises the exploitation of labor and resources of the indigenous peoples with relatively little social reorganization of the society and, with the exception of an administrative and military apparatus, hardly any imposition of its own population onto the colony. The British raj in the Indian subcontinent and the French and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia follow this model most closely, which has little application to the American situation until the annexation of the Philippines and Puerto Rico.¹¹

The other three models are of “colonies of settlement” in which the implantation of significant and permanent populations of Europeans forms the key characteristic of each type. In the “mixed” colony, such as Mexico and other parts of Latin America, settlers gained control of land and resources, imposed their political structures upon the native peoples, but did not entirely annihilate the indigenous peoples’ cultures. Inter-marriage between settlers and native peoples produced a “mixed” society in which sharp social and racial hierarchies were imposed but without entirely rigid boundaries, so that “acquisition of the culture of the dominant group, as well as favored phenotypical characteristics, might contribute to individual mobility.”¹²

In the plantation colony, of which the sugar islands of the West Indies are perhaps the clearest examples, “the principal form of exploitation was the forced labor of *imported* workers to produce staples for the world market.” Indigenous populations were not adequate—or had been exterminated—and thus required calling upon unfree or bound labor, mostly African slave labor, to be supervised by a small sector of European taskmasters.

Finally, Fredrickson describes the “pure” settlement colony as one in which

European settlers exterminated or pushed aside the indigenous peoples, developed an economy based on white labor, and were thus able in the long run to regain the sense of cultural or ethnic homogeneity identified with a European conception of nationality. What seemed required for the emergence of this pattern was a population surplus at home and a relatively sparse indigenous population that was politically and economically at a “primitive” (normally a hunting-gathering) stage of development. Exploitation of the environment would take the form of expanding the settler frontier which, depending on geographical circumstances, might be based on cultivation, grazing, or mining. If not totally exterminated, the indigenes would likely be confined to reservations in areas so remote or unproductive as to be of little interest to white settlers. Australia fits this model so well that one could well call it “the Australian case.”¹³

British colonization in North America closely followed this “Australian case,” with the important addition of pronounced religious constructs determining “the sense of cultural or ethnic homogeneity” that characterized the implanted settler society. Even with the development of the plantation system in the South, colonization maintained aspects of the mythic and moral rationales of “pure” settlement. Nevertheless, North American society took on a sectional division which, even after the question of slavery was resolved by the Civil War, accentuated the “deviant” or “hybrid” quality of the settler-colonial society. This hybridity was heightened even further with the annexation of “mixed” Mexican territories after the War with Mexico in 1848, along with the importation of immigrants from Europe and Asia as indentured, contract, or free workers whose status had to be “fixed” within the color-coded bifurcations of white supremacy. As urban and settled “cores” developed, “frontiers” between different populations were also drawn, while, as the original model of “pure” settlement expanded into new territories, germinal patterns of settler culture, particularly its investment of religious destiny affirming appropriation

of land and white supremacy, continued to be inscribed.

Melville and Twain were formed by different aspects of this settler-colonial culture before they traveled to the Holy Land. Twain grew up in the lightly settled border society of Missouri, sought his fortune as a printer in the settled core of New York, piloted riverboats up and down the plantation system of the Mississippi, and fled the Confederate army defending that system to the mineral-extraction frontier of “pure” settlement in Nevada and California. Twain even managed to visit the semi-“occupation” colony of the Kingdom of Hawaii as a journalist before making his way back to New York to his next assignment onboard the *Quaker City*.

Although Melville grew up in the settled core of New York strongly influenced by the Calvinist theologies underlying “pure” settlement, his experience of the maritime frontier determined much of his subsequent outlook, even as he spent the bulk of his life in Massachusetts and New York. Melville developed his own form of ironic instability or double consciousness from the “occupation” colonies in the South Pacific (he had almost “gone native”), but his experience of the maritime frontier extended to the highly diverse “Anarcharsis Cloutz deputation” encountered in the ports of New Bedford, Nantucket, and Manhattan and the “federated keels” of multinational, multiracial, religiously heterodox crews on the seas, inculcating a democratic sense of shared fates if not political equality (such as the “round robin” mutiny of *Omoo*).

Melville’s maritime experience underscores the often overlooked variations of colonial movement. Although American expansion is usually graphically depicted as a line moving westward across the continent, it can also be envisioned as concentric circles, with American merchant, whaling, and naval fleets spreading in all directions from the earliest days of settlement. In this regard, the Mediterranean formed one more zone of America’s colonial experience, beginning with the first merchant ships from Salem in the late seventeenth century, which grew to involve several nodes of diverse cultural contacts: merchant seamen held captive by North African corsairs at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries; sailors stationed at Port Mahon, the island base on Spanish territory the U.S. Navy occupied throughout most of the nineteenth century to defend the merchant fleet; communities of artists and intellectuals in Rome, of merchants in Smyrna (Izmir), and of missionaries in Beirut; and Civil War veterans recruited by William Tecumseh Sherman to serve in the Egyptian Khedive’s military. The early nineteenth-century trade by Yankee merchant houses like those of the Peabody and Perkins families, which saw “Boston Particular” rum sold in Smyrna in exchange for Turkish opium for resale in China, is but one dramatic example of how colonial worlds—North America, the West Indies, the Ottoman East, and the Far East—interpenetrated and extended in complex directions.¹⁴

Such circulation of goods, people, and cultural influences traveled in both directions, most especially in regard to Palestine and its biblical import. The religious influences carrying the images of Palestine and the Holy Land were, of course, deeply ingrained and pervasive from the first moments of North American colonization, but there were significant material contacts as well. For example, before the Revolution, Ezra Stiles, Newport minister and later Yale president, befriended Jewish “messengers” from Palestine, such as Rabbi Isaac Carigal, with the hope of learning more of Palestinian geography and Hebrew as these emissaries traveled to Sephardic congregations in Curaçao and Newport to raise money for pietist communities in the Holy Land.¹⁵

American travelers also had a profound effect on Palestinian realities. Virtually every traveler entertained filibustering fantasies, such as Bayard Taylor’s reflection that “there would be no end

to the wealth of Syria were the country in proper [i.e., European or American] hands” or William Lynch’s blunt assessment that “fifty well-armed resolute Franks, *with a large sum of money*, could revolutionize the whole country.”¹⁶ While the “resolute Franks” destined to take up the “Eastern Question” in the nineteenth century were the European powers, Americans also participated in that broader Western, increasingly British effort to gain political as well as cultural control of Palestine. Simply joining the stream of travelers who required accommodations was one way to participate, but the colonization attempts of Clorinda Minor, Warder Cresson, and George Adams, along with those of the German Templars and others, laid the material as well as major aspects of the ideological groundwork for Zionist settlement, while the archaeological and scientific expeditions of Edward Robinson and Lynch marshaled knowledge to the service of empire. All of this participation is not to be denied, despite the secondary role of the United States in the Eastern Question, but the most important effect of actual contact with the Holy Land was the more concrete construction of the imagined bond between the mythic destinies of America and Palestine for use in settler-colonial nationalism in both lands.

The title “American Palestine” can seem both as oxymoronic and as familiar a phrase as “American Samoa,” a colonial designation that could, perhaps, be affixed to any locale; at the same time, the biblicalized landscape of the North American continent could even be read as “Palestine or Holy Land America” or, in the words of Ezra Stiles, “God’s American Israel.” By “excavating” these complex meanings I do not wish to duplicate the aims and methods of Robinson and other biblical archaeologists seeking “evidences” of prophecy. The “evidences” I extract are of how “Palestine” and “Holy Land” constructed “America,” of how the books by Melville and Twain arose from a tradition of complex intertextualities, rhetorical devices, and religious narratives, a tradition of mythmaking that employed notions of the “East” to create a New World “West.”

To accomplish this excavation, the next chapter, “George Sandys: ‘Double Travels’ and Colonial Encounters,” examines the first of such intersections in the overlapping careers of George Sandys as Elizabethan traveler to the Holy Land, treasurer of the Virginia colony, Indian fighter, and author of the first English-language literary work in North America. The following chapter, “‘Christianography’ and Covenant,” discusses the ways in which Palestine was brought to “the American strand” through the imposition of an exegetical, typological landscape and how the covenantal mindframe that would impose such a transposition developed. The final chapter in this section, “Reading and Writing Sacred Geography,” surveys the sensibilities and rhetorical tropes as well as the intertwined conventions of biblical obsession and Orientalist eroticism in American Holy Land literature. Out of this rich field of shared narratives, experiences, and attitudes about America’s sense of mission and Palestine, Melville and Twain produced their “infidel” countertexts.

CHAPTER TWO

George Sandys: “Double Travels” and Colonial Encounters

GEORGE SANDYS, treasurer of the Virginia Company, led one of the raiding parties exacting revenge for the 1622 uprising of the Powhatan confederacy of Algonquins against the Jamestown settlement, and in London the colonial official, brother of former Virginia governor Edwin Sandys, was celebrated as a hero in the broadside “Good Newes from Virginia”:

Stout Master George Sandys upon a night
did bravely venture forth
And mong’st the Savage murderers
did forme a deede of worth
For finding many by a fire
to death their lives they pay
Set fire of a town of theirs
and bravely came away.¹

Such a representation by company propagandists could be seen as one moment in the formation of settler identity, an early formulation of the myth of the frontiersman, of stout conqueror bravely venturing forth against savage murderers. Yet Sandys plays a more extensive literary role than just a hero for balladeers, a role that deeply complicates this initial inscription. Sandys produced one of the first self-consciously literary texts in English-speaking America—his translation of and commentaries on Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*—and published a book seven years before he formed his “deede of worth” in Virginia, documenting his Grand Tour of the Mediterranean, the Ottoman East, Egypt, and the Holy Land.

Sandys’s career, then, embodies a curious intersection of texts and actions that reveals one core phenomenon of colonial encounter: the way narrative structures and narrativized experiences extracted from the East often predicate representations of the New World. By considering this intersection, by pulling at the string of the 1622 massacre, we can untangle aspects of the relationship of Holy Land literature, including the books by Melville and Twain, to the New World colonial project. There is the danger that by stressing such an originary moment too strongly the rich, over-determined complexity of factors in any historical process can be lost to a type of linear reductionism. But the fact that Sandys was a poet, an Eastern traveler, a humanist scholar, as well as an Indian-killer, makes his textual evidence especially compelling, particularly when the relationship between Holy Land and New World persists throughout colonization, while the actual intertextualization embodied by Sandys emerges once again with the popular “renaissance” of American Holy Land literature in the nineteenth century.

In *Colonial Encounters*, Peter Hulme observes how the 1622 “massacre” was a decisive moment in the history of the faltering settlement, noting how, due to the colony’s instability, “the period between 1607 and 1622 could not satisfactorily be narrativized until the 1622 ‘massacre’ provided the authoritative organizing principle that would reduce the earlier chaos to the order of syntagmatic coherence.”² This “authoritative organizing principle” enforced a sharp distinction

between “self” and “other” by which the Virginia settlers, previously unstable and even threatened like the Roanoke colonists with dissolution into the native environment, could affirm their identity. In exchange for allowing missionaries access to his people, the Powhatan leader Opechancanough had convinced the settlers to give the Indians muskets despite their previous policy of keeping firearms from indigenous hands. With apparent conversion to the religion and culture of the invaders, the Powhatans so infiltrated English homesteads that many of the 330 settlers who were slain in the uprising were caught completely by surprise. Opechancanough forged “a strategy more subtle in its execution, more ethnocentric in its foundation, and more revolutionary in its potential impact” even than that of the settlers.³ The existence of the Virginia colony was tenuous—previous wars with the Powhatans had been inconclusive, and even at the end of ten years this war would end with no clear winner (which meant, however, that the Indians would ultimately lose with the arrival of more settlers)—so the settler counterattack had to provide ideological as well as military results.

“Stout Master” George Sandys descended upon the Indians with more than a sense of vengeance, for with Virginia “violently ravished by her owne ruder Natives,”⁴ the colonists had determined that by such rape the Indians had committed “a huge infringement of Natural Law which left its victims free to pursue any course they wanted, unregenerate savagery having forfeited all its rights, civil and natural.”⁵ According to Samuel Purchas, because the Virginia Algonquians were “more brutish then the beasts they hunt” and they “range rather then inhabite” their territory, they held no claim to the land. As John Winthrop would later argue, the land fell under the legal rubric of *vacuum domicilium*; indigenous peoples maintained only “natural” but not “civil” rights over the land because they had not “subdued” it by fencing in plots as individual property.⁶ Such a perceived breach of natural law as the uprising afforded allowed the settlers to unleash the full measure of rhetorical as well as physical violence: with ideological clarity, there were no constraints. As one eyewitness explained: “our hands which before were tied with gentlenesse and fair usage are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Savages: not untying the Knot, but cutting it.”⁷

While George Sandys was cutting this Gordian knot of moral equivocation, he was also engaged in his major project of cultural affirmation. When he published *Ovid’s Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologiz’d, and Represented in Figures* in 1632, his awareness of the uniqueness of its creation in Virginia—the feat of writing a work of such cultural magnitude in a wilderness—is evident even in his apology. His book, Sandys explains, was “Sprung from the stocke of the ancient Romans; but bred in the New-World, of the rudnesse whereof it cannot but participate; expecially having Warres and Tumults to bring it to light, instead of the Muses.”⁸ Yet, despite rude New World origins, his extensive commentaries on Ovid—“the greatest repository of allegorized myth in English”⁹—are mythmaking eruptions of tremendous erudition and narrative imagination. From the great archive of the recently “discovered” past, Sandys embarks on the essential task—if classical roots were to be grafted to the Tree of Jesse—of reconciling Ovid with Scripture, and of having both be “Englished.” But to the wide range of classical and renaissance scholars, poets, and scientists newly available to European imaginations he adds his own, lived evidences of “new” worlds—his firsthand accounts of both Virginia and the Levant.¹⁰

Sandys’s commentaries bred “the familiar Mediterranean topoi of classical literature”¹¹ in order to understand “savagery” on unfamiliar soil. His humanist project is to “trac[e] the almost worne-out steps of Antiquitie” from the Creation to Moses in “stories conveyed by Tradition in loose and broken Fragments, [which] were by the Poets interwoven with instructing

Mythologies.”¹² For Sandys, appropriating such instruction involves weaving his own complex intertextualities as, for example, in his commentary on Polyphemus, “who feast himself with the flesh of his guests.” Ovid’s depiction of the anthropophagous cyclops allows Sandys to describe the indigenous people of the West Indies as cannibals who “onely eat their enemies,” a somewhat better status than Polyphemus, although he does note that the natives may also eat the “shambles” as leftovers. The Mediterranean-Caribbean comparison draws him to the defining moral observation that “Injustice and cruelty, are ever accompanied with Atheisme and a contempt of the Deity,”¹³ although he avoids the one recorded incident of cannibalism in Virginia when in 1609 settlers besieged by Indians at Jamestown ate their own to survive, presumably without “a contempt of the Deity.”¹⁴ His *Metamorphosis*’s use of colonial experience to elucidate myth and of myth to comprehend colonial contact—along with its free-ranging inquisitive (and acquisitive) Renaissance sensibility and his ability to elide English abominations through the inscription of those by Indians—seems appropriate enough for the first “American” literary text, for the settler-colonial project required “instructing Mythologies,” particularly ones of transformative, even digestive, violence, in order to conceive of the authoritative organizing principle for its narrative.

If creating *Metamorphosis* can represent one originary moment—both as text and as deed—then *A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610. Foure Bookes Containing a description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote parts of Italy, and Ilands adioyning* (1615) can be seen as more than an anticipatory gesture toward the East before working to advance empire in the West.¹⁵ The Ottomans, who were still capable of laying siege to Vienna at the end of the century, presented extreme danger along with palpable opportunity. In 1610 the sultan’s forces were at war with Persia, and in his travels Sandys had to avoid large units of *sipahis* (cavalrymen) as they maneuvered—and marauded—through Palestine. The English engaged in widespread commerce that was beginning to challenge older monopolies in the Levant, and they were impressed with Palestine’s geopolitical relationship with India, even then their prime colonial ambition: the English had already begun to develop “interests” in what would become the great nineteenth-century European drama of the Eastern Question.

Sandys, son of the archbishop of York, his family already deeply involved in both the India and Virginia trading companies, wrote with these considerations firmly in mind. Although in 1610 a still vigorous Ottoman Empire could not allow Sandys even to envision the imperialist artifice of sustaining a “sick man” to further those “interests,” much less a territorial “mandate,” Sandys did scout out ways to facilitate English commercial penetration of the area. He exercises great descriptive capacities, relating commercial data, details of travel routes and accommodations, accounts of religious ceremonies, floor plans of shrines, as well as assessments of fortifications, all with the characteristic gusto of a Renaissance explorer. But *A Relation of a Journey* can be regarded as something more than an intelligence briefing of enemy terrain, for the book responds to cultural imperatives as well, gathering together diverse narrative strands in order to construct hybrid myths of history, conceptions through which a new world could be comprehended. In a sense, *A Relation of a Journey* can be regarded as one element in fashioning a large-scale intertextual grid—a matrix of narratives and practices—that would be required for a colonialist sense of destiny, whether in Palestine or in Virginia. Certainly, the familiar Mediterranean topoi could be more clearly articulated—and reformulated—at the traditional chasm between Europe and the Islamic East.

In his dedication to Prince Charles (“To the Prince”) in *A Relation of a Journey*, Sandys describes the purposes of “these my double travels; once with some toyle and danger performed,

and now recorded with sincerity and diligence” as visiting “the most renowned countries and kingdoms” of what was already an old world. Doubteness is a key characteristic of travel, particularly of a journey invested with ritual or cultural values, since travel, as distinct from the literary “double” of the travel book, is itself a performance art. “Typically, the aim of the play” of travel performance, according to sociologist Judith Adler, “is the internalization and retention, through symbolic representation, of relationship to a real place that, having once been glimpsed and identified with cherished values, must be relinquished. In a double movement of projection and reinternalization, values are emblematically fixed in landscapes and reappropriated through encounter with literal geography.”¹⁶ Sandys’s “double travels”—both as experience and as text—move through more than terrestrial space: he journeys through a dense past in search of cultural origins for use in projection and reinternalization, which he can affix to the landscapes he observes in order to cultivate his own form of “Englished” subjectivity.

Sandys’s list in his dedication of the earlier accomplishments of the several different “Oriens” he visits is itself a catalog of emulative virtues. These lands were

once the seats of most glorious and triumphant Empires; the theaters of valour and heroical actions; the soiles enriched with all earthly felicities; the places where Nature hath produced her wonderfull works; where Arts and Sciences have bene invented, and perfited; where wisdom, vertue, policies, and civility have bene planted, have flourished: and lastely where God himselfe did place his owne Commonwealth, gave lawes and oracles, inspired his Prophets, sent Angels to converse with men; above all, where the Sonne of God descended to become man; where he honoured the earth with his beautifull steps, wrought the worke of our redemption, triumphed over death, and ascended into glory.

Yet the memory of “countries once so glorious, and famous for their happy estate” is shadowed by a steep decline fraught with stark moral implications. Because of their “vice and ingratitude,” the East is now emptied, ruined, enslaved. These lands now present

the most deplored spectacles of extreme miserie: the wild beasts of mankind having broken in upon them, and rooted out all civilitie; and the pride of a sterne and barbarous Tyrant possessing the thrones of ancient and just dominion. Who aiming onely at the height of greatnesse and sensuality, hath in tract of time reduced so great and so goodly a part of the world, to that lamentable distresse and servitude, under which (to the astonishment of the understanding beholders) it now faints and groneth. Those rich lands at this present remain wast and over-growne with bushes, receptacles of wild beasts, of theeves, and murderers; large territories dispeopled, or thinly inhabited; goodly cities made desolate; sumptuous buildings become ruines; glorious Temples either subverted, or prostituted to impietie; true religion discountenanced and oppressed; all Nobility extinguished; no light of learning permitted, nor Vertue cherished: violence and rapine insulting over all, and leaving no security save to an abject mind, and unlookt on poverty. (“To the Prince”)

The rhetoric of golden age gives way to spectacles of decline, the text concluding, once again, with moral injunction: the “calamaties” of these countries, with their wild beasts, desolation, depopulation, and “extreme miseries,” are “so great and deserved” that they are “to the rest of the world as threatning instructions” (“To the Prince”).

The shock of a different kind of wilderness—no longer a virgin but a victim of rape nonetheless—induces the understanding beholder to read “threatning instructions” in its landscape, for in the wreckage of the past can be obtained cautions for the present, salient lessons about empire. The moral conclusion is straightforward, for his travel book seeks “to draw a right image of the frailty of man, and mutability of what so ever is worldly; and assurance that there is nothing unchangeable saving God, so nothing stable but his grace and protection” (“To the Prince”). From such threats of divine retribution in the face of moral failure Sandys would be able to compile “instructing Mythologies” in Virginia.

For Sandys, Rome, Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land all represent distinct items of cultural wreckage, each with a different originary culture that embodies its own unique threat of moral collapse, each civilization forming a nexus of associations and geography that needs to be seized,

assembled, arrayed, then comprehended in a new fashion in order to obtain the stability of grace. The notion of the “understanding beholder” privileges the eye, of course: the travel style of the Grand Tour was shifting from one of the ear—of gentlemen learning the languages and discourses of other tongues and eminent scholars—to that of the eye—of “17th-century virtuosi disciplining their sight-seeing to empiricist canons.”¹⁷ “Understanding beholder” also underscores the degree to which understanding means actual possession, of “comprehending” items of the past by encircling them from cultural heights—a Pisgah-sight, as of Moses viewing the Promised Land. Only in this way, through a kind of bricolage accomplished by the “double” means of lived experience and mythic structure, can Sandys construct—and hold—an understandable East.

To journey East is to travel across and into several “Orients” of pasts and texts. Sandys informs his future monarch that to reach his goal, “I have not onely related what I saw of their present condition; but so far as conveniency might permit, presented a brief view of the former estates, and first antiquities of those peoples and countries” (“To the Prince”). Sandys employs a technique in *A Relation of a Journey* of combining firsthand experience of “present condition” with an impressive array of biblical, classical, hermeticist, and renaissance allusions to make historical sense of his travels. Every site is an occasion to relate its “first antiquities,” to compile an anthology of appropriate classical texts in translation—often even if Sandys only passes nearby—with historical and mythic tasks almost invariably dominating—and molding—the perception of present conditions. The primacy of the past (or, more accurately, of one version of the past) is underscored even in Sandys’s map, which ignores all Ottoman or Islamic political designations in favor of ancient ones, showing “Babilon” but no Baghdad, for example.

Because the Holy Land is, above all, the site of sacred narrative, it presents lessons of frailty and mutability with especial force, the instructions even more threatening, more destabilizing. Although scriptural truth remains dominant, Sandys freely mixes classical, Crusader, and other accounts into his relations of origins and antiquities. Gaza, for example, is “famous for the acts of Sampson, who lived about the time of the *Trojan* warres: (an age that produced Worthies) whose force and fortunes, are said to have given to the Poets their inventions of *Hercules*, who lived not long before him” (149). But more than the equal weight given to nonbiblical worthies, Sandys exhibits an increasingly ambivalent and even skeptical attitude regarding the manifestations of sacred narrative itself, an attitude heightened by Protestant revulsion of Islamic dominance and of the perceived fraudulence of Roman and Eastern Christianity. While the Holy Land is “the stage of wonders” (142), and Jerusalem is “the theater of mysteries and miracles” (154), present-day Palestine is a bare stage set only, while the ritual theatricality of the Christian shrines is a gross mockery of the true theater of the past.

While Sandys travels by means of the long-established pilgrimage system—accommodating himself to Roman Catholic and Orthodox control of shrines and lodging systems—he always keeps himself aloof. The authenticity of the sites, such as the tomb of Christ, are always “as they would make us beleeve” or “as they say,” all overseen by filthy Turks and infidels, his attempts at devotion constantly undercut by the gross impositions of contemporary Palestine upon the more significant memory of sacred history.¹⁸ Material Palestine is a disjuncture marked by absence, by the decidedly empty tomb of Christ, by the fact that the profane land is no longer sanctified in history but only a representation of sacred past and an anticipation of sacred future, an image flickering in ruins. Samuel Purchas, commenting on Sandys’s distress, offers the fundamental Protestant response to the whole notion of pilgrimage itself, even before Bunyan’s allegory: “Pilgrimages are good, when we are thereby made Pilgrimes from the world and our

selves. Thy selfe is the holiest place thou canst visit, if with faith and repentance made the Lords Temple, which the Jewish signified.”¹⁹ To value pilgrimage as a metaphoric, signified journey into individual identity and faith rather than as mere geographic passage presents yet further “double travels”—from the self to the Self—which, along with the idea that the land remains holy despite its divine curse, create conflict, anxiety, and ultimately vast disappointment with the actuality of Palestine. The fact that while passing Mount Carmel, stout master George Sandys must disguise himself to avoid a company of *sipahis*—riding through the cavalry’s camp in a stormy night “without our hats, lest discovered for Christians” (202)—only underscores his distress: he, like the land and its meanings, is hidden, disguised.

Although it is the farthest geographical and cultural extent of Sandys’s travels, the Holy Land is not the end of *A Relation of a Journey*. In the fourth and final book Sandys returns to England by way of Italy and of the instructions offered by Roman glory and failure. Only upon his departure from Palestine can Sandys accommodate the uncomfortable inadequacy of the Holy Land, which he accomplishes by means of rhetorical displacement in the opening of the fourth book.

Now shape we our course for England. Beloved soile: as in site

—Wholly from all the world disioyned: [Vir. Ecl.]

so in thy felicities. The Sommer burnes thee not, nor the Winter benums thee: defended by the Sea from wastfull incursions, and by the valour of thy sonnes from hostile invasions. All other Countries are in some things defective, when thou a provident parent, doest minister unto thine whatsoever is usefull: forrein additions but onely tending to vanity, and luxury. Vertue in thee at the least is praised; and vices are branded with their names, if not pursued with punishments. That *Ulysses*

Who knew many mens manners, and saw many Cities: [Hom. Odys.]

if as sound in judgement as ripe in experience, will confesse thee to be the land that floweth with milke and honey. (218)

Only from a distance looking back—only, like Ulysses, by contemplating return from wanderings in fallen lands to a home upon which comparative perspective can impose new values—can England be more vigorously imagined as sacred ground. Jonathan Haynes details the multiple cultural values in this metaphoric transference, for “England is the Promised Land, where a language of Edenic purity orders moral life; it is Ithaca, the epic wanderer’s goal; it is the *locus amoenus*, an Earthly Paradise where nature is in perfect balance . . . a pastoral haven.”²⁰ Sandys’s invocation of an ideal England, employing biblical, classical, and natural associations to create what could be seen as a newly emerging nationalist sensibility, is paradoxically at the core of Sandys’s cosmopolitanism—a happy, stable isle in a sea of threatening commercial and colonial mutability.

Although the allusive mix is potent, it is, as Haynes observes, merely “a grand gesture.”

The juxtaposition of England with the Holy Land, as well as the reference to milk and honey, suggest a typological transference—but this transference is not enforced: it is no Puritan doctrine of a New Jerusalem, but a lighter, poetic, allusive strategy, which touches on a whole series of fundamental mythic structures, picking up power from each. They are reconciled with each other (*Ulysses* and the milk and honey) as they are relocated, recentered in England.²¹

I would agree that this is a “lighter, poetic, allusive strategy,” but the invocation’s milk-and-honey climax indicates how a nascent Anglo-Israelite identity was already, in a variety of ways, becoming energetically “enforced.” The association of England with Palestine had long been deeply rooted in religio-national imagination: the cultural, historical marker of the close occurrence of British and Judean revolts against Rome; the legends of how the apostle Joseph of

Arimathea brought Christianity to the island directly from Palestine; the entwining of these myths with those of Trojan refugees and the holy grail coming to Britain; and the still-vivid memories of Crusader exploits.²² But the idea of the English as “a chosen people,” as elect nation, gained particular ascendancy during the Reformation: from William Tyndale, Joseph Mede, Thomas Brightman, and John Foxe to the Fifth Monarchy Men and beyond, the narrative of election continued to erupt, ultimately pushing Sandys’s “lighter” metaphorical displacement to the heavier realm of typological certainty, particularly as the Puritan English Israel “traveled” to North America and the English themselves, as John Rolfe writes in 1616, became “a peculiar people, marked and chosen by the finger of God” to become colonialists.²³

Sandys demonstrates the crucial fact of Palestine—not just as text but as lived experience—in the new-world colonial encounter. His attitudes, cultural imperatives, and rhetorical practices are all deployed again when American Holy Land literature resumes its double travels early in the nineteenth century. Although Anglo-Americans would produce no other travel-based, Holy Land text for over two hundred years after Sandys, material Palestine remained a constant field of interest to the settler-colonial project through English travel books. The genre of English Holy Land travel literature, reaching back to Arculf, Saewulf, and Mandeville in the Middle Ages, continued to grow, with important texts—such as those by Samuel Purchas, Thomas Coryat, Henry Maundrell, and Richard Pococke—readily available to North American settler society. Interest in Palestine was later also maintained through relations with American Jews, such as Ezra Stiles’s interrogations of Jewish Palestinian emissaries to Newport, or by means of pedagogical projects, such as Jedidiah Morse’s concentration on Holy Land sites in his geographies.

What Sandys did *not* do was enforce the dominance of America as prophetic fulfillment, for Virginia planters drew the coherence for their violence against the Powhatans in 1622 from multiple sources, their authorizing narratives structured around a variety of eroticized utopian visions. As Sacvan Bercovitch explains, the “Southern ‘paradise’ meant a benevolent, unspoiled retreat, convenient for adventurers, entrepreneurs, farmers, and idealists in quest of the good society . . . [Southern utopians] all shared a single, decisive difference in outlook from the Bay millennialists. Basically, they were seeking to improve imperfect human institutions. Their social goals called ‘for present gains.’²⁴ Though they did not remove themselves from providential history, neither did Southern planters conceive of their enterprise as a Bible commonwealth, and the model of Roman civilization was allowed freer play: of careful cultivation of virtue rather than sudden election; of history as a pattern of cycles and eternal recurrences rather than, as M. H. Abrams describes the Christian paradigm, of a finite, linear narrative that is providential, symmetrical, and “right-angled.”²⁵ A desire for “present gains” would become far more appealing to the pragmatic settlement of “distressed cavaliers” seeking to solve questions of labor through servitude and, ultimately, chattel slavery. The “city upon a hill,” on the other hand, was constructed from a model of colonial settlement that more strongly insisted upon the narrative of covenantal relations. Reenacting biblical narratives, the Puritans did not need to visit the Holy Land: they brought Palestine with them.

CHAPTER THREE

“Christianography” and Covenant

“GEOGRAPHY MUST now find work for a Christiano-graphy,” Cotton Mather declares in his ecclesiastical history of New England. For Mather, determining the meaning of Puritan settlement and the New England Way is fundamentally an exegetical and not an historical or geographical process: “America is Legible in [God’s] promises,” he writes in his history *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), at the same time he attempts to render God’s promises legible in America. America is revealed as the mystery of Jesus’ garments, which were “made *four parts*, by the soldiers that cast *lots* for them,” for the garments are “a type of a like division of his Church” into four parts: now has come the time of the fourth and final part. “The *Church of God*”—the true agent of history—“must no longer be wrapped up in Strabo’s cloak,” which presents Mather with the formidable task of turning humanist geography into a rigorous form of Christian hermeneutics. Cloak is exchanged for garment, yet the text follows the pattern of previous weaves; the classical notion of *translatio studii*—of the westward course of empire—is radically transformed into a millennialist Protestant “errand into the wilderness”: Jerusalem is to the west of Babylon, Rome to the west of Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem even further west in “regions far enough beyond the bounds wherein the *Church of God* had, through all former ages, been circumscribed.”¹

Mather’s “Christianography” attaches a name to the hermeneutics which, even before the settlers disembarked, invested New England settlement, and by extension all of America, with a sense of religious destiny: that the new society extinguishing the various indigenous peoples’ claims to land and independence was a re-creation of the scriptural narrative of covenantal, chosen-people identity. At the center of Christianography is one or another version of typological association, the practice of reading events, people, and even landscapes as incarnations of scriptural precedent, as “antitypes” fulfilling original, biblical “types”: of Jesus as New Adam; of New England settlement as New Israel in New English Canaan; of John Norton as New Israel’s Nehemiah. Typological association powerfully circumscribed “regions far enough beyond the bounds,” and its energy—as social practice as well as rhetoric—propelled the ideological formation of all of New England’s colonial projects, despite the innumerable controversies over the proper exercise of what could only be a thoroughly inexact science. Certainly, Cotton Mather’s history at the beginning of the eighteenth century imposes a single orthodoxy upon a multiplicity of viewpoints contested even at the very center of Puritan leadership during the previous century; yet, despite the variances, despite the disputes over the application of millennialist narratives, the administration of communion, and other matters, the basic contours of typological identification became dominant.² While Virginia also employed biblical associations to what would evolve into its own hybrid plantation form of development, the “pure” settlement model of New England encouraged a more insistent, more coherent mythic structure that demanded far more corporate adherence. Identification as a New English Israel—which made the small settlement a sort of sanctified “foco” or small motor enacting

revolutionary prophecy within the larger motor of world history—proved highly effective in establishing such an exclusivist enterprise, one that did not require the direct employment of slave labor on a massive scale.

By the time Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk left Boston in 1819 to become the first Protestants to “occupy” a missionary “station” in Jerusalem—and the first citizens of the new republic to write firsthand accounts of Palestine—Christianography had complicated Sandys’s “double travels” with double landscapes. Palestine travel writing called upon two landscapes of mythic imagination and dense materiality, two intersecting sets of rhetorical and empirical fields, two textualized geographies to be read with and against each other to form a weave of interpenetrating narratives within a single identity, a complex interterritoriality. Both lands were “holy”; both held competing claims to prophetic fulfillment; both drew upon the combined energies and anxieties of religious belief and nationalist affirmation; and both tested the validity of the other. Typological association, then, is something more than a background for American Holy Land literature, nor is it merely a penchant for attaching biblical names—Salem, Goshen, Bethlehem, and the over one thousand place-names eventually dotting the American map.³ Christianography provides a dialectical tension that makes Palestine, the new Holy Land’s Other, a key site for constructing settler-colonial identities, whether through the vehicle of George Adams’s millennialist colonialism or Mark Twain’s parodic tourism.

Christianography, despite its name, draws far more from Deuteronomy than from the Beatitudes, relying on the core dynamic of the covenant in Hebrew Scriptures: the possession of land as a contractual outcome of a chosen people’s performance in a divine economy. Like the covenant with Abraham, “covenant-mercies” are granted in exchange for “covenant-duties” imposed upon the chosen people to hold onto its territorial claim.⁴ Even before departing for the New World, John Cotton declared to the passengers of the *Arabella* in his dockside sermon that God had covenanted with his chosen people to fulfill his promises in the Old Testament embodied in “types,” and the settlers, like the Israelites, were “to transplant themselves and set up a new Commonwealth” in harmony with this “first Plantation of the Primitive Church.” Alpha and Omega are simultaneous, with the settlement both in and beyond history, acting in both profane and sacred time: the project was at once a primitivist restoration of First Days and—given the persistently eschatological thinking of Cotton and all the saints—a theater of Last Days.⁵

Such a sense of a “peculiar people” parallels ideological constructs that have been employed by other settler-colonial societies, such as those of the Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland, the Afrikaners in South Africa, and the Zionist Jews in Israel, all of which are structured around similar covenantal or chosen-people self-definitions despite great variances in application.⁶ Donald Akenson, in a comparative study of these three societies, outlines general features of what he terms the covenantal mind-set, characteristics of which can be profitably applied to American settler-colonial experience, even with its rich diversity and hybridity. Most certainly, such a mind-set applies to Puritan New England, whose vision would come to dominate ideological formation throughout the United States.

According to Akenson, once the if-then terms of the divine economy are established (*if* covenant duties, *then* covenant mercies), covenantal societies employ a cultural “grid” of six major conceptual, narrative, and practical preoccupations. These societies are characterized firstly by strong enforcement of social laws through religious congregations rather than through civil jurisdictions, and secondly with particularly sharp definitions of their enemies against which boundaries enforced by unforgiving attitudes toward the reviled Other are imposed. A

third feature of this grid is the tendency to think of the deity in heavily anthropomorphized terms, particularly as a thoroughly warlike God. This God can be wrathful at human deviance from divine plan at the same time that he can lead his chosen people “to victory over Egypt under Moses, to the conquest of the land of Canaan, the repulse of the Midianites under the ‘judges,’ and to the defeat of the Philistines by David,” as well as to the conquest of the Irish, the Africans, and the Arabs. But the conception of the warlike God always operates in conjunction with a fourth characteristic: a deep attachment to specific pieces of land, notably the territories targeted for colonial appropriation. However, “[t]his will not be mere land hunger, but land will be seen as sacralized, as holy, and as a Promised Land.” The “pull” of holyland sensibility operates dynamically with the “push” of a fifth characteristic: the emotionally charged motif of Exodus, of escape from Egyptian bondage preparatory to the journey to the Promised Land. Finally, covenantal societies display deep anxieties concerning “group purity, either religious or racial or both,” dwelling particularly on “scriptural prohibitions on the mixing of their pure seed with the impure seed of lesser peoples.”⁷

Akenson is rigorous in applying these categories as he elaborates the significant differences in the ways the three societies incorporate this covenantal grid. He reckons, for example, that Israeli society became covenantal only with the coming to power of religious nationalists as a result of the Likud electoral victory in 1977. Certainly, Zionist ideological formation, as a secular movement, initially appeared to move *against* traditional notions of Jewish uniqueness in a desire to establish a “normal” national life. I would argue, however, that the covenantal relationship is in fact at play even in such a seemingly inverted dynamic inscribed by early secular Zionists, just as it is also at play within Anglo-American colonial development, despite its great hybridity. The North American “grid” does develop in relationship with other secular and religious factors, allowing the covenantal mind-set to transmute, to meld with Anglo-Saxonism, to slide into notions of social contract, and to transpose itself into other ideological constructs of chosenness in ways that elude Akenson’s somewhat restricted categories.

Nonetheless, Puritan settlement certainly displayed all the features of the covenantal mind-set—for example, rigid congregational discipline of social mores through a unique ecclesiastical-judicial establishment, along with the violent “othering” of “Amalkite” Indians and dissenting settlers alike. At the same time, the settlement was also inoculated with the self-awareness of being a model, of embodying a small elect acting not only on behalf of but before the entire world, a sense of being, quite literally, observed. Puritans, of course, acted before the eyes of God, but they often saw their audience as England, either as a New Israel itself or, with increasing frequency as the Revolution approached, as a hideous Babylon or Egypt—although their own polities, along with other settlers, Indians, Africans, Jews, and Catholics, were all called upon to witness (and, willingly or not, to participate in) typological reenactment. “Thus stands the cause betweene God and us. Wee are entered into Covenant with Him for this worke,” John Winthrop seals the divine bargain in his famous sermon on board the *Arabella*.

Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when tenn of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when hee shall make us a prayse and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for we must Consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eies of all people are uppon us.⁸

The broad sense of theatricality in the rhetoric of “a city upon a hill” called forth both an idealized polity/performance and a sanctified land/stage set on which to present it. Even when typology weakened, transmuted into metaphor, image, and symbol, and the exegetical association became imprecise, even hazy, this sense of a witnessed first-last “city upon a hill”—

of primordium and millennium, of exemplum and proscenium—shaped American settler identity, becoming an enduring verbal paradigm and a powerful form of socialization.

Sacvan Bercovitch describes how John Winthrop’s scriptural allusion reverberated in American culture as “a ritual summons, a call for order in a community committed to progress, mobility, and free enterprise.” Bercovitch lists the functions, directly or indirectly, the paradigm served, presenting the effects of Akenson’s covenantal mind-set in forming a nationalist settler identity:

First, the “city upon a hill” identified personal goals with those of the community; it fused the concepts of spiritual and social fulfillment, private and corporate progress. Second, as a model of identity, the “city upon a hill” worked to erode past allegiances, genealogical and national. The emigrants, it implied, were not Europeans in a foreign country, but a New Israel in New Canaan. Third, as a social idea, the “city upon a hill” displaced the Old World hierarchy of aristocracy and crown with a new model of authority—a company in covenant, the forms of the modern corporation sanctified by Bible prophecy. Finally, the “city upon a hill” centered the prophecy on the meaning of the locale. To found an outpost of New Jerusalem was by definition to launch an errand into the wilderness. And although at first that wilderness was confined to territories surrounding Massachusetts Bay, the concept itself had far wider, continental implications. In this sense, as in the others, the Puritan migration began a long errand into rhetoric, from the New England Way to the myth of America.⁹

After the Revolution this “errand into rhetoric” entered secular, political realms with increasing force. Enlightenment influences, such as Scottish Common Sense philosophy and Locke’s secular covenant, played upon the biblicalism of “the myth of America,” while other fundamental and potentially competing narratives—such as the myth of democracy’s origins among Teutonic tribes or the paradigm of Newton’s clockwork universe—almost always revolved around an affirming scriptural sun, no matter how much such notions as natural law influenced the thinking of ministers, theologians, or political theorists. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale and associate of Samuel Hopkins, gave the Connecticut election sermon in 1783—“The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor”—portraying the new republic as “God’s American Israel” and Washington as “America’s Joshua”; the country was a favored “new sovereignty” whose flag would be carried by commerce around the world in literal fulfillment of the “prophecy of Daniel.”¹⁰

On the Rising Glory of America, by Philip Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge, celebrated America’s ascendancy in 1771, while the Connecticut Wits—Timothy Dwight, David Humphreys, and Joel Barlow—attempted to craft epics for the new republic with the same great theme of divine election. But even with the “rising” enthusiasms of the time—for rationalizing the millennium, for example, or for converting the world to democracy through the cultivation of the “imaginary wants” of commerce¹¹—the rhetoric remained primarily biblical:

This is a land where the more noble light
Of holy revelation beams, the star
Which rose from Judah lights our skies . . .
.....
They [the prophecies of Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, and
Revelation] sing the final destiny of things,
The great result of all our labors here,
The last day’s glory, and the world renew’d
.....
A *Canaan* here,
Another *Canaan* shall excel the old,
And from a fairer Pisgah’s top be seen.¹²

When Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams met on July 4, 1776, to discuss the imagery for the new republic’s official seal—a critical moment of self-conscious symbolic

formation—the covenantal myth persisted. Only Adams suggested a classical motif—of Hercules resting from his labors—while Jefferson and Franklin, independent of each other, suggested scenes from Exodus. Franklin proposed Moses lifting his hand while the Red Sea closed over the Pharaoh and his army with a radically revisionist motto of “covenant-duties”: “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.” Jefferson, according to John Adams, “proposed the children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night,” although other influences adjusted biblical myth, with Jefferson also suggesting that the seal’s opposite side display “Hengist and Horsa, the Saxon chiefs from whom we claim the honor of being descended, and whose political principles and form of government we have assumed.” While Congress finally selected the imperial eagle as the country’s symbol, even the accompanying motto “Novus Ordo Seclorum” (new order of ages) overlay classical with millennialist meanings.¹³

As the nineteenth century advanced, Mather’s Christianography took on an increasingly syncretic mode, adapting to the “manifest” exegesis of destiny and geography: no longer was God’s will hidden; clearly inscribed, it could be materially enacted, and the expansion of the frontier became the moving threshold of God’s kingdom. “The Puritans had sought correlations between their environment and Scripture,” Bercovitch observes, yet “the Jacksonian romantics, expanding the outlook of the Revolutionary era, read the biblical promises in nature itself.”¹⁴ In *White-Jacket*, Melville, who in *Clarel* and other works would later reevaluate the whole notion of America’s redemptive cause, gave voice to this transmuted Christianography:

Escaped from the house of bondage, Israel of old did not follow after the ways of the Egyptians. To her was given an express dispensation; to her were given new things under the sun. And we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. . . . [W]ith ourselves, almost for the first time in the history of the earth, national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we cannot do a good to America, but we give alms to the world.¹⁵

While it is beyond the scope of this study to trace all the influences shaping Manifest Destiny, Teutonism, Social Darwinism, and other constructs of “unbounded philanthropy” as they were applied to the formation of what Robert Bellah has termed America’s “civil religion,” the biblical, covenantal underpinnings of all these formulations of settler-colonial identity remained remarkably constant. Even oppositional or rebellious impulses would often push against the envelope of the core myth without going beyond Christianographic bounds. For example, when Thomas Morton established one of the earliest “counter-cultures” at Merrymount, he titled his humanist defense of nature religion, sensuality, and almagamation with native cultures *New English Canaan*. When African slaves sang of escape to the Canaan of Canada or the North, the Promised Land was concretized in a counter-hegemonic Christianography. When Nat Turner, inspired to revolt by messianic visions, was captured, he was executed in a town in Virginia called Jerusalem, providing an ironic intersection of biblical traditions. And even when Southern pro-Confederate preachers like Benjamin Palmer justified slavery, they employed the myth of the curse of Ham and envisioned secession from the North as the escape from Pharaoh and as the division of Israel.

While the rhetoric of a “city upon a hill” identified a present by means of a past, it was always through the sense of the promise of a future, of “the last day’s glory, and the world renew’d,” accomplished according to a prophetic scenario. The “envelope” of Christianography was sealed by anticipation, millennialist formulations saturating all actions with a sense of meaning becoming immanent, of word becoming flesh, of sacred text becoming history. The exegetical relationship to geography and history was never a static correlation but one of a constantly unfolding script that made the moving frontier a divine injunction. As Bishop Berkeley’s famous

poem put it, in appropriately theatrical terms:

Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way;
The four first Acts already past,
A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day;
Time's noblest Offspring is the last.¹⁶

Millennialist expectation powered the exegetical process (and vice versa), an enthusiasm that would emerge again and again in the great revivals and awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and it was the “express dispensations” for both holy lands that would be regularly invoked by travelers to the “double landscape” of Palestine.

By the time Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons left for Palestine in 1819, a revolution in the millennialist outlook had drastically redrawn the eschatological scenario previously held by Increase Mather and others in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: their premillennialist vision had been a pessimistic one of unrelenting human depravity unrelieved by human agency; consequently, the Parousia had to precede the millennium. The new vision—advanced by Daniel Whitby, Jonathan Edwards, Elias Boudinot, and others—was postmillennialist: true religion would spread throughout an improving world; souls would be recovered from sin rather than lost; the Kingdom of Heaven would be realized by gradual means through conversion until the millennium would be achieved, after which a believing and enlightened world would then witness the return of Jesus. “Your mission,” the secretary of the Prudential Committee told Parsons and Fisk at their farewell convocation, “is to be regarded as a part of an extended and continually extending system of benevolent action for the recovery of the world for God and to happiness.”¹⁷

This system of benevolent action grew from a radical transformation in Calvinist ideas of grace, which expanded the numbers that could be saved from the small number of the elect to the entire world. Samuel Hopkins “improved” on Jonathan Edwards’s idea of true holiness founded on “disinterested benevolence toward Being in general,” transforming Edwards’s quietism into evangelical activism. Conversion, salvation, even the onset of the millennium—all could be advanced by human agency, contrary to traditional Calvinist belief in human depravity and inability to intervene in the divine narrative—that is, if believers were willing to spread the Word no matter what befell them; if they acted not from self-interest but from “disinterested benevolence.” To be “disinterested” meant abandoning the “interest” of the self to make an activist commitment and to take risks, even to be willing to be damned for the glory of God, while “benevolence” meant that God’s work was the continual improvement of all people, not just of the elect, whether those unimproved people knew it or not. The prophet Daniel’s description of “the time of the end”—“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”—lent meaning to all exploration, expansion, and missionary activity, particularly in the Holy Land, for Christian “benevolence” could not be denied to those millions perishing in ignorance.¹⁸

This missionary impulse was in great part a result of the millennialist enthusiasm which, increasingly, was expressed in pragmatic, optimistic American terms. Samuel Hopkins’s idea of the millennium, for example, entailed a detailed vision of a golden age very palpable to the average person: people would “have every desirable advantage and opportunity to get knowledge,” including “sufficient leisure,” since “it will not be necessary for each one to labor more than two or three hours in a day”; “there will be a great increase of light and knowledge to a degree vastly beyond what has been before,” bringing about “great improvement and advances

in all those mechanic arts, by which the earth will be subdued and cultivated,” with inventions and arts “beyond our present conception”; farming would be vastly eased, with barren lands producing plenty; “in the days of the millennium there will be fulness and plenty,” there would be no war, the whole world “would be united in one amiable society,” and all humanity would freely consent to speak one “universal language,” which “the wisest men” would “fix upon.”¹⁹ Hopkins’s secularized, material vision of a golden age was paralleled by the enthusiasm with which deists or secularists adopted the millennialist outlook: the United States was “a new *theatre* for the exhibition of new things . . . the only place both in the *Political* and *Natural World*, that opened a fair prospect for a beginning” of the thousand-year reign.²⁰

Many of “the signs of the times” announcing the advent of this golden age were read from the political upheavals of the age, including the recent establishment of the New World republic itself. “Prophecy, history and the present state of the world,” the missionary sponsors of Parsons and Fisk wrote, “seem to unite in declaring that the great pillars of the Papal and Mahometan impostures are now tottering to their fall. The civilized world is in a state of awful convulsion and unparalleled distress.”²¹ The Pope was identified with the “man of sin” of 2 Thessalonians, and Mohammed with the “false prophet” of Revelation, and the destruction of both—which was represented in the pouring out of the sixth and seventh vials in Revelation—announced “interesting” steps to the Kingdom of Heaven. Not only did the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars raise hopes of the Pope’s demise, tumults within the Ottoman Empire excited visions of the sultan’s destruction, particularly after Napoleon launched his invasion of Egypt and Palestine in 1798. Palestine would once again play a major role in God’s drama, with the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land as a central feature of the chiliastic scenario, a necessary prerequisite for the unfolding of the divine plan.

From the very first settlers, belief in Jewish restoration was, as one historian observes, “endemic to American culture,” and in the decades preceding the tide of travelers launched by the first Palestine Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), discussion and activity concerning the redemption of God’s ransomed people became particularly intense.²² The pious raised money for the London Jews Society or formed their American counterparts, such as the Female Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews of Boston and Vicinity, founded in 1816, to aid in their conversion and return. The expectation of Jewish restoration filled numerous sermons of the time: the cause of the Jews allowed believers to witness the literal fulfillment of prophecy in their “captivity” and “dereliction”; believers could also take action to hasten the chosen people’s redemption and thereby advance the millennium, while the persistent identification of Indians with the Lost Tribes—which oscillated with the opposite signification of Indians as diabolical Amelkites—inscribed this expectation on the New World itself.²³ Levi Parsons, for example, while in upstate New York (before his departure for Palestine) to visit the Stockbridge Indians, the collection of displaced tribes first evangelized by Edwards, Brainerd, and Hopkins themselves, was enthralled with “the thought that his audience might be the descendants of Abraham.” Interestingly, the converts also embraced such a conception of themselves, and at their solemn meeting, the chief, “a large man of princely appearance,” delivered a speech as a message for Parsons to transmit to “the Jews, their forefathers in Jerusalem,” while presenting the missionary with a donation of \$5.87 and two gold ornaments for their distant relations.²⁴

Interest in Jewish restoration, closely entwined with the spirit of millennialist anticipation, crossed all secular and ecclesiastical lines, the myth adapting itself to a variety of theological stances, whether the orthodoxy of Jedidiah Morse, the unitarianism of Joseph Priestly, or the

deism of Tom Paine. For example, John Adams, writing in 1819 to Mordecai Manuel Noah, could “let my imagination loose” to voice a liberal unitarian interpretation, writing that Noah, the future founder of the failed proto-Zionist Ararat colony near Buffalo in 1825, should be

at the head of a hundred thousand Israelites . . . & marching with them into Judea & making a conquest of that country & restoring your nation to the dominion of it. For I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation. For I believe the most enlightened men of it have participated in the ameliorations of the philosophy of the age, once restored to an independent government & no longer persecuted they would soon wear away some of the asperities & peculiarities of their character & possibly in time become liberal Unitarian christians for your Jehova is our Jehova & your God of Abraham Isaac & Jacob is our God.²⁵

Fascination could reach a fever pitch, even mania: in the late 1790s Reverend David Austin, who, according to Timothy Dwight, “was perfectly rational upon every subject except the Millennium,” had so convinced himself that the Jews would gather in New Haven before embarking for the Holy Land to await the Messiah that he spent his fortune on the construction of houses, stores, and wharves for the assembled Jews to use for their imminent departure from Connecticut.²⁶

In his farewell sermon before his mission to Palestine, “The Dereliction and Restoration of the Jews,” Levi Parsons addressed this most “interesting and remarkable” prophecy, elaborating on the “captivity” of the Jews—the fall of Jerusalem, the Crusader massacres, the expulsion from Spain, their persecutions around the world—and their foreordained restoration. Although the Jews would convert to Christianity, they would not lose their ethnic identity, gathering once again to the sacred soil to be rid of God’s curse and become His peculiar, beloved people once more. Parsons, like Austin, encouraged human instrumentality in advancing the divine process:

But how will this interesting work be accomplished? By the benevolence of the *Gentiles*. . . . As they gave the Gospel to *us*, we are to give it to *them*, and how great is the privilege of reflecting a part of that glory, which has so long beamed upon us from the holy of holies!²⁷

Fascination with Jews was buoyed by enthusiastic (and mostly inaccurate) testimonies of the rapid increase in conversions. A “general movement” of the Jews that would lead toward literal restoration was detected: “The testimony of [mostly British] missionaries now in the field” reported the “inclination” of leading families in Russia to embrace Christianity; in the Mediterranean “there have been many unexpected conversions;” while “the Jews are not so obdurate as they once were.”²⁸ Parsons explained that “there still exists in the breast of every Jew an unconquerable desire to inhabit the land which was given to their Fathers; a desire, which even a conversion to Christianity does not eradicate.” Gentile benevolence in facilitating this return would have its distinctly practical side; better than building wharves in New Haven, Parsons conceived of human instrumentality in political terms: “Destroy, then, the Ottoman Empire, and nothing but a *miracle* would prevent their immediate return from the four winds of heaven.”²⁹

Jewish restoration was a vision of social engineering—and repair of the American soul—even grander than the plans for African colonization that flowed from the same Hopkinsian eruption that also extended well into the nineteenth century. The restoration of the ancient, fallen nation was a powerful trope of emerging nationalism that, because of the close typological identification of the settler-colonial project with the Israelites, was essential to the assertion of American identities. Perhaps its most concentrated expression was enacted by the Mormons, who, through the elaboration of restoration of Latter-day Saints to the new American Zion and of Jews to the old one, most explicitly linked the fate of both holy lands.

Gershon Greenberg, in a study of American religious attitudes toward the Holy Land, summarizes the way Mormon theologians expressed the relationship:

There was another Jerusalem, one built in another land for deliverance in the last days. Located in America, this was the Zion of the millennium where saints would gather, the refuge from God's apocalyptic wrath against the nations of the world. . . . At the end of history America and the Land of Israel would both be central places of gathering deliverance but part of a larger unity. At the beginning of history waters and lands had separate places, and in the days of Peleg the earth was divided. According to Isaiah, once Zion was built in the west on the American continent it would be reunited with the eastern Zion. The House of Joseph (Mormons) in America and the House of Israel (Jews) in Canaan would come under one government, one code of law, and one king. However, the city of David and "Zion in Jerusalem" would be "an auxiliary and not the principal"; America-as-Zion would be more central than Zion-as-Land-of-Israel.³⁰

In this radical vision, the parallel Zions would, in fact, physically fuse, the continents actually joining together at the millennium. With such a vision Mormon Elder Orson Hyde made his ritual journey to Jerusalem in 1841 to offer a prayer on the Mount of Olives that God "would not only revolutionize this country, but renovate and make it glorious," and in such manner do the same for the House of Joseph in the American Zion.³¹ Other Holy Land travelers—including the more secular or romantic literary travelers, such as Bayard Taylor and George William Curtis, and the millennialist colonialists, such as Clorinda Minor (who as a corrective revised William Miller's failed Adventist calculations to include Jewish restoration), and the Mormon apostate George Adams—would embrace sacred narratives somewhat less radical than these (at least whole continents did not move). Nonetheless, the obsession with end-day scenarios and Jewish return to the Holy Land—what Melville termed the "preposterous Jew mania"—continued to shape all encounters with Palestine and, directly or indirectly, the traveler's own Christianographic engagement with a sacralized America. The restoration of the Jews, like the restoration of the primitive church, set American sensibilities on a journey inward by means of active intervention, making the creation of the new New World republic a very old endeavor at the same time that it gave the myth of American expansion the quality of a quest toward the central, essential nub of history, a journey back in time to a pure core.

New England settlers, facing the daunting task of creating an entirely new society under difficult conditions, drew upon anxieties resulting from the enclosures and other violent displacements at the beginnings of English industrialization in order to "plant" a stable grace, seeking "eternal" polities modeled on narratives of destiny imposed upon their own indeterminacy. Utopian molding, including typological and millennialist self-selection, requires a population that can act as a blank page for the inscription of schemes for perfection, a population driven by an imperative to enforce rational ordering upon disorganized raw material. James Holstun, considering the popularity of renaissance utopian writing and social projects (of both the secular and religious types), has observed how such texts and social experiments "encounter displaced populations that are variously created, discovered, and rediscovered," whether middle-class East-Anglian exiles, American Indians, or "Europe's archetypal displaced population, the Hebrew nation." Holstun notes that "the entire Puritan errand into the wilderness seems like an integral utopian project," although he cautions that because of the military, political, religious, and textual complexities of settlement, the Puritan errand lacks "discrete textual margins."³² In fact, this lack of margins means that a similar impulse toward social molding extends into the nineteenth century, with the biblical paradigm calling upon a seemingly paradoxical dynamic: an identification with wandering, both as exodus and as exile, along with a simultaneous assertion of the most cohesive model of the sanctified (and sedentary) nation. The text from which John Cotton constructed his 1630 sermon before the *Arabella's* departure, 2 Samuel 7:10, thus

vibrates with unintended irony, no matter the cries of countless corrective jeremiads: “Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, *and move no more*” (emphasis mine).

Displacement—of indigenous peoples, African slaves, European settlers and other immigrants, uprooted farmers, merchants, and workers—has been a constant within American history, a frontier which, even today, is by no means closed. The anxieties of displacement, along with the parallel fears arising from captivity (by Indians, slave masters, tyrants), provide much of the psychic energy for the early development of American narrative, and the dynamics of motion and constraint—of the flight from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan; of the implantation of Israel and the captivity in Babylon—make themselves quite evident in the fiction of this period in *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, just to name a few major examples. But travel literature, of which much American fiction often seems an extension, is particularly marked by these dynamics of displacement, dynamics so pervasive and so assumed as to seem almost invisible, particularly because travel literature is such a relatively democratic genre readily accessible to nonprofessional writers. Yet the special nature of Holy Land travel, which embraced such diverse activities as pilgrimage, missionary enterprise, colonial settlement, exploration, archaeological excavation, and tourist excursion, all in an over-textualized landscape, allowed sanctified and consciously desanctified displacement, along with the fear/delight of capture/enchantment, to stand almost as an epitome of American settler-colonial identity. Holy Land travel provided a constantly reproduced liminal state in which stable grace, although rarely found, could be sought in the slippage of Christianography’s double landscapes, a utopian quest particularly poignant in Palestine’s charged terrain.

The covenantal narrative remained fixed while visionary travelers moved through both holy lands—“sauntered” across *saint-terre* as Thoreau characterizes the wandering motion in “Walking”—and as Anglo-Americans “returned” to their sacred home in Palestine, they brought with them the images, remembrances, associative mechanisms, and anxieties of their physical motion across the New Jerusalem to complicate the geographic hermeneutics. Many of the travelers to the East would first make journeys to the American West or other colonial contact zones, and the experiences and memories of a variety of frontiers configure their representations of the Holy Land as each landscape is read against the other, an increasingly complex interterritoriality added to the already dense intertextuality of the Bible. Levi Parsons traveled across Vermont, the “Burned-over District” of revivalist enthusiasm in northern New York, and as far west as settlements in Ohio to raise funds for the missionary enterprise. He prayed at one of America’s sacred sites, Niagara Falls, and along the Canadian border visited ruins and battlefields of the two previous wars with England. Stephens traveled first through the Ohio Valley, the far West of his youth, while the artist John Banvard had first moved down the Mississippi valley, producing his celebrated panorama of the river’s length in the 1840s, before embarking for Palestine and Egypt to create his enormous panorama tracing a journey through the Holy Land in the 1850s.³³ William Lynch returned from the battle of Veracruz before embarking on his expedition, while Melville, who in his youth had visited the Ohio valley, voyaged even further west than California to his “Orienda” in the Pacific before making his “Eastern jaunt.”

Twain was drawn first to Nevada and California, even Hawaii, and that combination of Edenic, majestic landscapes with the rawest impulses of capitalist accumulation would often serve as the New World double of Palestine, whether as complement, replacement, or antipode. Twain frequently relates Holy Land realities to California, often in a negative or inverted

comparison, such as disparaging the Galilee in favor of Lake Tahoe. J. Ross Browne, John Franklin Swift, and Bayard Taylor drew similar, although usually more positive, connections. When Taylor, for example, crosses the Plain of Esdraelon, “one of the richest districts in the world,” he makes such an association concrete, painting a rare picture of abundance in Palestine that positively employs California, which he had only recently described in his gold-rush travel book *El Dorado*, as his reference point:

[I]f I were to liken Palestine to any other country I have seen, it would be California. The climate and succession of the seasons are the same, the soil is very similar in quality, and the landscapes present the same general features. Here, in spring, the plains are covered with that deluge of floral bloom, which makes California seem a paradise. Here there are the same picturesque groves, the same rank fields of wild oats clothing the mountain-sides, the same aromatic herbs impregnating the air with balm, and above all, the same blue, cloudless days and dewless nights. While traveling here, I am constantly reminded of our new Syria on the Pacific.³⁴

The sobriquet of “our new Syria on the Pacific” is inflected with a slight “infidel” irony, one form of the doubleness inherent in criss-crossing exegetical landscapes, particularly as Taylor does find a vital distinction while in the old Syria: “Here, there is no gold; there, no sacred memories.”³⁵ However, Taylor’s formulation sets out an equation whose reverberations, particularly in Melville and even more so in Twain, are far more complex than his quip would first seem to suggest: indeed, gold and sacred memories became increasingly exchangeable, if not interchangeable, and it is the extraction and appropriation of both (of exchange values and once “natural” cultural values, of futures and pasts, of Wests and Easts) that result from the peculiarly American adherence to God’s covenant that made Palestine such a crucial site for Melville’s and Twain’s “infidel” countertexts.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reading and Writing Sacred Geography

“BUT PALESTINE,” Clarel anxiously questions the profligate “Prodigal” with whom the young American divinity student shares a room in Bethlehem on his return to Jerusalem from his pilgrimage to the Dead Sea, “do you not / Concede some strangeness to her lot?” (4.26.140–42).¹ Coming toward the end of Herman Melville’s narrative poem, the question Clarel poses of Palestine’s “strangeness” is plaintive, even poignant, but the answer, which the “Prodigal” deflects with laughter and erotic (including homoerotic) sensuality, has become obvious: the Holy Land is indeed “strange,” but in ways different than Clarel could surmise. In Palestine there are no numinous essences, no hidden meanings, no divine messages engraved on the shrines, the innumerable rocks, the geologic strata of the sacred landscape; instead, by the end of Melville’s poem-pilgrimage, the “strangeness” of the land has become an ironic alienation: the divine presence is hidden or even evacuated, meanings are exhausted, Christianography and all hermeneutics are rendered impossible, and sacred text is erased from Jerusalem’s “blank, blank towers.”

Melville’s “strangeness” of extreme disappointment, disjuncture, and alienation is entirely different from what Clarel and other nineteenth-century travelers would have typically anticipated of the Holy Land encounter. Indeed, the country was considered strange, but it was a strangeness emanating from divine meanings waiting to be “read” as they oscillated between sacred ground and biblical text, a strangeness considerably more intense than the mere excitation of the exotic expected to be found in the Orient, one redolent with meanings about the divine and the destiny of “God’s New Israel.” Palestine is “where the Word made-flesh dwelt with men,” as William M. Thomson in *The Land and the Book* explains, and as a consequence it “is, and must ever be, an integral part of the Divine Revelation.”

Her testimony is essential to the chain of evidences, her aid invaluable in exposition. . . . In a word, Palestine is one vast tablet whereupon God’s messages to men have been drawn, and graven deep in living characters by the Great Publisher of glad tidings, to be seen and read of all to the end of time. The Land and the Book—with reverence be it said—constitute the ENTIRE and ALL-PERFECT TEXT, and should be studied together.²

American Protestants traveled to Palestine to read this entire, all-perfect text, to engage in a complex interpretive practice of reading a female land inscribed with a male pen that, by the coupling of soil and story, would provide evidence of faith and providence in a unified, eroticized entity created by the traveler who has come with great purpose to “read” it. As the celebrated minister Thomas De Witt Talmage later in the century put it, “[I]n proportion as Palestine is brought under close inspection, the Bible will be found more glorious and more true.”³ The joining of strange landscape to mythic narrative provided such powerful confirmation of the divine “that infidelity will be pronounced only another form of insanity, for no honest man can visit the Holy Land and remain an infidel,”⁴ an assertion by Talmage that the “insanity” of Clarel-Melville, along with the comic derangement of Twain, might only have served to

underscore.

But reading sacred geography inevitably also means writing it. Certainly, reading always involves a complex process of imaginative reconstruction, interpretive extension, and epistemological intervention, which constitutes a “writing” act in itself; at the same time, the “double travels” Sandys first delineates, the parallel but not identical journey composed upon the traveler’s return, is likewise a concrete form of “writing” sacred geography as representation. But the physical presence of the traveler on the terrain itself, the actual art of traveling, already alters (“writes”) the landscape at the same time as the journey reconstitutes (“writes”) the subjectivity of the traveler through a process of constant reciprocity. After the Civil War, the arrival of genteel tourists would be seen as “ruining” the pristine, authentic text of any culturally valued landscape, particularly a sacralized one; but even the antebellum, pretouristic traveler, whether “gentleman” or “lady,” adventurer or religious seeker, brought about an active intervention, a complex interplay of inscriptions upon sacred ground that would begin with the imprint of the traveler’s first footfall and could extend in several directions. Such interventions included the distribution of printed tracts (which unintentionally introduced print-capitalism to a region hitherto limited by the Ottoman state to sacred or administrative script), the persistent habit of carving graffiti on shrines, the practice of scavenging for artifacts, as well as the most radical of interventions, the establishment of millennialist settlements.

Holy Land travel clearly heightened the tendencies of all travelers toward self-dramatization. Not only could they view themselves engaged in some sort of secular ritual of self-conscious movement, but in Palestine they could read/write themselves within a material aura of a transcendent past that the American entered as an actor on a divine stage set who, simply by his presence, brought the drama back to life. Bayard Taylor could comment that “to travel through Palestine without [the Bible], would be like sailing without pilot or compass,”⁵ but the Bible was more than a guidebook; it became the Holy Land itself—and the scenery of the living Palestine was continually adjusted to the textualized necessities of biblical narrative: the traveler always stepped onto its pages.

Sarah Haight, the “Lady of New York,” describes this quickening sense of theatricality, even epiphany, that is very much a convention of Holy Land travel books:

When I was returning to our tent, the impression made on my mind when I first landed on the coast of Syria returned to me with increased interest, now that I felt myself actually treading in the soil of Palestine, the theatre of so many mighty events. All my historical recollections, sacred and profane, came fresh to my memory; and I fancied I saw in every face a patriarch, and in every warrior chieftain an apostle.⁶

In a passage in *Tent Life in the Holy Land*, William Prime further extends this “fancy” of seeing such a “theatre of so many mighty events” when he and his wife come to the aid of his dragoman, who has fallen ill by the side of the road:

I found him near the top of the hill, lying on the ground under the side of a large rock, in great pain, and having no other remedy at hand, I dismounted, and getting a bottle of brandy from the luncheon bag, poured it in quantities on his breast and rubbed it in with a flannel cloth. Miriam, coming up at the moment I was pouring it out, shouted out her recollection of an old Bible picture of the good Samaritan pouring oil and wine into the wounds of the man who had fallen among thieves, and we were thereby reminded that this was the road on which the scene of that parable was laid.⁷

Suddenly, Prime and his wife are thrust within “the old Bible picture” itself, inadvertently stumbling across their own figural reenactment, and what they see, even to the degree that they can imaginatively stand outside themselves to perceive themselves within that scene, is the “evidence” of a transcendent narrative behind the squalor, the rocky landscape, the exotic, and all

the other appurtenances of Oriental actuality. Prime recalls apprehensions he entertained before his travels that familiarity with the Holy Land might breed doubts about the “authenticity” of the story of Christ’s “life and death in a distant land, over which tradition and history have cast a holy radiance.” But his presence so enhanced his reading/writing of sacred geography that “far otherwise was the reality”:

Every step that I advanced on the soil of Palestine offered some new and startling evidence of the truth of the sacred story. Every hour we were exclaiming that the history must be true, so perfect was the proof before our eyes. The Bible was a new book, faith in which seemed now to have passed into actual sight, and every page of its record shone out with new, and a thousand-fold increased lustre.⁸

Indeed, the Bible would become a “new book,” one written again by means of direct experience of its land, because the journey to those places of “sacred story” brought evidence, proof, and truth, brought faith “into actual sight” of the imagination, which Prime, like so many other Holy Land travelers, could reenact in awe as a theatrical event.

Such sacred theatricality was imbued with a sense of earthly home and heavenly Home that drew the imagined scene toward a reification and sacralization of domesticity conflated with eternity. American child rearing and Protestant-based education infused biblicalism into all aspects of daily life, resulting in an intimate, personalized knowledge of an imagined Holy Land, the scope of which biblical archaeologist Edward Robinson’s often-quoted testimony of his New England upbringing indicates:

As in the case of most of my countrymen, especially in New England, the scenes of the Bible had made a deep impression upon my mind from the earliest childhood. . . . Indeed in no country of the world, perhaps, is such a feeling more widely diffused than in New England; in no country are Scriptures better known, or more highly prized. From his earliest years the child is there accustomed not only to read the Bible for himself; but he also reads or listens to it in the morning and evening devotions of the family, in the daily village-school, in the Sunday-school and Bible-class, and in the weekly ministrations of the sanctuary. Hence, as he grows up, the names of Sinai, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Promised Land, become associated with his earliest recollections and holiest feelings.⁹

While Robinson attests that “a scientific motive” had also become connected to his own Holy Land travels, the dream-like quality that connects childhood and home to Palestine, persisting as a powerfully suggestive force, was only enhanced by his researches. William Prime recalls his Hudson Valley youth, when “[l]ying in my mother’s arms, year after year, I had slept peaceful sleep as she sang the songs of Christian story,” dramatizing how deeply ingrained was the biblical narrative in family and cultural life.¹⁰ Prime remembers as he crosses into Palestine that now, when his “father’s head was white with the snows of three-score years and ten,” he can only stammer, in the convention of awe at first setting foot on sacred ground, that

though I—I—yes, it was even so—I knew it not—I was on the border of Canaan, my footsteps were entering Holy Land on earth, and his, far away from me, were on the borders of the Promised Land! I was close to the Jerusalem of the cross, he already close to the Jerusalem of the crown—I was going to lave my weary limbs in the Jordan, he was going to lie down on the banks of the river of life—I was to go wearily to Gethsemane and the place of death and the sepulchre, he was passing swiftly to the presence of the Risen Lord!¹¹

Prime’s overheated melodrama underscores the associative power that inevitably conflates Palestine with hearth and home—the mother, the father, and the son, in Prime’s case, all in the Hudson Valley. By making the journey, all the associations become real, for the transformative ontology of the Holy Land can, indeed, turn word into flesh.

“This is the first country where I have felt at home,” exclaimed Methodist Episcopal bishop Henry White Warren in 1874, “yet I have been in no country that is so unlike my own.” Such

associative power, expressed in what John Davis calls Warren's "dreamy, atemporal haze of nostalgia,"¹² could draw the conventions of awe and conflation into an act of spiritual appropriation:

Somehow this seems as if I had lived here long ago in my half-forgotten youth, or possibly in some ante-natal condition, dimly remembered. As I try to clear away the mists, bring forward the distant, and make present what seems prehistoric, I find myself at my mother's side and my early childhood renewed. Now I see why this strange country seems so natural. Its customs, sights, sounds, and localities were those I lived among in that early time, as shown to me by pictures, explained by word, and funded as a part of my undying property.¹³

Again, the dynamic between domestic remembrances, pictorial representation, maternal narrative, and the traveler's presence in "this strange country" resolves itself into a remarkably material identification with "my undying property." John Davis, in *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture*, identifies Warren's conflation of memory with property as "symptomatic of the attitudes of many Americans," which included "an ambivalence toward the landscape mediated by an amorphous sense of the past, a need to invoke their cultural roots as a legitimizing tie to the biblical region, and a feeling of possessiveness that prompted repeated assertions of a national 'claim' to the Holy Land as patrimony."¹⁴ Such blurring of the lines between religiosity, domesticity, colonial appropriation, and national identity heightened the ways sacred theatricality assisted the development of an "imagined community" of settlers endowed with a divine mission of claiming as their "undying property" the new Holy Land as a sacred extension or double of their patrimony of the original.

While sacred theatricality sought to make such imaginary bonds real, the profane theatricality of the Orient fashioned through *Arabian Nights* and other facets of Orientalist fascination would melt the all-too-real actuality of the East into dreams of an altogether different sort. Melville, sailing through the Hellespont, writes in his journal that "Asia looked a sort of used up—superannuated,"¹⁵ while later he couples the conventional observation of the Orient's age with the unconventional comparison to the South Pacific:

Contrast between the Greek isles & those of the Polynesian archipelago. The former have lost their virginity. The latter are fresh as at their first creation. The former look worn, and are meager, like life after enthusiasm is gone. The aspect of all of them is sterile & dry. Even Delos whose flowers rose by miracle in the sea, is now a barren moor, & to look upon the bleak yellow of Patmos, who would ever think that a god had been there.¹⁶

Crossing to the Orient meant a separation from constraints, a moving across the boundaries of order, from the new and fertile to the old and sterile, which Alexander Kinglake, whose *Eothen* set the tone for so many travelers, dramatizes when he crosses the Sava River from Christian Austria to Ottoman Hungary accompanied by a "compromised" official tainted by contact with quarantined travelers. But Kinglake, leaving "wheel-going Europe," is thrilled to "see the Splendour and Havoc of the East," for "[i]t is sweet to find oneself free from the stale civilization of Europe," as if he has found in the wreckage of the East the same "virginity" of Melville's Typee. Kinglake casts himself in this romantic theater of unclean, unholy exoticism through the remembrance of the audience left behind, for recalling "how many poor devils are living in a state of utter respectability," the traveler "will glory the more in your own delightful escape."¹⁷

Twain similarly indicates the transformative power of Oriental theatricality through the frantic, acquisitive drive of the tourist. "We wanted something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign," Twain writes as his little party enters Tangier, the first Arab city he encounters on the *Quaker City's* excursion. He finds Tangier

foreign from top to bottom—foreign from center to circumference—foreign inside and outside and all around—nothing anywhere about it to dilute its foreignness—nothing to remind us of any other people or any other land under the sun.¹⁸

Such a quest for the exotic, for “something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign,” was a desire for release, a shedding of inhibitions, a plumbing of mysteries, both a dissolving into and a sharp separation from the Other—“Here are no white men visible, yet swarms of humanity are all about us”—which allowed the traveler to observe himself from outside his own center and circumference, to become more distinct and, as a consequence, more his white self, while awash in a sea of color, at the same time that he is released from the sexual constraints of that self.

The transformative power of the unholy Orient is embodied perhaps most dramatically by Bayard Taylor who, after taking a massive dose of hashish, describes with a delicious, self-reflexive eloquence his hallucinatory state:

While I was most given up to the magnificent delusion, I saw its cause and felt its absurdity most clearly. . . . I was conscious of two distinct conditions of being in the same moment. Yet, singular as it may seem, neither conflicted with the other. My enjoyment of the visions was complete and absolute, undisturbed by the faintest doubt of their reality; while, in some other chamber of my brain, Reason sat coolly watching them, and heaping the liveliest ridicule on their fantastic features. One set of nerves was thrilled with the bliss of the gods, while another was convulsed with unquenchable laughter at that very bliss. . . . I was double, not “swan and shadow,” but rather, Sphinx-like, human and beast. A true Sphinx, I was a riddle and a mystery to myself.¹⁹

Such an ability to observe himself conjuring dreams is more a result, perhaps, of hashish than of the Orient, yet this sense of “two distinct conditions of being,” of a double consciousness, spills over into the more ordinary incidents of his travels, through which Taylor accentuates his ironic, displaced, “double” stance.

Conjuring “two distinct conditions of being” could be promoted in less extreme fashion by experiencing the dream-like theatricality of Oriental splendor, the romance of bedouin nobility (such as the exploits of the celebrated Sheikh Ali Agha, who accompanied William Lynch along part of his expedition), and all the other exotica of the East. Holy Land travelers could sample the delights of Turkish coffee, puff on *narghiles* (water pipes), scorch themselves in Turkish baths while enjoying the homoerotic attraction that only the East allows (as does Taylor), and attempt to experience all the other marvels of Eastern fable. Often, they would cross over and observe themselves by temporarily “turning Turk” or “going Arab,” traveling, as did Taylor, in native dress, indulging themselves in a popular mode of cultural transvestism. When William Cullen Bryant returned from his visit to the East, where he had grown the long, flowing “Eastern” beard made famous in his later portraits, he played a prank:

I put on a turban, a Turkish silk skirt and striped silk gown, which I got at Damascus, and a pair of yellow slippers, and held a fifteen minutes’ conversation in broken English with Miss Hopkins, our next-door neighbor, she thinking all the time that I was a Turk.²⁰

Bryant’s brief masquerade—like that “latent disposition in some quarters to come out as Turks” felt by Twain’s fellow excursionists at the end of the *Quaker City’s* voyage—performed the erotic, transformative doubling that Orientalist theatricality allowed, and the fact that Bryant kept his beard perhaps reflected its permanent mark of change.²¹

Although the dream-like sense of the Orient was powerful, it did not dominate or obscure the perception of *sacred* theatricality, which was, in fact, enhanced by the overlapping of the two processes. Reading sacred geography often involved casting contemporary Arabs and other Orientals in “authentic” biblical scenes, but bringing scriptural narrative “into actual sight” through imaginative reconstitution also took on other practices, many of which allowed

American travelers to participate in their own providential, as well as erotic and racial, reaffirmation through typological doubling. Encounters with Palestine coincided with the rise of higher criticism and other attempts to regard the Bible as a “new book” that were not in line with Protestant orthodoxy. As a consequence, observations of biblical topography, shrines, and even local customs took on a heightened role of providing “evidences,” not just of “sacred story” regarded broadly, of general or approximate coincidence of place and verse invoked by reading the appropriate scriptural passage at the presumed site of its occurrence (“[B]ehold,” says Rolfe, the Melville-like sailor in *Clarel*, “Yon object tallies with thy text” [1.34.11–12]), but of a quest for the literalist confirmation of prophetic fulfillment that, in turn, would confirm the prophetic role of the traveler himself.

Anxieties over literalist interpretations of prophetic texts were clearly aroused by John Lloyd Stephens in *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (1837) when the New York lawyer, while seeking to restore his health through travel, inadvertently violated the biblical curse of Edom. Stephens was able to flaunt the apparent veracity of biblical prophecy by crossing the accursed desert wilderness of Idumaea when he took the unusual route from the Red Sea port of Aqaba through the desert to Hebron. “I was the first traveler who had ever attempted to pass through the doomed and blighted Edom,” Stephens explains. “In very truth, the prophecy of Isaiah, ‘None shall pass through it for ever and ever,’ seemed in a state of literal fulfillment”—that is, until the young lawyer traversed the wasteland to become the first American to visit the ancient cliff city of Petra.²²

Stephens is keenly aware of Alexander Keith, who in his “celebrated treatise,”²³ *The Evidence of Prophecy*—one of the books by the Scottish divine that greatly influenced literalist trends within antebellum Anglo-American Protestantism²⁴—categorically asserts that anyone passing through the cursed land of Edom would perish. “I did not mean to brave the prophecy,” explains Stephens, whom one historian describes as a “relaxed Episcopalian.”²⁵ Despite Stephens’s deference to Scripture, some contemporary reviewers complained his book was “spiced” with “levities . . . which occasionally give a queer air of irreverence . . . about sacred things.”²⁶ Nonetheless, he seeks an orthodox justification for the feat of having survived God’s wrath, as enunciated in Isaiah 34:5,10–17 and Ezekiel 35:7 and elaborated by “the learned commentator” Keith:

I had already learned to regard the words of the inspired penman with an interest I never felt before; and with the evidence I had already had of the sure fulfillment of their predictions, I should have considered it daring and impious to place myself in the way of a still impending curse. But I did not go so far as the learned commentator and to me the words of the prophet seemed sufficiently verified in the total breaking up of the route then traveled, as the great highway from Jerusalem to the Red Sea and India, and the general and probably eternal desolation that reigns in Edom.²⁷

After crossing the wasteland, Stephens nevertheless declares that he is “the only person, except the wandering Arabs [to whom the curse apparently did not apply], who ever did pass through the doomed and forbidden Edom, beholding with his own eyes the fearful fulfillment of the terrible denunciations of an offended God.” Having made the passage, Stephens is careful to argue against the accuracy of Keith’s exegesis while still defending the veracity of scriptural prophecy itself:

And, though I did pass through and yet was not cut off, God forbid that I should count the prophecy a lie: no; even though I had been a confirmed skeptic, I had seen enough, in wandering with the Bible in my hand in the unpeopled desert, to tear up the very foundations of unbelief, and scatter its fragments to the winds. In my judgement, the words of the prophet are abundantly fulfilled in the destruction and desolation of the ancient Edom, and the complete and eternal breaking up of a great public highway; and it is neither necessary nor useful to extend the denunciation against a passing traveler.²⁸

Despite Stephens's series of corrective interpretive adjustments in charting the careful distinctions between prophecy itself and its interpretation, his own reading/writing of the textualized landscape allows for too many uncertainties, including the very possibility of the prophecy's invalidation, at least as noted by Edgar Allan Poe.

In his review of Stephens's travel account, Poe illustrates the ways in which a concept or narrative can become a material force, for Stephens's "double travels" provoked an exegetical materiality separate from the land itself. Poe focuses principally on the curse of Edom's uncertainties, arguing a strange, deprecating defense of Stephens's empirical knowledge while at the same time dueling with, and ultimately defeating, Keith's authority, all within a virtuoso exegetical performance that, according to one early twentieth-century editor, brought Poe's "reputation for erudition . . . perilously near charlatanry."²⁹ Poe's obsessive critique points to the degree that the quest for "evidences" as a hermeneutical creation did not even require direct encounter with the landscape, although Poe does defend the testimony of both travel experience and critical intelligence because "skepticism has been made the root of belief": in other words, scientific investigation will inevitably reaffirm "the providence of Deity."

While acknowledging that Keith's work "must still be regarded as one of the most important triumphs of faith, and, beyond doubt, as a most lucid and conclusive train of argument,"³⁰ Poe asserts that Keith misconceives what "the exact boundaries of ancient Edom are," concluding that Stephens did not in fact cross the accursed terrain. Extending his argument further, he uses the Hebrew translations of a mutual friend, Charles Anthon, Stephens's old classics professor at Columbia, to prove that even if Stephens were to have passed through the wasteland, a true, literal interpretation of the text would still reveal that the prophecy remained fulfilled. Poe proceeds to explicate the "exact" Hebrew text, along with Greek and Latin translations, to prove that the words of the prophets, "when literally construed, intend only to predict the general desolation and abandonment of the land."³¹ Poe has in fact reached the identical conclusion as John Lloyd Stephens—that the curse means general desolation and not prohibition against passage through the wasteland—although Poe has achieved his goal through the armchair deductions of a philological Monsieur Dupin rather than through the empiricist verification of experience.

Nonetheless, Poe continues to assert "that, in *all* instances, the most strictly literal interpretation will apply,"³² arguing that thoroughgoing literalness is "an *essential* feature in prophecy" and literal interpretation demands attention even to "minuteness of detail."³³ Indeed, Poe goes so far as to note that

a strict prohibition on the part of the Deity, of an entrance into, or passage through, Idumaea, would have effectually cut off from mankind all evidence of this prior sentence of desolation and abandonment; the prediction itself being thus rendered a dead letter, when viewed in regard to its ulterior and most important purpose—dissemination of the faith.³⁴

In other words, Poe has the theological audacity to assume that God could not have banned passage because to have done so would have denied mankind "all evidence" of providence, something that—at least according to Poe—God would never allow. His literalness has taken him to philological origins and not mere English renderings; he has revealed the true, thoroughgoing textualization of the world through his Hebraic tour de force; and in the course of this irrefutable logic (assisted by Anthon) Poe outargues the exegete, overshadows the traveler, and presumes to know the mind of God. Even as Poe reaffirms the dominance of the Bible, his fascination with the exercise of intellect in and of itself reveals a certain subversive quality, for he abstracts the debate over sacred narrative to such a degree that actual contact with sacred

ground (like the loss of a beloved) is valued only in so much as it serves his discursive purposes. Bible in hand, Stephens, and those who followed, traveled across the landscape, constantly attempting to reconcile what they beheld to what they read; Poe, merely more rhetorically extreme than countless other calculators of prophecy at the time, did not even need to leave his writing desk to reconcile the two.

I dwell on this because Palestine—as Stephens, Keith, and Poe in their different approaches illustrate—became “one vast tablet,” in Thomson’s phrase, for inscribing the “evidences” of the volatile, sectarian ferment of American Protestantism and not of a univocal Bible, although by the time Twain arrived in 1867 that tablet had been written over so many times as to become almost illegible:

I am sure, from the tenor of books I have read, that many who have visited this land in years gone by, were Presbyterians, and came seeking evidence in support of their particular creed; they found a Presbyterian Palestine, and they had already made up their minds to find no other, though possibly they did not know it, being blinded by their zeal. Others were Baptists, seeking Baptist evidences and a Baptist Palestine. Others were Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians, seeking evidences indorsing their several creeds, and a Catholic, a Methodist, an Episcopalian Palestine. Honest as these men’s intentions may have been, they were full of partialities and prejudices, they entered the country with their verdicts already prepared, and they could no more write dispassionately and impartially about it than they could about their own wives and children.³⁵

Twain enunciates his own empiricist hermeneutics as an alternative, seeking for the reader “how *he* would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in those countries before him.” Yet his apparently unvarnished construction of Palestine is as partial and prejudiced as any of the other creedal travelers, only his is fashioned by a self-invented “American Vandal,” a skeptical, frontier debunker of fraudulence whose peroration over the ruined landscape is half conventional bathos, half parody: “Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes . . . Palestine is desolate and unlovely . . . Palestine is no more of this work-day world. It is sacred to poetry and tradition—it is dream-land.”³⁶

This “dream-land,” as historian Jonathan Sarna observes, “functioned like the inkblots in a Rorschach test. Particular religious traditions infused the land with meaning in a manner that tells us much more about these various religious traditions than about the realities of the Holy Land itself. Indeed, reality often posed difficult problems because of the dissonance created by the gap between what the faithful hoped for and what they found.”³⁷ To be sure, the occasional, inadvertent violations of biblical certainties by travelers like Stephens provided far fewer problems than the uncertainties, disjunctures, even falsities of the land itself, for this cognitive dissonance became a vast disappointment with ontological implications, a major characteristic bedeviling “reading” that demanded constant, corrective “writing.” Again and again, the shock of direct experience led travelers to a monumental deflation threatening key values ascribed to the Holy Land, transforming the encounter with the sacred “dream-land” into a nightmarish experience in which “strange” Jerusalem became a portal to the nether regions and not a gateway to the divine. Perhaps more than any other traveler, Melville describes Palestine as a blasted landscape, “A caked depopulated hell” (2.11.68), the fact of which is central to *Clarel’s* pilgrimage-descent. In his journal, Melville describes the “barrenness of Judea” in his telegraphic, open style:

Whitish mildew pervading whole tracts of landscape—bleached—leprosy—encrustation of curses—old cheese—bones of rocks,—crunched, knawed, & mumbled—mere refuse & rubbish of creation—like that laying outside of Jaffa Gate—all Judea seems to have been accumulations of this rubbish.³⁸

Most travelers found the denizens of the Holy Land even more repulsive than its terrain. Jews,

according to Twain, are “long-nosed, lanky, dyspeptic-looking body-snatchers,” while Arabs seem nothing more than “Digger Indians” living in “their shabby villages of wigwams.”³⁹ Islam would typically provoke amazement and disgust, while the Turk and the Arab are regarded as indolent, stupid, haughty, and decadent. Nothing, however, disappoints more than the shabby state of the “nominal” Christians of the Holy Land, particularly the sectarian squabbles over the possession of shrines, the meretricious tawdriness of the holy places, and the perceived barbarity of Eastern rites. Bayard Taylor declares:

Were I cast here, ignorant of any religion, and were I to compare the lives and practices of the different sects as the means of making my choice—in short, to judge of each faith by the conduct of its professors—I should at once turn Mussulman.⁴⁰

The tour of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was a particularly nightmarish experience for most travelers. “All is glitter & nothing is gold,” Melville describes his visit to Christ’s tomb, “A sickening cheat.” After George William Curtis visits the shrine, he voices his revulsion in the characteristic idiom of Western chauvinism and appropriation:

I make no other complaint than that of disgust. If Jerusalem were nearer Europe or America, it would be different, at least it would be more decent, from the higher character of the population. But going up to Jerusalem as to the holiest city of the purest faith, you are disappointed by what you see of that faith there, as you would be upon approaching a banquet of wit and beauty, to find it a festival of idiots and the insane.⁴¹

The lack of “higher character” of the people was paralleled by the absence of “the purest faith” of Protestant decorum. In *Clarel*, Melville once more exclaims how “strange” Palestine is, but this time the alienation is because

of the sacred places here,
And all through Palestine indeed,
Not one we Protestants hold dear
Enough to tend and care for.

(4.7.47–50)

Indeed, the absence of an official Protestant presence (even after the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian bishopric and other Protestant projects) pushed Americans toward a greater interest in landscape and topography (outside the walls of shrines) and archaeology (beneath them), which, as a consequence, made searching for “evidences” often a process of reading/ writing truth in panoramic views or beneath layers of fraudulence and decay.

Pliny Fisk, attempting to comprehend Jerusalem, initiates the rhetoric of such a search with a characteristic comparison of the fallen Holy City to a once beautiful lady

whom we have not seen for many years, and who has passed through a great variety of changes and misfortunes, which have caused the rose on her cheeks to fade, her flesh to consume away, and her skin to become dry and withered, and have covered her face with the wrinkles of age; but who still retains some general features, by which we recognize her as the same person, who used to be the delight of the circle in which she moved.⁴²

In response to this gendered city, Fisk abruptly switches from female metaphor to male measurement, launching Jerusalem’s resuscitation with the data-gathering “penetration” characteristic of Western discovery: “We measured the city by paces, and the following is the result:—West side 768 paces; south side 1149; east side 943; north side 1419; total 4279 paces.”⁴³

Reading and writing sacred geography often took on the masculine characteristics of both

Western exploration and Orientalist eroticism, such as the tropes of the East's lost "virginity," which Melville employed in his journal, and of "penetrating" Oriental (and biblical) veils of mysteries. Inevitably, for example, the male literary traveler would explore the harem, mentally if not physically. William Prime even managed to be invited to visit his wife as she was being entertained in the women's quarters of one of their hosts. Women travelers were often given greater access to female realms, such as Sarah Haight's visit to a harem, and they often expressed empathy for Eastern women, as did Clorinda Minor, who sympathetically observed the suffering of women laborously pushing grindstones in a Jerusalem flour mill.⁴⁴ J. Ross Browne used his observations to note the good fortune that American women possessed in having obtained higher, democratic status. For the most part, however, male American travelers occupied themselves by peering through the *yashmaks*, Turkish gowns, peeking behind veils, marveling how every inch of the female body was covered (while in Beirut women's breasts were embarrassingly exposed, at least to Twain's eyes), reporting on the lascivious belly dance, or offering worldly, considered opinions on comparative feminine beauty (or lack thereof) based only on peeks or surprise encounters, such as when Twain was startled to experience "Oriental simplicity" in the form of a well-developed thirteen-year-old girl "dressed like Eve before the fall" on the road to the Pyramids. In *Clarel*, Melville, as usual, goes even further, entertaining erotic associations with apostasy, miscegenation, and homosexuality, as well as alluding throughout the poem to the dalliance of his South Pacific interlude when his frolic with Fayaway in *Typee* was chased down by the "deacon-magistrates" of civilization.

In such a context, reading and writing sacred geography—seeing the truth of shrines and landscapes "with his own eyes"—held a pronounced erotic charge, such as that deposited in the link between *Clarel*'s own quest for "evidences" and his love for the Jewess Ruth, the living (and dying) evidence of Judaic truth. Consequently, for the traveler to see "with his own eyes" became a complicated test of manhood, one requiring discipline as well as daring: an analogue for the love quest. Once again, Poe sets the contours in his review of Stephens's book. Characterizing *Incidents of Travel* as "evinced a manliness of feeling,"⁴⁵ Poe describes the personality expected of the male traveler in his praise of its author's sensibility:

Equally free from the exaggerated sentimentality of Chateaubriand, or the sublimated, the *too French* enthusiasm of Lamartine on the one hand, and on the other from the degrading spirit of utilitarianism, which sees in mountains and waterfalls only quarries and manufacturing sites, Mr. Stephens writes like a man of good sense and sound feeling.⁴⁶

To be a man of "good sense and sound feeling" required that the Holy Land traveler should maintain a balanced distance, avoiding proscribed manias: he should neither be an over-intellectual, too French (and, therefore, too Catholic and too feminine) sentimentalist, nor a crude materialist in his attempt to penetrate sacred mysteries.

Although Edward Robinson demonstrated even more acutely Fisk's impulse to delve beneath the female surface, he exemplified this golden mean at the same time he pursued the approved mania for "evidences." A year after Stephens's book was published, Robinson, who deferred taking his chair as professor of biblical literature at the Union Theological Seminary until he had first explored the Holy Land, joined the missionary Eli Smith to embark upon a monumental archaeological study that would appear in 1841 as the three-volume *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea*. Generally regarded as the founder of biblical archaeology, his biographers praised him upon his death as one who "did not read *between* the lines" of sacred text, but, rather, as one who "read the lines themselves" to negotiate the calculated melding of science and faith: "He had no sympathy with either mysticism or

rationalism. He accepted revealed mysteries without being a mystic, and he used all the lights of reason without being a rationalist.”⁴⁷

Robinson’s task involved searching for the authentic biblical past beneath the corruptions of the Eastern and Latin churches. After one visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he exclaimed that

to see these venerated places and the very name of our holy religion profaned by idle and lying mummeries; while the proud Mussulman looks on with haughty scorn; all this excited in my mind a feeling too painful to be borne; and I never visited the place again.⁴⁸

Indeed, in his single-minded devotion to his task he became what William Thomson calls “the greatest master of measuring tape in the world,”⁴⁹ yet Robinson persisted in his disdain for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to such a degree that he would not even deign to take his measuring tape within its doors. He rejected all ecclesiastical traditions for identifying the location of biblical sites, unless scripturally or otherwise supported, while he delved into Arabic place-names as a hitherto neglected repository of biblical locales. Robinson reinscribed the topography with his own “evidences,” discovering about one hundred previously unknown biblical sites, becoming the first to crawl through “Siloa’s Brook” to prove that what had been previously thought of as two fountains was actually one stream and to identify an arch in Jerusalem’s foundations, which (even today) is called “Robinson’s Arch.”⁵⁰

Paradoxically, however, by seeking to uncover evidences of history beneath sacred geography, Robinson unwittingly gave further license to “the degrading spirit of utilitarianism” that Poe cautioned against: “Zion, like Rome, is Niebuhrized,” as Melville complains. The impulse of archaeologist Barthold Niebuhr to historicize ancient Rome, like the higher criticism of Strauss and others, inevitably allows that “doubt attends” (1.34.19–20). “The deuce take their penetration & acumen,” Melville rages in his journal. “They have robbed us of the bloom. If they have undeceived any one—no thanks to them.”⁵¹ The radical recovery of biblical topography allowed other travelers to entertain other, less balanced (and less manly) modes of reading and writing the terrain: the landscape’s achieving full status as “evidence” (its *unearthing*, so to speak) could lead to its desanctification. The “Hegelized,” materialist Jew Margoth in *Clarel*, for example, would “controvert” all religious tracts through the application of science:

“Sirs, heed me:
This total tract,” and Esau’s hand
He waved; “the plain—the vale—Lot’s sea—
It needs we scientists remand
Back from old theologic myth
To geologic hammers.”

(2.20.45–50)

It was but an inevitable leap from pulverizing “theologic myth” in the double meanings of “tract” to actually reinscribing such desanctified tracts with the signifiers of nineteenth-century progress:

Then [Margoth] mentions Salem: “Stale is she!
Lay flat the walls, let in the air.
That folk no more may sicken there!
Wake up the dead; and let there be
Rails, wires, from Olivet to the sea,
With station in Gethsemane.”

Although Melville scorns Margoth as an overbearing, vulgar scoffer, “improvements” such as the railroad and the telegraph were often regarded as prophetic fulfillments themselves, allowing “utilitarianism” to mix readily with millennialist enthusiasm. “A surprising tide of enterprise is already setting in toward the East,” writes the Campbellite missionary and archaeologist James T. Barclay in *The City of the Great King* (1858), “in anticipation of the general breaking up of the Turkish Empire and the enfranchisement of the Jews.”⁵² The Eastern Question fostered such anticipation, as the great powers positioned themselves to take advantage of the moribund Ottoman Empire, while the “surprising tide of enterprise” also provided the means through which Holy Land travelers could write sacred geography according to modern, political notions of salvation, particularly when linked to one or another form of religio-nationalist theatricality, such as William F. Lynch’s adventure.

Lieutenant Commander William F. Lynch, released from duties in the Mexican War after the fall of Vera Cruz, persuaded the secretary of the navy to let him mount his expedition in 1847. Lynch was confident that his proposal to explore the Jordan River and the Dead Sea would be approved:

I felt that a liberal and enlightened community would not long condemn an attempt to explore a distant river, and its wondrous reservoir,—the first, teeming with sacred associations, and the last, enveloped in a mystery, which had defied all previous attempts to penetrate it.⁵³

Assured that the “liberal and enlightened” victors against Mexico would sponsor his adventure, Lynch made a point of selecting “young, muscular, native-born Americans of sober habits, from each of whom I exacted a pledge to abstain from all intoxicating drinks,”⁵⁴ and with this crew of exemplary Americans, he charted the Jordan and the Dead Sea, confirmed that the waters of the river did in fact “mingle” with those of the lake, as the Bible said, flaunted yet another curse that none who ventured on the Dead Sea’s waters would live, and recorded important nautical and scientific measurements. But, more important, as he landed at Acre and set up camp outside Haifa, Lynch notes that “for the first time, perhaps, without the consular precincts, the American flag has been raised in Palestine. May it be the harbinger of regeneration to a now hapless people!”⁵⁵ Voicing the expansionist vigor of the recent war, Lynch could observe that “fifty well-armed, resolute Franks, *with a large sum of money*, could revolutionize the whole country.”⁵⁶

“Enlightened and liberal” readers could vicariously participate in Lynch’s symbolic appropriation of the Holy Land, but his patriotic theatricality and filibustering fantasies were by no means isolated. Stephens, who initially signed his travel account simply “An American Traveler,” reveled in waving Old Glory as he sailed up the Nile, while Taylor could cap off his exultation over the Plain of Sharon as “one of the richest districts in the world” with the exclamation, “Give Palestine into Christian hands, and it will again flow with milk and honey.”⁵⁷ Only God would “give” Palestine, but, although the European powers were the “resolute Franks” destined to take up the task, Americans could write themselves into that set of “sacred [colonial] associations” from which the divinity would draw the covenant land’s fate by promoting God’s plan. More concretely, as the century advanced, Americans could join the British in attempting to map Palestine for purposes of its ultimate colonial appropriation, although such concrete expressions of American religio-nationalist theatricality made less of an impact on the actual colonial penetration of the land than it did on the construction of American settler-colonial

consciousness.

“Pilgrimage,” writes Reverend Stephen Olin in 1844, “is little less than to be naturalized in the Holy Land. Only then does the Bible become *real*.”⁵⁸ While Olin, president of Wesleyan University, italicizes how sacred text becomes real, he does not underscore the curious but potent metaphor of Americans becoming naturalized at their cultural source. To Olin, like other travelers, returning to this source was a reenactment of immigration to the new Holy Land; such “return,” as a consequence, was a way of becoming even more American, so the metaphoric conflation is itself “natural.” Recall Bishop Warren’s meditation upon “why this strange country seems so natural.” Through sanctified travel, an American could become a citizen of the Bible’s realm, and to hold dual citizenship, so to speak, meant the right to appropriate those lands already theirs, like the Mormons fusing the two continents. Thomson opens *The Land and the Book* with the assertion that God’s promise to give the land to the patriarchs means that “[i]t is given to me also, and I mean to make it mine from Dan to Beersheba before I leave it.”⁵⁹

The greater “me” Thomson invokes is the collectivity of the Gentiles who will come into their “fullness” upon the millennialist reordering of the universe, a reordering to be initiated by the restoration of the Jews to their ancient homeland. The growing sense that adherents could “facilitate” prophecy led a small number of Americans to establish millennialist and other colonies in the Holy Land, including Clorinda Minor’s Artas colony and related agricultural projects, Warder Cresson’s proto-Zionist settlement outside Jerusalem, all in the 1850s, George Adams’s Jaffa colony in the 1860s, and the “American Colony” founded by the Spafford family in 1881, although virtually all of these attempts failed to sustain a community, with only the Spaffords’ project surviving any length, its name affixed to the popular East Jerusalem hotel to this day. Melville records in his journal his visit in 1857 with a group of Seventh Day Baptists who had come to Palestine to teach the Jews to become farmers and Christians, commenting that

all these movements combining Agriculture & Religion in reference to Palestine, are based upon the impression (Mrs Minott’s [Minor’s] & others’) that the time for the prophetic return of the Jews to Judea is at hand, and therefore the way must be prepared for them by Christians, both in setting them right in their faith & their farming—in other words, preparing the soil literally & figuratively.⁶⁰

Melville, who deems all missionary effort, including the Anglo-Prussian Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem, “a failure—palpably,” remarks that “this preposterous Jew mania . . . is half melancholy, half farcical—like all the rest of the world.”⁶¹

The mania of these millennialist colonialists to “prepare the soil” for restoration and the advent, along with the continuing efforts of missionaries, attested to the most radical reading/writing of sacred geography, even if regarded as foolish: “Colonization eastward,” observed former American consul J. Augustus Johnson, “like all efforts to turn back the hands of time, is likely to meet with little success.”⁶² But success is measured any number of ways. To be sure, each of these settlement efforts was part of the broader campaign of European colonial penetration of Palestine, of which Jewish restoration was a particularly British and American obsession joined to others, such as the largely French and German “Peaceful Crusade” of Christian reconquest, all of which did, in fact, “prepare the soil” for the modern Zionist project. However, the theatricality of colonization eastward, in terms of religio-national mythmaking, could hardly be judged a failure, for even the spectacularly dismal collapse of the Jaffa colony (from which survivors briefly joined Twain’s *Quaker City* cruise) galvanized public attention back home. As much as he deplored the “Quixotism” of the millennialists, Melville was well aware of the vital, powerful impulse at the very core of the American settler myth and made “this

preposterous Jew mania” a central feature of *Clarel*.

The millennialist mania to appropriate Palestine was at the farthest, most radical end of a continuum of reading and writing sacred geography, but the impulse to seize “my undying property” was also embodied by less feverish travelers. The perception of the Holy Land’s failure, which often led to the disturbing sense of disjuncture and disappointment, could also lead to material projects to correct and restore the land, although in most cases travelers appropriated and Americanized the land through the imagination by means of rhetorical adjustments. Between the expectation and the realization, between the ancient text and the contemporary, there always seemed to stand the impossible gulf, a gap that presented itself in all culturally valued sites that did not share the stupendous scale of the New World: “There is very little to be seen in the old world,” J. Ross Browne muses, “that does not produce disappointment.”⁶³ But the gap was heightened further by the biblical narrative associated with what seemed a very unbiblical land. In the face of such vast disjuncture, Melville offers his understated assessment: “No country will more quickly dissipate romantic expectations than Palestine—particularly Jerusalem. To some the disappointment is heart sickening.”⁶⁴

Almost every aspect of Palestine held a disappointment, requiring each writer to adjust the discrepancy between the idealized and the actual through some kind of epistemological mechanism. As we shall see, Twain develops a “system of reduction” in *Innocents Abroad* to scale down his childhood fantasies of biblical distances from American standards to Palestinian ones, while J. Ross Browne employs what he calls “an inverted imagination” to adjust the disjuncture between the Jordan River of text and that of the small creek he draws up to:

I was greatly astonished to find the river Jordan no bigger than what we call a creek in the backwoods of America; and resolved in all my future readings about rivers, lakes and seas in the old world, to look at them through an inverted imagination. I stood at the water’s edge, and tossed a pebble across to the other side with all ease. It was not more than thirty yards wide at most; and although the current was swift, yet it was impossible to get quite rid of the idea that the Jordan, so famed throughout the whole civilized world, must be somewhere farther on, and this little stream only one of its tributaries. Why it was I thought so, it would be impossible to say; but I certainly must admit that I never was so disappointed in regard to the size of a river in my life.⁶⁵

Such devices as “systems of reduction” and “inverted imaginations” provide a familiar, American discourse with which the jarring reality of this disjuncture can be regulated and internalized by the traveler’s subjectivity. Even when Melville jokes about the superabundance of stones in the Holy Land, he puts an American, even Yankee merchant cast to the ancient landscape by sardonically imagining that the countless stones are the remnants of a failed business deal:

My theory is that long ago, some whimsical King of the country took it into his head to pave all Judea, and entered into contracts to that effect; but the contractor becoming bankrupt mid-way in his business, the stones were only dumped on the ground, & there they lie to this day.⁶⁶

This deflation of Holy Land illusions was hastened by the generally ironic, iconoclastic attitude American literary travelers cultivated. The “queer air of irreverence” that marks Stephens’s account was enhanced by those Holy Land travelers like Mark Twain whom Bret Harte labeled “exuberant image-breakers”:

A race of good-humored, engaging iconoclasts seem to have precipitated themselves upon the old altars of mankind, and like their predecessors of the Eighth Century, have paid particular attention to the holy church.⁶⁷

Precipitating themselves upon Catholic and Eastern altars held only limited dangers for Twain

and other Protestant travelers, but the breaking of images—like unearthing biblical authenticity and facilitating prophecy—were attempts to come to terms with the “Great Disappointment,” although, despite their apparent skepticism or even infidelity, few authors hammered away with the disregard of a Margoth. Iconoclasm and sentimentalism, two seemingly opposite positions from which to perceive Palestine, were actually very much a part of the unified, Western response of “taking possession” of the Holy Land. Lamartine could tearfully travel uttering one long prayer, while Flaubert could fart as he entered Jerusalem, confessing to be “annoyed, at bottom, by this Voltairianism of my anus”,⁶⁸ yet both tendencies, which flourished within a single colonialist narrative, were considerably more exaggerated among American writers, particularly since the Americans attempted to see the Holy Land *anew* against a cluttered field of already classic utterances of English and European writers. Most American writers, even Prime, make the same observation that, as Bayard Taylor says, “The pious writers have described what was expected of them, not what they found.”⁶⁹ Again and again, writers announce that they have come to write the honest truth about the land of Truth, vowing with Twain to “see with their own eyes,” an act conceived as uniquely American. Such discursive devices, along with the conventions of identification, conflation, and theatricality, provided the means through which sacred geography could be written as American territory, advancing the imagined colonization of Palestine for the national myth.

Melville’s *Clarel* and Twain’s *Innocents Abroad*, despite their different genres and their starkly different receptions by readers, employ all these cultural assumptions, rhetorical conventions, and perceptual practices associated with the Holy Land book in unique ways to fashion out of Holy Land intertextuality and interterritoriality “infidel” countertexts. I place infidel within quotation marks to underscore the ambivalence of their own freethinking, since both authors step back from any overt declaration of atheism: Melville vehemently abhors it, while Twain papers over his comic detonations of conventional religiosity with pious sentimentality. Nonetheless, they present two of the most religiously heterodox encounters between Palestine and American sensibility shaped by settler-colonial dynamics.

While poetry on biblical themes or inspired by Palestinian geography, such as John Pierpoint’s popular *Airs of Palestine* (1816), was not uncommon, Melville was the only Holy Land traveler to apply his travel experience so extensively to verse. Nevertheless, his poem-pilgrimage was—and continues to be—virtually unread, and its unreadability, perhaps paralleling the “strange” illegibility of the Holy Land itself, opens a unique intellectual space. Melville pulls apart the coupling of land and text, questions all textual and intellectual authority, and, most devastating of all, fashions a mythic narrative that nullifies America’s sense of covenantal settler-colonial destiny for those readers who dare brave the poem’s protomodernist difficulties.

Although Twain, writing within the well-established tradition of the travel book, does not address the covenant as directly as Melville, his comic abandon, parodic instability, and mock frontier violence rely on the covenant’s assumed presence in order to disrupt the conventions and pretensions of the American who acts within its seemingly uncontested bounds. While Melville’s poem wrestles with questions of faith, philosophy, and politics, which certainly places it within the post-Civil War crisis of faith and identity that involved many others (such as Henry Adams), *Clarel*’s overtly covenantal orientation makes it more of a valedictory to the anxieties of the antebellum period. On the other hand, Twain’s creation of the American Vandal and the enormous popularity that Vandal enjoyed while defacing Europe and the East indicates the degree to which Twain’s parodic disruption looks toward the future of all-pervasive

commodification and its touristic effects in the second half of the century as radical reformulations of settler-colonial social and religious relations. Reading *Clarel* and *Innocents Abroad* within the Holy Land context presents new vantage points from which to examine the body of each author's work, and their critical perceptions of the relative authority of religion, culture, text, race, gender, and nation add yet other dimensions to why Melville and Twain have retained canonical status in American literature at the end of the twentieth century. Even though these two books do not themselves constitute the basis for each author's reputation, Melville's and Twain's "double travels" contain such potent literary, religious, and cultural ramifications as to reach contemporary readers like no other books of their time. Assuredly, one reason *Clarel* and *Innocents Abroad* resonate so strongly today is that the covenantal settler-colonial anxieties Melville and Twain address and critique in Palestine have by no means vanished: though both the "carnal" Jews of Israel and the typological Jews of Christ may have "returned" to state power in their respective sacred territories, both have yet to be "restored."

PART TWO

“The Fatal Embrace of the Deity”:
Herman Melville’s Pilgrimage to Failure in *Clarel*



From a stereoscope of "Jerusalem: Turkish Tombs and Arab Sheapherds [sic]," by William E. James, 1867. Courtesy of Brandt Rowles and the Mark Twain Papers in The Bancroft Library.

CHAPTER FIVE

“A Profound Remove”: Annihilation and Covenant

AS HE SAILED across the Atlantic in 1849, Herman Melville sketched out plans to extend what was ostensibly a trip to make arrangements for the London publication of *White-Jacket* into an excursion to the Levant. He would be accompanied by two friends he had met on board: Franklin Taylor, a surgeon, cousin of rising travel writer Bayard Taylor, and an experienced traveler himself, and George Adler, the German-born scholar with whom he had spent long shipboard hours in deep, metaphysical talk. Melville enthusiastically embraced the project: “I am full (just now) of this glorious *Eastern* jaunt,” he exults in his journal. “Think of it!—Jerusalem & the Pyramids—Constantinople, the Egean, & old Athens.”¹ Melville’s giddy fullness arose from the fascination he had long cultivated for Eastern locales and myths, an enthusiasm that extended from his first juvenile sketches influenced by *Arabian Nights* to the fantasy renderings that had only just flowered in the “Orienda” of *Mardi*.²

In his then most recent book, Melville had recounted the fascination of the young Wellingborough Redburn who, while dreaming of his own travels to “remote and barbarous countries,” remembers a boyhood encounter with an Eastern explorer:

I very well remembered staring at a man myself, who was pointed out to me by my aunt one Sunday in Church, as the person who had been in Stony Arabia, and passed through strange adventures there, all of which with my own eyes I had read in the book which he wrote, an arid-looking book in a pale yellow cover.

“See what big eyes he has,” whispered my aunt, “they got so big, because when he was almost dead with famishing in the desert, he all at once caught sight of a date tree, with the ripe fruit hanging on it.”

Upon this, I stared at him till I thought his eyes were really of an uncommon size, and stuck out from his head like those of a lobster. I am sure my own eyes must have magnified as I stared. When church was out, I wanted my aunt to take me along and follow the traveler home. But she said the constables would take us up, if we did; and so I never saw this wonderful Arabian traveler again. But he long haunted me; and several times I dreamt of him, and thought his great eyes were grown still larger and rounder; and once I had a vision of the date tree.³

John Lloyd Stephens was likely the man with bulging lobster eyes who had thirsted in Stony Arabia, for the “famishing” trek recalls Stephens’s journey across the forbidden land of Edom, whether or not Melville had actually drawn upon his own memories of a boyhood encounter with the celebrated explorer. The obsessive power suggested by those “uncommon eyes” in *Redburn* propelled much of Melville’s work, although the youth’s brief recollection of his eyes magnifying at the “wonderful Arabian traveler” stands more as a heightened emblem of Melville’s attraction to Ahab-like monomania than as any specific autobiographical marker.

Those eyes called forth a relentless desire to fathom the ineffable essence of creation, to possess secrets that could only be unveiled in the East or at the edge of madness, a state of derangement and illumination, which for Melville constituted a nongeographic “East.” The “vision of the date tree” would be transformed into the transfixing doubloon nailed to the *Pequod*’s mast in *Moby-Dick*; and, when Melville finally did publish *Clarel*, his own “arid-looking book” based on Eastern travels, the date palm itself would reappear, resurrected as the isolated sacred palm overhanging the courtyard of the cliffside Mar Saba monastery, the single

St. Saba Palm surrounded by stony desert at which the fellow “palmer” on Clarel’s pilgrimage stare, each revealing himself in his own distinct fashion as he seeks to penetrate the tree’s essence for spiritual messages.

Despite his faltering reputation in 1849, Melville was still acclaimed for the Polynesian adventures he had recounted in *Typee* and *Omoo*, the bizarre, invented world of *Mardi* notwithstanding. He had yet to embark on what was considered perhaps the most alluring, most weighted with meanings of exotic travels: the “jaunt” to the East, an excursion properly undertaken with the Orientalist sensibility Alexander Kinglake had recently made fashionable as that “longing for the East very commonly felt by proud-hearted people when goaded by sorrow.”⁴ Although Melville would meet the celebrated author of *Eothen* at a breakfast party in England, the plans he had made with his shipboard friends never did materialize. To travel East in 1849 was still difficult, still far more uncommon than when Melville finally did make the journey in the winter of 1856–57. The unprecedented hunger for Holy Land travel books during the decade of crisis before the Civil War provoked a steady stream of American writers to make circular pilgrimages to Jerusalem and then back to the doors of Harper Brothers and other publishers. But by 1857 Melville could no longer consider such a journey a “jaunt,” for the sorrow goading him was far more intense than that which was customarily allowed for the ironic gentleman traveler of Kinglake’s imperial stamp.

At the age of thirty-seven, Melville’s career as a commercial writer had virtually come to an end. His mind, after years of philosophical and psychological deep-diving, tottered at what he calls in *Clarel* “the perilous outpost of the sane” (3.19.98).⁵ He traveled once again to London to arrange for the publication of *The Confidence-Man*, the last novel to appear in his lifetime. Then, in the tradition of Stephens, his family sent him East on a Grand Tour to recover his precarious health, perhaps even, as his benefactor Peter Gansevoort hoped, to come up with a travel tale as exciting (and as lucrative) as *Typee*. Melville had spent eleven years producing nine novels, most of which, after their author’s initial celebrity as the “man who lived among the cannibals,” were ignored or cast aside by readers with mounting perplexity, alarm, and, eventually, lack of interest. “Dollars damn me,” he had complained in his letter to Hawthorne in 1851,

and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar. . . . What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches.⁶

By the time Melville arrived at Jaffa on January 4, 1857, he had pretty much given up in his struggle to produce writing that, though marketable, retained “banned” literary merit. He had, as Ann Douglas describes his state of mind, “come close to believing that no one—but no one—will ever read his pages.”⁷ Not surprisingly, his religious outlook had also taken a more somber, more pessimistic direction than the ironies he had entertained while writing the “botches” of *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*: to Melville’s obsessive meditations upon the mysteries of man’s iniquity, divine inscrutability, and materiality’s masquerade that shape *Moby-Dick* was added, like an even darker canopy over all such inquiries, the too-palpable presence of Failure.

This was not just the failure of a literary career, of an intensely prophetic, “masculine” calling to literature denied by market relations catering to feminized desires for sentimental fiction; nor was it only the failure signaled by Alan Melvill’s financial ruin, the father’s descent into poverty and madness cast upon the head of the son; nor was it solely the failure of a Revolutionary hero’s grandson to maintain the reputation of a creole aristocracy. All of this (and more) did infuse Melville’s well of failure, of course, but what he drew forth also encompassed the even deeper

failures of basic religious and national narratives. The island rover became, as he describes the troubled young divinity student upon Clarel's arrival in Jerusalem, a "pilgrim-infidel" (1.6.19), for Melville's Eastern jaunt was now a pilgrimage, a quest for the source of sacred narrative from which he could directly interrogate the idea of God. In the "caked depopulated hell" (2.11.68) that was Palestine in the eyes of the West, Melville sought to comprehend the totality of Failure, in all its chaotic, incomprehensible consequences.

Far more than George Sandys's "double travels," Melville's skeptical pilgrimage was a complex of intersecting endeavors and multiple texts. It was not just that a greater quantity of texts was available to Melville for his intertextual construction of the landscape, but the literary task and geographical scope of colonial "discovery" had become even broader. During his travels Melville kept a journal written in a style of exceptionally taut, telegraphic intensity, often reminding this reader of Allen Ginsberg's spontaneous, associative travel-jottings; he also composed, upon his return, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, a narrative poem of monumental length—longer than *Paradise Lost* and no less ambitious—in which he wrestles with varied permutations of the late nineteenth-century faith-doubt crisis in maddeningly constricted, convoluted, iambic tetrameter verse. Each of these two texts comes into being already damned by dollars; both the handwritten notebooks and the eighteen-thousand-line poem published in two volumes are products of a revolt against the reader and the marketplace that has gone far beyond petulance or anger to reach unique levels of detachment, isolation, resignation, and nerve: "I here dismiss the book—content beforehand with whatever future awaits it," Melville concludes his dedication upon *Clarel's* publication two decades later.

The journal to Europe and the Levant, particularly its passages on Palestine and Egypt, is far more elaborate than his 1849 travel notes. In the 1856–57 notebooks, Melville self-consciously worked out the language of immediate experience and meditation to be put to later literary use in ways that the earlier journal could not, yet they were still too private, too secret even to be dismissed. Like the "second self" Clarel discovers in the journal left by Celio after the tormented hunchback's death, we can find in Melville's "jotted journaled thoughts. . . . A second self . . ."; and, because of its privacy, this second self is in many respects "stronger—with the heart to brave / All questions on that primal ground / Laid bare by faith's receding wave" (1.19.25–29). The text of Celio's second self is only referred to and remains outside the poem itself, yet Melville's own double, as closed, as secret as its composition, can be brought before readers today, a still-vivid inscription upon Matthew Arnold's wave of religious crisis. Melville has not, as Ann Douglas suggests, "abandoned the secret cherished illusion" of "the imaginary audience" to produce "the bleached skeleton of rhetoric," its author a sufferer no longer even interested in his own torment.⁸ To this reader, the journal—even on its own, but more particularly when regarded in conjunction with the poem borne from its jottings—makes up a unique religious document, a journey through an uncompromising spiritual wasteland that, like the poem, insists upon constructing its own imaginary audience.⁹

Years after its publication, Melville would describe *Clarel*—the dark, philosophical satire, part Hellenistic symposium, part Hebraic jeremiad and lamentation that was shaped from his Holy Land sojourn—as "a metrical affair, a pilgrimage or what not, of several thousand lines, eminently adapted for unpopularity."¹⁰ Indeed, his poem-pilgrimage is persistently difficult, sometimes impenetrable, often boring, and so unpopular it is almost as unread today as when it first appeared, despite the elevated status of its author. "'Clarel' is a long poem of about twenty-seven thousand lines, of which we can only say that we do not understand a single word," one English reviewer sniped in 1876, and many who brave the poem's 150 cantos today are often

tempted to agree.¹¹ As Robert Penn Warren, one of the poem's more appreciative readers, pointedly observes, *Clarel* is "a complex document in literary history and in the history of ideas; and it is, too, the document of a conscience and a consciousness," yet, despite its significance, it remains "a poem, with its own strange intermittent power, and its chief critic is the ghost of the poem it so violently strives to be, and of the poem it might have been, which haunts us."¹² Still, as Warren details at length what Melville's offhand dismissal suggests, the poem in its entirety—despite its numerous passages of incredible brilliance, despite its constant eruption of ideas and mythic narratives, despite the considerable substance of its violent "ghost"—is unquestionably a failure: "a metrical affair" that, in its insistent meter and cloying rhyme scheme, can perhaps be most enjoyed by ranting out loud to the accompaniment of steady thuds on a kettle drum.

Melville's use of Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* as his model is often cited for the poem's problems, although Byron's "Giaour" and Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" employ the same "cramping effect of endless octosyllabic lines inevitably linked one to the other" and with far greater success. Walter Bezanson, whose annotated edition first made the poem accessible to a broader audience, concedes that "it is an essential part of the poem that the verse form is constricting and bounded, that the basic movements are tight, hard, constrained." To Bezanson, this "unbannered verse, without processional possibilities," is an appropriate choice because "the tragedy of modern man, as Melville now viewed it, was one of constriction."¹³ Bezanson accounts for the poem's failure to Melville's inability to realize his poetic ambition by means of such a daunting vehicle, while Robert Penn Warren, who concurs that Melville's failure is one of execution and not of his choice of form, goes on to suggest that Melville's emphasis on intellect over emotion, on philosophical dialogue over dramatic encounter, only compound the problem.

Bezanson, Warren, and other critics manage to leave Butler behind, with *Hudibras* cited only as a bad or too difficult choice for a model. Yet it may actually present more than a source for *Clarel*'s odd metrics, or for its ultimate failure, for in Butler's poem—not surprisingly hailed as "the worst great poem in the language"¹⁴—Melville found inspiration for his own attempt at a new aesthetics. Butler's mid-seventeenth-century satire of his times—of puritans and cavaliers, of religious dogmatists and mechanical materialists—is self-consciously ugly. *Hudibras*, as the poem's recent critic George Wasserman observes, is a "mess" of clashing languages, genres, and attitudes. The reader must refuse to ignore "the 'messiness' of the poem and the ignominy of its ideas, its sheer quantity of ugliness. But then if we read Butler patiently and attentively, he does not let us ignore the ugliness: he forces us even to consent to the integrity of his own vision of it."¹⁵ It is a mess that in great part draws upon the features of Mennipean satire, of burlesque and carnival, "where heroic conventions are debased as casually as pretense and failure appear to be licensed; where, it seems, 'anything goes.'"¹⁶

Melville assumes a similar carnivalistic sensibility to invoke the Holy Land as "Terra Damnata," constructing a mess far darker than Butler's, yet one just as self-consciously ugly, drawing upon all his travel and seafaring experiences and his knowledge of colonial contact and violence for a wide-ranging, seemingly inappropriate collage of languages, including deliberate archaisms, maritime terminology, and New World lingo. Such a "mess," with lines like "He shouts down his wild hullabaloo" (2.16.15) or "A hideous hee-haw horrible rose" (2.33.67), assails the reader in ways so brazen, so strange as to accomplish the weirdest of alienation effects, a poetic of disjuncture, dissonance, narrative compression, and resonant irony, even when overblown or ridiculous.

The poem also reaches back to other inventions of the nether regions, notably to the descents

of Virgil and Dante, which allow for the same satirical quality of “anything goes” because they, too, are written from the position of the dead (and their accompanying guides).¹⁷ But perhaps this prematurely modernist poetic can be best understood by casting *Clarel* forward: for example, to T. S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land,” which authorizes pastiche, collage, and self-conscious mythmaking—including use of the Palestinian mythscape, only recently “mandated” to the British Empire: “Here is no water but only rock” (line 331)—as a new, seriocomic aesthetic of “anything goes.” *Clarel* casts even further forward to Edward Dorn’s zany, psychedelic satire *Gunslinger*, with Dorn’s mock epic deliberately acknowledging its debt to Melville in several direct quotations and allusions. Dorn, who has praised *Clarel* as “The Great American Poem,”¹⁸ also constructs a pilgrimage, a poem also in four parts with a collection of characters, a group of wiggled-out, fractured, cartoon creatures, who also wander around a similarly arid sacred landscape, the Southwest, as they incessantly blab in search of slippery spiritual certainties, now rendered as “Hughes, Howard” hidden in Vegas:

Entrapment is this society’s
Sole activity, I whispered
and Only laughter,
can blow it to rags
But there is no negative pure enough
to entrap our Expectations.¹⁹

Still, many would argue that “The Waste Land” or *Gunslinger* would stand a better chance of being regarded as “The Great American Poem” than *Clarel*, their contrived, jarring ugliness more aesthetically pleasing than Melville’s constricted doggerel.

Yet, once you allow yourself to be drawn into Melville’s strange pilgrimage, “that rosary of doubt,” as Charles Olson calls the poem,²⁰ the pounding cantos can become intoxicating. The epic argument with faith, infused with that supercharged energy characteristic of “outsider” art, pulls the reader toward what at first may seem only a puzzling literary pursuit into an obsessive, psycho-religious quest—the way Clarel’s departure from Jerusalem for the Dead Sea with his odd group of pilgrim-seekers at the end of part 1, which at first he believes to be merely a “brief term of days,” actually becomes “a profound remove” (1.44.50).

Melville did spend only a brief term in Palestine—nineteen days, a week of that held over in Jaffa waiting to depart. There he was beset by fleas, felt claustrophobic as he did in all Eastern cities, and escaped to the rooftop as he did in Constantinople and Jerusalem for some kind of panoramic comprehension and release, only to get that “genuine, old Jonah feeling” (81). Stranded, he took the time to write up a series of descriptive meditations on what he had encountered under the major headings “From Jerusalem to Dead Sea &c.,” “Barrenness of Judea,” “Jerusalem,” and “Christian Missions &c in Palestine & Syria.” “I am emphatically alone” (80), Melville writes of the way he began “to feel like Jonah” in the city made famous by that prophet’s defiance. In that same absolute of aloneness he afterward composed his poem, dwelling upon that estrangement, visualizing what he calls Judea’s “diabolical landscapes” again and again, mulling over his cache of notes for years.

Melville began to pay serious attention to the composition of his poem-pilgrimage probably soon after the publication of his Civil War sequence of poems, *Battle-Pieces*, in 1866, the same year he was appointed to the post of inspector in the New York Customs House. He labored over *Clarel*, keeping endless metaphysical dialogues alive in his mind while peeking into crates on wharves, completing forms, occasionally boarding vessels. The man who had lived among the cannibals now sat amid vast quantities of cargo as they passed through the gates of exchange, all

the while tricking out constricted lines of verse in the private recesses of his mind. Warren captures the situation vividly:

The writing was for Melville an obsession—and also a refuge, the “other life,” the real life into which he might enter at night after the ignominy of the Customs House, with its shadows of political job-ism, small-time financial corruption, and intellectual blankness, a microcosm perfectly reflecting in its scale the temper of the great world outside, the new booming America.²¹

This microcosm of postwar America was none too insignificant. The New York Customs House, the largest federal office in the United States with almost one thousand employees, collected nearly two-thirds of all the nation’s import duties. Its collector of customs, only second in rank to the secretary of the treasury, controlled more patronage than anyone else in the federal government and received the highest pay of any federal official, including the president.²² The “intellectual blankness” at the center of which Melville stood happened to be one of the most corrupt nodes of the postwar boom: the New York Customs House was a constant target of civil service reformers. There, in the coils of the Republican clique called “The Customs House Gang,” Melville deliberately kept to himself, “quietly returning money which has been thrust in his pocket,” as his brother-in-law John Hoadley records in 1873, “quietly steadfastly doing his duty.”²³ This was different from the customs house that his grandfather Thomas Melvill had joined when he took his position to replace the corrupt toadies of the crown with an example of New World virtue. Now Melville “stood with his ancestors, not in revolutionary protest against a sullied custom house, but in loyalty to the idea of a pure one.”²⁴ Of the old patrician order that exalted a natural aristocracy, Melville was at odds with the plebeians of no repute, the confidence men, and the crude parvenus who had come to power after the war. He remained faithful to his notions of republican virtue, never rising in rank, never getting paid more than his original four dollars per day until he retired in 1885, a few years before the era of civil service reform did away with the patronage system.

Thus the writing of Melville’s customs house poem was itself a discipline of intense meditation, a “rosary,” and a pilgrimage simultaneously. Melville, a stationary enforcer of “duties” at the hub of fast-moving commodity circulation, engaged in constant mental motion while oddly fixed in space. T. S. Eliot, before he wrote the early drafts of “The Waste Land” at Lac Lemman during his recovery from breakdown, also stood at a similar hub, though one of circulating money and not goods, as he worked at the international desk of a London bank. Perhaps more than coincidence allows two major religious descents into hell to appear from similar circumstances of displaced patricians fixed to one spot while great oceans of capital flowed around them. For Melville, his release from the bounds of value, circulation, and exchange was acted out in the poem as a system of sacred journey, as indicated in *Clarel’s* subtitle—the book is not just “a Poem” but also a “Pilgrimage.”

Pilgrimage in all its diverse forms—even as symbolic, allegorical, or interior journey—suspends the habits of daily life and social relations to allow an “anti-structural” performance of intense liminality. As a mental state, pilgrimage creates a self-consciously embarked upon in-between time, a temporal space to allow the pilgrim to move across thresholds between physical and transcendent realms in search of valued ideals deposited, usually, in the divine traces of a sacred locale. Victor and Edith Turner describe the “normative communitas” often aroused by pilgrimage, the intense, egalitarian bonding between groups of fellow pilgrims allowed to flower outside of ordinary social relations, such as the “communitas” that led to Malcolm X’s revelation of human commonality above race at Mecca. Yet, despite the pilgrim’s entry into a

nonhierarchical, even antinomian “other world” of the sacred, the release usually serves established hierarchies quite well.²⁵ “Because pilgrimage places tend to enshrine collective ideals,” explains anthropologist Alan Morinis, “pilgrimage is usually a conservative force that reinforces the existing social order.”²⁶ The decades-long composition of Melville’s customs house poem extended the former rover’s initial, physical pilgrimage into a protracted, symbolic one: Melville, despite his immobility, continued to travel by mind’s eye across Palestine, the site of Christianity’s prototypical pilgrimage, while seeking resolution to his spiritual quest. Writing allowed him to inhabit such a zone of inward liminality, although, given the “infidel” quality of his quest, “the existing social order” only gained from Melville’s pilgrimage in a very vexed, problematic manner.

Melville’s wandering began long before he got that genuine, old Jonah feeling in Jaffa, and themes of journey, quest, and transformation through space and time are central elements of most of his fiction, while a state of unrelenting intellectual quest dominated his meditations. Hawthorne could identify what also had become his former neighbor’s familiar mental “wandering to-and fro” when they met in Liverpool on Melville’s way to Palestine:

Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had “pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated”; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before—in wandering to-and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other.²⁷

Melville’s interior arguments could not stop, even when he had appeared to make up his mind, an observation of mental motion Hawthorne readily describes in the language of a pilgrimage ordeal in desert places. That same restlessness for definite belief had shaped the dialogic qualities of much of Melville’s novels, such as the tragic joke structure underlying *Moby-Dick*, a constant dynamic of serious assertion or lofty thought exploded by comic or ironic counterpoint.²⁸ In *Clarel*, Melville distills such tendencies to cancel out definite beliefs with counterarguments, creating a series of dialogues in the mouths of an all-male group of contrasting, sometimes bizarre, yet compelling “representative” characters. The arguments and counterarguments on religion, politics, and science, on “just about everything Melville found theologically or ideologically troubling in his century,” all framed by the Palestine pilgrimage setting, compose a repetitive rhetorical effect. “Life is a pilgrimage in *Clarel*,” observes Stan Goldman, who offers one of the most theologically rigorous readings of the poem, “and the characters are set in dramatic situations that are designed to present an *agon* of questions, a dialog of oppositions, a deliberate intellectual and theological test of our ability to hold contesting ideas in the mind at once, rather than coming down hard in an absolutist way for any single voice or opinion.”²⁹

Melville proceeds with just such an oscillating dialectic throughout the poem, and at all levels of ideas, characters, and images: a “Pocahontas-wedding / Of contraries” (1.28.32–33) creating seemingly impossible couplings like that of the native princess and the Anglo-Saxon settler who had first fought the Turks before coming to Virginia. For example, Melville employs counterimages in metaphor and plot, such as providing an avalanche of stones at the death of the American biblical literalist Nehemiah at the Dead Sea against which “A counter object is revealed—/ A thing of heaven, and yet how frail”: a colorless “fog-bow,” a “slight / Slim pencil of an aqueous light” suspended over the visionary’s grave (2.39.150–57). Even in the realm of epistemology, the narrator recounts how, when the young student engages the reserved yet deep Hawthorne-like Vine in conversation, “Clarel, receptive, saw and heard, / Learning, unlearning,

word by word” (2.14.51–52). The reader, if drawn into the contrapuntal motion of the poem, is invited to engage in the intellectual and theological “test” Goldman describes, to join a spiritual pilgrimage along similar paths: learning and unlearning, word by word, until, by the end of the poem, both author and reader can obtain, if not Truth, at least the ability to sustain multiplicity, contradiction, linguistic indeterminacy, doubt, and failure without going insane or, in the imagery of the “Epilogue,” without drowning.

To be sure, such a “test,” maintained over years during *Clarel’s* composition, did not provide the immediate or easy attainment of what could be called detachment or resignation or calm, much less sanity. “[P]ray do not mention to *any one* that he is writing poetry,” his wife Elizabeth wrote to her mother in 1875, fearful of the alarms that his family would raise by Melville’s return to his failed literary obsession: “[Y]ou know how such things spread and he would be very angry if he knew I had spoken of it.”³⁰ During *Clarel’s* final preparations for publication, she bemoaned “this dreadful *incubus* of a *book* (I call it so because it has undermined all our happiness),”³¹ indicating to what degree his protracted wandering between metrically constricted contraries was an ordeal, no matter how closely and quietly Melville attended to his customs house duties.

Hawthorne, however, does note the one thing about which Melville seems to have had “pretty much made up his mind”: annihilation. Amid all the failures Melville contemplates—the “diabolical landscape,” the fraud of the New World myth, the spiritual vacuum created by theological modernists—the ultimate failure remains Death. Always present, death resides behind an impenetrable wall through which the Christian narrative peers with its penetrating vision to displace “annihilation” with continuation and resurrection. Yet Hawthorne’s perception of his apparent resolve proved inaccurate, for Melville cannot embrace Christianity’s promise, nor can he accept oblivion, and it is death, its agonizing hiddenness parallel to God’s own covered face, which deeply marks Melville’s journal and frames all of *Clarel*. In Constantinople, for example, he notes “the cemeteries of Pera,” observing an Armenian funeral “winding through the streets,” an intense drama of absolute loss that would recur throughout his poem:

Saw a burial. Armenian. Juggling & incantations of the priests—making signs & c.—Nearby, saw a woman over a new grave—no grass on it yet. Such abandonment of misery! Called to the dead, put her head down as close to it as possible; as if calling down a hatchway or cellar; besought—“Why dont you speak to me? My God!—It is I!—Ah, speak—but one word![]”—All deaf.—So much for consolation.—This woman & her cries haunt me horribly. (62)

The impenetrability of death, like the woman’s cries, did continue to haunt him horribly. He records in the journal of his 1860 cruise on board *The Meteor* to San Francisco the startling death of a young sailor. The Nantucketer suddenly plummeted “from the main topsail yard to the deck,” the incident’s extraordinary power indicated by the way it abruptly and dramatically ends all further journal entries (and apparently all possibilities of a California book). Melville is amazed at how calm the crew and even he is at the sailor’s fate,

which belongs to that order of human events, which staggers those whom the Primal Philosophy hath not confirmed.—But little sorrow to the crew—all goes on as usual—I, too, read & think, & walk & eat & talk, as if nothing had happened—as if I did not know that death is indeed the King of Terrors—when thus happening; when thus heart-breaking to a fond mother—the King of Terrors, not to the dying or the dead, but to the mourner—the mother.—Not so easily will his fate be washed out of her heart, as his blood from the deck. (134–35)

He would often have to contemplate “the King of Terrors” during the composition of *Clarel*: his father-in-law Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, his cousins, his younger brother, his mother, and, even upon the poem’s publication, his uncle Peter Gansevoort, who had financed the book’s appearance and to whom it is dedicated, all died. The tide of death, which rose to include the

horrors of the recent war, also included many old friends, including George Adler, the German-born thinker who had proposed their Eastern jaunt in 1849 and whose metaphysics, hallucinations, and paranoia caused him to be committed to an asylum, where he had yet managed to write his odd *Letters of a Lunatic* (a fate and even a book title that could easily have been Melville's own).³² Perhaps most painful of all, death took Melville's eighteen-year-old son Malcolm in 1867 in a gun accident that may have been suicide, and, burdened with grief and guilt, Melville found himself, like the Armenian woman, calling down the hatchway of his own son's grave.

To Hawthorne, Melville may have made up his mind to accept annihilation, but his "wandering to-and-fro" concerning mortality regarded death as "the cunningest mystery" in *Clarel*: "Alive thou know'st not death; and, dead, / Death thou'lt not know" (2.18.122–23). The divinity student, himself an orphan "bereft while still but young" (1.39.17), witnesses the deaths of three of the spiritual "guides" he encounters, mourning the tormented hunchback Celio, the "good" evangelist Nehemiah, and the embittered exrevolutionary Mortmain. Death even provides the impetus for the plot, for it is the murder of the American convert to Judaism, Nathan, at the hands of Arab marauders that causes Clarel to set out on the poem's pilgrimage-within-a-pilgrimage from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. Clarel, after only a few brief visits, has fallen in love with Ruth, Nathan's daughter, but, as a Gentile, he is forbidden by Jewish observance to comfort her during the period of mourning. The divinity student finally accepts the invitation to join the excursion, despite intimations of doom, such as the sudden reappearance of the Armenian funeral to announce Death's shadow over Ruth:

She comes, the bride; but, ah, how pale:
Her groom that Blue-Beard, cruel Death,
Wedding his millionth maid to-day;
She, stretched on that Armenian bier,
Leaves home and each familiar way—
Quits all for him.

(1.43.22–27)

But Clarel, though sensing "admonishment in air," only castigates himself as a "superstitious doubter." Sending Ruth a note, he embarks on his "profound remove," in the course of which he has visions of the dead walking, a mad monk demands the password "death" from all who encounter him, and each of the poem's characters delivers himself on Death's stark mystery, while the even greater "hauntedness" of Christ's death in "the deicide town" constantly makes its presence felt in the sacred landscape.

When Clarel finally does return to Jerusalem, the pilgrimage drawing to a close, he comes upon yet another funeral procession, this one of Jews. He beholds not just one but two biers, and soon discovers to his utter horror that the two bodies are of Ruth and her mother Agar. Clarel's love has died of "The fever—grief" (4.30.88) as a result of Nathan's slaying, while her mother expired, dreaming about the ocean-crossing back home to America, "Babbling of gulls and ocean wide—/ Out of her mind" (4.30.101–2). Clarel's swift, grief-torn response is to question the existence of God ("art thou, God?") and then to blame the Jews for their strict observance and exclusiveness: "'twas ye denied / Me access to this virgin's side / In bitter trial: take my curse! . . . / Had I been near, this had not been" (4.30.90–92, 95).

Ruth, like so many women in Melville's work, is a barely delineated character within the poem's starkly all-male world, so similar, despite the stones and desert wilderness, to the distorted sexual segregation of the maritime frontier. Ruth serves as a vaguely etched symbol of

erotic love and emotional sympathy, of unthinking creature comfort, lost to the crudities of homosocial economic life and the harshness of the covenant. Shirley Dettlaff notes how the few women in the poem are seen according to one tradition of Hebrew Scriptures “as a trap, a snare that will lure man to his doom by personifying those very qualities in himself which he would like to yield to but must transcend if he is to achieve salvation.”³³ Ruth’s death—and Clarel’s curse of the Jews—begins the process of his release. Once again “the bier Armenian” appears, but now it signifies too late, for “in torpor dim, he knew / The futile omen in review” (4.32.69–71).

Clarel remains in Jerusalem during Holy Week as his surviving companions, Rolfe, Vine, and Derwent, depart. Then, on Good Friday, “the dead walked,” and Clarel can clearly see all those who had passed away except for Ruth, who is “estranged in face! / He knew her by no earthly grace” (4.32.98–99). When Clarel mourns his love on Easter day itself, amid the “the gala of THE TOMB” (4.33.18) and the “lavish rite” of the Eastern churches (4.33.25), his question reaches to the efficacy of the divine:

The cheer, so human, might not call
The maiden up; *Christ is arisen*:
But Ruth, may Ruth so burst the prison?

(4.33.64–66)

Ruth, indeed, cannot rise; her voice will not call up the hatchway. After the rite, “Homeward the tides of pilgrims flow,” while Jerusalem is made “a depopulated mart; / More like some kirk on weekday lone” (4.33.71–72).

The narrative concludes on the Via Crucis seven Sundays later at Whitsun-tide. Whit Sunday marks the Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended in cloven tongues of fire upon the apostles, who then began to speak in “other tongues” (Acts 2:1–6). The day also provides the occasion for the last procession of the Easter season, and while Clarel makes his way down the Via Crucis, which “Tradition claims to be the one / Trod on that Friday far away / By Him our pure exemplar shown” (4.34.19–21), he observes a motley convergence of people and animals through St. Stephen’s gate: “As ’twere a frieze, behold the train!” the narrator describes the universal procession that includes “Jews with staves; / Infirm gray monks; over-loaded slaves; / Turk soldiers . . . A Bey, bereaved through luxuries; / Strangers and exiles,” Moslem women in mourning “Dumb from the mounds which memory claims,” an ass, “Sour camels humped by heaven and man.” All wend their way “In varied forms of fate” as variegated as all the tongues the apostles spoke, and yet “Or man or animal, ’tis one” (4.34.26–42). The vision of multiplicity deepens Clarel’s realization of the bonds of common suffering—what Eric Auerbach calls “creaturality”—and all that he sees passing by, man or animal, become “Cross-bearers all” (4.34.43). Clarel finally does join the procession, “lagging after,” while the failure of a comprehensible tongue of flame to inspire him becomes both his lament and his own cross to bear:

Wending, he murmurs in low tone:
“They wire the world—far under sea
They talk; but never comes to me
A message from beneath the stone.”

(4.34.50–53)

Not even the telegraphic, flaming tongue of science can make what Clorinda Minor calls “the speaking landscape” of Palestine utter a message from beyond death.³⁴ The divinity student leaves the Mount of Olives, now “Dusked,” behind and takes “a slender wynd”—then “Vanishes in the obscurer town” (4.34.54–56).

Some critics have noted Melville’s high regard for the Roman Catholic Church in the poem: the action of the poem-pilgrimage follows the progress of the church calendar closely; almost all the travelers join at the banks of the Jordan in singing *Ave Maris Stella*; devout Catholics, such as the Dominican and Salvaterra, display exemplars of enduring, unequivocating faith; and the church is praised for its longevity, particularly since Protestantism, due to its sectarian and liberalizing tendencies, as Rolfe avers, is “being retained / For base of operations sly / By Atheism” (2.26.142–44). Melville’s young seeker, though no convert, does enjoy a rueful sense of sacramentalism, as the non-Protestant notion of pilgrimage suggests, a desire to engage in ritual reenactment in the distant hope of spiritual incarnation, even if the Absolute as yet remains out of grasp. But Clarel joins the procession only as a ritual of “the obscurer town,” a counter-communitas of sorts, one of resignation and of loss, in which the student can bear his own cross of isolation, ambiguity, opaqueness, silence, and, if not annihilation, at least invisibility.

In the “Epilogue” Melville suddenly offers one canto of relief, switching to a looser rhyming pentameter to console the young seeker (and the reader) that, despite the gloom, none of the arguments of the poem have in fact been resolved, which in itself is at least small cause for optimism. The terrors of belief and unbelief, as well as the hope for “the spirit above the dust,” all still abide, no matter the sweeping doubts of modernity:

If Luther’s day expand to Darwin’s year,
Shall that exclude the hope—foreclose the fear?
.....
Yea, ape and angel, strife and old debate—
The harps of heaven and the dreary gongs of hell;
Science the feud can only aggravate—
No umpire she betwixt the chimes and knell:
The running battle of the star and clod
Shall run forever—if there be no God.

(4.35.1–2, 12–17)

No matter theories of evolution or geology or the incessant chatter of the new speaking landscape created by the telegraph, the oscillation of contraries, of high and low, good and evil, manages to continue—until the Absolute ceases all motion, producing an enlightened, calming apodicticity, that religious sense of certain truth, within the seeker. “The light is greater, hence the shadow more,” the narrator observes, for the mystery of creaturalty persists despite the rapid expansion of knowledge: “Wherefore ripen us to pain?” And yet Melville accounts that even “through such strange illusions” as science acting as “the spokesman of dumb Nature’s train,” someone who has “baffled striven” through “life’s pilgrimage” may as yet discover new terms of reality when crossing life’s final threshold: “Even death may prove unreal at the last, / And stoics be astounded into heaven” (4.35.18–26).

Melville concludes by addressing Clarel directly, appealing to him to “keep thy heart,” to “mind” feeling and compassion rather than the intellect, offering a final benediction of sorts with images of rejuvenation, release, and buoyancy joined to the triumphalist language of the Christian militant:

Clarel, thy heart, the issues there but mind;

That like the crocus budding through the snow—
That like a swimmer rising from the deep—
That like a burning secret which doth go
Even from the bosom that would hoard and keep;
Emerge thou mayst from the last whelming sea,
And prove that death but routs life into victory.

(4.35.28–34)

The Hawaiian concept of hope, *manaolana* or the “swimming thought”—a word and a concept both readily available to Melville, as James Duban has shown—perhaps best evokes *Clarel’s* attempt to “emerge” from “the last whelming sea.”³⁵ A compound of the Hawaiian words for thought and swimmer, *manaolana* describes that attitude of stamina sought by the solitary, long-distance swimmer far from shore. As an 1860 New York newspaper defines the term, the “swimming thought” is “faith floating and keeping its head aloft above water, when all the waves and billows are going over.”³⁶ Without the “swimming thought,” without the faith to reach land even though he cannot spy the distant island above the waves, Melville’s pilgrimswimmer will sink, no matter the arguments between reason and revelation.

Such “swimming thought” amid the abundance of stones in Jerusalem is in line with Melville’s frequent yoking of the South Pacific and Palestine. Only Melville can draw a comparison between the rocky fields of Bethlehem and the lushness of Tahiti or consider in his journal that “J.[esus] C.[hrist] should have appeared in Taheiti [*sic*]” (154) or in the poem that “Tahiti should have been the place / For Christ in advent” (4.18.44–45), as part of the “Pocahontas-wedding” of his maritime colonial poetics. The rising swimmer and his “swimming thought” reiterate the way the sea infuses Melville’s “oceanic feelings” of eroticism, sublimity, and doom throughout his desert pilgrimage. “Wreck, ho! the wreck—Jerusalem!” the sea-rover Agath cries out, spying the distant Holy City upon the pilgrim-party’s return. And when Melville meditates upon the Pyramids in his journal, regarding the colossal monuments in the tradition of Kant and Hegel as supreme examples of the sublime, he reaches for his familiar point of reference: “As with the ocean, you learn as much of its vastness by the first five minutes glance as you would in a month, so with the pyramid. Its simplicity confounds you” (78). In Melville’s pilgrimage to Failure, the desert and the sea, the geographic Alpha and Omega of the romantic landscape according to W. H. Auden, collapse into each other.³⁷

As compassionate as is the appeal in the “Epilogue,” the sudden appearance at the end of the poem of the “swimming thought” provides only the barest of life preservers. Ishmael at least can rely on the very materiality of Queequeg’s coffin to keep him afloat, but Clarel is asked to grasp only the insubstantial “mind” of *manaolana* to keep himself above the stones of Judea. After the death of Ruth, after Clarel’s curse upon the Jews, and after 149 cantos of anguish, *manaolana* seems small consolation, a flourish of stoic counterpoint at the very coda of textual instability. The heightened experience of pilgrimage is often found more in the process, those moments of friction and yearning and faith, than in its conclusion, and the ability to sustain uncertainty to which the “Epilogue” appeals has been anticipated and practiced throughout the poem’s *agon* of contending, embodied narratives. At the same time, the waves above which Clarel is asked to keep his head are powered by the covenant narrative of election, promised land, codes of blood purity, and curse at the very core of the poem-pilgrimage. The covenantal “deep structure” of the entire poem is revealed at the student’s return to Jerusalem: the desolation of sacred landscape (paradoxically, revealing both the affirmation of the covenant and the impossibility of hermeneutics) results in the death of the hybrid American-Jewish woman (the impossibility of

sexual love and blood purity) and renews the curse upon the covenanted people (along with the impossibility of their typological New World restoration: “To Terminus build fanes / Columbus ended earth’s romance: / No New World to mankind remains!” [4.21.157–59]).

At the conclusion of the “Jerusalem” sketch in his journal, Melville provides a telegraphic presentation of this narrative progression. Moving from “disappointment,” to “desolation,” and finally to damnation, Melville presents a sequence of observations almost as a set of logical propositions:

No country will more quickly dissipate romantic expectation than Palestine—particularly Jerusalem. To some the disappointment is heart sickening, &c.

Is the desolation of the land the result of the fatal embrace of the Deity? Hapless are the favorites of heaven.

In the emptiness of the lifeless antiquity of Jerusalem the emigrant Jews are like flies that have taken up their abode in a skull. (91)

In the desolation of Palestine, Melville has found, as Ann Douglas observes, “an objective correlative, the geographic analogue to his state of mind,”³⁸ for he seeks precisely that jarring disjuncture between text and landscape for which Palestine was so well known—and there is every reason to believe that even in 1857, Melville expected, even anticipated, just such a disappointment. The dissipation of “romantic expectation” reveals the utter horror of the covenant, for “the fatal embrace of the Deity” assures that sacred land and covenanted people are both ruined: the evidence of Palestine as “Terra Damnata” (2.3.108) reveals the inexorable outcome of the covenant code.

Indeed, the “barrenness of Judea”—its “encrustation of curses,” its “mere refuse & rubbish of creation”—provides an unremitting vision of stones, about which Melville even declaims in ironic rhapsodies in his journal:

Judea is one accumulation of stones—Stony mountains & stony plains; stony torrents & stony roads; stony walls & stony fields, stony houses & stony tombs; stony eyes & stony hearts. Before you, & behind you are stones. Stones to right & stones to left. (90)

The hills are merely “stones in the concrete” and Jerusalem is “like a quarry—all stone.” In the poem, Melville versifies similar rhapsodies (2.10.1–26), while the Holy City becomes the “Stony metropolis of stones” (4.2.12). Even Nathan’s spiritual journey, as he makes his way back from Protestant sectarianism and deism to Judaism as the original covenant, ends at “the crag of Sinai . . . adamant” (1.17.217–18). In the very first lines of the poem, Clarel, just arrived in Jerusalem, sits in a chamber “Much like a tomb new-cut in stone” (1.1.3) to contemplate the “naturalistic knell” of modernity “In lieu of Siloh’s oracle” (1.1.23–24). There he recalls how, when first approaching the Holy City, it loomed before him “Like the ice-bastions round the Pole, / Thy blank, blank towers, Jerusalem” (1.1.60–61). Clarel seeks to become a “just interpreter / Of Palestine” (1.1.95–96), and yet, despite the poem’s many stone inscriptions—the verses literally carved on the walls of chambers, the messages sought under stones, the geologic revelations crudely chipped away by Margoth the vulgar materialist, or even the new road cleared from the stones by Nehemiah the biblical literalist who claims he can read and even write the return of the Jews on the landscape—those symbolic, looming towers stay inscrutable, remain blank.

“But Palestine,” Clarel asks the seemingly uninterested, hedonistic, dissembling Jew from Lyon, “do you not / Concede some strangeness to her lot?” (4.26.140–42). To Melville, perhaps even more than to the literalist Alexander Keith and others seeking the “strangeness” of proof-texts in the stones, Palestine requires a special hermeneutics—or, as the poem contemplates, the

denial of hermeneutics altogether—for the blasted landscape has become the source of its own textualization, as the creature of a decidedly literary, “gothic” genealogy, rather than as the prophetic issue of divine intervention:

Had Jerusalem no peculiar historic association, still would it, by its extraordinary physical aspect, evoke peculiar emotions in the traveler. As the sight of haunted Haddon Hall suggested to Mrs Radcliffe her curdling romances, so I have little doubt, the diabolical landscapes great part of Judea must have suggested to the Jewish prophets, their terrific theology. (89)

The covenantal narrative, that “terrific [or ghastly] theology,”³⁹ is Judaic, above all, and it is the Deity’s somewhat oxymoronic “fatal embrace” that makes Jehovah not only responsible for evil but also malignant, cruel, or so incomprehensible that the gulf between the human and the divine, the “chronometricals” and “horologicals” of *Pierre*, impossible to bridge, allowing Gnostic or Manichean possibilities that “Jehovah was construed to be / Author of evil, yea, its god; / And Christ divine his contrary” (3.5.41–43). “Fatal embrace” leaves only an uncomfortable eroticism, recalling the canticles even in Clarel’s failed attempts at the alternative of human love through homosexual liaison:

But for thy fonder dream of love
In man toward man—the soul’s caress—
The negatives of flesh should prove
Analogies of non-cordialness
In spirit.

(2.27.124–28)

When Agar and Ruth, both Americans, both Jews, and consequently both doubly “favorites of heaven,” expire in the Deity’s embrace, domesticity and “positive” love are rendered “hapless” as well. “In truth’s forecasting canticles” (1.7.20), the bride can only die, and Melville’s misogynist violence, underscored by the unindividuated allegorical sentimentalization of the dead women, is transferred to the Jews.

That the accursed Jews populate the skull of the Holy City like insects both confirms and mocks the covenantal narrative’s cruelly enigmatic consequences for violating (actually, the violation fulfilling) God’s plan, and the appearance of a wide variety of “emigrant Jews” throughout *Clarel*, along with the constant contemplation and unraveling of their “terrific/ghastly theology,” marks Melville’s quest. The poem’s obsession with Jews begins even before Clarel’s first encounter: in the very first canto he speaks with a fellow American traveler, who warns the divinity student that he will not be able to read the landscape because “Our New World’s worldly wit so shrewd / Lacks the Semitic reverent mood, / Unworldly” (1.1.92–94). The poem’s preoccupation with Jews continues in the second canto when the American encounters the emblematic, utterly alien black Jew from Cochin—then goes on with the “Hegelized” Margoth, the “plump” Lyonesse dissembler, and others, including the Wandering Jew as performed by a monk at Mar Saba’s masque. Most of all, however, the “fatal embrace” of the covenantal narrative is embodied in Nathan, the fanatical seeker through America’s volatile religious wilderness, who ends up converting, through love for Agar, to Judaism, the source of the American settler myth itself, a fate that by implication also awaits Clarel but for the death of the convert’s daughter.

American philo-Judaism, specifically as it revolved around the millennialist doctrines of Jewish restoration, was well known to Melville. In the section of his journal “Christian Missions &c in Palestine & Syria,” he focuses on the effects of the obsession, noting that Clorinda Minor (who Melville mistakenly calls Minot) “seems to have been the first person actively to engage in

this business” of offering agricultural training to Jews in anticipation of their return. He calls Minor “A woman of fanatic energy & spirit” who inspired others to catch “the contagion” that “the time for the prophetic return of the Jews to Judea is at hand, and therefore the way must be prepared for them by Christians, both in setting them right in their faith & their farming—in other words, preparing the soil literally& figuratively” (92–93), a task Nehemiah, the “flitting tract-dispensing man” (1.8.33), passionately attempts in *Clarel*:

Passages, presages he knew:
Zion restore, convert the Jew,
Reseat him here, the waste bedew;
Then Christ returneth; so it ran.

(1.8.26–29)

Later in the poem, Clarel observes the “saint . . . with busy care / Flinging aside stone after stone / . . . While every stone that he removed / Laid bare but more” (2.10.189–94) in his “conceit about the Jew.” Like his biblical namesake, Nehemiah prepares the soil for return.

Melville had access to many religious enthusiasts as a model for his naive literalist, but one certain inspiration was the missionary Reverend Dickson, who was seen “going about Jerusalem with open Bible, looking for the opening asunder of Mount Olivet and the preparing of the highway for the Jews” (94). Unlike his lashing critique in *Typee* of colonizing missionaries in the South Pacific, Melville regards Dickson and the other Christian forerunners he documents as absurd, ineffective dreamers, more to be pitied than condemned:

Old Dickson seems a man of Puritanic energy, and being inoculated with this preposterous Jew mania, is resolved to carry his Quixotism through to the end. . . .The whole thing is half melancholy, half farcical—like all the rest of the world. (94)

The “preposterous Jew mania,” as Melville was aware, was an obsession with broad appeal, and he takes care to counter the entire Christian Zionist project with a keen perception of its impracticality, even its absurdity:

The idea of making farmers of the Jews is vain. In the first place, Judea is a desert with few exceptions. In the second place, the Jews hate farming. All who cultivate the soil in Palestine are Arabs. The Jews dare not live outside walled towns or villages for fear of the malicious persecution of the Arabs & Turks.—Besides, the number of Jews in Palestine is comparatively small. And how are the hosts of them scattered in other lands to be brought here? Only by a miracle. (94)

One can observe, as does Franklin Walker, that Melville “proved a poor prophet,” for the “miracle” of Jewish conversion to settler-colonial nationalism, if not Christianity, transformed the farcical, melancholy dream into a considerable material force.⁴⁰ But the “vain” mania provides more than a convenient White Whale for Nehemiah, as one of the poem’s cast of monomaniacs, to pursue.

In its paradigmatic, Judaic form, the settler-colonial myth was reenacted by the proto-Zionist Warder Cresson, the convert from Philadelphia from whom Nathan is drawn, whom Melville briefly sketches in his journal only as “An American turned Jew—divorced from former wife—married a Jewess &c—Sad” (85). Melville is keenly aware that the “preposterous Jew mania”—melancholy, farcical, and sad, as well as bloody, cruel, and self-destructive—reaches in several directions, including the widespread typological understanding of America and the American landscape, from Cotton Mather’s Christianography to Young America’s sacralized Manifest Destiny and beyond.

For Melville, the failure of the New World is joined to the failure of its underlying typological narrative, which makes that “genuine, old Jonah feeling” he senses in Jaffa a bitterly ironic,

absurdist lens through which to view his own contradictory, prophetic calling. “And if we obey God,” Father Mapple exhorts in *Moby-Dick*, “we must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists” (chapter 9). Or, as Samuel Purchas presents the same dichotomy in the Protestant trope of life as a pilgrimage: “And thus is Man’s whole life a Pilgrimage, either from God as Cain’s or from himself as Abel’s.”⁴¹ And yet, for the preposterous, typological Jew of America (and, by extension, of the Christian West, more generally) to obey God (to read the world) results only in the “fatal embrace” of devastation and death, while obeying oneself (to write the world) accomplishes only evil (“Man’s vicious: snaffle him with kings” [2.3.180], the ex-revolutionary Mortmain snarls).

Both Jonah and Cain, in Christian anti-Judaic tradition dating back to the early Middle Ages, are figures of the recalcitrant, sensuous Jew, the obdurate, willing heretic who refuses to heed the Word of his own God. Melville-Clarel, who can hear no message beneath the stone, is both the typological Jew who receives the covenant and the one who rejects it, and only *manaolana*, that sensibility of hope oddly borne from the discontinuities, displacements, and disjunctures of colonial contact, can sustain him or the pilgrim-reader. In *Clarel*—and throughout his entire poem-pilgrimage—Melville unravels the covenant, disobeying both Jehovah *and* himself, and is thus more alone than even Jonah, while his narrative perception of the painful impossibility of the Beatitudes, of a revolution in the natures of both the Divinity and His Creation, would have to await the paradoxes of *Billy Budd*.

CHAPTER SIX

“That Strange Pervert”: The Puritan Zionist

MELVILLE’S JEW MANIA

“Who may be / That strange pervert?” (1.16.197–98), Melville has Clarel query Nehemiah, his guide to the shrines of Jerusalem, when the troubled American student first spies Nathan, the American convert to Judaism, walking with his daughter Ruth away from the Wailing Wall. While Clarel’s tour of Jerusalem initiates his sequence of encounters with representative seekers, many of whom harbor monomanias, such as the millennialist Nehemiah, or spiritual wounds, such as the hunchback Celio, it is Nathan, highlighting the “strangeness” of Palestine by the American’s surprising presence at the Jewish shrine, who plays a pivotal role in the narrative and symbolic structure of Melville’s epic poem-pilgrimage. He is not one of the major interlocutor “guides” in Clarel’s quest for religious certainty, yet he is assuredly one of the grandest of the poem’s monomaniacs. It is the sight of Nathan’s daughter Ruth that arouses Clarel’s love; and it is Nathan’s death at the hands of Arab bandits, prompting Ruth’s seclusion in mourning, that sets Clarel on his pilgrimage-within-a-pilgrimage to the Dead Sea with Nehemiah and two other Americans, Vine, the coldly reticent Hawthorne-like brooder, and Rolfe, the “manysided,” broad-minded Melville-like sea rover, along with the too-liberal English clergyman Derwent and the embittered Swedish ex-revolutionary Mortmain. Yet Nathan does more than instigate the poem-pilgrimage’s weaving of the travelers’ dialogic performances with their encounters of sacred geography; with his aberrant hermeneutics, he charges the poem-pilgrimage’s spiritual quest with distinctly sexual, racial, religious, and national implications. Nathan is a “strange pervert” because of his extreme religious reversion, yet his prototypical story of spiritual quest across America’s religious landscape, culminating in his attempt to reinscribe the colonial covenant at its origins, frames the entire poem with the “preposterous Jew mania,” the mythic allure of Jewish restoration as a colonial “errand into the wilderness” parallel to America’s own.

A zealous Zionist settler after his conversion to Judaism, Nathan is the descendent of American Puritans, and Melville recounts his biography primarily as a portrait of the New England spiritual and cultural quest taken to extremes; and yet the idea of actually “reinstat[ing] the Holy Land” (1.17.264) and living the settler’s life of Nathan’s “sires in Pequod wilds immersed” (1.17.305) is actually no more strange or perverse than other Anglo-American primitivist narratives of exile and promise, renewal and failure. He embodies the ideas of “literal restoration” current within the strain of Protestantism espoused by Nehemiah; but rather than attempt to proselytize Jews to resettle the ancient homeland of the Hebrews for essentially Christian eschatological purposes, Nathan returns the restorationist idea to the purity of its narrative source. “ ‘Poor Nathan, did man ever stray / As thou? to Judaize to-day!’ ” (1.22.77–78), Nehemiah exclaims with “A meek superior look” as he bemoans Nathan’s proto-Zionism as nothing “ ‘but dreams—dreams, dreams!’ ” (1.22.76, 84). Yet, when Clarel reminds the fool for Christ of his own millennialist faith “in Jew restored,” Nehemiah confidently draws the

Christological distinction across his own version of Jewish restoration: the Protestant doctrine was justified only in terms of Christ's return, Jewish restoration gaining narrative coherence and authority only "as forerunner of our Lord." With the "evidences" of Christological interpretation so far from any realm of contestation, the "Saint" is compelled only to offer paternalist sympathy for Nathan's perversion: "Poor man, he's weak; 'tis even here' / Touching his forehead—'he's amiss' " (1.22.86–89).

While Clarel observes that Nathan must also regard the Christian restorationist as "touched," the American-turned-Jew and Nehemiah (the typological Israelite-become-American) are alike in other ways besides their shared mania: both bring pragmatic settler-colonial impulses to the project of "advancing" Jewish return to Palestine. Yet what is so audacious, so "perverted" about Nathan is that he sets out to reinscribe the covenantal narrative onto Judaism itself. He recreates the Puritan settler seeking a New Jerusalem, except in this version the "errand into the wilderness"—that performance of promise, trek, possession, and failure—no longer stretches toward the West. Now the errand, suddenly unmediated and unencumbered by Christological hermeneutics, veers back to the East (and back through time), returning to the sacred geography of the old Holy City to try, in a characteristically "American," pragmatic fashion, to make an idea become a material force, "to realize the unreal" (1.27.70).

Although the characterization of Nathan is primarily as a Puritan reenactment, readers must also consider it within Melville's overall "preoccupation with the 'original' inhabitants of this 'terrible' land, the Jews."¹ Arrayed throughout the poem, the major Jewish characters exist as evidences of authenticity, ruin, perversion, exile, or the inviolate isolation of the outcast, each embodying a complex of extreme responses to the covenantal mind-set, at least as seen through the Calvinist eye, and a close reading of Nathan inevitably demands scrutiny of the poem's other Jewish characters, along with Judaism itself. Abdon, whom Clarel encounters in the very first canto, is a black Jew from Cochin, an exile descended from the Ten Lost Tribes, those "Lost children in the wood of time" (1.2.27), and he has "From Ind to Zion" returned, but "less to live, than end at home" (1.2.72–73). Margoth, called a "Hegelized" Jew, is a materialist who conducts his crass dialogue with the Holy Land by means of science, chipping away at the rock of Peter with his hammer as he seeks to "remand" the stony landscape "Back from old theologic myth" (2.20.48–49): "All's mere geology" (2.33.46), he declares, asserting the profane ordinariness of "strange" Palestine. Margoth delivers the harshest remarks of science scoffing at Christianity ("I, Science, I whose gain's thy loss, / I slanted thee, thou Slanting Cross" [2.31.99–100]), while the comments on Jerusalem by this barbarian (Bad Goth), echoing Whitman's "Passage to India," are perhaps the most characteristically "American" lines of positivist materialism in the poem:

"Stale is she!
Lay flat the walls, let in the air,
That folk no more may sicken there!
Wake up the dead; and let there be
Rails, wires, from Olivet to the sea,
With station in Gethsemane."

(2.20.89–94)

The assimilationist salesman from Lyon—" 'Twas a prodigal / Yet pilgrim too in casual way" (4.26.10–11)—is perhaps the most shocking Jew, for he hides his origins (" 'He'd melt in, nor be separate— / Exclusive' " [4.28.143–44]) at the same time that the "juicy little fellow" with hair "Like to a Polynesian girl's" (4.26.249) displays what was thought to be typically Jewish sensualism to cast a homoerotic "spell" over Clarel. Agar, who marries Nathan, is a victim of his

mania, for “The waste of Judah made her lorn” (1.27.20), and she suffers a tragically ironic “exile-grief” away from her real homeland, America. Ruth, the daughter of Nathan and Agar, is a creature of miscegenation, an American with distinctly “Hebrew the profile, every line” (1.16.176), a half-breed of Old and New Israel. Despite the “secret protest of a virgin mind,” Ruth constitutes a racial and conceptual impossibility torn by both covenants of “The two-fold Testaments” (3.5.48): she exists only to die.

For the most part these Jews present extreme images of the “other”—the Jew as a type of “counter object,” to apply the image Melville uses to contrast the signifying appearance of an avalanche and a rainbow at the time of Nehemiah’s death at the Dead Sea. Throughout *Clarel*, symbols, characters, episodes, and philosophical dialogues are all dialectically positioned against each other as counter-objects. While Abdon, Margoth, the Prodigal, Agar, and Ruth, like the non-Jewish characters, represent distinct emotional and intellectual stances in relation to revelation, covenant, and hermeneutics, they also collectively embody an attendant, disquieting “strangeness”: the too-real fact that they are Jews, the ruined descendants of a “mitered race” borne of “diabolical landscapes.” Melville’s ambivalent response to Jews grew in part from his revulsion to the actual, ruinous inhabitants of the Palestine he visited in 1857, those “emigrant Jews [that] are like flies that have taken up their abode in a skull” (91). To this insect/ death image is joined an anger born of bafflement at the “terrific [ghastly] theology” that underlies, even predicates, Christianity; and at the core of his “Jew mania” is Melville’s obsession with Jehovah.

In Egypt, “oppressed by the massiveness & mystery of the pyramids,” Melville experienced a tumult of epiphanies and panics during his brief visit to the monuments, so often the site for Euro-American meditations upon the most impenetrable mysteries of the distant past, as Twain would underscore through burlesque in *Innocents Abroad*. There Melville’s journal records feelings “of awe & terror” and “Dread of the Arabs”; he was overcome by suffocating claustrophobia as he entered a pyramid’s chambers, while he was filled with “gradual nervousness & final giddiness & terror” as he climbed to its heights. Even in Melville’s memory, “Pyramids still loom before me—something vast, indefinite, incomprehensible, and awful”—and ineluctably Judaic:

I shudder at idea of ancient Egyptians. It was in these pyramids that was conceived the idea of Jehovah. Terrible mixture of the cunning and awful. Moses learned in all the lore of the Egyptians. The idea of Jehovah born here. (75)

The Pyramids provide the supreme example of manmade sublimity, of “doing violence to the imagination” in Kant’s formulation,² but Melville locates their power, beyond both man and nature, in “that supernatural creature, the priest.” What Moses learned from those “terrible inventors, those Egyptian wise men,” was their parallel spiritual conception of violence done to the mind on a similarly colossal scale:

And one seems to see that as out of the crude forms of the natural earth they could evoke by art the transcendent mass & symmetry & unity of the pyramid so out of the rude elements of the insignificant thoughts that are in all men, they could rear the transcendent conception of a God. (78)

“But for no holy purpose was the pyramid founded,” Melville sardonically concludes. Jehovah, horrifying, impossible to comprehend, inscrutable, impervious to reason, and irrationally violent, this “transcendent conception” raised itself from out of a heap of rocks animated only by “the insignificant thoughts that are in all men.” Even before he visited the Pyramids, those monuments represented to Melville the sublimity/horror of inscrutability or, worse yet, vacancy. In *Pierre* he unravels the layers of “superinduced superficies” like unwinding a mummy “cloth

on cloth,” trying to penetrate to the “unlayered substance” of the human’s divine essence, a process Melville also compares to the discovery of the core tomb within a pyramid’s interior:

By vast pains we mine into the pyramids, by horrible gropings we come to the central room; with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid—and no body is there!—appallingly vacant as vast is the soul of a man. (Bk. 21, sec. 1)

Melville’s horror of Jehovah, whether present or absent, was further complicated by the tradition of philo-Judaic identification with Israel as the first “natural” aristocracy. Although he expresses admiration for some latter-day Jews in the “Concerning Hebrews” canto, such as the pantheist Spinoza and the emancipated yet by no means apostate Moses Mendelssohn, Melville is most confounded by the “contrast with the breastplate bright / Of Aaron flushed in altar-light” (2.22.19–20) and the fallen London “Houndsditch clothesman” that would seem “scarce. . . . Akin to seers” (2.22.25–26). Melville is particularly disturbed at “Jew banker, merchant, statesman—these, / With artist, actress known to fame, / All strenuous in each Gentile aim” (2.22.27–29), for these Jews also harbor “doubt Judaic” (2.22.87) and “share the change” (2.22.37) of rationalism and skepticism with non-Jews. Melville is dismayed at the notion that Jews, descendants of a “mitered race,” can not only mimic Christians, but fail like them as well. Indeed, Christian failure he finds less disorienting, for his animating nostalgia is for the mythic Jew as the central actor, the original human, in a drama of Western identity.

The weakening of the old dispensation undermines the new, so the failure of Jews to remain loyal to what amounts to the structural and narrative foundations of the Christian world draws forth a bitter animus, the quality of which is particularly undisguised in Melville’s depiction of the scoffing Margoth: “One can’t forbear / Thinking that Margoth is—a Jew” (2.22.6–7). “In Gentile ’twould not seem so odd” (2.22.16) not to “keep fealty / To ancient rites” (2.22.47–48), the liberal Protestant Derwent explains, warning off “preconceptions” of authenticity and purity concerning Jews. But what is virtually an expletive—“a Jew”—cannot be dispersed by a liberal who can wear his faith like “an over-easy glove” (2.22.142). Even the very non-Jewish reality of contemporary capitalist exploitation is given what would become an all-too-familiar anti-Jewish cast, when, in part 4, Ungar revises Chaucer’s blood-libel myth:

Old ballads sing
Fair Christian children crucified
By impious Jews: you’ve heard the thing:
Yes, fable; but there’s truth hard by:
How many Hughs of Lincoln, say,
Does Mammon in his mills, to-day,
Crook, if he do not crucify?

(4.9.129–35)

Melville, in both *Clarel* and his journal, displays much of the complex of emotions, images, and philosophical obsessions from which a racialized antipathy—nineteenth-century anti-Semitism—was beginning to mature out of the more traditional exclusion rooted in metaphysical anti-Judaism and economic caste. The Jewish Other remains an object of Melville’s obsession, a representation of the authentic “crag of Sinai” and a counter-representation of the Christian, a mirror image that exerts an exotic yet familiar magnetism, provokes a maddening fascination, even narcissism, which, at the same time, elicits disgust.

THE WANDERING JEW

The Jew's role as actor, counter-representation, mirror image, surrogate, and typological double is rendered most acutely in the poem's depiction of the Wandering Jew, Cartaphilus. Melville's tragic sense of the limitations of Christian identity is performed by the legendary figure, acted by one of Mar Saba's monks during a masque for Clarel's pilgrim-party in part 3 of the poem. Melville's theatrical, symbolic Jew not only affects the apprehension of the actual Jew in contemporary life but further shakes apart the constitutive coherence of the Christian himself. Not only depicted as the figural Jew-as-fallen-Christian, Cartaphilus has also been cast within the romantic tradition of the defiant hero. Tormented by his rejection of Jesus, the Wandering Jew always returns to a "haunted" Jerusalem, drawn "by the guilty tie / Between us" to his "sister in wrong" (3.19.22–23, 27). Cartaphilus suffers from the endless accumulation of knowledge about "vanity's endless reign" (3.19.105), an epistemological assault unmitigated by the comfort of death. " 'Just let him live, just let him rove,' " he mimics Christ's "voice estranged from love" (3.19.49–50), as the condemned Messiah on his way to Calvary levels his curse at the Jew:

"Live—live and rove the sea and land;
 Long live, rove far, and understand
 And sum all knowledge for his dower;
 For he forbid is, he is banned;
 His brain shall tingle, but his hand
 Shall palsied be in power:
 Ruthless, he meriteth no ruth,
 On him I imprecate the truth."

(3.19.51–58)

"Cut off I am, made separate," the Wandering Jew cries out, and in the endless cycles of his "profound resort" (3.19.37) to Jerusalem, he only hungers for the day "When Michael's trump the call shall spread / Through all your warrens of the dead" (3.19.41–42). Forbidden to return to the domesticity he left behind in the Holy City when the curse set him on his endless rounds, he bemoans his loss even "of homely joy" (3.19.82) of wife Esther and his son, and he rages against the excessive punishment of a too-cruel God:

Caitiff I am; but there's no sin
 Conjecturable, possible,
 No crime they expiate in hell
 Justly whereto such pangs belong:
 The wrongdoer he endureth wrong.

(3.19.86–90)

In Melville's free rendering of the legend, no direct reference is made to Cartaphilus's skeptical rejection of Jesus as true Messiah, nor of the Malchus variant of the legend in which the scoffing Jew actually strikes Jesus; and though Cartaphilus serves as "Christ's convict grim" (3.19.140), sentenced until Judgment Day for release, there is no mention of Christ's actual redemptive return as the very paradigmatic, liberating event for which he is condemned to tarry. The witness to the evidence of resurrection that the legend traditionally offered is absent in Mar Saba's version; instead, Cartaphilus is an eternal witness to human vanity whose only respite is to seek refuge from his surfeit of profane history in a solitude "More lonely than an only god" (3.19.77).

Etymologically, Cartaphilus breaks down into *kartos* and *philos*, which denotes "strongly" or "dearly loved,"³ an appellation calling forth Melville's bitterly ironic sense that the "deity's fatal embrace" leads to the "hapless" covenant fate of all "favorites of heaven" (91). God's

responsibility for evil (although the favored Jew must share the “burden . . . of every crime” [3.19.93]) resonates throughout the Wandering Jew’s defiant rage, with the tortured, cursed Jew, the “dearly loved” of the covenant’s fatal embrace, declaiming the burden of ceaseless mental wandering so familiar to Melville: “Go mad I can not: I maintain / The perilous outpost of the sane” (3.19.97–98).

By employing the less frequently used appellation Cartaphilus instead of the more current Ahasuerus, Melville reaches back to one of the earliest written versions of the legend, the 1228 account by Roger of Wendover;⁴ at the same time, he had available a recent, American transmission of the tale that also featured “dearly loved.” Written by David Hoffman, a retired jurist and obsessed amateur historian from Baltimore, *Chronicles Selected from the Originals of Cartaphilus, the Wandering Jew, Embracing a Period of Nearly XIX Centuries* (1853–54) is a massive, unfinished account of several volumes. Hoffman’s Cartaphilus intersects with major events in early history, such as the rise of Charlemagne and the career of Mohammed. Hoffman produces a fictionalized documentation of antiquity and the East, employing the figure of the eternal wanderer to do violence to the historical imagination.⁵ In *Chronicals’* hybrid amalgam of extrascriptural extension, fantasy, history, romance, and science fiction, the legend’s protagonist “assumes a bewildering number of names, characteristics, and intellectual and philosophical postures” to participate in the multifaceted encounters and clashing languages of history, a characterization curiously comparable with the over-rich, obsessive dialogic quality of *Clarel* itself.⁶ But of all the many, recent romantic versions of the legend, including those by Schubart, Goethe, Shelley, Byron, and even Hawthorne that were readily available to Melville, the most popular rendering, translated and reprinted several times, was Eugene Sue’s *The Wandering Jew* (1844 and 1845).⁷

Hoffman judged Sue’s fantasy to be “a work of loathing immorality—but of undoubted genius”—yet, perhaps because of the “immorality” of its radical social critique on the eve of the 1848 revolutions, the novel was enormously popular.⁸ In Sue’s version of the legend, the Wanderer has become a modern rebel who identifies himself so much “with the downtrodden multitude of laboring men and women,” as George Anderson in *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* puts it, “that Christ’s curse has struck not only him but the workers also, through him.” The shared base of “the fatal embrace” becomes so broad that the liberation of the tormented, lone witness to history comes only with capitalism’s Judgment Day, the triumph of the working class against its oppressors, “the rich, the idle, the arrogant, and the Jesuits.”⁹ Given Melville’s rejection of “Red Caps,” “Vitriolists,” and “Communards,” he no doubt regarded Sue’s socialist optimism with little enthusiasm. Yet Sue’s representative, synecdochial character as the one who bears the curse for all, especially the lowly, held deep resonance.

Sue’s potboiler also complicates the character of Ahasuerus with the addition of a sister. The Wandering Jewess, a defender of the workers and an outspoken advocate of women’s rights, is an innovation in the history of the legend, but one in concert with the revolutionary tenor of the times. The novel opens with a prologue in which the brother and sister face each other with impossible longing across the continents at the Bering Sea:

On the Siberian Cape a man, on his knees, stretched his arms toward America with an expression of inconceivable despair.
On the American promontory a young and handsome woman replied to the man’s despairing gesture by pointing to the heavens.¹⁰

In his perceptive study, “Melville’s Wandering Jews,” Bernard Rosenthal observes how Sue’s

innovative iconography of the woman representing the New World and the man representing the Old World could serve as “an arresting backdrop” to *Clarel*: “Wandering Jews both, they feel the awful pain of their destiny and their eternal separation. Whether Melville picked up a clue from this prologue or not, his poem explores the complex interrelationships of the New and Old Worlds against the background of two lovers seeking to bridge that which cannot be crossed.”¹¹

As in *Pierre*, Melville can construct the impossible “bridge” of incest in order to see the span’s inexorable collapse, yet here, as Rosenthal suggests, Sue’s dramatic inclusion of the female wanderer also presents Melville with the use of a kind of gendered typological doubling as a bridge across two worlds, clearly in relation to Clarel’s love of Ruth but also to the Wandering Jew’s attraction to the Holy City. Jerusalem is Cartaphilus’s “sister in wrong,” and the close association of the Old World’s feminized deicide city and the westward-traveling-yet-always-returning male Wanderer invokes the incestuous relations between text (and myth) and hermeneutics (and action). The instability of eroticized doubling—the lived, messy slippage between signifier and signified—is underscored further by the fact that “Cartaphilus” is actually performed by a Christian monk during Mar Saba’s masque. Cartaphilus’s figural existence is a stand-in for what the acting Christian could become if he were to read sacred narrative incorrectly, confuse or conflate the “two-fold Testaments,” or blaspheme the author of its duality. The Christian “actor,” however, can divest his role after experiencing the didactic, magical incarnation of figural identity with the Jew as heretic or outcast, quickly releasing himself at the end of the masque, while the symbolic Jew is left as a paradigmatic shadow to follow but never overtake the reborn man, other than in sanctioned performances of dualism, heresy, and liminal release, all aimed at the more firm embrace of Christ.

Rolfe, Mortmain, Celio, Agath, Vine, Clarel—most of the pilgrims have returned to Palestine to penetrate the mysteries of sacred text, each in his fashion acting as a Wandering Jew to seek out a perverse erotic encounter with his “sister in wrong,” then to move on, inevitably returning to the eroticized stone city for the hermeneutic liaison until Judgment Day. The Jews in the poem, of course, are by definition exiles and wanderers of various sorts, while the Americans, such as Ungar, the Confederate veteran turned mercenary for the sultan called “a Wandering Ishmael from the West” (4.10.189) who joins the travelers in part 4, are driven variously by the curse of New World delusion, failure, and rootlessness. But of all these wanderers, none so scrambles the typological landscape as Nathan, for he has crossed the boundaries altogether, doing a type of violence to identity perhaps even more unsettling than the transformation into Mohammed Effendi of George Bethune English, who earlier in the century became the first willing American convert to Islam.¹² Nathan demonstrates the intoxicating dangers of theatricality, for he is the actor who becomes his role, the incarnation of Christianity’s ultimate failure to supplant its fallen original, the embodiment of typological collapse animated by the colonizing vigor of American self-fashioning: Nathan out-Mormons the Mormons.

REVERSION TO THE PRIMITIVE

Nathan at first appears to be a peculiar candidate as an “apostate” to “turn Hebrew” (1.17.212); but as the narrator describes the American’s conversion, the speaker notes that as a result of his “passion,”

the Puritan—
Mixed latent in his blood—a strain
How evident, of Hebrew source;

'Twas that, diverted here in force,
Which biased—hardly might do less.

(1.17.227–31)

In the dialectical play of “counter objects,” Nathan converts because his sensual love for a woman arouses his latent “interest in a mitered race” (1.17.223), and he returns not only to the primitivist theological source that is “behind man’s present lot,” a “secure” and “adamant” “crag of Sinai” that stands “Far behind Rome and Luther” (1.17.214–18), but also to his father’s pilgrim-settler founding myth.

Yet Nathan’s effort to act out the myth of the New World in Palestine is as absurd as it is foredoomed. In his journal, Melville writes that the attempt by American missionaries to convert “either to Christianity or Agriculture” the nine thousand mostly elderly Polish Jews then maintaining a pious community in Palestine¹³ is a “preposterous Jew mania,” a “Quixotism” (94). When in Palestine Melville met the inspiration for Nathan, Warder Cresson of Philadelphia, the former American consul in Jerusalem and victor in a lunacy trial brought on by his family because of his conversion, Melville identified the defamed convert in his journal only as “An American turned Jew,” adding “sad” as his one-word commentary (85). But Nathan-Cresson is something more than “preposterous” or “sad.” In *Clarel*, the American-turned-Jew has taken on a complex, absurdist-tragic dimension to settler identity, for his atavistic regression and sexual-racial perversity ironically mirrors the American’s progress toward the New Jerusalem, revealing, through the creation of an all-too-familiar Other, the anxious confusions and instabilities of typological doubling.

The sense of “otherness” is particularly striking at Clarel’s first encounter with Nathan at the Wailing Wall. Clarel observes Abdon, “marks the Black Jew bowed” (1.16.120) at the temple wall, but then

 he seeth there
One scarcely Hebrew in his dress
Rural, and hard cheek’s swarthinness,
With nothing of an Eastern air.
His eyes met Clarel’s unremoved—
In end a countryman he proved,
A strange apostate. On the twain
Contrasted so—the white, the black—
Man’s earliest breed and latest strain . . .

(1.16.123–31)

The image of “the twain / Contrasted so” is further heightened by the previous portrayal of Abdon, the only Jew that Clarel, or the reader, has as yet closely encountered in the narrative. While the characterization of Abdon is the most sympathetic of all the Jews in the poem, he is introduced in the second canto as perhaps the most exotic personage an American pilgrim could imaginably meet on his first night in the Holy City: not only is Abdon a most unusual Jew who is “Descended from those dubious men, / The unreturning tribes, the Ten” (1.2.24–27), but his complexion is a “strange . . . shade / Of swartheness like a born Hindoo” (1.2.83–84)—Abdon is virtually an emblem of all that is Eastern. Contemplating him, Melville further ponders the “deeper mystery” of how the Ten Tribes “live on—/ Unmixed into time’s swamping sea / So far can urge their Amazon” (1.2.48–50). The Amazon, which can project its undiluted current far into the Atlantic, not only conveys the longevity and endurance of the lost tribes, but it also indicates the “urge” of the primitive associated with the New World that Melville also

paradoxically invests in Abdon, at the same time as the black Jew exudes the quintessence of the Orient.

The contrast between Abdon and Nathan is so shocking that Clarel “feels the earth upheave / Beneath him, and learns, ill-content, / That terra firma can deceive” (1.16.135–37). This shock echoes of yet another “strange apostate,” for the earth also “upheaved” during the earthquake at the time of Jesus’ death. But the contrast between Abdon as Fallen Adam and Nathan as the New Adam causes a counter-upheaval to the sacred text, one in which the black Jew, “Man’s earliest breed,” is impossibly joined to the “latest strain” of humanity—the white, Anglo-American—creating a dialectical “contrast” between Nathan and Abdon by means of the “othering” instrument of American racial categories: Nathan, the latest genetic incarnation of European superiority, meets his ancient Negro forebear.

While the “strange apostate” is “contrasted so,” an identity is also established by means of Judaism: primitive and civilized, black and white, “earliest breed” and “latest strain”—all are linked, their lines of demarcation superseded by the power of “ancient creed.” In *Typee*, Melville entertains the idea of staying in the South Pacific, of allowing his own “conversion” from a fallen civilization to a prelapsarian Eden, although Tommo ultimately rejects the allure: Nathan, however, has actually converted, although to the cursed, rocky wasteland of Judea instead of the Edenic verdure of an eroticized, tropical island. Still, by means of the Judaic medium, Nathan, the “strange apostate,” has crossed the color line, has joined the atavistic, the primitive, and the black; and yet how ironic to have crossed over to the Other in order to reenact yet another colonizing dialectic between settler and native, for in the process of becoming the Other, Nathan very much becomes himself, reasserting his Puritan past with the mania of the “primal settlers.”

NATHAN’S TANGLED THREAD

After the encounter at the Wailing Wall, the narrator prepares to interpret Nehemiah’s account of the “tangled thread” of Nathan’s story in the next canto. By clearing Nehemiah’s narrative “from snarl,” Melville allows himself the broadest narrative and symbolic “interflow” (1.16.201–3) to portray Nathan as a representative American; Melville employs an epic sweep that the character of Nehemiah, if allowed to relate the tale, could never have achieved. Throughout *Clarel*, the narrator engages in didactic and narrative excursions, such as in the earlier cantos “The Sepulcher” and “Of the Crusaders,” during which he abandons the voices of his characters in order to speak from the heights of disembodied third-person anonymity, a voyeuristic position more akin to the Wandering Jew as witness to history than to Ovid’s donkey. The point is not that this is the “real” Melville speaking: if anything, the constant, obsessive play of arguments and counterarguments itself comes closest to a “real” Melville; for as much as the poem is a series of dialogues, the “dialogic” quality of the poem is not entirely consistent, a single dominant voice persisting throughout. In the “Nathan” canto, Melville exercises this “interflow” in order to range freely and independently among the correspondences, all the “linked analogies”—those crisscrossing images and philosophical arguments that Melville plays with—arrayed along the narrative weave of Nathan’s epic biography.

The narrator begins Nathan’s story with the “landing patriarchs” (1.17.34), the founding race. Nathan was “sprung from worthy stock—/ Austere, ascetical, but free” (1.17.1–2), and this patriarchal gene pool initiates a “train” of physical as well as intellectual migrations. While their “pilgrim-keel in storm and stress / Had erred” (1.17.5–6) and came upon a “wilderness” in the New World, his forebears, “primal settlers,” continue their migration, beginning the genetic

reproduction of the pilgrim-settler impulse:

Those primal settlers put in train
New emigrants which inland bore;
From these too, emigrants again
Westward pressed further; more bred more;
At each remove a goodlier wain,
A heart more large, an ampler shore,
With legacies of farms behind;
Until in years the wagons wind
Through parks and pastures of the sun,
Warm plains as of Esdraleon.

(1.17.9–18)

The westward advance across the American continent is a series of racial improvements (“more bred more”): each scion produces “a goodlier wain” who leaves “legacies of farms behind,” until the pilgrim-settlers enter a pastoral domain metaphorically linked to the fertile plains of biblical myth in northern and central Palestine. The narrator describes this Edenic zone as “nature in her best benign,” so pacific that the “libbard-lily [leopard lily] . . . alone looks pantherine” (1.17.19–23), although these “parks and pastures of the sun” are “wild in symmetry of mold” (1.17.17, 20). The pilgrim-settlers have left behind the “grim hemlock woods” that breed “the witchcraft-spell malign” (1.17.24–25), the gloom of Puritan New England. Then, through epic simile, Melville links the “promised land” vision of the plains to “groves like isles in Grecian seas” (1.17.26), alluding to the spiritual potency of ancient Greek pastoral. Melville then places these “groves like isles” in the sea, a recurrent image in *Clarel* and throughout Melville’s writings:

Long rollings of the vast serene—
The prairie in her swimming swell
Of undulation.

(1.17.29–31)

This prairie-sea is invested with an undulating, feminine serenity, while, at least here, the inscrutability and malignity that Melville often associates with the sea are forgotten amid “Such glad scenes.” The Illinois frontier provides the pilgrim-settler “venturers” with “a turf divine / Of promise,” better than what “The landing patriarchs” knew beneath “that severer star” near “Saco’s mountain wilds” in New Hampshire (1.17.31–38).

When his “sire” dies, “in [Nathan’s] bosom crept / Precocious doubt unbid” (1.17.52–53). Despite living amid the “turf divine / Of promise,” Nathan feels “the sway . . . of his grave life, and power / Of vast space” (1.17.53–55) on the prairie. The doubt and fatalism he begins to struggle with emerge from America’s own diabolical landscapes as he daily contemplates the “mounds” of death by the door of his loghouse:

Three Indian mounds
Against the horizon’s level bounds
Dim showed across the prairie green
Like dwarfed and blunted mimic shapes
Of pyramids at distance seen
From the broad Delta’s planted capes
Of vernal grain.

(1.17.56–62)

Once again, Melville yokes the East to the New World by means of simile, the burial mounds looming as “dwarfed and blunted mimic shapes / Of pyramids” above the prairie-sea equated to the Nile delta’s “vernal grain” (1.17.59–62). To conflate mounds with pyramids seems almost far-fetched, the equivalency of the New World reality with the Eastern paradigm subtly undermined at the same time as the American landscape is rendered with mystic weirdness. As far-fetched as the “linked analogy” may seem, the process of “reading” the New World as yet another inscription of the Old World lends itself to any equivalency, particularly in light of Puritan practice. Nathan’s morbidity grows through his contemplation of the “vital gum” provided by the dead “sagamores” (Indian chiefs), which “green kept each mausoleum” (1.17.64–66). Once he chanced upon

Bones like sea corals; one bleached skull
A vase vined round and beautiful
With flowers; felt, with bated breath
The floral revelry over death.

(1.17.68–71)

Here the pattern of images once more involves the sea. As well, the skull described as “A vase vined round and beautiful /With flowers” evokes the circling design of a Greek vase, recalling the Greek “groves” of the earlier configuration of images. Amid this sense of the regenerative “revelry” of nature, Nathan recalls the Christ story, as the farmer “thrilled” to lambs killed by lightning in a thunderstorm who are “Innocents—and the type of Christ / Betrayed” (1.17.72–75): doom awaits even the innocents, a random victimization that no reading of text-landscape seems to be able to illuminate, much less stop.

Even more than these visions of mortality, Nathan is haunted by traumatic memories of the 1826 Crawford Notch avalanche in New Hampshire’s White Mountains. His uncle was a victim of the famous Willey disaster, and nightmarish visions of the slide as the horror of nature “contrasted” with his pastoral idyll in the “prairie twilight.” When “the mountain-side / Sliced open” (1.17.89–90), the landslide parted at the Willey home, leaving the house utterly untouched while overtaking the family on both sides as they fled for safety. The tragic irony of the Willey disaster provoked an intense response throughout the United States that “reflected the puritan tradition of interpreting ‘Illustrious Providences’ and blowing the trumpet of doom”:¹⁴ how a family whose whole intention, as reported by their neighbor, was solely “to live humbly, walk uprightly, deal justly with all, speak evil of none”¹⁵ could be inexplicably destroyed seemed an impenetrable mystery, a demonstration of the power of an overruling God whom mortals could never comprehend:

Nature hath put such terror on
That from his mother man would run—
Our mother, Earth: the foundered rocks
Unstable prove: the Slide! the Slide!
.....
Somewhere his uncle slept; no mound,
Since not a trace of him was found,
So whelmed the havoc from the heaven.

(1.17.85–88, 95–97)

The perfectly preserved house, fire in its hearth, and food on the table, was seen as a mysterious “improvement” upon Scripture, and the house became an American pilgrimage site, a

shrine to “the fatal embrace,” as well as to the cult of domesticity ironically overwhelmed by the female earth. The disaster, set within the rugged mountains, “satisfied perfectly the contemporary demand for a storied landscape”; the house and the slide provided America with its own ruins.¹⁶ The hills could now be storied according to Walter Scott–like romance, enhancing the profane pleasures of fiction, in addition to being typed according to biblical exegesis, with secular, romantic imaginings creating new possibilities for hermeneutical variety, complexity, and ambiguity.

Hawthorne had already used the slide for “The Ambitious Guest,” to which the story’s climax (“The Slide! The Slide!”) Melville’s account alludes. A traveler, a young man driven to seek fame, “to desire a monument, be it slate, or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man,” spends the night on his way to cross the mountains; there, amid the warmth of the family and the allure of their daughter, “a germ of love” springs up, and he loses his isolating monomania.¹⁷ The “havoc from the heaven” that overwhelms the domestic scene as the family and their guest discuss mortality and fame results in the family’s enduring memory, their name and unscathed home living on in eerie, suspended fashion, while their ambitious visitor, who has finally found human sympathy, is summarily swept under the mountains to sudden and absolute anonymity: the ironies of oblivion are as heavy as the rocks. Nathan’s uncle rests under just such a heavy mound of terrifying irony, and thoughts of this imponderable mystery, this “reminiscence of dismay,” “unhinged him” (1.17.98–99). Confronted by such irrational “havoc from the heaven,” Nathan takes his journey down the path of unbelief.

Nathan comes across a “dusty book” of the Scottish miller for whom he works, and he is impressed by

The blunt straightforward Saxon tone,
Work-a-day language, even his own,
The sturdy thought, not deep but clear,
The hearty unbelief sincere,
Arrested him much like a hand
Clapped on the shoulder. Here he found
Body to doubt, rough standing-ground.

(1.17.115–21)

Whether or not this “dusty book” is a deist tract by Thomas Paine, Melville seems to be describing the “sturdy thought, not deep but clear” of rough-hewn rationalism that, despite the return of his morbid terrors (“The White Hill’s slide! the Indian skull!” [1.17.135]), briefly comforts him with its “hearty unbelief sincere.” Once, however, this “wore off,” he returns to till “An altered earth . . .”:

in Adam’s frame
When thrust from Eden out to dearth
And blest no more, and wise in shame.
The fall!

(1.17.138–42)

Nathan still cannot regard the prairie “turf divine / Of promise” as a genuine New Eden. The fall and its “dearth” (death), its barrenness, its paradoxical wisdom found in shame, remain too evident, while “the Deist’s sway” (1.17.145) only has the effect of “clear[ing] the soil for upstart weed” (1.17.149).

The next “replacing mood” is the “Pantheistic sway,” whereby the idea of “god, expelled from

given form, / Went out into the calm and storm” (1.17.150–52). Once again sea imagery returns, as Nathan plows “near the isles of wood” and feels the influence of a god freed from a “given form” that “Tenants our maiden hemisphere” (1.17.160). Again, the configuration of the sea and the New World is joined by an allusion to ancient Greece, as if “Pan and the pagan oracles,” “dislodged long since from cells / Of Thracian woodlands” (1.17.161–62), have come to America. The classical allusions are reinforced by the narrator’s describing how Nathan would feel the west wind, “Favonius,” across “his father’s sylvan grave.” The virginal, pagan quality of New World nature, inherently conducive to a “Pantheistic sway,” causes him to feel “a thrill / Which heathenized against the will” (1.17.169–70), investing American geography with power enough to cancel exegesis, even to create (heathenize) its own reader.

Nathan is still not satisfied. “Years sped. But years attain not truth . . . / But time instead contributes ruth” (1.17.171, 173), the narrator explains, producing a pun on the contribution of both compassion and his future daughter to Nathan’s search. Nathan continues his quest for the female principle during harvesttime, when, again employing classical-heathen imagery, “the breasts of Ceres swell”; the goddess of earth’s bounty shakes her “golden tassels gay” of New World “Indian corn” (1.17.177–79). Nathan then comes upon yet another American way station on the path toward spiritual enlightenment, a communal sect of religious innovation, “Uncanny, and in rupture new” (1.17.185). Rejecting “rite and creed sublime,” the sect’s members nonetheless “to their own rank fable cleave,” although not all of them were “true / And good.”

For them who hate and heave
Contempt on rite and creed sublime,
Yet to their own rank fable cleave—
Abject, the latest shame of time;
These quite repelled, for still his mind
Erring, was of no vulgar kind.

(1.17.186–92)

Nathan is repelled by the variety of American cultic sexual practices—the corruptions of Blithedale, the plural wives of Nauvoo—and it is at this level of the vulgar, at the too-material discharge of erotic tension, that this wanderer descends to the nadir of his spiritual sickness:

Alone, and at Doubt’s freezing pole
He wrestled with the pristine forms
Like the first man.

(1.17.193–95)

Again, Melville conflates Nathan with Adam after the fall, while “Doubt’s freezing pole” recalls “the ice-bastions round the Pole, / Thy blank, blank towers, Jerusalem!” (1.1.60–61), that frozen sea locking around the “blank” ruins at Clarel’s first approach to the Holy City. In a classical epic this “freezing pole” would perhaps be the gateway to the underworld; in Melville’s existentialist epic this nadir is the point from which Nathan can walk through the glass of the mirror to become the Other in a performance of identity’s elasticity and fungibility only matched by the impossible quick-change artistry of *The Confidence-Man*.

Wrestling alone with “pristine forms,” this masturbatory Adam, once again about to give names to the Platonic essences, is ready for his Eve. Nathan’s soul is “ripened” for influence by a shaping “control,” which arrives, ironically, “from a source that well might claim / Surprise” (1.17.199–200). At a grain market Nathan meets Agar,

A Jewess who about him threw
Else than Nerea's amorous net
And dubious wile. 'Twas Miriam's race:
A sibyl breathed in Agar's grace—
A sibyl, but a woman too . . .

(1.17.202–6)

Agar is other than a seanymp, for the sensuality that attracts Nathan radiates from her aura as a member of “Miriam’s race.” His attraction to the Hebrew race is far more potent than the pull he has felt to natural, American, heathenized lust: how “Siloh’s oracle” can overpower the “naturalistic knell” of New World nature worship. Cast as a descendant of Miriam, Moses’ sister and the leader of the women through the wilderness trek, Agar is the representative Jewess set to “woo” Nathan to embark on his own trek to find promise.

Why Melville chose the name Agar (Hagar), the mother of Ishmael and the Arabs, instead of Sarah may seem somewhat perplexing at first. However, the shock of Palestinian and American actualities throwing shared Holy Land narratives out of joint suggests that Melville’s employment of “Agar” has been deliberate. As a variant of Hagar, Agar appears only once in the King James Version, in Galatians, Paul’s declaration of independence from Judaism. The apostle’s polemic repudiation of Judaizing factions within the infant movement presents a radical, allegorical reconfiguration of the foundational, dynastic story. Paul shifts the symbolic attributes of “Ishmael” and “Isaac,” asserting the new identity as a church of the uncircumcised according to a shocking hermeneutical revision:

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a
bondswoman, the other by a freewoman.
But he *who was* of the bondswoman was born after the flesh;
but he of the freewoman *was* of the promise.
Which things are an allegory: for these are the two
covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which
gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to
Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
But Jerusalem, which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

(KJV Gal. 4:22–26)

The new covenant of faith supercedes that of law in the symbolic shift, the true Jerusalem is “unreal,” Christians are the children of Isaac, Jews have become Ishmaelites, and in dramatic fashion the mantle of election passes on to the revolutionary party: “So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondswoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (KJV Gal. 4:31–5:1). By naming the descendant of Miriam’s race Agar—a designation Jews would hardly use—Melville has created a symbolic Jewess according to the rules of Christian signification and the customs of New England naming practice. The inversion only serves to emphasize her role as an allegorical outcast of the old covenant, the mother of wanderers and slaves, a figure of the bondage to flesh.¹⁸

Agar’s “amorous net” is complicated by her power as a “sibyl” of her race, even before her attraction as a woman: “ ‘Wilt join my people?’ ” (1.17.210). Sibyl was Aeneas’s guide to the underworld, and Eve-Miriam-Agar will guide Nathan on his own journey to become the Other of the American Christian, and from this moment of conversion the classical allusions in the canto give way to the Hebraic entirely. Agar offers the scripted covenant narrative seen suddenly in its

pristine, original form, and it holds a paradigm-shattering erotic attraction for Nathan:

Nay, and turn Hebrew? But why not?
If backward still the inquirer goes
To get behind man's present lot
Of crumbling faith; for rear-ward shows
Far behind Rome and Luther—what?
The crag of Sinai. Here then plant
Thyself secure: 'tis adamant.

(1.17.212–18)

At “Doubt’s freezing pole,” Nathan plants himself on the solidity of Sinai, a theological retreat to the ultimate rock of faith; and yet, given the constant recurrence of rocks and stones throughout the poem as images of a barren, blasted landscape, this “adamant” is not without some irony: for even the male “crag” is projected out of female Jewish flesh.

Nathan’s theological “why not” is soon superseded by the beginning of his appropriation of “Zion’s story” (1.17.219):

He felt the glamour, caught the gleam;
All things but these seemed transitory—
Love, and his love’s Jerusalem.

(1.17.220–22)

In the “gleam” of authentic, authorizing power, Nathan has at last found the absolute; but it is a dual absolute, composed not only of love but of “his love’s Jerusalem,” not only of flesh but of an idea becoming flesh. Agar, chanting “David’s songs” in her sibyl-role, evokes from Nathan a religious “passion” of somewhat grander dimensions than she expects:

'Twas passion. But the Puritan—
Mixed latent in his blood—a strain
How evident, of Hebrew source;
'Twas that, diverted here in force,
Which biased—hardly might do less.

(1.17.227–31)

The latent “Hebrew source” of the Puritan will inevitably “bias” back toward the pilgrim-settler ethos, back toward the “promised land” sense of mission; Nathan’s disbelief recoils back toward a reconstructed faith, yet his earnestness “shot him sheer / Beyond” (1.17.239–40). In the end, his conversion sets off the diversion of the American strain back toward the zeal of the “primal settlers”: truly, “such a nature, charged with zeal, / Might yet overpass that limit due / Observed by her” (1.17.241–43).

NATHAN’S CONVERSION TO ZIONISM

As if to emphasize the diversion toward sensation and the sensual, Nathan converts not only to Judaism but to the economic caste reserved for the Jew:

Transferring fields with title-deed,
From rustic life he quite withdrew—
Traded, and thrive.

(1.17.245–47)

He has truly entered the “underworld” of the “Houndsditch clothesman,” the embodiment of commodity exchange cut off from production, the Jew barred from tilling the soil. But despite the “sedate” life he achieves, he finds that

 he outgrew
(While yet confirmed in all the myth)
The mind infertile of the Jew.
His northern nature, full of pith,
Vigor and enterprise and will,
Having taken thus the Hebrew bent,
Might not abide inactive so
And but the empty forms fulfill:
Needs utilize the mystic glow—
For nervous energies find vent.

(1.17.249–58)

What transpires is the revivification of “the Hebrew bent” through the “strain” of nordic vigor. If “Jewry’s inexhausted shore / Of barrenness” (1.31.34–35)—despite the rich soil of “Zion’s story”—could be rejuvenated by means of the Anglo-Saxon pith, vigor, enterprise, and will of man’s “latest strain”—sprung from those “Austere, ascetical, but free” first settlers whose “nervous energies” compel further colonial expansion—then the sacred errand first embraced by “a mitered race” could once again become an active principle. Nathan discovers Zionism:

 The Hebrew seers announce in time
The return of Judah to her prime;
Some Christians deemed it then at hand.
Here was an object: Up and do!
With seed and tillage help renew—
Help reinstate the Holy Land.

(1.17.259–64)

Melville’s iambic tetrameter, very regular in this passage, tends even more toward a type of Hudibrastic doggerel (“Here was an object: Up and do!”); at the same time as grandeur is recalled, a tone of the preposterous is also struck.

The fact that “Some Christians deemed” Jewish restoration to be “then at hand” has already been voiced by Nehemiah in an earlier canto:

 Passages, presages he knew:
Zion restore, convert the Jew,
Reseat him here, the waste bedew;
Then Christ returneth: so it ran.

(1.8.26–29)

“The fact is the fullness of Time has come,” Melville records in his journal an American missionary telling him: “The Gentile Christians must prepare the way.” The idea of “facilitating prophecy,” of “preparing the soil literally & figuratively” (93) for a role for Jews in Christian salvation arose with the Reformation, drew increasing strength with English Puritanism, became “natural” and secularized in the Anglo-American Enlightenment, and waxed larger as an insistent organizing myth in the discourse of Anglo-Atlantic nationalism. Alexander Keith’s first attempts to use photography to document “evidences” of prophecy in Palestine ended only with blank sheets of calotype paper in 1839, but even before he succeeded with daguerreotypes in 1844 to

reproduce the imprint of sacred landscape in order to prove God's word, the apparatus of framing, capturing, and developing sight, site, shrine, and the divine had been long established. Sacred geography could be set "before the eyes of every beholder, who knows the Bible and can exercise his reason," according to Keith, and the beholder can read clear evidences of prophetic truth in the Palestinian landscape.¹⁹ With such ocular proof-texts the beholder would readily affirm the presence of the deity, the imminence of Jewish restoration, the advent of Jesus, and all the other events of the millennium with "the defined precision of the *sure word*."²⁰

Only two years after *Clarel* was published in 1876, the first of a series of prophecy and Bible conferences would be held at Niagara Falls to take on precisely that task of defining the precision of the sure word. The Niagara Prophecy Conferences, as the gatherings would come to be known, brought together representatives of a broad cross-section of conservative elements in Presbyterian, Baptist, and other denominations to combine elements of Princeton theology, biblical literalism, and premillennialism with a conservative rebuff of higher criticism, church modernism, and other liberalizing trends. The conferences, inspired by the dispensationalist premillennialism preached by the influential Anglo-Irish minister John Nelson Darby, established a modern, profundamentalist tendency. Although this movement did not invent this interpretation of Scriptures, it extended and "modernized" already existing threads of theological narratives, such as what was once the dominant strain of premillennialism projected by Increase Mather and others within New England tradition.²¹

The same year, 1878, also saw the publication of William E. Blackstone's *Jesus Is Coming*, which argued how the doctrine of Jewish restoration was central to the premillennialist scenario. Blackstone and others gave new vigor to the doctrine's role in the eschatological script because this "literalist" interpretation did away with the necessity of Jewish conversion occurring before the return of God's elect to the land. The eschatological calendar was altered; the Jews would be restored even before Jesus would come back to rule them; and advancing Jewish return became even more urgent as a way to hasten the any-moment advent. Such an outlook allows the restoration of God's favorites even in their unbelief, making the material accomplishment of Jewish return rather than their conversion an immediate sign of God's plan. Jewish conversion would occur, but only after most Jews die. Jesus appears at the end of the great battle of the Antichrist against the gentile nations at Armageddon to deliver the surviving remnant of Jews. The full restoration of all twelve tribes under Christ's rule in Jerusalem would then proceed during the thousand years when the Devil is bound.

The expected return of Jesus will occur *before* the thousand years of peace and plenty rather than *after* the golden age, a change that stresses even more how believers should regard the world as nothing but "a wrecked vessel," while the utter horror, depravity, and "unbelief" of the current era serve only as signals of Christ's imminent return.²² The disillusioning horror of the Civil War gave ample cause for this seemingly more pessimistic, premillennial vision to gain ground at the same time that the Gilded Age boom could also fuel secular alternatives in the culture and modernist innovation within the church. Still, while the profundamentalist outlook may seem at odds with the ameliorative, postmillennialist narratives of perfectionists or the "easy," liberal Anglicanism of Derwent, both theological poles found common cause in popularizing the exemplary, imperative character of Jewish return in the divine script.

To Melville, however, the idea of Jewish restoration in 1876 would seem even more than in 1857 to be "half melancholy, half farcical—like all the rest of the world" (94). The melancholy-farcical nature of the idea is displayed in a scene in which Clarel and his fellow pilgrims are making their way toward the Jordan. As they stop to rest, Nehemiah busily attempts to clear the

Judean wilderness of its numberless stones to help prepare Jewish restoration and thereby hasten the second coming:

The saint it was with busy care
Flinging aside stone after stone,
.....
While every stone that he removed
Laid bare but more.

(2.10.189–90, 193–94)

And despite the absurd “Quixotism” of clearing the stones to prepare the highway for Jesus’ return, Rolfe does not simply reject Nehemiah’s “conceit about the Jew” as only a monomania. He recognizes the primitivist force of the narrative: “The early Christians, how did they? / For His return looked any day” (2.10.232–33). Yet doubt remains cast, even upon the early Christians, as the saintly Nehemiah drowns in the Dead Sea as he sleepwalks along its underworld-like shores while engrossed in his dream of the New Jerusalem.

Melville’s rejection of such millennialist notions, despite the compassion for their “preposterous” proponents voiced by his “manysided” character Rolfe, “contrasts” with a fundamental assumption embedded in much of American culture. When Melville visited Palestine in 1857 he expressed few mitigating sentiments for this “Jew mania” in his journal. He notes how spectacularly unsuccessful the missionaries were in convincing Jews to become Christians or Zionists (“Not a single Jew was converted either to Christianity or Agriculture” [90]), and he explains that “The idea of making farmers of the Jews”—and by extension their restoration to the land—“is vain.” He reasons that—given the unwelcoming desert, the fact that “the Jews hate farming,” their “malicious persecution” by Arabs and Turks, the small number of Jews currently in the Holy Land, along with the physical impossibility of bringing their scattered brethren to such a spot—such an utterly “unreal” idea could become “real” “only by a miracle” (94).

What Melville keenly recognizes is the *mythic* power of non-Jewish Zionism, its uncanny ability to become a material force already demonstrated in the founding myths of America’s “primal settlers,” despite their own Quixotism. Melville zeroes in on precisely the nineteenth-century, colonizing “mission” of Jews as surrogate Christians (and of Christians as restored Jews), as re-visioned by Keith, Levi Parsons, Lord Palmerston, and others. He dives to the depths of that ambivalent, ambiguous, excessively compulsive “othering” of Jews to extract the mix of philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism from which the Christian West helped to propel modern, Jewish Zionism into existence. The fact that Melville thought accomplishing Jewish return could only be a “miracle”—and the fact that the Anglo-American settler project was by necessity also providential—underscores to what degree the myth was capable of propelling ideological formations into material accomplishments. Through shared languages, cultures, and cults, social groupings, including “nations,” can be made to act out mythic narratives, can will their own identities into being, given the confluence of enough material conditions with volition. Melville is well aware of such power in his use of Jewish restoration as a pivotal trope for America’s own bitterly ambiguous miracle.

SNATCHED FROM GRACE

Nathan is struck deeply by the restorationist notion, impressed by how

Some zealous Jews on alien soil
Who still from Gentile ways recoil,
And loyally maintain the dream,
Salute upon the Paschal day
With *Next year in Jerusalem!*

(1.17.265–69)

When he “breathed the words on the Passover,” Agar was startled, and in Nathan’s invocation of “the old phrase” she detects a disquieting “import new” (1.17.272, 274). Won over to the Zionist idea, Nathan now transforms himself into the spiritual guide for his wife, who recognizes in “her husband’s mind austere” and “his reveries grave” (1.17.278–79) the same authorizing purpose of his Puritan patriarchs. Unable to object to what appears to be a basic commandment of Judaism, she agrees to resettle in Palestine, despite her dark foreboding, for his “hardy will / Overpowered the deep monition still” (1.17.284–85).

One could read the “import new” of settler-colonialism that Nathan found in the Jewish longing for return, particularly in light of modern Zionism, as a natural extension of Jewish tradition. However, the expression “Next year in Jerusalem,” along with other slogans or signs of nineteenth-century, orthodox *Jewish* response to the notion of restoration, resided in spiritual rather than secular realms: the Jewish people would return and the kingdom would be restored in Palestine, but only at the arrival of the *Mosheach* (the Jewish Messiah), an event that depended on the corporate saintly behavior of the covenanted people. To attempt to “advance” divine restoration by secular means was blasphemous: the Jews Melville saw living in Palestine in 1857 were not modern Zionist settlers but those who sought, like Abdon, the *mitzvah* of praying and dying in the Holy Land.

Quickly, Nathan and Agar sell their house and fields and with Ruth and a younger child “cross the main” (1.17.287) to secure a tract “on Sharon’s plain.” There Nathan builds a shed “and ground walled in / Defensive” (1.17.290–91) and first encounters marauding Arabs:

The wandering Arabs, wonted long
(Nor crime they deemed it, crime nor sin)
To scale the desert convents strong—
In sly foray leaped Nathan’s fence
And robbed him; and no recompense
Attainable where law was none
Or perjured.

(1.17.292–98)

The customary exclusion of Jews from farming, the depredations of nomadic bedouins, as well as the corruptions of Ottoman rule have all made the settler project perilous. Resolute, however, Nathan lodges Agar and his children “within the stronghold town / Of Zion”—although his heart is “exiled” to do so—while he prepares “To abide the worst on Sharon’s lea” in the “Pequod wilds” (1.17.300–305) that recall the vehicle for Ahab’s exiled mission in *Moby-Dick*:

Himself and honest servants three
Armed husbandmen became, as erst
His sires in Pequod wilds immersed.
Hittites—foes pestilent to God
His fathers old those Indians deemed:
Nathan the Arabs here esteemed
The same—slaves meriting the rod;
And out he spake it; which bred hate
The more imperiling his state.

Here we should note that Melville's "othering" of Arabs follows a somewhat different trajectory than his treatment of Jews. The characterizations of the Arabs in *Clarel* have a distance and lack of individuation that the Jews do not, with the pilgrim's dragoman Djalea as the only well-etched Arab portrayal in the narrative. Either as "tawny" (2.16.13) or as "mongrel" (1.44.8), the Arab is always invested with the qualities of the savage. As the pilgrims cross the wilderness, they see menacing Arabs with spears "Like dorsal fins of sharks" (2.9.98). The malignity beneath the sea images surfaces in the Arab-shark who jars the sanctity of both textual and geographic "tracts," causing Clarel to ponder "The something dubious in the Holy Land" (2.9.105). Nehemiah naively passes one of his "inscrutable" tracts to the illiterate leader of an Arab band, and when his camel drops the pamphlet after trying to eat it he then ignorantly "transfixes" what Nehemiah calls "Christ's gift to you" on the point of his spear (2.13.26–41). Approaching the sacred precincts of the Jordan, the band of Arab robber-sharks, "Swart, sinuous men on silvery steeds" (2.23.86), reappears; like Plains Indians, they revel in their horsemanship ("I, Ishmael, have my desert mare!" [2.23.167]), as they ride across the river, "With warrior cry and brandished dart," where, in contrast, "The halcyon Teacher waded in with John" (2.23.191–93).

The quality of naive savagery ("Nor crime they deemed" marauding Nathan's settlement) is interlaced with images of nobility, manly poise, and Oriental splendor. The Arabs show through their famed chivalry "a lingering trace / Of some quite unrecorded race" (2.27.74–75) that has receded, while the Hawthorne-like character of Vine regards the "Clan of outcast Hagar" as superior to America's savages, exclaiming that

Well do ye come by spear and dagger!
 Yet in your bearing ye outvie
 Our Western Red Men, chiefs that stalk
 In mud paint—whirl the tomahawk.

(2.27.44–48)

At Bethlehem the pilgrims view pastoral scenes of Christian Arab shepherds, which confuse their American sensibilities ("Catholic Arabs? Say not that! / Some words don't chime together, see" [4.17.7–8]); while the Druze Djalea, the son of a Lebanese emir, presents a dignified image, the "passive self-control" of savage equanimity with his pipe and placid religious acceptance: " 'No God there is but God' " (3.15.115).

In the "Nathan" canto, the Puritan Zionist's transference of the scriptural "reading" of the New World back to Palestine is completed in a settler-savage confrontation in which any of these or other varied or more subtle manifestations of the Arab hardly come into play. Here Arabs have been reduced to virtual invisibility; they are nothing but allegorical representations, "foes pestilent to God," the manifestation of bondage, the threat to the purity of the chosen. Sharon has become "Pequod wilds," while the Arabs have become the Hittites his "fathers old" had "deemed" the Indians whom Nathan "esteems" as "slaves meriting the rod." The evocation of "slaves" echoes the pre-Civil War canker in the American "errand into the wilderness," the abstraction of the colonized into nonhuman categories in order to coerce their too-human labor, a process initiated by the "primal settlers" in their war to win for the select a "vacant" continent: Nathan has indeed returned to the poisonous roots first set down by his "fathers old," while his theological hatred is a counterpart to the phobia Melville already elaborated in "The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating."

This frontier clash with Arab-Indian-Hittite-Slave proves to be the culminating provocation to Nathan's "inveterate zeal" (1.17.328) to "try to realize the unreal" (1.27.70). Nathan has, in fact, realized the unreal far more successfully than in any other aspect of his colonizing project in the characterization of Arabs as "foes pestilent to God," for his hatred becomes utterly consuming. Like other "visionaries of the Word" who have been "mastered by the awful myth," Nathan walks "like somnambulists abroad" (1.21.40–47), as would Nehemiah to his death, except that this pervert's "awful myth" of an American Palestine is acted out with muskets in harsh light and not dreams.

It would be enough, perhaps, that Nathan's attempt to make myth manifest is portrayed in such melancholy-farcical proportions; but the attack on New World romance more fully voiced later in the poem, particularly in Ungar's jeremiad in part 4, extends the perversity of this Puritan reenactment to the reaches of existential tragedy. Unlike other American optimists, Ungar asserts that settler-colonial expansion does not present confirmation of the New Jerusalem; instead, the exhaustion of hope in the New World provides "New confirmation of the fall / Of Adam" (4.21.124–25). The death of a scriptural America, or of the possibility of any other promised land, is mourned by Rolfe: "No New World to mankind remains!" (4.21.159). Attempting to revive the pilgrim-settler myth in such a "haunted" land is even more absurd than holding onto the exploded myth in an old and decidedly fallen New World: the original text as enacted on sacred geography has been shaken to its foundations, rendering the mythic palimpsest of the American exegetical landscape as nothing more than an illusion built on an illusion, a parodic disfigurement inevitably leading toward doom.

Putting "blanks" between himself and his wife, Nathan has, indeed, entered a type of underworld from which Agar has been walled out. Now Agar suffers "exile-grief," for though a Jewess, she becomes more of an American than Nathan. Agar was "born / In Gentile land where nature's wreath / Exhales the first creation's breath" (1.27.17–19); a creature of the Jewish "dream" of return, she yet grasps the tragic absurdity of Nathan's monomania:

But ah, the dream to test by deed,
To seek to handle the ideal
And make a sentiment serve need:
To try to realize the unreal!

(1.27.67–70)

But such "sentiment" as Nathan's Puritan Zionism is cut off from family and compassion, even more than Hawthorne's ambitious guest, although he, too, is marked for an avalanche. Even the death of their youngest child "Balked not [Nathan's] purpose tho' it wrung" (1.17.330). The Jewish women feel a sense of foreboding, anticipating Nathan's death at the hands of Arabs, the "sequel unforeseen" of Time and Fate, which the narrator virtually announces at the end of the "Nathan" canto, for the women, like Clarel, have been "Snatched from grace, / And waylaid in the holy place!" (1.1.25–26). Even as a young child, Ruth senses that Palestine is "a bad place" (1.27.86), and Agar welcomes Clarel as one "from the clime she doted on" (1.27.9), a "waftage from the fields of home / Crossing the wind from Judah's sand" (1.27.100–101), as she yearns for freedom. Of all the Americans who have made the Orient their home—the Zionist Nathan, the missionary Nehemiah, the mercenary Ungar—only Agar and Ruth, the Jewish women, seek to return to America, rejecting "the heritage / Of Judah" (1.27.41–42) in favor not only of the "Gentile land" but of that domestic land's feminine compassion, family, and love.

How odd an irony, perhaps, that the Jewish women are more "American" than the Zionist Puritan, yet their avoidance of the pilgrim-settler myth serves to heighten the melancholy-farcical

quality of Nathan's own "Jew mania." Consequently, the fact that Ruth becomes Clarel's idealized object of love presents an even more multilayered irony. When Clarel first sees Ruth at his encounter with Nathan at the Wailing Wall,

She looked a legate to insure
That Paradise is possible
Now as hereafter.

(1.16.161–63)

Ruth herself provides an image of redemption, of "harmonies inlinked" of purity, a woman with "the grace / Of Nature's dawn: an Eve-like face / And Nereid eyes" (1.16.163–65). Indeed, as Nathan advances through his religious quest, Melville anticipates his future issue:

But years attain not truth,
Nor length of life avails at all;
But time instead contributes ruth.

(1.17.171–73)

The pun on compassion and the biblical figure appears again much later at Mar Saba in the monologue of Cartaphilus, when the Jew repeats Christ's curse: "Ruthless, he meriteth no ruth, / On him I imprecate the truth" (3.19.56–57).

The biblical Ruth loyally followed her mother-in-law Naomi to the Promised Land to marry Boaz, the type of the genuine convert, and it is through Ruth that the genealogy leads through Obed and Jesse to David and, finally, to Christ. Ruth provides an example of faith and the redemptive power of prophecy, her name an allusion that would otherwise be uncomplicated, except for her being the daughter of Agar, Paul's symbol for the flesh, for the ruined Jerusalem of this world in Galatians. Agar poses a negation to Ruth's prophetic testimony of heaven's Jerusalem, according to Bernard Rosenthal, whose untangling of this typological "mess" is quite succinct:

Melville's Ruth, as does her biblical namesake, comes from a faraway land to Jerusalem. One finds redemption, the other death. If Melville's Ruth had been a Jewess only, her fate would have been less ironic. But she is also the daughter of Nathan, the Jew who has rejected Christ and returned to Jerusalem. Biblical prophecy thus becomes reversed. The "Jews" go to the old Jerusalem to find the new Jerusalem. They die.²³

This "Nathan" is not the wise prophet whose counsels lead David from evil ways, who assures the succession of Solomon and thus paves the way for the authority of the New Testament narrative. "Put another way, Melville has named Ruth's family after biblical types whose scriptural history centers in some manner on an identification with Jerusalem,"²⁴ but in each of these instances the notion of Jerusalem has been subverted or, like the city itself, brought to ruin. The Old Covenant, indeed, cannot be wedded to the New; incest between brother and sister, between the Wandering New World Jew and his Jerusalem, cannot sustain the covenant, while Clarel's attraction for Ruth as the daughter of such corruption only repeats the "fatal embrace" of Nathan's own canticles.

Melville employs the full panoply of biblical, classical, tropical and oceanic images he applies to Nathan's narrative in epic simile to describe Ruth's erotic and racial attraction:

Hebrew the profile, every line;
But as in haven fringed with palm,
Which Indian reefs embay from harm,

Belulled as in the vase the wine—
Red budded corals in remove,
Peep coy through quietudes above;
So through clear olive of the skin,
And features finely Hagarene;
Its way a tell-tale flush did win—
A tint which unto Israel's sand
Blabbed of the June in some far clover land.

(1.16.176–86)

Only after seeing Nathan call Ruth with a “voice paternal” does Clarel exclaim to Nehemiah: “Who may be / That strange pervert?” After Clarel’s initial shock at seeing Abdon alongside Nathan, Ruth is yet another stark contrast: part-Jewess, her skin “blabs” of “some far clover land”; she is also a prodigy of Nathan’s pastoral prairie-sea; she belongs to the American universe at the same time as she shows the “tint” of Hebrew race. Clarel is attracted to a forbidden mixing of a “mitered race” with American (white) purity; her “tint”/taint creates a racial love-object, a target for all of Melville’s obsessions with both the Holy Land and the New World. Ruth embodies both the reenactment of the pilgrim-settler myth and the magnificence of ancient Zion. As such, she becomes the poem’s apt image of Paradise Now, the transference of the mythic into sexual love, of masculine thought into female form, of Zion into Zionism. Ruth’s hybrid impossibility constitutes the ultimate “Jewish” act of Melville’s ironic perversion of the covenant. Her death, like the foretold death of most Jews, is a sacrifice, a ritual misogyny as inevitable as the murder of the Puritan Zionist by “foes pestilent to God.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

“The Great Jewish Counterfeit Detector”: Warder Cresson, “Carnal” Hermeneutics, and Zion’s Body

“Warder Crisson of Philadelphia—an American turned Jew—
divorced from (former) wife—married a Jewess, etc., Sad—.”
—Melville, *Journal*, January 1857

CRITICS OF *Clarel* have duly noted that the character of Nathan is largely based upon Warder Cresson (not Crisson as Melville incorrectly records in his journal), the “American turned Jew” Melville briefly met during his sojourn in Jerusalem in 1857. Such an observation satisfies a certain curiosity in determining sources Melville may have drawn upon to fashion his poem-pilgrimage, but a deeper dive into the actual career and literary output of Nathan’s inspiration produces further disturbing resonances to Melville’s representation. As the characterization of Nathan suggests, Melville most likely felt deep attraction as well as great dis-ease, even revulsion, for Cresson, who had taken the Hebrew name Michael Boaz Israel upon his conversion, particularly since the émigré’s journey to his “adamant” constituted a version of settler-colonial covenant parallel to Melville’s own melancholy-farcical narratives of “fatal embrace.” To take Cresson’s religious ideas seriously means gaining yet another vantage point from which can be viewed not only the poet and poetry of *Clarel*, but the American Christianity both the poet and the convert found so troubling. Certainly, more may be revealed than if Cresson were simply left to the obscurity of a footnote or dismissed as a lunatic, for engaging Cresson involves delineating how seemingly dissimilar realms of religious experience and literary expression arise from similar discourses, structures of feeling, and anxieties. Indeed, “monomania,” the charge used to stigmatize abolitionists as well as religious innovators, stands out as a prototypical American state of mind, and Melville’s fascination for mania regularly drew him to its depiction as well as to its replication. Regarding Cresson’s *The Key of David* alongside *Clarel* may at first seem as startlingly improbable, even impossible, as reading “Song of Myself” against *The Book of Mormon* or “The Waste Land” against the extended 1906 Azusa Street Revival during which the Pentecostal movement popularized “speaking in tongues.” Nonetheless, I entertain the assumption here that the compulsions flowing from either side of such apparent incongruities may be far more alike than either literary critics or religious historians may at first surmise.

When on May 15, 1849, Warder Cresson was brought before a jury in Philadelphia by his wife Elizabeth and his son Jacob for an “Inquisition of Lunacy,” his family claimed that he was a religious maniac whose views were always changing while his fanaticism was ever constant, no matter the doctrine. According to his family, Cresson’s spiritual wandering, which began when he first traveled from his Quaker origins in 1827, had meandered down successive Shaker, Mormon, Millerite, Campbellite, and Irvingite paths, until now, as his lawyer sarcastically

characterized his family's response, "he completed the damning circuit of his eccentricities by becoming a Jew."¹ His wife Elizabeth charged that with his conversion he harbored plans to squander his fortune in a wild scheme to rebuild the destroyed Temple of the Jews in Jerusalem, and she was forced by his bizarre behavior, as her lawyer explained the painful moral dilemma she faced, "to deny either her *Saviour* or her *Husband*."² While Cresson countered that he "had to deny either the *One Only God*, or my Wife" (203), the six-man sheriff's jury, faced with an apostasy so severe as to supersede the usual deference given to patriarchal authority, denied the husband, quickly reaching the verdict that Warder Cresson was insane and incompetent to handle his monetary affairs.

Cresson was from a respected family with deep Huguenot and Quaker roots reaching back to the seventeenth-century settlement of Pennsylvania, and his fortunes had been assured. But when the prosperous farmer succeeded in obtaining an appointment as United States consul in Jerusalem in 1844, he "left everything near and dear to me on earth," ostensibly to take up his diplomatic post, but really to continue his unrelenting pursuit of "perfect, evident, incontestable Truth" to its sacred source (13). What Cresson sought in the terrestrial Jerusalem was more than Truth as an idea, an abstraction, or even a proof-text: in the City of David he "longed to behold her realized in *Fact*, in *Reality*, in *Time*, *Place*, and *Circumstances*" (13). His presence in the Holy City did reveal to him an ultimate facticity, and that literal Jerusalem, "the centre and joy of the whole earth," was instrumental in his conversion.³

Elizabeth Cresson's lawyer charged the religious seeker with having made the incredible claim of having actually beheld King David's embalmed body in his tomb, while a witness testified the convert also told of seeing angels at his own circumcision.⁴ But Cresson's conversion was marked by more than astonishing discoveries and visions, for it also flowed from the internal logic of a newly discovered exegetical geography that, although methodologically consistent, veered sharply from Christianographic assumptions. He found what he called the "Jewish Counterfeit Detector" (297) of Hebrew Scriptures, which he joined to a "carnal" hermeneutics, and was thus able to read Truth as a coherent narrative in the stones and social relations of Jerusalem's time, place, and circumstances. Cresson, who had been an ardent millennialist advocate of Jewish restoration since the early 1840s, succeeded at the end of his pilgrimage quest in finding his "adamant," and as a consequence he shifted his entire exegetical apparatus toward an even more radical biblical literalism. The New Testament, its "counterfeit" nature exposed, withered and died, while the story of God's carnal Israel and its restoration in the terrestrial Jerusalem became the sole, authentic narrative. Cresson had decided—despite the special blessings to be bestowed upon those Gentiles who befriend Israel—to become God's agent of restoration rather than its sponsor, a Nehemiah rather than a Cyrus.

Overcoming the objections of the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, Abraham Hai Gagin, Cresson converted. He explained his choice in the figure of Ruth, the woman of worth:

My object, as I said before, was "the pursuit of Truth," and with truth I desired *Strength* and *Rest*. I remained in Jerusalem in my former faith until the 28th day of March, 1848, when I became fully satisfied that I never could obtain *Strength* and *Rest* but by doing as Ruth did, and saying to her *Mother-in-law*, or Naomi, (the Jewish Church,) "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy *people* shall be my people, and thy God my God . . ."

In short, upon the 28th day of March, 1848, I was circumcised, entered the Holy Covenant, and became a Jew, as the above words prove that Ruth became a Jewess, although "A STRANGER." (205)

Ruth is "Rest" and Boaz is "Strength" in the directly allegorical Hebrew of the Book of Ruth's fiction of loyalty, charity, and inclusion; thus Cresson changed his name to Michael Boaz Israel

to indicate that he now “rested” in the true Israel of God’s “strength,” and with the “principal seat of the fallen Body . . . located in the *Foreskin*,” his “redeemed Body” could now “be acceptable unto God as perfect” without it (90). He returned to Philadelphia six months later with the intention of settling his affairs and relocating his family in Jerusalem. There they would become the founding members of an agricultural settlement dedicated to training Jews in farming so as to hasten their divine restoration in the Holy Land. But, to his apparent surprise, Cresson faced “a growing OPPOSITION and ENMITY” toward the course he had taken for himself and his alarmed family (205).

Cresson was never half-hearted. A demanding, passionate adherent of whatever religious stance he took, he was willing to sacrifice everything to follow God’s will. But his latest enthusiasm, the most bizarre to date, irritated his family to such a degree that some of the scenes of domestic conflict and insult he records in his account of the case can be read today almost as television situation comedy. His son-in-law, for example, when admonished that he “well knew that *Pork* was contrary to the law of God . . . and, therefore, very disagreeable to me,” called out to a servant, “Susan, go and get another pound of sausage” (222).

However, their arguments over money and doctrine were hardly comic. Cresson was accused of demanding his wife’s conversion by force and even of threatening to shoot his family.⁵ In his defense, Cresson described how he refrained from striking his wife as ungentlemanly; he only “wished” Elizabeth realized the truth of Judaism, attempting only to persuade her while never resorting to any threats “that I had not full authority from God to do, and not until it was absolutely necessary” (213). Although the situation was intolerable, matters never appeared to reach the point of physical violence within the household. After “my wife had been locked up days and nights from me,” Cresson moved his belongings from his home to the house of a Jewish friend, where he assigned half of the mortgage of his farm to his wife and family in order “to convince them that a Jew could ‘do justice and love mercy’ ” (207–9).

Cresson, who had given his wife power of attorney and control over half of his fortune before departing to take his position as consul in Jerusalem, appeared competent and scrupulous in all of his worldly affairs. His behavior certainly did not display any of the manic-depressive or schizo-affective psychoses and other pathologies displayed by those Millerites and other enthusiasts who were in fact committed to asylums during this period. Evidence indicates that most seekers who suffered from what Robert Burton terms “religious melancholy” led lives of quiet desperation within the privacy of their homes, although doubts about the mental stability of adventists and other religious enthusiasts circulated widely.⁶ The movement to build insane asylums paralleled the rise in religious agitation in the 1830s and 1840s, although even in 1812 Benjamin Rush had reported that 10 percent of the fifty “maniacs” at the Pennsylvania Hospital suffered from “erroneous opinions in religion.” Rush noted that “researches into the meaning of certain prophecies in the Old and New Testaments,” particularly attempts “to fix the precise time in which those prophecies were to be fulfilled, or from a disappointment in that time, after it had passed” would often have dire consequences.⁷ Conversion to Judaism may have seemed to many one such dire consequence, but Cresson was hardly insane—or at least he was no more insane than his son-in-law Alexander Porter, who had been variously a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, and even a Millerite preacher—nor was he any more erratic than others in his family who were religious and reform enthusiasts themselves.⁸

Indeed, upon his return from Jerusalem, Michael Boaz Israel had discovered that in his absence his wife had also undertaken her own spiritual journey. She had converted from her Quaker faith to become “a rigid Episcopalian,” a denomination he found particularly abominable

because he had come to revile the practices of Anglican missionaries toward the impoverished Jews of Jerusalem. He records long, exasperating controversies between them, as the “AUTHORIZED HEAD AND FATHER” of the family tried to argue his newfound strict monotheism against his wife’s recently gained faith in the mysteries of the trinity. Elizabeth Cresson “followed her *own rule* to believe all and everything with and in *Implicit Faith*, without asking why or wherefore” (207), he contended, and she rebelled at the proper “control” and “instruction” exercised by her husband, continuing to expound her Three-in-One to his One-only. Refusing patriarchal authority, “the only true FOUNDATION and SUPPORT of every other right *form* of government and relation in society” (212), Elizabeth set out on her own, while Cresson, deemed insane for changing religion so often and now told to change once more, scornfully retorts in his apologia: “And every one of my family have changed their Religion, some of them four or five times, and these are my persecutors too—THIS IS RICH” (216).

While he did concede the charge of “Haranguing in the Streets,” he confessed to doing “no more than the first Quakers, Methodists, and Episcopalians” in his career as a religious seeker (212). In fact, as “eccentric” as he was—and even his friend Isaac Leeser, the rabbi of Philadelphia’s Mikvah Israel congregation who defended both the conversion and the convert’s character, employs that term—Cresson’s imperative spirituality, his erratic volatility, his controversialist off-centeredness, and his stubborn insistence “to realize the unreal” had not veered too drastically from the pattern of other American religious innovators of the period.⁹ Warder Cresson had left for Jerusalem when Clorinda Minor and other Millerites anticipated their revised precise date for the end of the world to be October 22, 1844; and when he returned in 1848, the Mormon trek was well under way, at the same time that the first reports of spirit rapping from Rochester, New York, were just being heard.

Cresson was granted an appeal, and when the second trial was held on May 13, 1851, the case was celebrated in the press as a test of fundamental constitutional liberties. His family brought forth nine witnesses, while Cresson’s lawyer, General Horatio Hubbell, “produced seventy-three of our most respectable citizens” on his behalf, including a Jewish convert to Christianity, a scientist hailed for his test for either sanity or the presence of Negro blood in a person by the examination of his hair roots under a microscope, and the Jewish leader most Christian Americans recognized as spokesman for the community, Mordecai Manuel Noah.¹⁰

Hubbell argued for Cresson’s sanity on the grounds of the sanctity and legitimacy of Judaism and the assertion that “[i]n this land of liberty there are no religious distinctions; man adores his Creator according to the dictates of his heart.” All “whose privileges are those of Americans, and whose rights are those of freemen,” have no restrictions on conscience. Jew, Gentile, and even “the Turk” are free to worship as they choose, while “the votary of Vishnu” can “dream securely of the mysteries of the sacred waters of his Ganges.” The closest to a “votary of Vishnu” the jury might have encountered in 1851 would have been a Transcendentalist, of course, so the more familiar varieties of American religious experimentation—revivalists, spiritualists, adventists, even Mormons—were intended as the actual beneficiaries of the freedom in Hubbell’s appeal to the Constitution. “All are equal, all privileged in their religious propensities,” he asserted, invoking Jefferson’s principle that it was immaterial “whether a man worships one god or twenty, as long as he fulfils the duties and executes the obligations demanded of a citizen.”¹¹

Hubbell cited the consistency of Cresson’s behavior as a “citizen,” then answered charges of his excessive doctrinal changeability with its commonality. As “an earnest inquirer after truth,” Cresson stood “at best only in the category of a great multitude,” whom Hubbell suggests the prosecuting attorney would “not venture to damn by the wholesale, and stamp with insanity,

although they were deluded by the pretensions of these various sects, bewildered by their cant, and intoxicated with their fanaticism. Will he still impute insanity to my client because, renouncing the dogmas of these visionaries, he afterwards left his country, and wandering in Palestine, he became at length a convert to Judaism . . . ?”¹² Hubbell goes on to praise “that old and venerable faith whose institutes were founded amid the solitudes of Sinai” and the honor and longevity of its people. Besides, his elder brother Elliot Cresson, an anti-slavery activist advocating colonization of Liberia, could not sit in judgment of the convert: “If the one is crazy upon the subject of religion, the other may be pronounced so upon the subject of slavery.”¹³

The Morgan Hinchman case had only recently concluded in 1849 with the defendant committed by his Quaker family to a Friends’ asylum because of his dissident religious peculiarities. Hinchman was released six months later after a countersuit, and the similarities of Cresson’s case to what was considered an outrage committed by a venal family quickly aroused the press to defend the rights of individual conscience. Editors did not fail to note how the climate of religious ferment and unpredictable innovation made religious meandering an especially unreliable measure to use for determining insanity: “[I]f Orestes A. Brownson, who changes his religion every year, has not yet been made the subject of a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*, it is probably because his worldly means are not extensive” enough to drive an avaricious family to court, the *Sunday Dispatch* quipped.

As regards Mr. Cresson, we wish him a safe deliverance from the hands of the Philistines. He is undoubtedly somewhat visionary in his ideas about religion, but what else ought we to expect from one who studies the metaphysics of creeds? In a worldly point of view he appears intelligent, and able to conduct his own affairs. We must protest against any weakening of the barriers between *sanity* and *insanity*. All men have their eccentricities and peculiarities—particularly in regard to religion and its ceremonies. If the mere fact that a man who studies sectarian subjects changes his creed is to be taken as a proof of madness, who shall pronounce of sound mind? (228)

When the second jury decided to release Cresson after deliberating only a half hour, the *Public Ledger* exulted that the decision “sanctions a prominent constitutional right of every republican citizen to exercise freedom of conscience,” declaring that “a man’s ‘religious opinions’ never can be made the test of his sanity” (241–42). The rights of the eccentric and the peculiar at least in terms of religious practice were successfully defended, while both Isaac Leeser and Mordecai Manuel Noah noted approvingly that the honor of Judaism was upheld as well.

Cresson never doubted his sanity or the rightness of his views for a moment, and he was always ready to expound them in print. His only motive in converting, he writes in terms Melville would relish, was due to

the love of Truth and the Honour and Adoration that I owe to his ever exalted “UNITY” AS THE ALONE FOUNDATION OF ALL STRENGTH. And although my persecutors tried hard to condemn me upon the ground of MONO-MANIA, let me inform them, there is no MANIA or madness as bad as POLY-mania, or POLY-THEISM, for that is rank IDOLATRY and INSANITY. (243)

Cresson had been publishing religious polemics since 1827, including tracts that appeared in London when he was en route to Jerusalem in 1844, so his counterthrust against “poly-mania” spoke to his public career as a religious controversialist.¹⁴ Having won his case, he took the opportunity to expound his views one last time, and upon his departure for Jerusalem in 1852 he published *The Key of David*, a combined apology, defense, and farewell to his former coreligionists, now Gentiles, of Philadelphia. Cresson seized upon his recent notoriety as an occasion to defend not only his sanity but his newfound faith, all the while sustaining his penchant for controversialist rhetoric. This “strangely jumbled book,” as one sympathetic historian terms it,¹⁵ is composed of polemics, explications of biblical figures and narratives,

essays on scriptural authenticity, prophetic computations, satiric dialogues, “Reasons for Becoming a Jew,” a credo, detailed instructions on how to travel to Jerusalem from Philadelphia, and, at the core of the whole ensemble, his own account of the “LUNACY TRIAL, OR THE GREAT LAWSUIT FOR BECOMING A JEW,” with newspaper articles appended.

The Key of David is a controversialist’s tour de force, a virtuosic performance of biblical interpretation akin to Poe’s perversely excessive exegetical defense of John Lloyd Stephens’s trek through “the cursed land of Edom.” The book joins traditional Judaic arguments against Christian hermeneutics to the polemical style and prophetic calculations of American millennialists, all animated by that driven, single-minded volition to act, that obsessive desire to feel fact as flesh, which Melville would know as a “mania.” When *The Key of David* is read within the broader text of Cresson’s other writings and his career as a proto-Zionist, the collection reveals a vigorous, “eccentric,” yet acutely reasoned intertextuality of biblical narrative and colonial settlement that intersects nineteenth-century American, Christian, Jewish, Zionist, Israeli, Ottoman, and Palestinian histories in startling, unsettling ways. It is that intersection, particularly in terms of the development of the covenantal mind set, that draws us, as it did Melville, to Cresson’s bizarre trajectory.

In one important sense, Cresson’s outsider dramatization of covenantal, colonizing identity embodies the injection of Christian Zionism into previously non-Zionist Jewish discourse. His was not the first such American infusion, of course. Mordecai Manuel Noah’s *Discourse on the Restoration of the Jews* (1844) was perhaps the most recent (and most celebrated) attempt to join the Protestant enthusiasm to somewhat more traditional Jewish expectations. Major Noah—whose failed Ararat colony of Jews on Grand Island in the Niagara River in 1825 was yet an even earlier restorationist project—also saw “great and important revolutions” in the East that “shadow forth results long expected, long prophesied, long ordained.” He called for Christians to “unite in efforts to promote the restoration of Jews in their *unconverted* state, relying on the fulfillment of the prophecies and the will of God for attaining the objects they have in view after that great advent shall have arrived.”¹⁶ The former Tammany Hall leader and Andrew Jackson supporter addressed his plea to Americans in particular: “Where can we plead the independence for the children of Israel with greater confidence than in the cradle of American liberty? Where ask for toleration and kindness for the seed of Abraham, if we find it not among the descendants of the Pilgrims?”¹⁷ Noah sought to defer ticklish differences, such as Jewish conversion or the return of Jesus, in favor of Christian-Jewish unity in action, a tactic that found far more favor among Christians than Jews.

At the same time, Cresson reanimated the covenantal narrative as a practical project in an American idiom, acting out an emerging nationalist geography of identity through settlement with mythic resonance. His conversion, as odd as it may have seemed to Christian Americans, provided yet another performance of the New Israel’s imagined identity with the original nation, a self Americans could easily recognize. The secular “excitements” of the Mexican War, the California gold rush, European revolutions, and the increasingly intractable crisis over slavery had also charged the air, coincident with religious agitations, and each dramatic event, whether secular or spiritual, aroused practical plans, utopian projects, and violence. In this cauldron, Jewish restoration became a task increasingly open to human instrumentality; the concept became as practical as the filibustering fantasy that Lt. Commander Lynch entertained of how a small band of resolute Franks could “revolutionize” Palestine as he circumnavigated the Dead Sea in 1848.¹⁸ Cresson’s “revolution” of restoration was a scheme he could “up and do,” as Melville would express the mania, and as “eccentric” as its proponent may have seemed, such a

practical vision to make destiny manifest stood at the center of the popular imagination. His “literal” project for the sacred renewal of land and identity through colonial appropriation was consistent with the methodological, epistemological, as well as covenantal impulses of Christianography.

Yet Cresson crossed over a deeply etched line when he “turned” Jew, perhaps a crossing even more disturbing than when George Bethune English had “turned” Turk. Like the tattooed beachcombers Melville met in the South Pacific or the captives and renegades who chose to remain with, even fight on behalf of, native peoples, Cresson was a creature created at the peculiar fault lines of colonial contact: conceived at the settled core that was Philadelphia, he was reborn at the “frontier” that was Jerusalem. Not every religious conversion directly involved colonial dynamics, of course, nor did every apostasy threaten civilizational assumptions: Cresson’s movement from Quaker to Shaker, for example, was hardly so disturbing. Still, “turning Jew” held particular terrors for the antebellum Protestant. While Islam could offer the lascivious fraudulence of Mohammed’s imposture, Judaism tempted with an altogether different sensuality, the “revelation” of original election in the flesh, an intoxicating sense of authenticity and even agency that placed the validity of the “two-fold,” typological Jew at doubt.

The existence of rival rabbinic exegesis had threatened the legitimacy of the Gospels and the entire Christian hermeneutical apparatus from the church’s earliest days. The medieval Christian’s indebtedness to the sacred character of Hebrew Scripture prevented the simple, contemptuous dismissal afforded the Koran, yet the risk always remained that what Melville calls the “two-fold Testaments” could collapse into one and seduce the Christian into “judaizing,” even to the point of converting. The Jews are the dead branches of the olive tree of prophetic revelation, reprobate and blind, as Augustine explains, while the Christians provide the new, vibrant graftings for their ultimate salvation, the spiritual Israel in place of the “indisputably natural” one, but only if the spiritualizing, allegorical “twofold” hermeneutics of the new religion are maintained.

In the *Adversus Judaeos* tradition of Augustine and other church fathers, Jews “do not listen to what we say because they do not understand what they read.”¹⁹ If matters were otherwise, Jews would have concluded that Jesus’ first advent had fulfilled the messianic prophecies of their own texts; yet Jews continue their reprobate practice of refusing to comprehend their own prophets. Rosemary Radford Ruether describes the way this “illiteracy” actually manifests itself through a hermeneutics of dualisms laid out on the axis of time:

One draws a line across history at the time of Jesus, which is treated as though it coincides with a transition from sin to grace, from an earlier era of outwardness, carnality, and unbelief, to a new era of inwardness, spirituality, and faith. The Jews receive the negative side of all these dualisms. The Jews are the men of the letter, vis-à-vis Christian spiritual hermeneutic. The Jews are the carnal men confined in their moral lives to a carnal level of existence, vis-à-vis Christians, who live on a higher plane, morally and ontologically. Jews are blind vis-à-vis Christian belief. But this moral and ontological dualism is also treated as though it were a temporal or historical sequence, so that everything Jewish becomes obsolete and has no further right to exist now that its spiritual fulfillment in Christ has come. The earlier revelation only predicts and symbolizes outwardly that which has now been fulfilled inwardly.²⁰

Ontological superiority flows from standing on the “modern” side of this chronological-hermeneutical divide. The Christian has an inside, a living interior felt as a soul, but he remains inherently dependent on the idea of the Jew to define his shell or skin, the very “outwardness” from which the Christian has fled. Christian identity requires not only Jewish rejection, venality, and deicide, but also Jewish blindness and “illiteracy” in order to function as a living testimony of failure through difference and one-dimensionality. The Christian remains whole and at the center of the sacred narrative because the spiritual, inward man is set off against the surface,

“carnal” Jew, who is incomplete and “eccentric,” despite the necessity of his presence, even if, as with the Puritans of seventeenth-century England, Jews had been excluded for centuries. If Jews did not exist, early and medieval Christianity would have had to invent them, not simply to claim their scriptural legacy, but to confirm the transference of election and to provide a model for heretical deviation. Anti-Judaism in Christianity, as Reuther points out, “is not just an external problem of relations with another community, but an internal problem of its own understanding of its faith.”²¹

Augustine’s assertion that Jews do not know how to read was motivated by a sense of the danger—and the constant attraction—of “misreading” the New Covenant in favor of the Old, or simply voiding the New altogether. There was real danger in the heretical allure of recently converted pagans reverting from spirit back to flesh, from the allegorical child to the historical father, from the spiritual Israel of Rome to the physical one of Jerusalem. The turn toward Hebrew Scriptures during the Reformation, particularly by the Puritan and Presbyterian formulators of covenantal identity in the sacralized “plantations” of Ulster and New England, revived these dangers in a new context of practical implementation. The danger of “judaizing” among covenanted settlers, however, took shape mostly as anxieties about election, separation, and sectarian fracture rather than the threat of actual conversions to Judaism. Covenantal exclusiveness served English and Scots-Irish expansion well, but for all their identification as the New Israel, covenantal colonizers strictly maintained the two-fold quality of typology, carefully constituting themselves as a *New Israel* and not as the “literal” body of the old.

When Warder Cresson took his leap into that body, however, he disrupted Christianography as an authorizing exegetical relationship to land and destiny. Such a disjuncture was even more disconcerting because Cresson’s attraction to “carnal” hermeneutics drew from the very same primitivist, restorationist, and utopian impulses as did the dominant, transdenominational, American religion of direct, personal experience, individual renewal through mission, and exceptional promise. His acutely reasoned, non-“spiritualizing,” Baconian approach to the Bible was entirely common, a rationalist method shared by Pliny Fisk, Levi Parsons, and other biblical literalists. Yet he switched election, colonial as well as spiritual, from the Anglo-American settlers, who were in constant motion to thicken and expand settlement, to the Jews, who, in Augustine’s geographical-chronological figure, “have remained stationary in useless antiquity,” immobilized in their dispersion and error.²²

Such a revolution came about because of Cresson’s encounter with the physical, palpable Jerusalem, the “literal” link between word and place for which he had been searching for years. “Blessed is the man who placeth his *confidence* in the Lord and thinketh *of the way to Jerusalem*,” he quotes Scripture (16), and the ways in which Cresson “thought” his way to arrive at Jerusalem as the “literal place” for God’s appearance should be underscored. In the early 1840s he had plunged into concentrated biblical study, joining the exegetical culture vigorously engaged in setting down rational, common-sense “rules” and “proofs,” such as William Miller’s fourteen-point methodology, in order to interpret scriptural figures and metaphors and calculate future events.²³ Cresson’s rhetoric moved from the appeals to reason of his Quaker and Shaker periods to become an intertextual pastiche of prophetic narratives, proof-texts, and empirical “evidences,” with the Jews increasingly positioned as the key protagonist in the divine scenario.

Cresson was not alone in turning his eyes toward the Jews. Recent events in the East had greatly agitated British and American religious circles. Mohammed Ali’s rule from 1831 to 1840 had opened up Palestine to more European interests, while Sultan Abdul Mejid offered the unprecedented reforms (*Tanzimat*) in his *Hatt-I-Sherif* decree along with other concessions to

Western penetration in exchange for the European assistance in defeating the Egyptian challenge. For the first time the American government had come to the defense of Jews when it protested a traditionally anti-Judaic “blood libel” in Damascus in 1840, while the British, who that year occupied the city in the effort to repulse Mohammed Ali, had become the first Western nation to open a consul in Jerusalem in 1839. In 1841, Queen Victoria and King Frederick William IV of Prussia founded a joint Episcopal church in Jerusalem, to which a Jewish convert, Michael Solomon Alexander, was appointed bishop. Mt. Zion would soon be graced with a stone church, a bishop, and a complex of missionary projects, all directed toward conversion of the Jews. Western influence was on the rise, while the centuries-old ambition that the infidel Turk would collapse and open Palestine to Christian designs seemed near fruition.²⁴

Because of these and other “signs of the times,” Jewish restoration and the fate of Jerusalem became immediate, central components of most of the millennialist anticipation circulating throughout the Anglo-American Atlantic. The followers of William Miller, of course, found the doctrine irrelevant to their conclusion of sudden end—even more, it was “subversive of the whole Gospel system, by raising up what Christ has broken down, namely the middle wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile”²⁵—while Catholics, whose concept of pilgrimage to holy places was “delocalized” to Rome, Compostela, and numerous other sites and did not privilege Palestine, regarded unconverted Jews as irretrievably fallen and “unrestored” until Judgment Day.²⁶ But, with the pronouncements of that “Evangelical of Evangelicals,” the earl of Shaftesbury,²⁷ the founding of restorationist/ millennialist sects, such as the Christadelphians in 1844 by John Thomas, the novelized aspirations of Disraeli, and the declarations of Alexander Campbell and other American millennialists, Jerusalem had become the major stage set and the Jews the essential, if not leading, actor in world history.²⁸

At this time Cresson also befriended Rabbi Isaac Leeser. Editor of *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate* and perhaps the most respected traditionalist leader within the antebellum Jewish community. Leeser took cautious interest in Protestant ideas of Jewish restoration, and, although he avidly supported active help for impoverished Palestinian Jews and projects like Cresson’s that could improve conditions for Jewish return, he considered Israel’s restoration to be an entirely divine event to be accomplished without gentile assistance.²⁹ The two began a dialogue on biblical exegesis and the fate of the Jews, and by 1844 Cresson had become certain that he could only conclude his inquiry by traveling to Jerusalem to witness the eschatological drama unfold firsthand.³⁰

A friend convinced Philadelphia Congressman Edward Joy Morris, who had just returned from his own tour of the Holy Land, Egypt, and the East, to write a letter to Secretary of State John C. Calhoun on behalf of Cresson’s appointment as the first—though honorary and at his own expense—United States consul to Jerusalem, and on May 17, 1844, Warder Cresson was commissioned.³¹ However, upon learning of Cresson’s appointment, an alarmed Samuel D. Ingham, wealthy Pennsylvania papermaker, former congressman, and secretary of the treasury under President Jackson, dashed off an urgent letter of warning to Secretary Calhoun:

The consul has been laboring under an aberration of mind for many years, his mania is of the religious species. . . . [H]is passion is for religious controversy & no doubt he expects to convert Jews and Mohammedans in the East—but, in truth, he is withal a very weak-minded man and his mind, what there is of it, quite out of order. . . . His appointment is made a theme of ridicule by all who know him.³²

On June 22, Calhoun withdrew the ill-advised appointment, although Cresson, not knowing of its revocation, departed with a new American flag and his favorite white dove, which he planned to

release at the advent, to take his post in Jerusalem.³³

He stopped briefly in England, where he published three works, enumerating how “the signs of the times announce extraordinary events about to take place in regard to the Jews.”³⁴ Included in his signs were the machinations of the British, Russian, and Ottoman Empires (with the important variant on Isaiah’s reference to “the land overshadowing with wings” to allude to the United States’ crucial role), astronomical agitations, chronological calculations of biblical “days” and “weeks” according to terrestrial years, reports that Jews were abandoning the Talmud, and the increased attention directed to Jerusalem by Jew and Gentile alike, all of which led him to believe that the Temple Sanctuary was just then being cleansed for the fulfillment of prophetic promises.³⁵ He was particularly insistent in his inversion of Paul’s and Augustine’s olive tree, for it was the Jews, “the Good Olive Tree,” to which the “wild branches” of the Gentiles were engrafted, who were “the principals.”³⁶ The descent of the *Shekhinah*, God’s “Crown of Glory,” would occur only in “connection with *place*,” which could only be the City of David:

[W]oe, woe to that man that is found fighting against God, by supporting their different Zions—one at Rome, another at Nauvoo, another at Sing Sing, another at Illinois, another at New Lebanon, another our Zion or Church, another in the heart, as all spiritualizers say.³⁷

When the new consul arrived in Jerusalem that fall, he set up his official residence in the American Missionary Establishment, which, according to Cresson, had recently been emptied when the Americans, taking offense for being called “*Unauthorized Teachers and Schoolmasters*” by Anglican colleagues, departed (201). Actually, Rufus Anderson, president of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, had finally decided that they could no longer “occupy” Jerusalem, particularly after the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian bishopric. Conceding the city to the Anglicans, the Americans retreated to Beirut to focus on the more promising task of reviving the true faith among Armenian and Nestorian Christians, with Cresson taking their mantle along with their rooms as the American presence in the Holy City.³⁸

William Thackeray, who met Cresson while the sketch-pad satirist traveled to Jerusalem, quickly determined in *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* that “He has no knowledge of Syria but what he derives from prophecy.”³⁹ Thackeray reports with amazement that the new consul demanded an interview with the pasha immediately upon his arrival in order to explain to him

his interpretation of the Apocalypse, in which he had discovered that the Five Powers and America are about to intervene in Syrian affairs, and the infallible return of the Jews to Palestine. The news must have astonished the Lieutenant of the Sublime Porte; and since the days of the Kingdom of Munster, under his Anabaptist Majesty, John of Leyden, I doubt whether any government has received or appointed so queer an ambassador.⁴⁰

Thackeray, who enjoyed the world as a vast Vauxhall Garden set in motion, found Cresson laughable, although he also noted that the comfortable “tradesman” was a “kind, worthy, simple man.” The Victorian traveler listened with bemusement as the American “talked of futurity as he would about an article in *The Times*; and he had no more doubt of seeing a divine kingdom established in Jerusalem than you that there will be a levee next spring at St. James’.”⁴¹

Cresson acted as consul for six months, issuing official papers putting local Jews under United States protection (encroaching upon a prerogative of the British), before he learned of the withdrawal of his commission. He continued living in the city as a private citizen to engage in his biblical researches. Reading Scripture intently, he investigated archaeological “facts” while observing the conditions of Jerusalem and its Jews with mounting bitterness, drawing radical

conclusions to all of his exegetical, archaeological, and social inquiries.

In terms of social relations, his insistence that only in their unconverted state would Jews be the vehicle of God's will had already led him to oppose all missionary attempts, but the activities of the Anglican mission especially enraged him. In Cresson's view, the missionaries treated the impoverished five and a half thousand Jews of Jerusalem in a demeaning manner, angling for converts with material bribes.⁴² The missionary society had set out "not to CONVERT, but to PERVERT, the Jews, that is, to GENTILIZE them," and in a short satiric tract, "The Society Formed in England and America for Promoting Sawdust, Instead of Good Old Cheese, Amongst the Jews in Jerusalem," Cresson lashed out at the missionaries' over-lording behavior (317–22). The "fact" that Jews had no need for the Sawdust of Christianity when they had "the GENUINE ARTICLE of GOOD OLD CHEESE ITSELF," that they had inherited authenticity as God's people from patriarchal forebears, is "beyond all controversy." Nonetheless, the Jews "smelt so strong, (with the Truth,) and looked so *oily* and *greasy*, and were so *poor* and *dirty* . . . with old tattered clothes, and brown bread to eat, and water to drink, and sometimes without even these necessaries themselves." On their way to prayers the impoverished Jews would pass "the sumptuous houses of the Missionaries" and smell their beef cooking, while the missionaries would ride their "fine prancing steeds . . . with their greyhounds and hunting dogs running beside them, attended by two and three servants" in gross displays of privilege (319–20).

In his 1830, Shaker-influenced tract *Babylon the Great Is Falling*, Cresson had denounced "fleshly love" and "selfishness" as the root of all errant religion and bad politics: "[O]ur once happy republic, the glory of the world, must fall as all other republics have done . . . unless they come out of all selfishness and equalize wealth and education."⁴³ His republican outrage over the corrupting contamination of luxury marked the farmer's Jeffersonian roots, while his revulsion to class inequity, including his admiration of Robert Owen's utopian communities, cast him for a time as an early Christian socialist.⁴⁴ Cresson's denunciation of the "selfishness" of the missionaries in Jerusalem flowed from his identification with the victims of self-aggrandizing power. He noted how unsuccessful the seductive missionaries were in winning Hebrew souls for Christ, and Jewish resistance to the material blandishments and advantages of conversion impressed him greatly. What he began to see embodied in the patient, pious Jew was not the malodorous " 'ol clo's man" of John Gordon Bennet's diatribes, but a patriarch of incredible faith, strength, and dignity, someone willing to forego all wealth and comfort for the Word, someone very much like Warder Cresson.

As a result of his archaeological investigations, Cresson determined three "startling facts" concerning Jerusalem's antiquities, which he argued would "forever *rent from off* its followers' eyes" the "Veil of Christianity" (132), if these evidences of prophecies were regarded "*impartially*." Like Edward Robinson, whose archaeological data he employed, Cresson "used all the lights of reason without being a rationalist,"⁴⁵ and he quoted Isaiah 29:1, 4, "thou shalt *speak out* of the ground," to direct readers to listen to the voice of the exegetical landscape (131). Not only would his three archaeological facts go beyond the "Lying Wonders" and "Pious Frauds" of Roman and Eastern traditions that Robinson so scorned, but the implications of Cresson's three facts even shot past Protestant pretensions toward measurable verification of the divine narrative.

The first two facts were simply proof-texts carved in stone: the ruins of the temple's lower story extended under al-Aksa Mosque and the Mosque of Omar, casting doubt on the testimony of Matthew 24:2, which asserts that every stone of the temple would be thrown down after Christ's execution. Moreover, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre could not be the site where

Jesus was crucified because, as Hebrews 13:12 says, Jesus “suffered without the Gate,” outside the walls of the city, and “*we well know that the ancient wall of Jerusalem extended much further north than the present wall*” (132). “The Professor of Biblical Knowledge,” as he had begun to sign his tracts, may have taken decisive positions on the debates over archaeological controversies rather too hastily, but these inconsistencies were not unknown, the debates over their interpretation were lively, and Cresson invoked Alexander Keith’s “Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland,” along with the researches of Dr. Robinson and others, to back his case.

His third fact, however, stretched credulity, for Cresson did indeed claim to have seen King David’s body in his tomb and that the monarch’s remains had survived “in a *perfect state of Incorruptibility*” along with his royal regalia (131). In Cresson’s lunacy trial, General Hubbell had parried the prosecution charge that such a tale confirmed Cresson’s insanity by raising the reports of other Holy Land travelers, such as Dr. John Durbin, the Methodist president of Dickinson College, who had recently returned with his own description of David’s tomb.⁴⁶ Cresson’s book offers no elaborate description or narrative of discovery, only a statement of fact, nor does it labor over the significance of his find before drawing his conclusion. But such a marvel, as astonishing as Joseph Smith’s inscribed plates, perhaps accounts for why Cresson prefaced his entire list of startling facts with the proviso that “[a]s soon as there is a *sufficient force sent, fully authorized and properly qualified and duly protected*” (131), these evidences would be fully disclosed and indisputable.

Cresson was already convinced, however, and such decisive physical evidence ruptured the coherence of the Christian exegetical narrative, leading him to a conclusion that, though certainly odd, did not do irrevocable violence to Jewish tradition: the Messiah could be no one else than King David himself. He would not even be a descendant, as the lineage given Jesus had to claim, but the king himself, the actual branch of Jesse literally sprouted, bodily resurrected out of the dust of the psalmist’s embalmed remains. King David and no one else would come to rule God’s restored nation, and from Jerusalem he would rule the world.

The evidence he drew from observing the missionaries and researching his archaeological “facts” Cresson comprehended through a qualitatively deeper, “literalist” hermeneutics, an exegetical procedure that read the evidences of prophecy to entirely different ends than Christological justification. Christianity interprets Hebrew Scriptures as symbolic anticipations of “the *Spiritual Kingdom of Christ*,” while Judaism, according to Cresson, asserts the reverse: “[A]s everything proves and bears evidence that the *Spiritual* cannot precede the *Literal*, but that the *Literal* must first take place, and until it does the literal predictions of all the Prophets can never be fulfilled” (17–18). While Christians scorn genuinely literalist interpretation as “carnal,” as seeking an outward, visible kingdom first before the inner, spiritual one, Cresson argues, using Paul’s text against itself (“That the *invisible* things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” [Rom. 1:20]), that even allegory requires materiality: “[E]ven the *seeing* of the *Invisible* is predicated upon the ‘things that are *made*,’ and not *vice versa*; the visible ‘things that *are made*’ must be first, and the spiritual, or invisible things not until *afterward*” (19). As if to emphasize the materialist actuality of this approach, he compares the relationship of the two realms to how “a Steam Engine, when properly constructed and arranged in all its parts, would afterward receive all the spirit and power of Steam” (19).

Specifically, when prophecies are rendered in those verses in Hebrew Scriptures pertaining to David, they speak solely of David and no one else. Christians, by interpreting Psalms and other

texts according to “spiritual” rather than literal hermeneutics, are “transferring David’s *Messiahship* as King, Priest, and Prophet, to Jesus of Nazareth . . . thus effecting a complete change of *David’s Identity* to Jesus,” fabricating a “counterfeit” Messiah to take the place of the genuine prophet:

Are Christians aware of the dreadful dilemma they have brought themselves unavoidably into, of giving *Jesus* his *own body* and that *David’s body* too, and leaving poor *David* *without any body at all*? For all *Identity* is dependent upon our distinct *Body*, or *Personality*, and no other person dare claim it, or else we must lose our *individual* responsibility or accountability. (49)

Cresson had completely reversed his Shaker abhorrence of flesh, realizing that “*all Souls have a Body*, either fallen or unfallen” (306), to employ a highly empiricist, even materialist methodology in the service of transcendent narratives.

Such “carnality” was able to take root because he trusted the authenticity of Hebrew Scriptures as protected in the Masora, the canonized sacred texts that he called “The Great Jewish Counterfeit Detector.” He enumerated “the ten thousand mistranslations” of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible, such as the famous “Woman in labour” changed to “Virgin” to foreshadow Mary in Isaiah 7:14, while he lauded the Jewish tradition of preserving and copying scrolls as “a Fence” that kept Scripture “unadulterated, and without any possibility of corruption, or mistake, of even one single word” (298). Like Ezra Stiles and Poe, Cresson found recourse in the divine ultimacy of the Hebrew language to distinguish the “counterfeit” from the true article of biblical narrative, a discovery that allows the text’s true, univocal meaning to be fully exposed.

The search for a “Counterfeit Detector” recalls the old man in the final chapter of Melville’s *Confidence-Man*. He, too, employs a Counterfeit Detector, a booklet given to him by the trickster boy as a premium for buying a money belt, a guiding text used to determine the legitimacy of currency. The old man examines the fifty indications of truth in the booklet against his own two bills with more and more uncertainty, increasingly alarmed about the value of his banknotes. “What a peck of trouble that Detector makes for you now,” the Cosmopolitan complains. “Proves what I’ve always thought, that much of the want of confidence, in these days, is owing to these Counterfeit Detectors you see on every desk and counter. Puts people up to suspecting good bills” (chapter 45). Melville’s Counterfeit Detector, arriving when the novel has utterly exhausted the poetics of confidence at the end of the riverboat’s pilgrim journey, comes too late, of course. The reader can no longer distinguish Apocrypha, “something of uncertain credit,” from “certain truth,” suspecting all bills, good or bad. The search can only end, not with the stoic “swimming thought” of *Clarel’s* final canto, but with the sardonic, scatological life preserver of a chamberpot “stool,” which the elusive Jesus-Satan figure of the Cosmopolitan offers to the old man before extinguishing the Bible’s “lamp.” Cresson’s Counterfeit Detector came to him from out of the same anxieties over “Trust” as did Melville’s. Like Melville, he was driven by doubts over authenticity, uncertainties about the slippery quality of surfaces, nervous suspicions about the relationship of exterior “confidence” to interior trickery, and of appearance to reality that marked the development of Jacksonian market-driven social relations.

But Cresson’s confidence in the inerrancy of Hebrew text, joined to his trust in his other “evidences” of archaeology and missionary seduction, allowed him to exercise his literalist, “carnal” hermeneutics, wrenching biblical narrative back from the appropriations of allegory to the sacred city’s ownership of time, place, and circumstances without typological doubling. “I sucked all these inconsistencies in with my mother’s milk, and never discovered them until I went to Jerusalem,” Cresson exclaimed. He knew the Jews had been branded as “blind,” but when he read the same passages with a “single eye” operating directly in connection with

accurate “*Facts and Places*,” Truth became obvious—and Judaic (81). The literal comes before the spiritual, David is the “key” to unlock the Holy City’s secrets, and the Jewish body will be restored instantaneously at the revivification of the Messiah’s corpse. God’s nation will be redeemed, then Israel will rise to “preeminence” in the terrestrial Jerusalem itself, as promised with “*trust, confidence, and dependence*” upon God.⁴⁷

Jerusalem is not just a catalyst, but the only place in which the divine script can be fully discovered and acted out. A Christian could participate directly in the restoration narrative only by converting, only by becoming an actual, “carnal” Jew and not a “spiritual” one—although the possibility of conversion was readily, even democratically, available, if the seeker were only willing to travel to Jerusalem: “[T]here is no Salvation for the Gentiles but by *coming to Israel, to be saved, as I have done*” (15). Jerusalem was available to all, but only those Gentiles who were God-fearing, honest, and, most of all, not “compromised to any of the many hundreds of the Christian sects, either by *pre-possession or Prejudice*” (22) could receive the sacred city’s knowledge. If compromised, Jerusalem would likely change him, but not necessarily for the better, his collapse playing out according to established patterns of failure:

[I]f he be a High Churchman, or a Puseyite, he will, if he get amongst the Convents there, in all probability, go over to the Catholicity or Church of Rome. If he be an Orthodox Quaker, he will, in all probability, go over to the Church of England; but if he be an Hicksite Quaker, a Universalist, or Spiritual Knocker, he will, in all probability, go to Infidelity. (22)

The instrumentality of Jerusalem is so powerful that although only “a truly Wise and Understanding man” can go and “ *dwell under the shadow of Israel and return,*” all who come to read its text, who become one with the city, will be transformed (22).⁴⁸ His focus on going to Jerusalem is so fixed that Cresson ends *The Key of David* only with the simple, informational note “Expenses of Time and Money in Going from Philadelphia to Jerusalem”: “Length of passage generally from 45 to 65 days, according to the season of the year. THE END” (344).

Cresson had come back to Philadelphia only to return forever to Jerusalem. While his faith had changed, his fervor for restoration had grown even more intense, and his acceptance of human instrumentality in facilitating the fulfillment of prophecy allowed him to organize the imagined narrative into practical projects to hasten Jewish return. He published *The Great Restoration and Consolidation of Israel in Palestine* in 1851, addressing it to “the Jews of the House of Israel, Scattered Throughout the United States of America, England, and All Europe,” to propose what he called the “Great American and Foreign Association for Colonizing and promoting the welfare and interest of our the *Jewish People*.”⁴⁹ The association, headed by an international committee of eminent Jews, would be the vehicle for “national recognition of the Hebrew People, by the powers of America and Europe.” The organization would facilitate migration of Jews who “desire to settle in, or be *restored*” to the covenanted land, organizing their instruction in agriculture and “rural sciences.”⁵⁰

In 1851, the idea of “colonizing” the Jewish people, echoing the movement to settle Liberia with freed slaves, resonated with “the great question of *slavery*,” and Cresson was as aware of the slavery crisis as he was of the evangelical mania for Jewish restoration. He identified the Fugitive Slave Act (along with the advent of railroads, telegraphy, and gold in California) as one of the signs of messianic times, for the law “has made the whole Ham, or Negro line, or race, ‘tremble,’ (as they are now doing,) from one end to the other of this vast republic,” in fulfillment of Habakkuk 3:7. Cresson quite consciously situates his restorationist project within the sectional crisis, for “the question of Union” is so important that it “agitates” not only Israel, “but also this great and extensive Republic,” and, while he advises Jews to stand clear of the conflict, he

promotes the Hamitic destiny of Negroes to be cursed as “a servant of servants” among the sons of Noah.⁵¹

According to his version of the racialized genealogy of Noah’s sons, the Jews, who are the lineal descendants of Shem, are chosen to come to power; they will then lead the sons of Japhet, the divided, fractious gentile nations, to their “fullness” and ultimate union with God and self—and those “are equally foolish who endeavor to promote *Ham* or the *Negro above his sphere and place* as pre-determined by the word of God, as those who try to keep *Israel back* from his.”⁵² Not only was Israel the first to establish “a moral, Republican form of government,” the only true form of rule “during the absence of a theocracy,” but the internal union of all nations bears upon the unity of God’s people: “[A]gitation must do its work, until it shall be seen that all Union centres in the Union of God,” which insists upon the “*Union and Restoration of Israel.*”⁵³

On his way back to Palestine, Cresson gained the ear of respected Jews in London, where he issued his “Circular Letter for the Promotion of Agricultural Pursuits; and also, for the Establishment of a Soup-House for the Destitute Jews in Jerusalem.” Cresson’s “Soup-House” would feed hungry Jews and prevent the inroads of the missionaries, while his agricultural pursuit would be a “*Model Farm* in the Valley of Rephaim, to introduce an improved system of English and American Farming in Palestine.”⁵⁴ Cresson argued for the restorative influence of agriculture, for Jewish absence from the land had “prevented their energies becoming effectual for so many hundred years; for no people can become powerful while scattered over the whole earth, because *Unity* and CONSOLIDATION IS STRENGTH, but diffusion is weakness.”⁵⁵ In his interpretation, Jewish law deemed “that *Agriculture* is to be Israel’s vocation, when restored to their own land,” and as a successful farmer, Cresson was in a position to assist just such a development.⁵⁶

He was even grateful for Jerusalem’s aridity and inability to sustain manufacturing as blessings that bestowed the possibility of cultivating Jeffersonian yeoman virtues, while preventing modern urban vices: “[T]he good hand of Providence was against Jerusalem ever becoming a manufacturing city, owing to the great scarcity of water-power for mills, and of wood and coal, or fuel, for steam-power.”⁵⁷ Cresson pragmatically sought money to purchase air-pressure engines for running gristmills and other devices that did not require scarce water and fuel resources.⁵⁸ By means of his model farm, Jerusalem’s Jews would be able to feed themselves and resist the temptations of the missionaries; they would no longer need to send abroad at great expense “messengers” to seek philanthropic support from world Jewry, “the hat,” as Melville puts it in *Clarel*, that “goes round the world” (1.33.58). Self-sustenance would set the conditions for future growth and, eventually, national return. He ended his proposal by repeating the organizing principles of *The Great Restoration* and announcing the names of the international coordinating committee.⁵⁹

In October 1852, Isaac Leeser described the plans of the departing Michael Boaz Israel in the *Occident*, hailing the “thorough farmer,” who was “returning to Palestine to open . . . an extensive farm outside of Jerusalem in the Valley of Rephaim,” as a “redoubtable convert.”⁶⁰ Cresson maintained a regular correspondence, and while Leeser encouraged the collaboration of a Rabbi Moses Sachs in Jaffa, who also wrote an appeal to American Jews to support an agricultural colony, “with Mr. Cresson, who is an experienced farmer, to conduct the field labors of the colony.”⁶¹

In the end, only a plot for a garden was procured in Jaffa, hardly the model farm Cresson had envisioned, although he continued refining his plans. In 1854 he proposed that the settlement’s

lands be divided into small family allotments for five to seven families, which would create better conditions for sharing skills and self-defense. After he obtained the plot in Jaffa that year, he made plans for training young men in silk culture and broom making. But the next year he reported problems in planting and seeding, along with difficulties in meeting expenses for mules and land payments, although he kept on elaborating his ideas, proposing the cultivation of new crops more suitable for the area, such as lemons, bananas, sugar cane, and pineapples.⁶²

Jews were not convinced, however. The “model farm” soon failed due to lack of funds and recruits, and Cresson stopped sending his proposals to the *Occident*. “Why do the Jews suffer so much, and are so poor and despised, if it is not God’s punishment upon them?” he ruminated instead, reporting that the conditions of Jerusalem’s Jews had only gotten worse.⁶³ By the time Melville met the “American turned Jew” in 1857, Cresson had become a respected figure of the *yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine), making his rounds to prayer through the city’s streets. He had taken a Sephardi wife, fathered two children, and immersed himself in the study of the Talmud and Kabbalah, even becoming for a time leader of the Sephardi community. When he died on October 27, 1860, Jerusalem’s Jewish businesses closed for his funeral on the Mount of Olives. Over a hundred years after his death, orthodox Jews continued to pray at the grave of “the American *Ger Tsedek*,” the American Holy Stranger.⁶⁴

Others, mostly Protestant restorationists, were also planning various Jewish settlement schemes during this period. For example, John Meshullam, a Jewish convert to Christianity and to restoration doctrine, worked with Clorinda Minor in establishing the Artas agricultural colony in 1851, while Reverend Dickson and his family, whom Melville also met in 1857, would collaborate with Minor’s efforts. In fact, Dickson, whose family would suffer rape and murder from bandit attack, would serve more as the composite model for Nathan’s death at the hands of Indians/Arabs in *Clarel* than would the former Quaker farmer.⁶⁵

Cresson’s attempt, like those of Minor, Dickson, and others, was part of a protracted trial-and-error process out of which the ideas and structures of modern, Jewish Zionism would develop. What was most important in Cresson’s soup-house/model-farm proposal was that it presented an early model for a modern Zionist undertaking, adding to the thickening texture of narratives that over the course of the nineteenth century would transform the insistent doctrine of Jewish restoration into a manifestation of time, place, and circumstances. In Gramsci’s terms, Cresson’s project was one step in the process in which an idea becomes a material force. Although his farm did not succeed, he did plant “the seeds of concepts which later became bywords of classical Zionism; the abnormality and devitalizing power of the ‘galut’ [diasporic exile]; the restorative power of the Holy Land; agriculture as the vocation of Israel; aiding the coming of the Messiah by beginning his work of restoration; and the religion of labor, labor on the soil of the Holy Land.”⁶⁶ Early Zionism, led by secularists, nationalist romantics, and social revolutionaries, had a deeply ambivalent relationship to the Christianized notion of chosenness, since the ideal of “normalizing” Jewish national status conflicted with any appeal to uniqueness or special destiny, particularly when that “abnormality” was mostly experienced as victimization. Yet Zionism developed from a paradoxical amalgam of contradictory influences in order to cope with persecution through national separation, with the experiments in developing settlements and solving the concrete problems of acquiring land and labor following an eclectic variety of ideologies and models.⁶⁷ What informed and shaped the experiments of the first and second *aliyahs* (immigration waves) of Jewish settlement was not just Tolstoyan populism, not just Nietzschean transvaluation of values, but the pragmatic designs of Prussian agricultural colonies to supplant the presence of Poles in the Eastern territories, the practices of nomadic Cossack

settlements along the Don, even the plans for a *moshav*-like turn-of-the-century agricultural and housing development near Red Bluff in northern California.⁶⁸ Cresson's Jeffersonian agricultural republicanism, his practical approach to the "work of restoration," even his extreme, covenantal sense of election and land, were important elements of the ideological and practical complex of narratives that led to Jewish colonization.

Cresson's project was also "the American thing to do"—in the words of the emigrant from Chicago who answered Jack Kemp when the then-Congressman asked why the American Jew chose to move to Israel.⁶⁹ Cresson enacted the ascetic spirit of Weber's Protestant "calling" within its American, frontier contours in order to implant, once again, a settler project in a perceived wilderness as a means to restore the past and thereby ensure the future. He performed a drama of American exceptionalism that raised the American identification with ancient Israel to a higher, albeit distorted, pitch, but one that reverberated with Christianography nonetheless.

American election is more than an "abstract philosophic idea," as Conrad Cherry explains. American chosen-people identity has served as "an empowering national myth," a complex of mythic narratives that, "rather than scrupulously avoiding contradictions, ranges widely across the experience of a people, scoops up some dominant images, and blends them into a compelling worldview."⁷⁰ That worldview, as it developed among the tensions of the antebellum period, also encompassed other, conflicting images and concepts: the utopian sense of a civilizing, democratic mission through displacement, motion, and violence; the anguish over settler union in the face of the slavery question's divisions; the anxieties of an increasingly feminized sensibility; the burdens of Anglo-Saxon supremacy. But what, indeed, Cresson "scoops up" into this unstable, mythic construction is nothing less than the embodied nerve of God's New Israel through the most primitive enactment of the covenantal drama—that chronotope of holy union through settlement—imaginable.

When in 1841 Orson Hyde was delegated by the newly founded Mormon Church in its first official act to announce in Jerusalem the imminent restoration of the Jews to the old Holy Land and the Latter-day Saints to the new, Hyde returned afterward to take up the task of Joseph Smith's new revelation in the West; Cresson, however, looked to the very first revelation, then returned to the East to implant the nation's new seed. The impulse toward national restoration at the core of the covenantal relationship was given the dimension of ritual enlargement by the Mormon elder; but by stripping away its typological double, Cresson added the singular, erotic "carnality" of the *ur*-nation's fulfillment. Melville keenly noted the "strange pervert," as he calls the Nathan-Cresson character in *Clarel*, and he was able to locate in Cresson's "sad" history an ironic, absurdist type, a paradigmatic narrative of American settler-colonial identity. Few noticed Cresson—and even fewer read Melville's poem—but Cresson's obsessive desire for an ultimate "Counterfeit Detector" with which to read time, place, and circumstances in order, in the words of the "practical," modern Zionist slogan, "to create facts on the ground" was, as Melville knew, so prevalent as to be virtually invisible.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Ungar “His Way Eccentric”: The Confederate Cherokee’s Map of Palestine

MAKING THEIR way from Mar Saba to Bethlehem in the fourth and final part of *Clarel*, the pilgrims come across a “plain-clad soldier” (4.1.76), “A stranger quite” (4.1.42) who, mounted “Upon a cloistral beast” (4.1.72) borrowed from the monastery, travels alongside their party with somber mien, striking self-possession, and “a slouched reserve of strength” (4.1.82). The stranger displays the “high-boned” cheek, “copperish” skin, and long hair “much like a Cherokee” (4.1.84–86), while he also bears the telltale signs of battle: an ominous “saber-scar,” which leaves a tattoo-like “livid bar” on his neck, and a “strange blue of powder-burn” on his temple (4.1.88–93). At first he strikes the pilgrim-party as a Turk, a veteran of the sultan’s army, but to their surprise they soon discover the stranger to be none other than

A native of the fair South-West—
Their countryman, though of a zone
Varied in nature from their own:
A countryman—but how estranged!

(4.1.99–102)

A monk at Mar Saba who had exchanged words with the Southerner reports that he was awaiting his “troop / Destined to join him for the swoop / Over Jordan” (4.1.108–10) but the soldiers had been detained. Such a “swoop” by Ottoman forces against bedouin predators or other rebellious elements would have been a common-enough occurrence, but the pilgrims, moving toward their encounter with the birthplace of Jesus and the inevitable consummation in death of Clarel’s covenantal quest, at first reconcile themselves to the incongruity of seeing an American soldier in the Holy Land by mistakenly deeming him to be “one who took his way / Eccentric in an armed survey / Of Judah” (4.1.112–14).

But Ungar—the part-Indian, Anglo-Catholic veteran of the Confederate army—had not wandered from an armed geographic expedition, as the pilgrims first surmise. When their dragoman, the Druze Djalea, reports having seen Ungar “Drilling some tawny infantry” along the Nile as well as conversing with Turkish naval officers on the beach at Jaffa (4.5.28–34), they realize with a shock that their “countryman / By birth” (4.5.26–27) is now, of all things, a mercenary for the sultan. Defeated, displaced, and marginalized through a matrix of conditions and grievances—as soldier for the Lost Cause, as Indian, as Catholic, as exile, even as hireling of the Orient—Ungar has indeed taken “his way / Eccentric.” However, like Nathan-Cresson, Ungar’s apparent eccentricity, his seemingly impossible, unstable coalescence of extreme contradictions within one life, extends from the very center of American settler-colonial experience. Ungar may have been somewhat improbable, given the dominant trends in American development, but his hybrid identity, his deep knowledge of pain, his wound, his defeat and failure, and even his contrarian views were hardly implausible.

In fact, an American drilling “tawny infantrymen” on the banks of the Nile was altogether plausible. In 1868, the khedive of Egypt, eager to modernize his country, particularly his military, against the pressures of the Ottoman sultan’s dominance and European penetration, engaged Thaddeus Mott to employ American advisors. Mott, employing William Tecumseh Sherman as advisor, recruited Charles P. Stone, veteran of the Mexican War and survivor of McClellan’s intrigues, as the Egyptian chief of staff; and as brigadier general Stone selected William W. Loring, who had fought Indians, Mexicans, and Mormons, as well as Union troops, to join scores of other veterans from both Union and Confederate armies. Many of the American mercenaries considered their service a contribution to the independence of an emerging nation against the tyranny of the sultan, while the Egyptians, finding the United States’ lack of geopolitical interest in the region particularly appealing, valued American experience in the exploration of Western territories and the conquest of indigenous tribes for their own quest for expansion and modernization. James Field in *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776–1882* cites similarities between the drive of both countries to expand—to the west or to the south—that account for the attraction the United States held for Egypt:

In its attempts to develop its national estate and to thrust its frontiers outward through arid and unmapped areas populated by doubtfully disposed aborigines, the Khedive’s Egypt had obvious resemblances to an earlier America. The need for improved communications and for the development of natural resources paralleled the situation in the American West a generation before, and the area in question was of comparable size.¹

The completion of the transcontinental railroad at almost the same moment as the completion of the Suez Canal, along with the resumption of Indian wars, made the allure more immediate than Field’s allusion to “an earlier America.” Between 1871 and 1878 the Americans even engaged in one of the largest topographic surveys yet conducted of unmapped African territories, particularly of the provinces of Dhofar and Kordofan in today’s Sudan, to assist Egypt—whose ambitions to challenge Ottoman control in Syria had been permanently thwarted after Mohammed Ali’s defeat—to expand southward toward equatorial zones.²

But, in addition to the well-known mercenary involvement in Egypt, one very plausible, central item to Ungar’s eccentricity can even be read in the pilgrim-party’s initial, mistaken apprehension of the stranger’s business in Palestine, for the ex-Confederate could very well have been engaged in “an armed survey of Judah.” The American Palestine Exploration Society (PEF) had been founded in 1870, five years after the establishment of its larger, more powerful British counterpart, and in 1871 the Americans, in the antebellum tradition of biblical archaeologist Edward Robinson and naval explorer William Lynch, began to make plans to join the British in the first scientific survey of Holy Land geography.³ “This country of Palestine belongs to *you* and to *me*, it is essentially ours,” William Thomson, the archbishop of York, pronounced the geographic imperative at the founding meeting of the British PEF in 1865.

It was given to the father of Israel in the words “Walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto ye.” *We* mean to walk through Palestine, in the length and breadth of it, because that land has been given unto us. It is the land from which comes news of our Redemption. It is the land to which we turn as the fountain of all our hopes; it is the land to which we look with as true a patriotism as we do to this dear old England.⁴

Much of American Protestantism could identify with such myths of identity and aggrandizement, just as it had in the days of the ABCFM missionaries Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons, so Anglo-Americans could share in the Holy Land “patriotism” of “dear old England” as performed through yet another version of the “disinterested” search for knowledge, while the anti-Ottoman sentiments of the mercenaries in Egypt did nothing to counter such “disinterest,” despite their

allegiance to the khedive. More important, the time had come in the course of Europe's "rediscovery" of Palestine to render sacred geography upon a cartographic grid: the application of measuring tape would serve both as biblical key to unlock redemptive secrets and as imperial tool to pry indigenous fingers off "our" land.

An armed detachment of royal engineers led by Captain Charles Wilson and Lt. Claude Condor did in fact set down triangular grids on the landscape, measuring all geographical aspects and accumulating "a complete inventory of every natural and historical feature of Palestine" in order to inscribe both modern and biblical topologies with utmost accuracy and thoroughness.⁵ An arrangement was made whereby the Americans would take such an inventory of the landscape east of the Jordan, while the British surveyed all land to the west, which not accidentally included Jerusalem and most of the historic and strategic sites. The American effort soon floundered, however, largely for the same reasons the mercenary enterprise in Egypt could succeed: the United States had not as yet developed crucial commercial or strategic interests in the region.⁶ The flush of victory against Mexico in 1847 may have prompted the War Department to sponsor Lynch's expedition despite the Dead Sea's lack of strategic value, but after the devastation of the Civil War no official support—and certainly no detachment of army engineers—would be forthcoming. The successive British surveying expeditions, which over decades succeeded in establishing the geopolitical frontiers of what would become Mandate Palestine, ended up creating the highly accurate map that the British military would employ to overcome four hundred years of Ottoman occupation during World War I. Construction of the map led to domination of the actual terrain, and representation became an act of possession, with that very map guiding General Allenby to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem in 1917 to make what would become Mandate Palestine's as-yet imaginary borders real.

Ungar does engage in a cartographic survey, however, although his "map" of Palestine is of an entirely different sort. He does not fall from the task despite anglophile enthusiasm, as did the American PEF, nor does he become the Holy Land "saunterer" of Thoreau's essay "Walking," inevitably, if ironically, heading due west with the course of empire; but he has come east to "this land named of Behest, / A wandering Ishmael from the West" (4.10.185–86). His easterly motion appears to counter the currents of history, while his somber demeanor even marks the rare possibility that a New Worlder could actually achieve "the Semitic reverent mood" required "for just interpreter / Of Palestine" (1.1.93, 95–96). Ungar is yet another Wandering Jew/Ishmael criss-crossing Melville's stony narrative landscape, although he is neither a pilgrim nor a tourist, but a soldier in "the habit of renouncing" for the sake of military discipline and duty. "[W]ar's his business" (4.23.39): hired by the Turk, he is not "free," and in that abject state of obeisance to necessity, fealty to wealth, and submission to authority—a state so much like Melville's own quiet submission to the tributary despotism of the customs house gang—Ungar delivers scathing denunciations of liberal religion, democracy, capitalism, notions of progress, and New World exceptionalism. Through Ungar, Melville gives vent to what C. Vann Woodward has aptly called "the blackest commentary on the future of his country ever written by an American in the nineteenth century."⁷

Wandering the sacred landscape while casting "his Jeremiad spells" (4.23.23), Ungar charts a counter-map, unhooks the typological mechanisms of American hermeneutics, and abrogates the settler-colonial covenant. Ungar is the last monomaniac Clarel engages before the pilgrim-party's sudden encounter with the double funeral of Ruth and Agar outside the walls of Jerusalem instigates the final collapse of his search. The ex-Confederate Cherokee is the appropriate counterpart, the opposite wing of the bird to "strange" Nathan, the other American

taking up residence in the East; but, rather than returning the covenant to its source and making the unreal absurdly real as Nathan attempts, a different task is reserved for this “estranged” Ishmael: to pull apart the embrace of John Locke and Cotton Mather, to unbind the “social covenant” from its conflated but not entirely identical spiritual counterpart—and destroy them both. Indeed, Ungar’s counter-map demolishes the Christianographic grid of American presumptions to primitivist restoration, renewal, and providential destiny, while Ungar himself, his very existence, serves as evidence of the unexpected consequences of settler-colonialism. With no typological double, there is only one, “strange” Holy Land—and even that may be too much: the New World can make no transcendent claim to textual authority, nor can the New Worlder presume any unique interpretive acuity in reading either landscape.

Ungar’s jeremiad spells begin, even before he speaks, with his simple presence, for in Rolfe’s contemplation of him in the canto “Of the Stranger,” the Southerner silently projects “The rankling thing” in his grief (4.5.73), the dark wound of the Civil War, while the pilgrim party goes on with its dialogic encounters. Agath, the Greek timoneer (pilot), comes on the scene soon after Ungar begins to accompany the party, and after the veteran of the maritime frontier spies the distant Holy City and cries out, “Wreck, ho! the wreck—Jerusalem!” (4.1.187), a series of narratives involving the old sailor ensue with Ungar all the while remaining in the background. First, a tattoo, “a living fresco” on Agath’s arm, is recounted, “A crucifixion in tattoo” (4.2.51) identical to the emblem of the cross drawn by George Sandys (and the same “Ensign” Melville would also emboss on the cover of *Clarel’s* two volumes).⁸ Gunfire is suddenly heard, which leads Ungar to comment with dark import, “A gun’s man’s voice—sincerest one” (4.2.161); but when the report is discovered to be only the Arnaut (Ottoman soldier) assigned to protect them firing into the air, Hawthorne-like Vine asks Agath, “man of nature true, / If simple” (4.2.192–93), to recall a land comparable to arid Judah from his wide-roving experience in regions “strange or rare” (4.2.201). In response, the sailor relates the tale of a South Pacific island where “the monstrous tortoise drear” (4.3.61) returns “After a hundred years of pain / And pilgrimage” (4.3.86–87) to the same beach. Agath’s tale, akin to Melville’s stories in “The Encantadas,” is interrupted by the sudden arrival of a scorpion, “the unblest, small, evil thing” (4.4.15), and Rolfe, exclaiming at the “small epitome of devil” (4.4.22), ruminates on evil’s continued presence in the world: “Evil and good they braided play / Into one cord” (4.4.31–32). But even before the arrival of the insect, Ungar had made his presence felt in the “braided” narratives of lush Pacific and “wrecked” Palestine. He listens to Agath’s story with deep interest “at the hint” of “mystic” meanings in the tortoise’s pilgrimage or the markings on its shell, and Rolfe is amazed to find that Ungar’s Indian-like “forest eyes” (4.5.3), which “glowed” with serious import, showed “No cynic fire sarcastic” (4.5.17). Ungar still seeks to read signs of God in nature, despite his defeat, and his respectful, uncynical demeanor compels Rolfe to discover the truth of his countryman merely by the contemplation of his scarred face and the fate of the vanquished South.

Reading the American landscape in the Southerner’s condition, Rolfe considers the war and its aftermath:

Ay me,
Ay me, poor Freedom, can it be
A countryman’s a refugee?
What maketh him abroad to roam,
Sharing with infidels a home?
Is it the immense charred solitudes
Once farms? and chimney-stacks that reign
War-burnt upon the houseless plain

Of hearthstones without neighborhoods?

.....

Is't misrule after strife? and dust
From victor's heels? Is it disgust
For times when honor's out of date
And serveth but to alienate?
The usurping altar doth he scout—
The Parsee of a sun gone out?

(4.5.35–44, 48–53)

This grid of rhetorical questions assigns charred solitudes, chimney stacks, houseless plains—Sherman's march to the sea, the subsequent federal occupation, Reconstruction's "misrule"—to the new map of wrecked American memory: a landscape that had finally and bitterly obtained its own Ruins of Empire. In the "Supplement" to *Battle-Pieces* Melville had expressed abhorrence of slavery and offered his sympathy to the slaves "in their infant pupilage to freedom," but he also insisted that

such kindness should not be allowed to exclude kindness to communities who stand nearer to us in nature. For the future of the freed slaves we may well be concerned; but the future of the whole country, involving the future of the blacks, urges a paramount claim upon our anxiety. Effective benignity, like the Nile, is not narrow in its bounty, and true policy is always broad. . . . Let us be Christians towards our fellow-whites, as well as philanthropists towards the blacks, our fellow-men. . . . Emancipation has ridded the country of the reproach, but not wholly of the calamity.⁹

Melville's attraction to Ungar as yet another Ishmael, one actually seen wandering along the banks of the real Nile, might seem consistent with Melville's penchant for reviled, rootless seekers, but the "benignity" that Rolfe and the other pilgrims feel toward the defeated fellow-white, to the one who stands nearer to him "in nature" than "our fellow-men" the blacks, goes beyond the too-easy Christian benevolence and uneasy race-consciousness suggested in the "Supplement." Rolfe's meditation regards the war as a "Sad arch between contrasted eras"; but, instead of blaming "the slave-interest" as the cause of the conflict, as Melville did in the "Supplement," he ruefully regards "that evil day / When the cadets from rival zones Their country's pick and flower of sons" (4.5.79–83) turned to arms

Touching construction of a pact,
A paper pact, with points abstruse
As theologic ones—profuse
In matter for an honest doubt;
And which, in end, a stubborn knot
Some cut but with the sword . . .

(4.5.86–91)

The war has become merely an interpretive dispute, the difference over slavery an "honest doubt"; the Constitution has been desanctified, has become merely a "paper pact," a contractual agreement that is humanly "touched," manifestly "constructed," and not divinely revealed, although the "theologic" language of religion also associates the social contract with the sacred covenant and the guiding power of hermeneutics. The overlapping, "braided" categories of state power and "the people" are played out against the field of "nature" with the express purpose of doing God's work of settlement, for the contract is a bond among "fellow-whites" to claim their liberty in their ascendancy over the land; differences over labor, slave or free, are secondary if at all relevant, a Gordian knot that, in the end, could be cut, for the South is only "a zone / Varied in nature" and not a realm outside the bounds of nature. Ungar is so disillusioned over the

betrayal of covenant ideals and natural rights, particularly the “self-evident” right of settlers to self-rule, that “Reading and revery impeded his pain,” which in turn causes his anguish to “take a flight / Beyond experience and the reign / Of self” (4.5.94–97). The defeated Southerner is so beyond the rule of the imperial, settler self that he comes full circle and develops a “latent” old-new self with

A bias, bitterness—a strain
Much like an Indian’s hopeless feud
Under the white’s aggressive reign.

(4.5.106–8)

Indeed, the allusions to Indians and their own defeat are pointed, for the narrator is prompted next to let the story “rearward run” to recount how Ungar’s forebear, an English Catholic escaping anti-Catholic “zeal or bile” to “The New World’s fairer flowers and dews” (4.5.117, 120), entered “the Indian glade” (4.5.133). There in nature’s Edenic bower

He wedded with a wigwam maid,
Transmitting through his line, far down,
Along with touch in lineaments,
A latent nature, which events
Developed in this distant son,
And overrode the genial part—
An Anglo brain, but Indian heart.

(4.5.134–40)

The “distant son” inherits the Anglo slave system along with his mother’s Indian “lineaments” and “latent nature,” yet he is “Outspoken in his heart’s belief / That holding slaves was aye a grief” (4.5.147–48). Even so, his anti-slavery sentiment fits the complacent, privileged attitude of Southern cavaliers who harbored qualms yet did not disturb the status quo. He thought

The system an iniquity
In those who plant it and begin;
While for inheritors—alas,
Who knows? and let the problem pass.

(4.5.149–52)

When later Ungar observes two shepherds in Bethlehem he recalls the story of Lot and Abraham “halving” their herds and land, noting that “both were wise” to go their separate ways, bitterly applying the biblical lesson of appropriate divisions to the North American situation: “ ’Twas East and West; but North and South!” (4.9.80–81). His mental wound remains, is “impeded” because he cannot accept that internecine warfare threatening the union of colonizers would ever erupt over a mere “paper pact” concerning the colonized; denied his half, Ungar becomes “the self-exiled one” (4.5.154).

Yet the presence in Ungar of an “Indian heart” appears to collapse or at least confuse the distinctions between colonizer and colonized, for he embodies both poles of the settler/native dialectic along with its brain/ body correlative. His “taint” of Indian blood renders his status ambiguous; he has internalized an alien, impure quality that has been adjusted, made externally “white,” only by the injection into the colonial dynamic of a third category, the African. Indians fighting to defend the slave system may also seem implausible, even absurdly so, yet many Cherokees and other “civilized” Indians of the old Southwest embraced the slave-holding

plantation system with enthusiasm. Blacks, always “bearing burdens, performing labor, tending livestock, and acting as body servants,” arrived with the earliest Europeans, and African subordination was a given in colonial relations. At the same time, the enslavement of Indians was prevented by allowing the red/white division to become secondary to the black/white color line, despite the depredations against Cherokee land and rights, while the Cherokees as a whole never developed “an affinity with blacks as brothers of color, both oppressed by the white man.”¹⁰

The destruction of aboriginal matrilineal society and the loss of women’s control over land and agricultural production late in the eighteenth century had set the basis for the patriarchal “civilization” that encouraged the plantation system to flourish, along with the other innovations of the Cherokee’s adaptation of European practices to indigenous culture.¹¹ The slave system was so successful in transforming Indians that “Cherokee Agent George Butler even wanted to export black slavery to the ‘wild’ Plains Indians in an effort to ‘civilize’ them.”¹² At the same time, slavery took on particular, “Indian” characteristics different from other Southern communities. Slaves tended to be treated better by Cherokee masters, often serving more traditional Indians only as English interpreters.¹³ Cherokee proprietors of large-scale plantations saw slave-holding as an economic and political question that had nothing to do with the moral qualms displayed by missionaries from the ABCFM and other churches. In *Red over Black: Black Slavery among the Cherokee Indians*, R. Halliburton summarizes characteristics of Cherokee slavery that differed from Anglo-American practice:

[W]ithin the Cherokee Nation an underground railroad never operated, free blacks never owned slaves, “slave trader” was not a pejorative term, slaves were probably used more frequently as barter, slaves were used more extensively as interpreters and business consultants, and many Cherokee slaves did not speak English. Moreover, Cherokees never experienced the inner conflict between slave-owning and conscience, never felt the need to justify slavery morally, never claimed slavery was in the best interest of blacks, and never gave voice to the “positive benefits” of Christianizing and civilizing their slaves. Slavery was justified solely on the basis of the benefits which accrued to masters.¹⁴

On the eve of the Civil War, the Cherokees split along abolitionist and pro-slavery lines similar to the rest of the country, although the internal conflict also reflected the violent divisions between the Ross (resistance) and Ridge (accommodation) parties still raw from the forced removal to Indian Territory, complicated further by the factionalism between modernists and traditionalists. Although at first attempting to be neutral, the Cherokees fought bitterly among themselves with bloody, often oddly extreme consequences: Cherokees made up the only Confederate regiment “to have almost its entire membership desert into Union service”; the Cherokee Nation, of all slave-holding communities, was the only one to abolish slavery during the Civil War; at the same time, Cherokee Brigadier General Stand Watie was the very last Confederate general to surrender, offering his sword on June 23, 1865.¹⁵ Ungar’s taint, then, is also one of complicity, of complicating the categories of victim and victimizer through the lived, messy particularities of frontier experience: he is, quite literally, a “Pocahontas-wedding / Of contraries” (1.28.32–33), the hybrid New Worlder who is both innocent and guilty, who has benefited from the settler-colonial system at the same time as he inveighs his jeremiad spells against its violent tyranny.

Ungar, a Tiresias of the colonial dialectic, hurls a tirade against the myths of Anglo-Saxon vigor and supremacy when aroused by the West’s ingrained revulsion from “the Turk”:

“As cruel as a Turk: Whence came
That proverb old as the crusades?
From Anglo-Saxons. What are they?”

.....
 The Anglo-Saxons—lacking grace
 To win the love of any race;
 Hated by myriads dispossessed
 Of rights—the Indians East and West.
 These pirates of the sphere! grave looters—
 Grave, canting, Mammonite freebooters,
 Who in the name of Christ and Trade
 (Oh, bucklered forehead of the brass!)
 Deflower the world’s last sylvan glade!”

(4.9.112–25)

Melville’s fierce hatred for the presumption and hypocrisy of racial superiority and Anglo-Saxonism remains rare among Anglo-American writers of the period, and speaking through Ungar’s “eccentric” status allows him the freedom to take the position of “myriads dispossessed” with relative ease. At the same time, Carolyn Karcher has rightly noted “the strange absence of the Negro . . . in a passage that omits Africa from the catalogue of the white man’s depredations.”¹⁶ Yet in all his denunciations, Ungar does not follow his compatriots of the South into blindly taking out his rage against the freedman, perhaps because of the sympathies of his racial taint; nonetheless, the Negro and his status remain central to the composition of Ungar’s character, although the American black man (here and throughout the poem) remains virtually invisible. The “braided,” divided performance of the settler-native allows for the tirade against colonial oppression marked with the glaring absence of one of its main victims.

His rant against Anglo-Saxons shifts easily from the violent dispossession of indigenous peoples by the “pirates of the sphere” to the equally violent alienation inherent in capitalist relations, such a shift involving the yet more foundational and more ambiguous racial/civilizational difference embedded in Jews:

Old ballads sing
 Fair Christian children crucified
 By impious Jews: you’ve heard the thing:
 Yes, fable; but there’s truth hard by:
 How many Hughs of Lincoln, say,
 Does Mammon in his mills, to-day,
 Crook, if he do not crucify?

(4.9.129–35)

Ungar is here referring to the Medieval blood-libel accusation that the Jews of Lincoln had abducted the Christian boy Hugh for purposes of ritual murder, which the “old ballad” of Chaucer’s “Prioress Tale” adapts. Interestingly, the accusation had the effect of promoting Lincoln as a new pilgrimage site, with all of the economic benefits such a designation entailed; the blood-libel at Lincoln, along with the earlier tale of William of Norwich, inspired other accusations and the consequent creation of additional pilgrimage sites, making the cultivation of perceived crimes of Jewish perfidy a potent component of medieval pilgrimage economies.¹⁷ While Ungar may be lashing out against capitalism here, he also reanimates the blood-sacrifice myth, associating Jews with moneymaking—“there’s truth hard by”—in the deliberate ambiguity of just who “Mammon in his mills” really does represent (Jew-as-capitalist or capitalist-as-Jew): “Your alms-box, smaller than your till, / And poor-house won’t absolve your mill” (4.9.140–41). In a later canto Ungar refers to “Pauperism’s unhappy sons . . . / Grimy in Mammon’s English pen—/ Collaterals of his overplus” (4.20.85–88), and the economic, English “Mammon” of

Blake's "dark Satanic Mills" and not his New Jerusalem appears more clearly invoked. Yet the Jewish "taint," the negative implications of the Englishman becoming the counter-typological, fallen, carnal, calculating Jew, remains in the "collaterals" taken from the pawning of labor.

With capitalism tainted by Anglo-Saxon blood shed on behalf of a particularly "Jewish" lust, Ungar directs his barbs at the political system cultivated from the atomization promoted by commodity exchange. Democracy is the "Arch strumpet of an impious age" (4.19.138), a sexual signifier for the exchange of flesh inherent in commodity relations and wage labor, a lascivious debasement especially dangerous in the New World with its hothouse, too-vigorous zone of "natural" effulgence:

But in the New World things make haste:
Not only men, the *state* lives fast—
Fast breeds the pregnant eggs and shells,
The slumberous combustibles
Sure to explode. 'Twill come, 'twill come!
One demagogue can trouble much:
How of a hundred thousand such?
And universal suffrage lent
To back them with brute element
Overwhelming? What shall bind these seas
Of rival sharp communities
Unchristianized?

(4.21.105–16)

Ungar warns of "Your Thirty Years (of) War" (4.21.117), of the inevitable eruption of "the slumberous combustibles" fanned by universal suffrage, the demand for which paralleling the universality of commodity exchange, as indeed the working-class rebellions of the 1877 railroad strike, erupting a year after the publication of Melville's poem-pilgrimage, would seem to confirm. Melville's apprehension of "slumberous combustibles" had already been aroused by the New York City draft riots of mostly Irish and German immigrants he witnessed in 1863, as testified by his poem in *Battle-Pieces*, "The House-Top," which records "the Atheist roar of riot." American settler democracy, long before current controversies over "multiculturalism," created "a sea of rival sharp communities" (4.21.115), a primal stew of identities arising from the increasing need for the importation of immigrants to ease capital's severe labor shortage. To Ungar, democracy, therefore, is an opaque "monster of a million minds" (4.10.109) and not, as Derwent's liberal attitude would have it, an "object clear":

Men liberated—equalized
In happiness. No mystery,
Just none at all; plain sailing.

(4.20.28–31)

Rather than "plain sailing," Ungar sees reversion to barbarism: "Your arts advance in faith's decay: / You are but drilling the new Hun" (4.21.18–19). He can envision—and dread—an Anglo-Saxon China resulting from colonial domination, although he can also revel in the comfort that at least Asia, with "That old inertness of the East" (4.19.143), would stop democracy's advance, a backhanded reassurance that may shed some light on why the New Worlder chose to take his exile in the service of the cruel Turk's absolutist realm.

Ungar's biting critiques of capitalism and democracy echo the philosophical stances of other vanquished Southerners, with the character of the defeated Rebel frequently serving as the

vehicle for polemics by Northerners disillusioned with the corruptions of the “commercial spirit” in the war’s wake, such as John Carrington in Henry Adams’s *Democracy* and Basil Ransom in Henry James’s *The Bostonians*.¹⁸ The apologia and anticapitalist critique voiced by ex-Confederate Colonel Woodburn in William Dean Howells’s *A Hazard of New Fortunes* is also part of the same ventriloquy:

If we could have had time to perfect our system at the South, to eliminate what was evil and develop what was good in it, we should have had a perfect system. But the virus of commercialism was in us too; it forbade us to make the best of a divine institution and tempted us to make the worst. Now the curse is on the whole country; the dollar is the measure of every value, the stamp of every success. What does not sell is a failure; and what sells, succeeds.¹⁹

But, like Ungar, Woodburn’s opinions propel him into fantasies of radical retrenchment, of a return to the imagined past of aristocratic paternalism rather than a move to the redemptive future of social and economic restructuring. While Howells holds more sympathy for the Christian socialist stance also expressed in the novel, Woodburn’s visions of natural aristocracy are compellingly rendered:

But when the last vestige of commercial society is gone, then we can begin to build anew; and we shall build upon the central idea, not of the false liberty you now worship, but of responsibility—responsibility. The enlightened, the moneyed, the recultivated class shall be responsible to the central authority—emperor, duke, president; the name does not matter—for the national expense and the national defense, and it shall be responsible to the working classes of all kinds for homes and lands and implements, and the opportunity to labor at all times. The working classes shall be responsible to the leisure class for the support of its dignity in peace and shall be subject to its command in war. The rich shall warrant the poor against planless production and the ruin that now follows against danger from without and famine from within.²⁰

Like that of Henry Adams, Ungar’s revulsion for the modern is accompanied by an intoxicating medievalism which, similar to Orientalism, vents a yearning for values and practices (such as sacramentalism) that resist dissolution into relations of commodity exchange. Ungar, at the conclusion of a discussion on the significance of the Holy Land as “legend-precincts” (4.7.80), contemplates the night sky and exclaims: “Look up: the age, the age forget—/ There’s something to look up to yet!” (4.7.99–100). With the same image of starry night, Ungar defends the Middle Ages, for if, as Derwent argues, “sages / Denominate those times Dark Ages,” Ungar retorts that if the era was “night, it was no starless one” (4.10. 136–37, 139). In the Middle Ages religion was “the good guest” welcome in each home, controlling the inevitable evil in the human soul through obedience just as the monarch ruled through a hierarchical system of obligation. Men “owned”—archaic for “owed”—loyalty to their natural superiors, including God, and they were humble in their subordination, although the ambiguity of owned/owed also alludes to nineteenth-century anxieties over the flux and interchangeability of exchange in Ungar’s reverence for the past:

Men owned true masters; kings owned God—
Their master; Louis plied the rod
Upon himself. In high estate,
Not puffed up like a democrat
In office, how with Charlemagne?
Look up he did, look up in reign—
Humbly look up, who might look down:
His meekest thing was still his crown:
.....
The coronation was a prayer,
Which yet in ceremonial clings.
The church was like a bonfire warm:
All ranks were gathered around the charm.

Slaves “owned” masters, while masters “owned” God, yet all were humble in their possession. Again, what makes Ungar more than the vanquished Southern cavalier seeking in the past what had been decisively denied in the present, what makes him a man possessed as well as one possessing, is his “taint,” his experience as a racialized victim of multiple displacements, an all-too-common freak of New World exceptionalism.

Such a taint, registering the hybridity, impurity, and strange, unforeseen consequences of Sandys’s New World metamorphoses, is amplified by the appearance of Ungar’s comic counterpart, Señor Don Hannibal Rohon Del Aquaviva. Don Hannibal, a veteran of the war for Mexican independence who lost an arm and a leg on behalf of “Mexic liberty” (4.19.63), declares himself “A *reformado* reformed” (4.19.72) for whom drink and laughter serve as prosthetics for his amputated limbs and ideals. Also a defeated rebel, he wishes “all were back to former state—/ I, Mexico, and poor Old Spain” (4.19.66–67), and the Mexican’s sudden appearance among the pilgrims—with his mutilated stumps and his lighthearted, intoxicated “sunshine,” which the “very Indian” ex-Confederate, “clouded” and too serious, finds unbearable—provokes Ungar to even more bitter jeremiads.

Don Hannibal’s disillusion with revolution even caused him to flee Derwent’s England because he found “too much agitation” there: “Too proletarian it proved” (4.19.36–37). He, too, is a wanderer, the maimed survivor of modernity who has “stumped about” the world yet can find “no redress”:

Norway’s too cold; Egypt’s all glare;
 And everywhere that I removed
 This cursed *Progress* still would greet.
 Ah where (thought I) in Old World view
 Some blest asylum from the New!
 At last I steamed for Joppa’s seat,
 Resolved on Asia for retreat.
 Asia for me, Asia will do.

(4.19.39–46)

Like Ungar, Don Hannibal’s retreat/quest has taken him to the East, and like Mortmain, he affirms the intractability of human depravity. Both the Southerner and the Mexican take the same authoritarian turn that the embittered Swedish veteran of Paris barricades first utters earlier in the poem: “Man’s vicious: snaffle him with kings; / Or, if kings cease to curb, devise / Severer bit” (2.3.180–82). Don Hannibal’s New World status—his presence as a comic disfigurement of the defeated enemy of 1846, including Melville’s fractured Spanish, and as a creature of a rival, mixed-race, “hybrid” colonialism—makes him the fool to Ungar’s straight man, creating a dynamic in which all presumptions concerning the ameliorating influence of the New World can be simultaneously laughed at, scorned, and subverted.

When Derwent protests that only “I of the Old World, all alone / Maintaining hope and ground for cheer / ’Gainst ye, the offspring of the New” (4.19.96–98), Ungar even disputes the designations “old” and “new,” countering that the New World’s “advanced experience” in democracy actually makes it, “in the truer moral sense,” the older realm: British liberals like Derwent merely “Adopt the cast skin of our worm” (4.19.102–6). Don Hannibal jokes that democracy is not so much a casting off of skin as an “Eternal hacking,” such as the revolution that lopped off his own limbs, but the Mexican’s figure of mirthful castration propels Ungar into yet deeper rage. When “the New World’s the theme” (4.21.83) of a later dialogue, Rolfe makes

one last attempt, appealing to the benefits of the frontier's "vast reserves" of available land for settlement as an escape valve for relieving class conflict within the settled core:

Those waste-weirs which the New World yields
To inland freshets—the free vents
Supplied to turbid elements;
The vast reserves—the untried fields;
These long shall keep off and delay
The class-war, rich-and-poor-man fray
Of history.

(4.21.87–93)

But Ungar can only recoil, retorting that Rolfe's anticipation of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis merely serves "To draw my monomania out" (4.21.101), and he expounds on how "the Dark Ages of Democracy" (4.21.139) provide "New confirmation of the fall / Of Adam" (4.21.124–25):

Myriads playing pygmy parts—
Debased into equality:
In glut of all material arts
A civic barbarism may be:
Man disennobled—brutalized
By popular science—Atheized
Into a smatterer . . .

(4.21.127–33)

Melville has traveled far from his eloquent if ironic millennialist vision of Americans in *White-Jacket* as "the peculiar chosen people—the Israel of our time,"²¹ far from his paean to amalgamation in *Redburn* in which "[w]e are not a nation, so much as a world," where "all tribes and people" meld "into one federated whole" to await "a future which shall see the estranged children of Adam restored as to the old hearth-stone in Eden."²² Ungar's estrangement so confounds the Americans Clarel, Rolfe, and Vine that, as Karcher observes, "guilt pervades the pilgrims' attitude toward him and muzzles them in the face of his splenetic outbursts," for in the Southerner's lucid argumentation the Northerners recognize "some misgivings of their own" (4.21.150).²³ The pilgrims collectively fear "the arrest of hope's advance"—the end of their fellow-whites' westward drive toward Progress—and with Ungar's deflation of modern notions of "advance" the narrator allows the group to cry out a single, silent epitaph to American exceptionalism:

"To Terminus build fanes!
Columbus ended earth's romance:
No New World to mankind remains!"

(4.21.155–59)

Ungar's unraveling of the myth of America appeared in print the year that the centennial exposition in Philadelphia sought to reassert ideological coherence of the nation after the Civil War, erecting, in effect, a massive "fane" to the narrative of the New World as the inheritor and guarantor of "earth's romance." The 1876 centennial's jumble of exhibitions was a hodgepodge of raw materials, inventions, and ethnological evidences that sought to link the Corliss steam engine, the Singer sewing machine, Charles Bierstadt's stereograph photography of biblical scenes in Palestine, and thousands of other products of "divinely" ordered progress according to

hierarchical models of scientific classification that cast Native Americans as savage impediments to civilization's advance, rendered African Americans virtually invisible, and arranged the rest of the world along lines of Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic racial supremacy.²⁴ Such a hodgepodge, which Melville described in a letter as "a sort of tremendous Vanity Fair,"²⁵ displayed the very dynamics of scientific presumption, racial arrogance, religious trumpery, and bourgeois atomization that Ungar, the "Christian" of his *Pilgrim's Progress*, rails against; indeed, the publication of *Clarel* that very same year highlights the way Melville's poem-pilgrimage can be viewed as a counter-centennial.

But Ungar's dark, Mennipean satire of America's official carnival is not yet complete. He must plumb to the religious foundations of the national myth, underscoring just how much "earth's romance" has ended with a final outburst on man's "ever-bubbling wickedness" (4.22.17): not only can there be no "new" world, but there can be no renewal for mankind either. When the sea rover Rolfe remarks that "Tahiti should have been the place / For Christ in advent" (4.18.44–45)—the familiar comparison of the moist fecundity of the South Pacific to the stony aridity of Palestine Melville first recorded in his journal in 1857—Ungar defends the choice, that it was "God's design . . . to broach / Rebuke of man's factitious life" by coming to "Judaea, with customs hard as horn" (4.18.49–54). The stony landscape is, above all, the appropriate locale for challenging the hardness of the human heart, just as the overpowering immensity of the Pyramids is the appropriate site to inspire the ghastly idea of Jehovah. Through Rolfe's suggestion and Ungar's rejection Melville can finally erase the invisible tattoo he received in Typee, can reject the imprint of the Edenic alternative to civilization and reach back to his "adamant," the deeper stain of human evil.

In "Of Wickedness the Word," the canto following his denunciation of the New World, Ungar attempts to recover the true meaning of wickedness, "That Saxon term and Scriptural" (4.22.27) debased by "ridicule's light sacrilege" (4.22.24). Earlier, in response to Derwent's "plain sailing" toward democracy and happiness, Ungar denounces secular reform for involving methods "of the world," when, in fact, "the world cannot save the world," when even—in yet the ultimate flight from grace—"Christ renounces it" (4.20.33–35). Man's wickedness is so profound that it gives "Credence to Calvin" (4.22.38), revealing its powerful hold on flesh in "that deep utterance decried / Which Christians labially confess," the desire to "*Be born anew*" (4.22.39–41). Yet, despite that desire, all hope for regeneration, whether of hard souls, of rocky landscapes, or of failed New Worlds, has been blotted out by man's depravity, which proves to be the even more unsettling termination to "earth's romance" than the collapse of the New World dream, and Ungar's interrogation of the Christian wish for transcendent rebirth stands as the soldier's final intervention: unable to be born again without sin, he has no more to say—at least not directly—in the poem.

But before the poem-pilgrimage moves on to Clarel's final temptation—his attempt to find release through sensual love in his homoerotic attraction to the "juicy" salesman from Lyon (whose secret Jewish identity "the prodigal" does not disclose during their night of intimacy in a monastic cell)—Derwent and Rolfe argue over the significance and appropriateness of Ungar's "Jeremiad spells." The Anglican minister doubts the soldier can "countermand" what he calls "the large hope" (4.23.24) offered by modernity. Ungar is "Too vehemently wise," his judgment "tyrannize[d]" by "His factious memories" (4.23.33–34). Besides, Derwent raises the unseemliness of a man who shows "So much concern for *Lincoln Hugh* / Ground up by Mammon in the mill" (4.23.49–50) yet who allows himself to be hired out as a mercenary. Rolfe tersely responds, "May be" (4.23.51) to Derwent's condemnation of the soldier's "Fine business

driving men through fires / To Hades” (4.23.42–43), particularly as a Christian who “owned” the Turk; but Derwent, always seeking to avoid conflict, chooses to see sympathy toward a fellow countryman in Rolfe’s curt response and drops his complaint to praise Rolfe’s “magnanimity.”

Yet Ungar’s role as a soldier impresses the American pilgrims—and Melville—more deeply than Derwent surmises. When at Bethlehem Ungar contemplates the grotto of the manger and “compare[s] / These haunted precincts” with the guide-book (4.14.6–7), Salvaterra, the Franciscan monk escorting the pilgrims through the shrine, observes the soldier with “Ascetic insight” (4.14.14) and reads him as yet another sacred text. The monk tells him, “True sign you bear: your sword’s a cross” (4.14.21), and when surprised Ungar, examining the steel and hilt, agrees, Salvaterra continues:

Ignatius was a soldier too,
And Martin. ’Tis the pure disdain
Of life, or, holding life the real,
Still subject to a brave ideal—
’Tis this that makes the tent a porch
Whereby the warrior wins the church:
The habit of renouncing, yes,
’Tis good, a good preparedness.

(4.14.33–40)

Salvaterra’s ability to transform the everyday into the symbolic through devotion (a capacity, as his name seems to indicate, to save the world) impresses the ordinarily reticent Vine to such a degree that he exclaims, “How he transfigured Ungar’s sword!” (4.15.12). And Rolfe, also startled by the identity of sword and cross, regards the ex-Confederate as disturbingly wise because of his veteran, even exhausted, condition.

Ungar is Mars in funeral
Of reminiscence—not in pledge
And glory of brave equipage
And manifesto.

(4.17.62–65)

To Rolfe, the defeated mercenary is “Brave soldier and stout thinker both” (4.17.67), and his habit of renouncing, his ability to map memory as landscape and landscape as memory, his deliberate “armed survey” of “haunted precincts” as a duty-bound soldier—“An armed man in the Druid grove” (4.17.72)—gives Ungar a stolid, heroic stature unique among the characters the pilgrim-party encounters. While the other stoic “Indian,” Djalea the Druze dragoman, also displays such soldierly poise, he remains more comfortable in his acceptance of fate and does not engage in the same project to map American meanings, Puritan typologies, Swedenborgian correspondences, even Catholic allegories, as does Ungar, whose attempts, in the face of continued failure, seem only to reveal the impossibility of reading, much less writing, sacred geography.

Appropriately, the “man of scars” departs just as his opposite, the prodigal from Lyon, joins the party, Ungar’s emotions “stirred” by the fact that he must forsake his countrymen in his military demarche. Ungar’s “aspect” displays

that strange look
Of one enlisted for sad fight
Upon some desperate dark shore,
Who bids adieu to the civilian,

Returning to his club-house bright,
In city cheerful with the million.

(4.28.11–16)

“Strange” is a word fraught with more than oddness in Melville’s poem, for Ungar, like Palestine, is “strange” with hidden meanings, defeats, and impenetrable designs that can be hinted at but not known by the “civilian” who is not himself a deep diver. He makes “His way / Eccentric,” returning to the “desperate dark shore” of the crisis of faith with no message, no voice from beneath the stones, while the reader/civilian returns to the secular city, “cheerful” but uncomprehending. As the lines immediately following indicate, “Nature never heedeth this: / To Nature nothing is amiss” (4.28.17–18), for the “strange” surface of the material world is available to neither soldier nor civilian but remains a geography as impervious, as unyielding as Jerusalem’s “blank, blank towers” at the beginning of Clarel’s quest.

Ungar, himself a haunted precinct, a Pocohantas-wedding of settler-colonial contradictions, moves on in his service to the sultan, a service that, like that of the Americans who served the khedive in Egypt, allows the former enemies of North and South to transcend their conflict, ironically, in the “waste-weirs” of the East. Crossing over to the East remains, as in *Eothen*, a crossing to the inert, the exotic, and, at the same time, the possible, a netherworld brought into even greater relief by Ungar’s submission; but now, with the signification of the West no longer holding restorative promise, the demarcation between realms has been blurred. Ungar’s duty as a soldier toward the “sad fight,” like Melville’s sad duty to inspect the flow of cargo across New York’s wharves, is the only comfort offered: a meditation of submission, routine, patience. Ungar’s “strange look” of renunciation and resignation anticipates that Polynesian sense of *manaolana*, of “swimming thought,” that the narrator will shortly offer in the “Epilogue” to Clarel as his only hope at the very end of the poem-pilgrimage. It is this stoic acceptance of the exhaustion of known possibilities, the ability to hold his head above the waves while keeping the hope for some sight of land (which I discussed earlier), that Melville and the pilgrims find so appealing in the defeated soldier, even when those waves are translated to the swells of Judean rocks. Even so, the debris, the wreckage of religious covenant and social contract, that Ungar must swim through cannot be so easily swept aside.

Melville’s anger and grief over “civic barbarism” and the shattering of New World promise is in great part a response to the pervasiveness of commodity relations in the postwar period, a distress further exacerbated by the corruption, profiteering, and venality that the customs inspector, modestly engaged in his solitary mental pilgrimage, regularly witnessed on the Manhattan waterfront. The hoped-for shore, the sight of which buoys Melville with “swimming thoughts,” is more than a nostalgia for the past; it is a yearning for values outside those determined by the circulation of commodities at the gates of which he stood, values for which transcendence offers an alternative, despite the collapse of the covenant, the increasing chaos of doctrines, and the threatening incursions against religious certainty by Margoth and his hammer.

Mark Twain is also caught in the same crisis of faith, but he presents in his travel account to the Holy Land an altogether different response. Although his is no longer in the strangeness-divining mode of pilgrimage, it is just as radical. Wielding a hammer as destructive as that of Margoth, Twain attempts to overthrow romantic or sentimental illusions in the name of the “real,” enacting a complex touristic sensibility in combination with the violent dislocations of subversive laughter. Such “realism”—which became so characteristically American in its self-aggrandizing yet “innocent” freedom to deflate and to debunk—can only contemplate the

tyranny of exchange value's end paradoxically through the extension of its reign to all realms, including those of the sacred. Such an apparently endless sea of commodity relations requires that Twain must struggle, like Melville, to keep his head above water, although he is assisted not by the cultivation of "swimming thoughts" but by the buoyancy of laughter.

PART THREE

The Guilties Abroad: Mark Twain's Comic Appropriation
of the Holy Land in *Innocents Abroad*



From a stereoscope of "Tiberias: Encampment of Travelers," by William E. James, 1867. Courtesy of Brandt Rowles and the Mark Twain Papers in The Bancroft Library.

CHAPTER NINE

Authority and Authenticity

RIDING AN open carriage on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln discussed plans for the future with his wife, now that the Civil War had finally come to an end: “In the years which stretched peacefully ahead they would travel together, out to the West as far as California, then perhaps to Europe. They might even make a special pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which Lincoln had often said was a city he longed to see.”¹ At least one source even has the president, during the performance of “Our American Cousin” later that night, leaning toward Mrs. Lincoln in their box to whisper, “How I should like to visit Jerusalem sometime!” only moments before the assassin’s ball would tear through his skull.² Whether this final wish is legend or not, Mary Todd Lincoln did recall a year later how on that fateful day the president “appeared to anticipate much pleasure, from a visit to Palestine,” although she comforted herself with the thought that at least now “he was rejoicing in the presence of his Saviour, and was in the midst of *the* Heavenly Jerusalem.”³

California—Edenic, still “flush,” a reassertion of America’s myth of the New Jerusalem—and Palestine—site of the still sacred yet terrestrial city, a reaffirmation of the divine curse—both destinations stood at the far geographic poles of the same explosive process of expansion and identification that would soon produce both transcontinental railroad and Suez Canal, at the center of which Europe—its high culture, its overarching, expansive capital, its immense political and military presence—still stood. All three regions resonated with restorative cultural meanings, which, after the Civil War’s trauma, were crucial to the recovery and reconstitution of American identities—although Lincoln’s final decision to privilege Holy Land pilgrimage demonstrates the symbolic closure that only Jerusalem could obtain.

Though Lincoln was fated not to make the pilgrimage, General Grant did, visiting Jerusalem and the Holy Land during his 1877–79 globe-circling tour (which, in addition to Europe, would also include California by way of Asia). Grant joined the many Americans who, at the conclusion of the Civil War, began to explode onto Europe and the East the way pent-up British travelers “poured, in one vast stream” to the Continent at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.⁴ The means of travel—facilitated by a growing infrastructure of competing steamship services and travel agencies—were no longer available only to old established, genteel families or to adventurers. “A progressive broadening as well as deepening in the stream of travel” joined to years of confinement produced a boom, allowing people of rising fortunes with available leisure but no significant cultural attainment to gain the necessary cultural capital expected of their new status.⁵ Although this broadening and deepening was only relative—tickets for the “select” on the *Quaker City* excursion still cost a substantial \$1,250, for example—the lines of exclusivity and status formerly a part of travel were nonetheless redrawn. As a former president and war hero, Grant was an exceptional traveler, as much a curiosity to foreigners as they were to him, yet his tour was very much a part of this “great popular movement” of bourgeois travel and cultural appropriation.

“Of course to feel Jerusalem one must come with faith,” comments John Russell Young a little anxiously in his popular chronicle of the triumphant excursion as Grant’s party enters the Holy City. “And if there be heathen questionings in any of our company, for this day at least we give ourselves up to faith.”⁶ Faith was assisted, as always, by the Bible, which provided the expected narrative coherence and spiritual weight to the former president’s itinerary. But Grant was also aided by what at first may seem an odd choice to quell “heathen questionings” like the higher criticism, or other, nineteenth-century skeptical inquiries: “My friend Mark Twain will be glad to know,” Russell reports, “that the General read with delight and appreciation his ‘Innocents Abroad’.”⁷ As the contemporary biographer William McFeely describes the war hero’s “numbing” trek from one biblical tourist site to another, “The general trudged, and rode on donkeys, and took it all in. Mark Twain helped.”⁸

To consider how Mark Twain “helped” General Grant in his encounter with Palestine is, in part, to delve into the ways this “Wild Humorist of the Pacific Slope” became an authoritative presence in American culture. For Samuel Clemens—and the “American Vandal” he invented onboard the *Quaker City*—did much to define and authenticate new Anglo-American national identities in the face of postwar contradictions and anxieties resulting from the accelerating expansion, speculation, urbanization, and industrialization of the “Gilded Age” he would come to name. Although the excursionists on the *Quaker City*, before disembarking on sacred soil, were themselves studying Edward Robinson’s *Biblical Researches*, William Thomson’s *The Land and the Book*, and Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine*—popular, informative, even scholarly accounts—it was no whim that led General Grant along with the general reading public to turn also to *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim’s Progress*, for this travel book allowed new ways for Americans to read themselves into their cultural sources.

As Twain explains in his “Preface,”

This book has a purpose, which is to suggest to the reader how *he* would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in those countries before him. I make small pretense of showing anyone how he *ought* to look at objects of interest beyond the sea—other books do that, and therefore, even if I were competent to do it, there is no need.⁹

This seemingly unencumbered, “innocent” vision apparently struck a resonant chord with his readers, as one reviewer noted:

He sees just what all of us would see under the same circumstances; and he tells the truth about what he sees. The wit is his own; the phraseology is his own; but the eyes with which he sees are our eyes as well as his. They are not the eyes of the solemn old humbugs through which we have been forced to look so often. And thus the book becomes a transcript of our own sentiments.¹⁰

Although the book is certainly “a transcript of our own sentiments”—a document of satiric differentiation through the volatile combination of mockery and self-mockery—*Innocents Abroad*’s radical effect has nothing at all to do with any attempt at objectivity, despite Mark Twain’s abjuration of the normative and his claim to “impartial eyes.” Most Holy Land travel writers, with only brief sojourns that were informed by little knowledge of local conditions, produced only superficial impressions; the Palestine depicted in *Innocents Abroad*, however, is predicated, far more than the usual accounts, on distortion. By 1867, the year of the *Quaker City* excursion, so much had been written and so many attitudes, characterizations, scenes, observations, and speculations had become stock, sentimental devices that Twain could attempt to plunge through this overwrought textualization to a sense of reality by means of tall tale,

burlesque, joke, and parody, in spite—or even because—of his blissful ignorance of actual Palestinian conditions.

Apparently unaware of the cotton boom in Palestine and Egypt, due ironically to shortages resulting from the American Civil War, Twain had no notion of the devastating effect the collapse in cotton prices at the end of the war had on the country; nor was he aware of the locust plagues, which had ruined crops the two years before his visit, nor of the failure of that year's harvest. He scorned the reports of Bedouin depredations, ridiculing the tour group's official guard as the "infamous star-spangled scum of the desert" for whom the travelers paid a local sheik without realizing that the Ottoman authorities, after much bloodshed, had only recently reached agreements that exchanged peace for tribute in the form of ceremonial protection: "The nuisance of an Arab guard is one which is created by the Sheiks and the Bedouins together, for mutual profit, it is said, and no doubt there is a good deal of truth in it" (592). He had no idea that violent factional strife, cutting across all religious and tribal lines, between the *Qays* and the *Yaman*—the two factions composing a kind of two-party politics based on pre-Islamic myths of origin—had only recently been quelled, and the conflict had just begun to transform into a more benign rivalry of folkloric practices. Nor did Twain realize that the dominance of local lords was just coming to an end in favor of new administrative structures that accelerated Ottoman centralization. Seeing only Muslim fanaticism, he seemed unaware of the "syncretism" of the native population, which allowed Muslims to have their children baptized in Greek churches while Christians would attend mosques, nor was he conscious of the growing resentments of the local population toward the European incursions of the "Peaceful Crusade," particularly the guise of selectively protecting non-Muslim communities. When he railed against the dearth of roads, he was unaware of the Ottoman policy, mistaken as it may have been, which preferred Jerusalem's isolation to allowing troops of European pilgrims to turn the Holy City into "a Christian Madhouse."¹¹ Yet, even though it should be obvious that *Innocents Abroad* is, more than the typical travel book, utterly fictive, Mark Twain's representations of a "hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land"—"Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes"—continue to be regularly cited in descriptions of nineteenth-century Palestine, not because of their accuracy but because of the authority of Mark Twain as a distinctly authentic American personality.¹²

Innocents Abroad's manufacture of "Mark Twain" as the surrogate for the reader's "own eyes" was immensely popular. The travel book, whose sales reached 100,000 even before the second anniversary of its publication, launched, even more than his celebrated jumping frog, Mark Twain's national career. "Popular as are Mark Twain's books at home," an unidentified correspondent for the *Hartford Courant* reported in 1872, *Innocents Abroad* is "still more so abroad."

Published in two volumes in London at one shilling each, I meet them everywhere and at all times. If I see a party on board an India-bound steamer laughing heartily, I am sure it is over some oft-repeated jest of Mark Twain's. If I hear notes of subdued laughter from hotel bedroom or steam cabin, some happy fellow is enjoying the *Innocent's Progress*. At every railway station, at every bookstall from London to the Pyramids, from the Pyramids to Peking, these two yellow volumes are in the greatest quest. On every Nile *diahbyeh* there was at least one copy last winter. No tent outfit for Palestine was complete without a copy of Murray and Mark Twain. Here at this hotel, Byzanci of Constantinople, I am no sooner housed than on my room table I espy a copy of the *Innocents*, whose well-worn condition contrasts oddly with the well-conditioned Scriptures furnished in hotels at home.¹³

"It sells right along just like the Bible," Mark Twain remarked to William Dean Howells.¹⁴ Indeed, half a million copies had been sold by Twain's death in 1910, at which time *Innocents Abroad*, with its central organizing principle of "Mark Twain" as "one of the boys" joined

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* as the titles (and the two other boys) most commonly worked into political cartoons memorializing the author in the press.¹⁵ Today *Innocents Abroad*, still a pleasure to read despite the complications and vexations of history, remains durable, continuing to be hailed as “the most popular book of foreign travel ever written by any American.”¹⁶

Much of *Innocents Abroad*'s early popularity arises from the fact that despite Twain's boast that he “basked in the happiness of being for once in my life drifting with the tide of a great popular movement” (27), he seems to swim against that very tide—or at least against the tide of expected, genteel responses to touristic locales. The *Quaker City* adventure, the first organized American tourist excursion—“its like had not been thought of before” (19), even anticipating the first of Thomas Cook's “Eastern Tours” by two years—allows Twain to reinvent the traveler as a consumer of sights through a volatile rhetoric of perception, value, and authenticity that is both playful and explosive. *Innocents Abroad* extends the already iconoclastic inclinations of Americans into (and beyond) irreverence, marking the transition of the American in the Holy Land from pilgrim, adventurer, or scholar to tourist, a transition from travel as some kind of unique experience of social, aesthetic, and spiritual relations (such as Abraham Lincoln may have anticipated) to an exercise in the accumulation of cultural commodities.

Innocence is played off against experience, naivete against sophistication, trust or confidence against fraud, authenticity against inauthenticity, with the “New Pilgrim's Progress” of the book's subtitle even playing off the attainment of grace against sin by means of the illusion of “the reader's own eyes.” Even the prospectus of the book—which was used to sell *Innocents Abroad* door-to-door by subscription—announces that “no one will rise from its reading without having a better and clearer knowledge of the countries it describes than ever before, and more ability to judge between truth and fiction in what he may read respecting them in the future.”¹⁷ Yet what remains fascinating is the fact that the play of this duality—“truth and fiction”—is posed by a confidence-man himself, a shifty narrator who constantly inflates his own illusions in order to puncture them, who repeatedly engages the reader's trust by pulling his “mark” willingly within the tall tale's interpretive circle of complicity to discover “truth” while at the same time destabilizing the certainty of it altogether through laughter—a masterful “poker-faced” performance underscored by Mark Twain's own deadpan delivery of his “American Vandal Abroad” lectures before the actual publication of the book.

“Tall” humor was a form of initiation and survival in response to the radical physical and social uncertainties on the edge of settler-colonial expansion. This humor thrived at the borderland of displacement, migration, and violence, finding much of its pleasure in dethroning the condescension of gentility at the thickly settled Eastern core, while at the same time reproducing the radical incongruities and discrepancies at the root of all American experience—which were even more dramatic at frontier contact zones—in order for the grizzled veteran to gull the unsuspecting tenderfoot. The “great American joke,” Louis D. Rubin, Jr., explains, is located in “the gap between the cultural ideal and the everyday fact, with the ideal shown to be somewhat hollow and hypocritical, and the fact crude and disgusting.”¹⁸ Exaggeration extends for comic effect an already over-wide gap between democratic (or high cultural or religious) notions and crude, disgusting fact. “Tall humor,” Henry B. Wonham observes, “is American not because it is incongruous—all humor is that—but because it articulates incongruities that are embedded in the American experience. A country founded, settled, and closely observed by men and women with extraordinary expectations, both exalted and depraved, could not help but appreciate the distance that separated the ideal from the real, the ‘language of culture’ from the

‘language of sweat,’ the democratic dream from the social and economic reality of the early American republic.”¹⁹

The “gap” between culture and sweat found in frontier experiences—which characteristically included Indian wars, slave-dealing, herrenvolk white racial solidarity, endemic violence, economic instability, fluidity, humbuggery, and speculative fantasy—cultivated a vernacular humor of extremes, along with pleasure in horror and depravity (an outgrowth of urban contact zones, as well), both of which are at play in *Innocents Abroad*. It is a gap also found in the Jacksonian class verve, borne of gold rush and silver bonanza, of the Westerner whom Twain described in his “American Vandal Abroad” lectures as

the roving, independent, free-&-easy character of that class of traveling Americans who are *not* elaborately educated, cultivated, & refined—& gilded & filagreed with the ineffable graces of the first society.²⁰

As Mark Twain charges through the *Quaker City*’s relentless itinerary, he repeatedly employs this humor of discrepancy, alternately playing the knowing insider or the deluded newcomer. At each site he anticipates authenticity, exoticism, beauty, or, particularly in the Holy Land, spirituality, only to discover crudities, fraud, or illusion instead. Acting out the same perceptual procedure again and again, Twain practices the tourist’s capacity to abstract locales from all social or historical contexts, to isolate them into reified commodities as touristic “sights” while at the same time framing them as carriers of exchange values even while deflating their cultural auras.²¹

“Damascus is beautiful from the mountain,” he observes of the account of Mohammed’s refusal to enter the earthly paradise. But “[t]he Prophet was wise without knowing it when he decided not to go down into the paradise of Damascus.” The city may have been paradise then, “but it is not paradise now, and one would be as happy outside of it as he would be likely to be within. . . . [T]he paradise is become a very sink of pollution and uncomeliness” (455–56). Damascus, like Constantinople and Jerusalem, is a pleasure to behold from a distance; up close, inside the picturesque, exotic, or authentic itself, it is execrable; yet the motion itself, from far to close, from outside to inside, transforms some previously held notion of a romantic or transcendent site into its vulgar materiality, brings the revered low, which is, in one burlesque or parody after another, repeatedly expressed in commercial terms, such as in his business report on the sales of women in the Turkish slave market or his playbill of entertainments at the Roman Coliseum: “With infinite pains I have acquired a knowledge of that history,” he introduces the story of Abelard and Heloise, in part because the public has been “wasting a good deal of *marketable sentiment* very unnecessarily” (141, emphasis mine).

In *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne can yet indulge the antebellum sensibility that parts of the Old World still afford “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”;²² but after the Civil War, actualities do impinge, erasing the worshipful distance, and Twain’s reader, through the vehicle of comic incongruity, is plunged from romance into the illusion of realism. In effect, Mark Twain brings the exalted wonders and masterpieces of the great museum of the Old World down to the “crude and disgusting” reality of P. T. Barnum attractions.

Such a routine is played out against received images and notions that have defined the proper, genteel approach to cultural shrines, along with the appropriate rituals of appreciation. When in Italy Twain goes to view “The Last Supper” by Leonardo da Vinci—Twain’s put-on frontier erudition having already been established: “They spell it Vinci and pronounce it Vinchy; foreigners always spell better than they pronounce” (185)—he walks through the “tumble-down

ruin of a church” to see “the mournful wreck of the most celebrated painting in the world.” Before “the dilapidated wall” he witnesses a scene of numerous artists painting reproductions of the “wonderful painting, once so beautiful, always so worshipped by masters in art, and forever to be famous in song and story” (190), which elicits the comment: “And as usual, I could not help noticing how superior the copies were to the original, that is, to my inexperienced eye.”

Wherever you find a Raphael, a Rubens, a Michael Angelo, a Caracci, or a Da Vinci (and we see them every day) you find artists copying them, and the copies are always the handsomest. Maybe the originals were handsome when they were new, but they are not now. (191)

Twain goes on with an extended burlesque of the awed responses of fellow tourists who have come to “glorify this masterpiece,” despite its “battered,” “scarred,” “stained and discolored” condition: “They stand entranced before it with bated breath and parted lips, and when they speak, it is only in the catchy ejaculations of rapture”—which prompts him to embark on a long, satiric essay debunking high art and the Old Masters.

But it is his ostensibly subversive delight with the reproductions rather than the originals that marks the origins of the touristic site/sight—with its souvenirs, its postcards, its infinite duplications of itself—while the assertion of New World skepticism, Twain’s “inexperienced eye,” clears the view of all unmarketable sentiments: Twain does not debunk art, only the worship of what can no longer be exchanged itself. Like Christopher Newman in James’s *The American*, whose first utterance would be “*Combien?*” when approaching Mlle. Nioche to buy her reproductions in the Louvre, Twain’s acculturation is bound by the cash nexus.²³ The value of the touristic sight is not determined by an aura of authenticity alone but by the site’s capacity to frame the touristic imagination through multiple images of itself, through its narrativization by local guides, and through its textualization by guide-books, travel books, and other sources, so that it could be re-collected in—and transformed by—memory. Above all, the tourism of *Innocents Abroad* becomes “a comically philistine cycle of anticipation and consumption” in which viewing “The Last Supper” (or Damascus) “entails reading about each site, evaluating the actual place in light of its prior image, and comparing it to other sites and experiences” in order to complete the most important act of all—consumption.²⁴

In “Framing the Authentic: The Modern Tourist and *The Innocents Abroad*,” Richard Lowry describes how Twain travesties the breathless excitement of art devotees who after years of viewing only reproductions could finally approach authentic originals in Europe. The scenes of “men apostrophizing wonders and beauties and perfections” (192)—as Twain describes their eruptions of awe—were regular parts of the ritual of art appreciation, a thrill that even took on religious qualities. Henry Ward Beecher, who missed the *Quaker City* excursion, had already felt his “instant conversion, if the expression be not irreverent,” as he stood before the painting collection at the Palace de Luxembourg in Paris.²⁵ But Lowry also notes the fact that Twain’s disappointment about the Leonardo had become a cliché as well, that previous travel and art books had already noted the deflating experience of approaching battered Old Masters, making “disappointment itself . . . as integral a component of the rhetoric of authentic culture as rapture.”²⁶ What Twain’s preference for the copies suggests, however, is that “the rhetoric of reverence finds as its true object nothing more than the mental image” that the multiple copies and the endless literary accounts have already determined.²⁷ “We do not think, in the holy places,” Twain concludes after the emptiness of his experience of Holy Land shrines:

we think in bed, afterwards, when the glare, and the noise, and the confusion are gone, and in fancy we revisit alone, the solemn monuments of the past, and summon the phantom pageants of an age that has passed away. (603)

The power of “fancy,” of purposeful blurring and imaginative reconstruction, validates the authorizing power of the travel book’s narrator, who, left alone with the reader, is capable of stimulating vicarious pleasures.

Also at play here are the distinctions inherent in tourism between authentic and inauthentic subjects, between tourists and “anti-tourists,” between undifferentiated, animal-like “packs” or hordes who endlessly repeat predictable responses as they are quickly “herded” from sight to sight by railroad or (in the *Quaker City*’s case) steamship and true travelers, those who differentiate themselves from those very tourist herds by their disdainful attitudes and by their quest for “real” encounters with “unspoiled” places. At times Mark Twain embodies the first pole of this dynamic, the tourist in a frenzy who hurries into “the business of sight-seeing”:

I can not think of half the places we went to, or what we particularly saw; we had no disposition to examine carefully into anything at all—we only wanted to glance and go—to move, keep moving! (96–97)

Twain is aware of the absurdity of frantically collecting “sights,” although, even when finally “surfeited” in the Holy Land, he maintains the same frenetic pace. He imagines how the Wandering Jew—an “old tourist” bent on serious travel and driven by guilt to return to Jerusalem again and again—would respond to his party of modern tourists in the Holy City:

How he must smile to see a pack of blockheads like us, galloping about the world, and looking wise, and imagining we are finding out a good deal about it! He must have a consuming contempt for the ignorant, complacent asses that go skurrying about the world in these railroading days and call it traveling. (578)

Most of the time, Twain distinguishes himself by displaying his own “consuming contempt” for the bulk of the *Quaker City* excursionists, dividing his fellow tourists into pompous, self-righteous “pilgrims” and fun-loving, irreverent “boys,” a designation which, in the Holy Land, takes on even more resonance when recast as “sinners.” He could eat tourists for breakfast because of the literary depredations they bring on; he mocks the way “the lost tribes of America . . . infested the hotels” (612); he rails against their bombast, such as the way the “Oracle” “reads a chapter in the guidebooks, mixes the facts all up, with his bad memory, and then goes off to inflict the whole mess on somebody as wisdom” (70); he lampoons their follies, such as their thoughtless relic-hunting or the way they are denied the once-in-a-lifetime experience of sailing the Galilee because of their tightfisted refusal to accept the boatmen’s price; he scorns their sanctimonious piety for the letter rather than the spirit of divine law that allows them cruelly to run their horses into the ground in order to reach their destination by the Sabbath.

But above all, he chafes at the fact of being a tourist himself, of trodding well-worn paths that only seem to disclose already over-consumed sights rather than the unknown. In a passage in which Twain imagines himself a Roman traveling to America for the first time to report the wonders of science and secular democracy, he prefaces his fantasy with a meditation on that which “confers the noblest delight. . . . Discovery!”

To know that you are walking where none others have walked; that you are beholding what human eye has not seen before; that you are breathing a virgin atmosphere. . . .To be the *first*—that is the idea. To do something, say something, see something, before *any body* else—these are the things that confer a pleasure compared with which other pleasures are tame and commonplace, other ecstasies cheap and trivial. (266)

The tourist, by definition, never breathes “a virgin atmosphere,” while the anti-tourist can either seek first-time discovery “off the beaten track” or, as Twain most often does, reconfigure his relationship to less-than-virginal sights through distinguishing attitudes and tropes such as unbridled skepticism and comic routines. Tourist and anti-tourist are often viewed only as antagonistic categories—as Twain’s barely suppressed or comically defused rage with the

“pilgrims” appears to confirm—yet, like the rapture/disappointment dynamic of art appreciation, they are actually interdependent poles of a single dialectic of touristic sensibility. The desire to separate from the “herd”—to experience original, “authentic” sites rather than inauthentic attractions; to view the sublime, such as Niagara Falls, without being surrounded by “Indians” with thick Irish brogues selling trinkets (such as those Twain derides in his short story “A Day at Niagara”); to travel as an unstructured, self-determining agent rather than as a passive recipient guided through already formulated expectations—is very much a part of touristic experience itself. The sense of superiority vis-à-vis other tourists, of appearing to maintain individuality in the face of dissolution within the undifferentiated role of consumer, is enclosed by the same authenticating rhetoric that defined the site/sight in the first place.

In James Buzard’s perceptive analysis, anti-tourism

evolved into a symbolic economy in which travellers and writers displayed marks of originality and “authenticity” in an attempt to win credit for acculturation; and visited places were perceived as parts of a market-place of cultural goods, each location chiefly of interest for the demonstrably appropriatable tokens of authenticity it afforded. Travel’s educative, acculturating function took on a newly competitive aspect, as travellers sought to distinguish themselves from the “mere tourists” they saw or imagined around them. Correspondingly, the authentic “culture” of *places*—the *genius loci*—was represented as lurking in secret precincts “off the beaten track” where it could be discovered only by the sensitive “traveller”, not the vulgar tourist.²⁸

This dynamic pulls in two directions at the same time, producing “a double and potentially self-contradictory process” that requires both “self-distinction (to separate oneself from the crowd) and solidarity (to appeal to an imagined small group of independent spirits).”²⁹ Twain plays upon both aspects of this dynamic, dragging readers into the crush of touristic acculturation while at the same enticing them to identify with “an imagined small group of independent spirits” who regard “tourists” (including the self-deprecating narrator) with contempt as “blockheads” when viewed through “his own eyes.”

The Holy Land—“the grand goal of the expedition” (431)—complicates this paradoxical semiotics enormously because the reading of “the authentic ‘culture’ of places” is now qualitatively altered by the inevitable questions of hermeneutics, faith, and orthodoxy. A celebrated painting of a religious event, as potent a cultural marker as it may be, is presumably less noumenal than the revered site of the event itself. Consequently, Mark Twain’s encounter with the Holy Land—and his comic elaboration of its inauthenticity—provides the most explosive desanctification of sacred geography in all of American Holy Land literature, a comically nihilistic deflation that flows from his role as the anti-touristic (and anti-pilgrimistic) “sinner.”

While his self-designation as a “sinner” is an exaggeration to serve the elaborate joke structure of the book’s Holy Land episodes, it is worth underscoring the degree to which Samuel Clemens could actually be regarded at this stage in his career not just as a sinner but as “an out-and-out criminal—the only one of our major writers who was incontrovertibly an outlaw.”³⁰ By joining the Confederate army, Clemens had become a traitor; by “resigning” from the Rebel army, he had become a deserter. He fled Nevada after he perpetrated several hoaxes, including the pro-Confederate slander that money raised by the ladies’ Sanitary Fund was going to a society promoting miscegenation, which prompted a challenge to a duel; and he hastily departed San Francisco for Tuolumne County, according to his own account, because his journalistic jibes against the police made him *persona non grata*.³¹ His “sentence” for such outrages was suspended, so to speak, only because of his comic effect, particularly the way Clemens deflated both actual cowardice and the fear of it in a society traumatized by war and an overblown sense

of male honor. Still, Mark Twain was unquestionably toying with yet further crimes by exercising his disruptive, comic skills on sacred ground.

Colonel William Denny, one of the “pilgrim” targets of Twain’s comic abuse, at first refused Clemens’s request to accompany him through Palestine, despite their previous adventures together in Tangier and Athens, because the colonel could not enjoy the Holy Land in the company of “a wicked fellow that will take the name of the Lord in vain, that is no respecter of persons.” After Clemens promised to restrain his habit of profanity, the colonel reluctantly accepted him as a travel companion, modifying his judgment to note that “he is liberal, kind and obliging, and if he were only a christian would make his mark.”³² Yet, to the colonel’s disappointment, he would make his “mark” precisely because he was no respecter of places as well as persons, and the degree to which he was a Christian would remain a troubling controversy throughout his career.

As a “free-&-easy” product of settler-colonial borderlands, Twain—despite the ministrations and expurgations of Mrs. Fairbanks, Bret Harte, and his fiancée Olivia Langdon—regularly crossed lines of propriety, legality, and even sanctity, although he realized that the broader success of his humor depended on his learning how to play upon dangerous dualities, unstable contradictions, and permeable, “shifty” identities without erasing that thin line of acceptability. As a result, it becomes difficult to differentiate between passages that are parodies of clichés and that are actually clichés themselves. Such rhetorical uncertainty becomes more comprehensible when viewed as a result of the confrontation between “the pragmatic and commonsense values of a vernacular community, whose natural idiom is the tall tale” and “the rigid beliefs of a society that sanctions conventional myths with the stamp of absolute truth.”³³ When such a “sinner” addresses questions of authenticity in the Holy Land, all expressions of official high-mindedness or reverence—in such a rich context of parodic, theatrical effects—become suspect.

“One naturally goes first to the Holy Sepulchre,” Twain writes, and it is at Christianity’s central shrine that the semiotics of authenticity are most “naturally” displayed as a rhetoric oscillating between the high and the low. As the site of the crucifixion, the tomb of Christ, “and, in fact, every other place intimately connected with that tremendous event . . . ingeniously massed together and covered by one roof” (560), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is “the most illustrious edifice in Christendom” (573). The church, while the traditional culmination of the pilgrim’s quest, also provoked the most anxiety on the part of incredulous Protestants. Here is a site whose authenticity, despite its symbolic weight, was regularly rejected as an article of faith: Edward Robinson, abhorring it as the supreme “pious fraud,” refused even to stretch his irrepressible measuring tape around it. Fifteen years after Twain’s departure, Protestant dismay would even lead General Charles “Chinese” Gordon, the British colonialist hero, to “discover” an alternate, authentic site for Golgotha—the Garden Tomb—which, endorsed by the American consul and prayed over by the evangelist Dwight Moody, became something of a Protestant shrine.³⁴ But for Twain, like George Sandys and John Lloyd Stephens before him, the church—despite its disdainful Ottoman guards, its noxious squabbling among Christian sects, its “trumpery gewgaws and tawdry ornamentation” (560) offensive to ascetic Protestant sensibilities—was a site that could not be avoided. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre must be experienced, comprehended, somehow rationalized in order for the encounter with the divine to be rescued, for the site’s inauthenticity could not be allowed to obscure the authenticity of the Gospels:

One is grave and thoughtful when he stands in the little Tomb of the Saviour—he could not well be otherwise in such a place—but he has not the slightest possible belief that ever the Lord lay there, and so the interest he feels in the spot is very, very greatly marred by that reflection. (570)

In addition to Christ's tomb, Twain visits other sites of Jesus' death and resurrection, as well as the pillar marking the center of the earth from which the dust was taken to form Adam, whose tomb is also nearby. At each spot he notes the implausibility of determining the accurate location of these scenes—such as the location of Adam's tomb conveniently situated next to the Second Adam's empty sepulchre—as well as the absurdity of their present-day framing:

When one stands where the Saviour was crucified, he finds it all he can do to keep it strictly before his mind that Christ was not crucified in a Catholic Church. He must remind himself every now and then that the great event transpired in the open air, and not in a gloomy, candle-lighted cell in a little corner of a vast church, up-stairs—a small cell all bejeweled and bespangled with flashy ornamentation, in execrable taste. (572)

“The authentic site of history and culture,” Richard Lowry observes of Twain's progress through the church, “is at the same time its most thorough parody, composed of monuments that are pure images, signs with no referents,” for the rituals, the ornamentation, “even the Church itself, designate what is essentially an *image* of truth.”³⁵

Yet, almost at the conclusion of his visit, Mark Twain does experience one “unexpected epiphany” that offers an alternate mode of attributing authenticity. While Twain dismisses Adam's grave and other sites as no more “true” than the kegs of nails of the True Cross scattered throughout the churches of Europe, the shrine's markers are not shams, according to Lowry, for the church has gained authentic meaning as a result of history. Right after his “strange prospecting” (which consists of sticking his hand into the gilded hole of the crucifixion), Twain closes his chapter on the shrine with a serious meditation on “the most sacred locality on earth”:

In its history from the first, and in its tremendous associations, it is the most illustrious edifice in Christendom. With all its clap-trap side-shows and unseemly impostures of every kind, it is still grand, reverend, venerable—for a god died there; for fifteen hundred years its shrines have been wet with the tears of pilgrims from the earth's remotest confines; for more than two hundred, the most gallant knights that ever wielded sword wasted their lives away in a struggle to seize it and hold it sacred from infidel pollution. Even in our own day a war [the Crimean War], that cost millions of treasure and rivers of blood, was fought because two rival nations claimed the sole right to put a new dome upon it. History is full of this old Church of the Holy Sepulchre—full of blood that was shed because of the respect and the veneration in which men held the last resting-place of the meek and lowly, the mild and gentle, Prince of Peace! (573)

Twain inverts the normal touristic relationship between the site and meaning in this passage: rather than the church being full of history, “history is full of this old Church.” In this way, “Twain explicitly relocates authenticity in the historical process that has designated the site as worth visiting, a process that as a tourist Twain affirms.” According to Lowry,

[T]he true site in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and, indeed, the true origin of historical and touristic authenticity, is the comically mistranslated sign that read, “‘Chapel of the Invention of the Cross’—a name which is unfortunate, because it leads the ignorant to imagine that a tacit acknowledgement is thus made that the tradition that Helena found the true cross here is a fiction—an invention.” Twain, of course, is one of those “ignorant”: in this “invention,” which has long since overwhelmed the integrity of the original, lies authentic fiction.³⁶

By focusing on the way history has determined value, Twain seems to displace the absurdity. Sacred geography is not to be read as a palimpsest, the pilgrim-tourist vainly attempting to decipher the true script beneath the “clap-trap side-shows and unseemly impostures”; rather, those erasures (those sights without actual sites) should be ignored (or relegated to the imagination) in favor of what others have written over it—in prayers, blood, and human folly. It is the building itself—that site of Crusader battles and contemporary imperial rivalries, irrespective of the truth of biblical events—that carries cultural value, the “invention” ranking above its origins.

Lowry's reading of Twain's “epiphany” is compelling, particularly since such tangible

historicism appealed to the pragmatic bent in American culture. Certainly, the passage allows Twain to encompass the shrine within the domain of the touristic through the employment of the rhetoric of reverence while accommodating his more-than-Protestant skepticism. The church is valued precisely because people believed it to be valued; and because they believed, their concrete actions made it so, whether or not the shrine is an actual site of sacred drama. The passage highlights how setting value is predicated on contingency, subjectivity, and indeterminacy; how, in terms of the illusive relationship between use value and exchange value, the church is actually not much different than a pet rock. Yet Twain's conclusion, like other "serious" passages in the book, can only be regarded as an epiphany designed for performance. The impersonation of moralism helps Twain position his disdain within the bounds of acceptability, although his seriousness also remains more fluid, more unstable than the usual effulgences of piety.

Yet the switch from divinity to history—the change to the lowercase, singular (although drawn, by implication, from the plural), "a god died there"—and the declamatory-meditative style Twain often employs for sober opinion have desanctifying effects even more unnerving than those Lowry identifies. These effects are particularly evident in the *comic* epiphany of his tour of the shrine—Twain's weeping at Adam's graveside:

The tomb of Adam! How touching it was, here in a land of strangers, far away from home, and friends, and all who cared for me, thus to discover the grave of a blood relation. True, a distant one, but still a relation. The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The fountain of my filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depths, and I gave way to tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor dead relative. Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume here, for he will find little to his taste in my journeyings through Holy Land. Noble old man—he did not live to see me—he did not live to see his child. And I—I—alas, I did not live to see *him*. Weighed down by sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born—six thousand brief summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude. Let us trust that he is better off, where he is. Let us take comfort in the thought that his loss is our eternal gain. (567)

The mock-lament careens from one parodic or burlesque performance to another—self-pity, sentimentality, bromide, "funerary flapdoodle"—hitting upon a series of major chords of oratorical bombast of the time, its effect readily going beyond mere Protestant scoffing at Catholic and Orthodox impostures.

Twain was trading in familiar currency in this burlesque, and his contemporaries roared at the comic effect of exploding such fatuous, melodramatic language ("And I—I—alas, I did not live to see *him*"). The passage—hailed a few years later by Samuel "Sunset" Cox as the height of "serio-comic weeping and wailing" and as an example of the "humorous sublime"—became one of the most celebrated in *Innocents Abroad*, the impersonation's effect even more explosive than its author had anticipated.³⁷ Later Twain even complained that too many readers actually believed he had truly wept at the spot. "Who is Mark Twain?" a St. Louis newspaper jokingly queried as late as 1902:

The man who visited Adam's tomb, the man who wept over the remains of his first parent. That beautiful act of filial devotion is known in every part of the globe, read by every traveler, translated into every language. Even the dusky savages of the most barbaric corners of the earth have heard of Mark Twain shedding tears at the tomb of Adam. By this time the ancient monument is fairly mildewed with the grief of Mark Twain's imitators.³⁸

Perhaps in no more effective way did Twain inscribe himself upon sacred landscape. His performance—acting out what the idea of Adam's tomb provoked rather than its presumed actuality—demonstrated the historicizing process he would invoke at the conclusion of his visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: countless American tourists would henceforth visit the

grave, not so much to see the purported authentic shrine but to view the “staged” site where Mark Twain had wept. With the authority of the persona that emerged from his pilgrim’s progress, Twain had transformed the sacred site into a modern tourist attraction.

But it was not only a notorious Phunny Phellow’s re-valuation of the site as a marker with a prank-like joke that distinguishes this particular passage. “Sunset” Cox’s description of it as an example of the “humorous sublime,” unintentional as it may have been, alludes to further ramifications, for the passage also evokes a greater disturbance, an actual evocation of terror comparable to the more serious, Burkean aesthetic category. Though Louis Budd rightly points out that the core of the passage’s meaning “lay in the daring burlesque of reverence itself,”³⁹ Twain’s performance embodies even more: through comic appropriation, values and identities, once exploded, can become cleared fields of touristic commodification, ready to be “settled” by new meanings. Even the “sacred,” otherwise outside the realm of commodity relations, collapses into exchange values, as Twain’s joke playfully undermines the very notion of transcendent meaning itself.

CHAPTER TEN

The Jaffa Colonists and Other Failures

“BUT I AM FORGETTING the Jaffa Colonists” (613), Mark Twain interjects in *Innocents Abroad*, after first describing how “the lost tribes of America” from the *Quaker City* tour “infested” Alexandria, Egypt. “The prophet [George] Adams—once an actor, then several other things, afterward a Mormon and a missionary, always an adventurer” (613)—had a “call” to establish a New Jerusalem in Palestine to await the Second Coming. Although Adams settled his followers from Maine on fertile land, “the colony was a complete fiasco,” the unfortunate farmers of that “very celebrated community” soon realizing the degree to which they were “shamefully humbugged by their prophet” and “felt humiliated and unhappy” (613). Twain recounts how Adams’s “sorrowful subjects” failed even to gain the “sympathies of New England” to pay for their rescue: “It was evident that practical New England was not sorry to be rid of such visionaries and was not in the least inclined to hire anybody to bring them back to her” (614). Instead, Moses S. Beach, editor of the *New York Sun*, performed an “unselfish act of benevolence” to pay for their return to their homes in Maine—“Moses” ironically leading the fallen children of “Adams” from the desert—an act of charity for which, as Twain wryly comments, another man received all the credit (“Such is life” [614]).

Nearly destitute, these survivors of a settler-colonial reenactment of the American pilgrim-settler’s myth had to fall upon the charity of the *Quaker City* tourists to evacuate the settlers from “hated Jaffa.” Crossing paths with these refugees constitutes one of the few instances where Mark Twain and his fellow travelers encounter their own countrymen on the “pleasure excursion,” although little is made of the failed settlers’ kinship with the tourists except as objects of charity before the narrative jumps back to the sight-seeing itinerary: “Alexandria was too much like a European city to be novel, and we soon tired of it” (614). Perhaps, in similar fashion, the Holy Land colony was too much like a failed American settlement to be novel, and Twain soon tired of it, too. However, in their effort to establish a colony, actually to possess the land, the Jaffa “visionaries” stood in a radically more committed relation to Palestine than did the bourgeois tourists, a fact underscored by the sentimentalized, guide-book efforts of both the tour group’s stuffed-shirt “pilgrims” and bad-boy “sinners” to extract spiritual recompense from the “hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land” (606).

Although the failure of the absurd settlers is only a brief recollection of the Holy Land before the climax of Twain’s journey to the true heart of the Orient at the Sphinx, the episode provides him with one last ironic commentary to his own “reading” of the failure of sacred geography, perhaps best summarized by the remark he jotted in his notebook at the Dead Sea: “No Second Advent—Christ been here once, never will come again.”¹ Despite the gap between the millennialist aggrandizement of the land and the touristic appropriation of the New Pilgrim’s Progress, Mark Twain and the refugees share more than this brief episode may at first suggest. While the Jaffa colonists were betrayed by the inability of the prophet Adams to create the New Jerusalem in the precincts of the old, Mark Twain also reveals a shattering sense of

disappointment and betrayal—but by the land and its attendant texts.

Such is the depth of betrayal Twain feels for the Holy Land that, at the site of Jesus' birth, Twain can only observe that

I have no "meditations." . . . I touch, with reverent finger, the actual spot where the infant Jesus lay, but I think—nothing.

You *can not* think in this place, any more than you can in any other in Palestine that would be likely to inspire reflection. Beggars, cripples and monks compass you about, and make you think only of bucksheesh when you would rather think of something more in keeping with the character of the spot. (601)

For Twain, the Holy Land has become nothing but Palestine, a small, impoverished province of Syria, "desolate and unlovely," a "dream-land" that is "sacred to poetry and tradition." The disappointing, dead land is resurrected only in the imagination by the effects of distancing and memory or through nature's theatricality: the only time to see the Galilee, for example, is at night, for "Gennesaret under these lustrous stars, has nothing repulsive about it" (512). Under the stars, the lake "has no boundaries but the broad compass of the heavens, and is a theater meet for great events." In the sunlight, the fact that sacred narrative was enacted upon such a "little acre of rocks and sand" seems beyond belief: "One can comprehend it only when night has hidden all incongruities and created a theatre proper for so grand a drama" (513). But when seen in the glaring actuality of "the work-day world" (608), Palestine is as much an example of humbuggery as Adams's scriptural reenactment.

Edward Said observes that one of the typical Western responses to the East is "disappointment that the modern Orient is not at all like the texts." This sense of "the betrayed dream" resulting from the direct experience with the mundane Orient was very much "a common topic of Romanticism," as expressed by Goethe, Hugo, and others, a tradition against which Samuel Clemens took pains to define himself, particularly through the lens of the frontier skepticism cultivated by his persona "Mark Twain." Said describes the complex relationship between dream—or imagination—and reality as a process whereby

[m]emory of the modern Orient disputes imagination, sends one back to the imagination as a place preferable, for the European sensibility, to the real Orient. For a person who has never seen the Orient, Nerval once said to Gautier, a lotus is still a lotus; for me it is only a kind of onion. To write about the modern Orient is either to reveal an upsetting demystification of images culled from texts, or to confine oneself to the Orient of which Hugo spoke in his original preface to *Les Orientales*, the Orient as "image" or "pensée," symbols of "une sorte de préoccupation générale."²

For Twain, the lotus of the Holy Land is very much an onion, a particularly smelly one at that, and his response to Palestine is therefore to embark precisely on such an "upsetting demystification of images culled from texts," registering that "disappointment" found in the disjuncture between what he perceives as modern Oriental reality and "all the texts," particularly sacred Scripture and the Holy Land literature then popular in America ("When I think how I have been swindled by books of Oriental travel, I want a tourist for breakfast" [376]). To be sure, despite his moves toward the semblance of a countertextual "realism," Twain engages in producing yet another text of the East in a "shifty" procedure very similar to those who have "swindled" him.

Of course, Twain's debunking begins during the European part of the tour, with the Holy Land, in many respects, only a further demystification of what Leslie Fiedler calls "the world worth seeing . . . defined once and for all by the genteel essayists of the generations before, and the writers of guide-books, who were their degenerate heirs."³ Yet, particularly in relation to Europe, the question of what "his own eyes" perceive is constantly answered in a self-consciously brash, "American" fashion. Fiedler observes that Americans "invent" themselves in

relation to Europe, that we are “plagued by the need to invent a mythological version of Europe first, something against which we can then define ourselves; since for us neither the Old nor the New World seems ever given, and we tend to see ourselves not directly but reflexively: as the Other’s Other.”⁴ However, what Twain discovers at the core of this “mythological version of Europe” is only a series of betrayals represented by motifs of dismembered bodies and rotting corpses.

Although Twain mocks the pleasure trip (and, more pointedly, the complacent pretensions of his fellow tourists) as “a funeral excursion without a corpse” (644), the reader is actually provided with a constant parade of corpses. We are presented with corpses in revelatory juxtapositions, such as, at the start of the journey, the magic lantern performance given by the “photographer of the expedition” to “show the passengers where they shall eventually arrive.” “But by a funny accident,” the first slide presents a view of Greenwood Cemetery (43), the rural park-like innovation for jointly sacralizing and commodifying death for wealthy members of the Plymouth Church.⁵ We are provided with corpses in broad jokes, such as in Twain’s wisecracks before stacks of bones in catacombs or the running gag of “Is—is he dead?” before tombs and mummies. We are suddenly confronted with corpses in stark imagery, such as in Twain’s visit to the Paris morgue or his clandestine tour of the Parthenon where he is startled “to see a stony white face stare suddenly up at us out of the grass with its dead eyes” (347). Throughout, Twain provides a representation of the Old World as shabby, fraudulent, decadent, meretricious, frayed, and, above all, dead (although brightened somewhat by modern innovations, such as Louis Napoleon’s railroads), while Palestine, with its overabundance of tombs, sepulchres, and decay appropriately serves as the climax to such a funeral procession, the fallen Holy Land not just an extension of Europe’s moribund status but virtually a leap into the grave itself.

While Twain is seeing all of the Old World “with his own eyes,” in Palestine such a vision also incorporates the desanctification of Scripture, the deflation of travelers’ tales, and the failure of Oriental exoticism into the general sense of betrayal expressed in the way tourists “ought to look at objects of interest beyond the sea” (“Preface”). In Palestine, Twain exhausts his continually lacerated sense of betrayal with normative vision; but more than any other nineteenth-century American literary traveler to the Holy Land, he then transforms this disappointment into an *appropriation* of sacred geography and Holy Land myth for the American imagination, a sensibility that, despite being crude or “innocently” hypocritical, is very much the dead Other’s living Other. In this way, Twain’s vision, projected by means of the violent incongruities of frontier humor, shares much with that of the visionaries of the Jaffa colony, for both unsuccessfully attempt to possess the mundane, “actual” Palestine, and at their failures both Twain and the Jaffa colony survivors thrust themselves back home, reaffirming the “practical” success of the pilgrim-settler’s myth in the New World.

George Jones Adams, born in rural New Jersey in 1811, grew up to become a lay Methodist preacher and an itinerant Shakespearean actor particularly fond of soliloquies from *Richard III*.⁶ Like Warder Cresson, Adams drifted across the volatile sectarian landscape, converting to Mormonism after hearing a sermon by a Mormon preacher in 1840. He accompanied Orson Hyde on the first leg of Hyde’s mission to Jerusalem to announce the dual restoration, traveling as far as London, where he stayed behind to do successful missionary work; he preached the “classic” rationale for baptism of the dead before Joseph Smith himself; and he became embroiled in all the controversies and intrigues of early Mormonism.⁷ In the 1850s, after he was successively excommunicated from three competing branches of the Latter-day Saints because of

charges of drunkenness, immorality, and embezzlement, he became a Campbellite preacher who alternated between pulpit and stage until public drunkenness and a campaign of exposure by a pugnacious editor in Springfield, Massachusetts, forced the minister-actor further north. In the 1860s, after a stint at an Adventist pulpit, Adams established himself as the prophet-priest of the Church of the Messiah and publisher of *The Sword of Truth and Harbinger of Peace*, making his base at Indian River and attracting converts throughout the coastal section of Maine adjoining New Brunswick. There the prophet preached on the imminent “Fifth Universal Empire of the World,” the need for the gentile tribe of Ephraim to reconstitute itself and prepare the way for Jewish restoration, which would occur without conversion and would be led by a king, possibly one of the Rothschilds, and the near advent of the Second Coming. Other doctrines included baptism by immersion, the denial of hellfire, temperance, the end of slavery, and the origin of American Indians from the ten lost tribes of Israel. Most of all, Adams promised “prosperity plus salvation,” a combination of personal and universal perfection that “broke down the resistance of many hardheaded Yankee farmers and seafarers.”⁸

The San Franciscan Holy Land traveler John Franklin Swift visited the Jaffa colony when prospects for the settlers still seemed promising. He perceived that Mrs. Adams, “a large-sized lady, with a decided military manner” was “the executive branch of the government,” but he noted that “the sacerdotal mantle rested solely upon the shoulders of the President.” Swift records the president’s elaboration of his doctrines: “They had no creed of faith, he said, but took the ‘Bible and the whole Bible,’ just as it was in its purity, for their faith.” Authorized by the American tradition of *sola scriptura*, Adams asserts that “the reign of Christ on earth and the return of the Jews to Canaan are even now on the very eve of occurring.” Though it might be a decade before the advent and return, “it could not be longer.” Consequently, Adams’s mission was to prepare “the Holy Land in advance for the great change” since

it was clear to every intelligent American that the country in its present condition was not a fit place for the residence of the Jews, nor for the reign of the Messiah; that it was not even reasonable to expect the Jews, with all their shrewdness, to return to a country such as was Palestine in its present state, nor was it quite certain that the Messiah himself would come unless great changes for the better were at least commenced; that his call was to plant great and glorious institutions and introduce the wonderful agricultural inventions of our land into the future home of the chosen people of God; that the true method of civilizing the benighted Arabs of the Sharon valley was to teach them to turn up the soil with Johnson’s patent shifting mold-board and gang-plow; to plant grain with Smith’s remarkable double-back-action drill, and to harvest the fruits of the earth with somebody else’s wonderful combined self-adjusting reaping, thrashing, sacking, grinding, and bolting machine.⁹

Combining millennialist and restorationist doctrines with the pragmatic American zeal for technical innovation that Swift found so humorous, Adams decided to “spy out the land” for settlement. “Joshua” departed with his “Caleb”—Abraham McKenzie, Indian River postmaster, justice of the peace, shipowner, businessman, and the prophet’s benefactor—in June 1865, just two months after Abraham Lincoln’s own dream of pilgrimage had been cut short. Enthusiastic dispatches in *The Sword of Truth* on the possibilities of colonization near Jaffa were especially appealing to hardscrabble Maine farmers:

In fact it is the very place for industrious people to come and make a living and a *good* living, and make it easy after the first two or three years. And as for farmers, no better place can be named; the land requires no dressing, only plough the ground, and sow and harrow it into wheat or barley. Only think of a crop of fifty to eighty bushels to the acre without any dressing. Where can you find such another fertile country?¹⁰

Painting a picture of Jaffa on the eve of an agricultural and commercial boom, Adams assured his flock that “[w]e don’t expect to die for lack of employment.”¹¹ Indeed, “[t]he climate is good, being very much like that of Santa Cruz, California,” Swift reported of his own visit before the

colony's crops had failed. "The oranges of Jaffa are reputed the best in the world. They are certainly the largest and finest I have seen. The valley of Sharon, the fairest and greenest part of all the land of Canaan, slopes gently back from Jaffa, and extends to the foot of the coast range."¹² While Adams's claims of multiple crops, huge yields, and burgeoning commercial opportunities ("We'll run boarding houses and a stage line for the 30,000 European pilgrims that go [to Jerusalem] each year"¹³) went beyond all reports of the Jaffa area's abundance, his assessment was not entirely unreasonable: prospects for Jaffa's development did seem good.

Upon his return Adams threw himself into his new role as president of the Palestine Emigration Association to organize the sale (at substantial loss) of his followers' properties and the massive migration of the American Holy Land "regenerators." Though the pastor had his detractors, the colonizing plan was by no means universally regarded as a crackpot scheme. Assisted by a letter of introduction from Maine senator Lot M. Morrill, Adams was received by President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward, who expedited a petition to the Ottoman authorities to ensure clear legal status for the departing colonists.¹⁴ As the *Machias Union* pointed out, the colonists were not "ignorant men." Among the 156 men, women, and children on board the *Nellie Chapin* who set off in the newly built American bark in August 1866 were fishermen, farmers, merchants, shipmasters, and mechanics, all of whom discounted disparagement of President Adams, predictions of hardships, or even seasickness to regenerate the Holy Land: as one observer reported of a colonist, "He would rather sit himself on a plank and puke his way across the sea than miss the trip to Palestine."¹⁵

Arriving off Jaffa on September 22, 1866, Adams changed his name, signing all documents George Washington Joshua Adams to better signify his embodiment as both "types" of nation-builders. However, harsh realities immediately challenged such expectations. Land was not bought as colonists had been told, nor had the Ottoman authorities issued a *firman* (decree) permitting them to purchase land or to settle, facts Adams had kept from his congregation. For six weeks the settlers camped on the beach under blazing sun and torrential rains while arrangements were sought. One disgruntled colonist's description of their plight to American consular officials stands as a particularly vivid account of Holy Land disappointment, one recalling a visitation to the nether regions rather than a vision of millennial regeneration:

We were encamped on the seaside. In our rear was a graveyard. Nearly 200 had died of cholera and their bodies, many or most of them, I believe, being buried here. The exhalations through the porous sand from such a vast body of decomposition was very bad. We were flanked by two dirty villages of Arabs. The shore was the world's privy. Anyway, the butchers put their offal there which also gave off no heavenly smell. Decaying seaweed in front was not always pleasant perfume.¹⁶

Before the end of the first month, six children and three adults had died. With the help of American vice-consul Hermann Loewenthal (a German Jewish convert to Christianity), who bribed and cajoled local authorities into allowing the colonists to settle, plots were bought (although smaller than expected and under an Ottoman citizen's name) only a mile from Clorinda Minor's former colony, lumber was unloaded, and prefabricated New England frame houses were built. For a while, despite the increasingly erratic, authoritarian, and alcoholic behavior of President Adams, the colony began to stabilize, crops were planted, and business prospects looked up with the anticipation of French financing of new port facilities at Jaffa and the possibility of a railroad to Jerusalem.

Yet resistance increased to Adams's erratic and autocratic leadership (he was reported frequently drunk and declaiming passages from *Richard III*), as did the death toll, while rumors of dissension and disaster reached the American press. Secretary of State Seward asked

Reverend Walter Bidwell, editor of *Eclectic Magazine and American Bible Repository*, to investigate the allegations. The minister, accompanied by a journalist, found nothing amiss: “The majority of the members express themselves entirely satisfied with their situation and prospects”; at a mass meeting only one “pale faced and decidedly intellectual-looking woman” had voted to return home; and their tour of the crops revealed verdant fields of wheat and barley almost ready for harvest.¹⁷ Adams heaped blame for problems on Vice-Consul Loewenthal, as he also told John Franklin Swift:

Being a Jew, he of course opposed all Christian progress. Being a foreigner and not an American, he naturally could appreciate neither the gang-plows of Johnson, the drill of Smith, nor the self-adjusting reaper, thresher, sacker, grinder, and bolter of the other gentleman. The wretch had from the first foreseen the good to the Christian cause to be produced by the movement, and had laid a plan to circumvent it. The plan of the wily Jew, it appeared, was in keeping with the commercial character of his people.¹⁸

Although Swift visited the colony before its collapse, dissension had already reached such a stage that “it is exceedingly difficult to get hold of any really disinterested statement of the difficulty. The affair has become a sort of party strife in Jaffa.”¹⁹ The American consul in Jerusalem, Victor Beauboucher, an American citizen from Belgium who had lost a leg fighting for the Union, was also denounced as a foreigner who, as a Catholic, behaved as a member of the Inquisition. Eventually, six consular investigations were held, and, with the death rate continuing to mount, most of the destitute colonists began to clamor to return home, although Secretary Seward, after hearing Bidwell’s positive report along with word that British and Jewish settlers were preparing to join them, thought it best for the colonists to await these reinforcements. But the appeals for aid continued to be issued, and J. Augustus Johnson, American consul-general in Syria, paid \$1,250 of his own money for the passage of sixteen colonists, mostly women and children, back to the United States because “he could not bear to see American citizens begging of Arabs in their misery to avoid dying of starvation in the streets of Jaffa.”²⁰ Forty more embarked on the *Quaker City*.

By the time a Maine clergyman visited in October 1868, only twenty-five settlers remained. Reverend Mr. McCollister reported that they seemed to be getting along and were becoming a “full match for Arab Craftiness,” although soon after most of these holdouts would also disperse.²¹ The prophet and his wife—whose frequent marital disputes alarmed the colonists with their violence—had already departed for England to seek further recruits and await the anticipated mobilization of Jews. George Washington Joshua Adams never did return. Eventually, the preacher-actor resurfaced in Philadelphia in 1873 with his son, an ordained Baptist minister, to preach at a new Church of the Messiah until his death in 1880.

The previously prosperous community of Indian River had been virtually destroyed, and many colonists, impoverished and embittered, were too humiliated to return to their former homes. Those who did were the butt of jokes and malicious rumors, their children taunted by schoolmates as “queer.” The McKenzie family managed to survive by selling Arab curios and bags of “genuine Palestinian soil” out of a tent. Yet, despite the failure of the project, many of the colonists continued to adhere to similar doctrines, so much so that when a missionary of the Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints came to the area in 1870–71, his most enthusiastic response came from former members of the Jaffa colony, with several even receiving baptism.

The few who remained in Palestine despite the dissolution of the colony survived mainly as a result of touristic rather than colonial appropriation. Herbert Clark served as a representative of Cook’s Tours in the Holy Land, acquired considerable property, and was eventually named honorary U.S. consul for the Holy Land. Rolla Floyd, even more illustrious, drove a diligence he

had brought from Maine on the newly built Jaffa-Jerusalem road for the Ottoman government, mastered Arabic, and became a highly successful and well-known tour guide and dragoman. “[A]n active and intelligent man,” as described by John Russell Young, Rolla Floyd took charge of General Grant’s tour party, as well as those of other notables, such as “Chinese” Gordon and the emperor of Austria.²²

Despite the failure of Adams’s experiment, “the colony itself was not a futile venture”; the settlement was a significant “link in the chain of nineteenth-century colonial schemes that sought to improve conditions in the Holy Land,” part of what Lester Vogel calls “Palestine’s emergence.”²³ The success of Adams’s venture is also a part of the “Peaceful Crusade” of European penetration and colonial domination. Certainly, as Shlomo Eidelberg notes, Adams’s “references to the imminent return of the Jews to Palestine were not based on Messianic expectations alone.”²⁴ The small Zionist movement, still years before Theodor Herzl, responded favorably to the prophet’s efforts. The correspondent for the Zionist newspaper *Hamagid* in Jaffa, for example, reported the “important news” of the American colony, hailing the colonists’ “noble purpose . . . to pave the way for the Children of Israel to make possible their return to the land of their fathers,” and a letter by Adams was printed in the newspaper calling upon Jews to join the effort. Adams’s exhortations, as well as the colony’s example, formed one more “link” in Anglo-American efforts to agitate Jews to settle Palestine.²⁵

More immediate in its impact, the New England houses built by the colonists were purchased by the *Tempelgesellschaft*, the Association of Templars. These German pietists were also swept up in millennialist enthusiasm to await the advent, although their doctrines declared that only true Christians had become a “people of God,” displacing the Jews as inheritors of the Holy Land. The Templars proved to be disciplined, successful colonizers who expanded upon the existing structures of the Adams settlement to construct a substantial, stable enterprise, even establishing an additional community near Haifa. Keeping themselves apart from the Arab populace, the German Templars survived until the outbreak of World War II, when they were detained by British authorities as Nazi sympathizers.

The legacy of the settlement’s failure in terms of American culture is also ambiguous. To John Franklin Swift, impressed by the colony during its flush times, the American experiment was “a wonderful event” that “had astonished the half-civilized natives of the country as much as it must have amazed the people of America.” The settlement he could regard with some irony, yet it did distinguish itself from similar but less worthy ventures:

Not a colony of discontented and broken-down rebels, such as we have heard of seeking a new home in Mexico or Brazil, but a colony of genuine Yankees from New England, coming, as they say, with a new religion in one hand and American plows and reaping machines in the other, to regenerate the land on American principles.²⁶

Mark Twain, in a letter to the *New York Tribune* that was not incorporated into *Innocents Abroad*, considered “the famous Adams colonization expedition” as “one of the strangest chapters in American history.”²⁷ But was the project really so strange? John Russell Young speculates upon the failure of “our feather-brained fellow countrymen” that

one would suppose that upon soil so fertile and in a climate so mild there would have been a practical success—the achievement of material benefits something like what the Mormons achieved in Utah. But the colony did not thrive. There is something in Turkish rule that would stifle even New England thrift, and those in charge of the colony seem to have been dreamy and light-headed—lacking in the strong, mighty governing sense which enabled Brigham Young to turn his wilderness into a garden.²⁸

Although George Adams did not provide the leadership of a Brigham Young, the scheme itself was no more far-fetched—and no less based on “American principles”—than the establishment of the Mormon Zion.

Indeed, as historical geographer of Ottoman Palestine Ruth Kark has observed, “Adams may have erred in his vision and personal behavior as a leader, but his methods were right.” The soil was fertile, modern farming machinery and techniques could have led to success, although “[w]hat he did not foresee were the legal and administrative difficulties he came up against, the hostility of the local population, and the need for much greater financial backing than his group had at its disposal.”²⁹ Adams, in fact, could be compared to Samuel Brannan, the Mormon leader with whom the Holy Land regenerator collaborated during his days with Joseph Smith. At the same time Brigham Young headed for the Great Basin, Brannan set out with a boatload of settlers to establish the Mormon kingdom in San Francisco. As susceptible to alcohol as was Adams, Brannan soon became an apostate after Young chose the Great Salt Lake over California but eventually achieved the distinction of becoming California’s wealthiest millionaire, San Francisco’s greatest scoundrel, and, with no little irony, its leading vigilante. Brannan’s colony disbanded—most Mormons choosing to reunite with Young in Utah despite the lure of gold—but the process of settlement, along with personal aggrandizement, was eminently successful.³⁰

In fact, the Adams colony was a project consistent with the long-standing tendency to interlace a providential, millennialist sense of American destiny with the settler-colonial project, particularly within structured, intentional communities. Twain could quip that the colony had failed because “a discrepancy between the almanac and the Book of Revelations interfered with the Second Advent,”³¹ but the fact remains that although it may not have been possible to overcome the difficulties with biblical text, the problems with the almanac could have been. Those seeking to deter literalist renderings of biblical narrative were horrified that deluded Americans suffered “[i]n a strange land, where they are unprotected as they would be on a Texas frontier,” as Charles W. Elliott approvingly quotes a correspondent in *Remarkable Characters and Places of the Holy Land* (1867). The failure proved that “the Kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, and that the Jerusalem where he is to reign is a spiritual Jerusalem, and not the old, dirty Jewish city which once was (but not now) the type of a heavenly city.”³² For those who did not so much object to millennialist fantasies as to violations of the fundamentals of American expansion, J. Augustus Johnson, consul-general for Syria, expressed a similar sentiment: “Colonization eastward, like all efforts to turn back the hands of time, is likely to meet with little success.”³³ The East was both the wrong place and the wrong time, and Jaffa the wrong city: settlement, for Americans, even those inspired by biblical narrative, had to follow the course of the sun.

The Adams colony, like Warder Cresson’s proto-Zionist experiment, was a reenactment not just of biblical narrative but of the early settlement of America: it was, in a way, an imitation of what already was an imitation. Though the project, along with “the old, dirty Jewish city” of Jerusalem, could be criticized as no longer suitable “types,” colonial appropriation through narrative actualization was decidedly a “type” of American cultural practice. *Innocents Abroad* is similarly a “type” of appropriation, although the “regeneration” of the Holy Land takes place through parodic aggrandizement rather than through narrative reenactment.

Mark Twain quite literally carries the act off through literary means, for the way Twain employs travel writing as a genre (or, perhaps more accurately, the way travel writing employs Samuel Clemens) in itself forms a decisive procedure through which the Holy Land is “taken.”

Most of the *Quaker City* travelers returned to New York having obtained material things or accumulated experience to produce things: Samuel Parsons, the bombastically titled “Commissioner of the United States of America to Europe, Asia, and Africa,” brought back important agricultural specimens, such as the first Valencia orange trees, which founded the citrus industry in Florida; John Greenwood, P. T. Barnum’s agent, returned with mummies and other items for exhibit at Barnum’s American Museum; William E. James, a Brooklyn photographer, produced a highly successful panorama of Holy Land scenes; Bloodgood Cutter, the self-deluded “poet lariat,” privately published a book of ridiculous verses based on the trip; Mrs. Stephen Griswold attempted to capitalize on the market created by Mark Twain’s book to produce *A Woman’s Pilgrimage to the Holy Land; or, Pleasant Days Abroad*; at least seven of the passengers, including *New York Sun* editor Moses Beach, Emily Severance, and Twain’s confidant Mary Fairbanks, wrote journalistic letters on the excursion; while all of the passengers returned bearing bottles of water from the Jordan and the Dead Sea, as well as rocks and other “specimens” appropriated—stolen—from every shrine the thoughtless and over-acquisitive souvenir hunters could pounce upon.³⁴ Nor did Samuel Clemens return empty-handed, coming back with both the full-blown creation of “Mark Twain” and the letters that would eventually make up the travel book (along with his own bottles of sacred water).

Most of the other journalist letter-writers were, to one degree or other, genteel amateurs, but Clemens was the only working journalist obligated by contracts with two newspapers, the San Francisco *Alta California* and the New York *Herald*, to produce at a grueling pace not just reportage but “entertainment.” The creation of entertainment demanded the constant production of jokes, anecdotes, wry observations, and “information” (statistics, history, description) from the raw material of the excursion, skills Mark Twain had mastered for the predominantly male frontier newspaper readers in California and Nevada. Travel narrative itself can produce a structure similar to the loose discourse Twain had also developed through the lecture circuit: a constant stream of anecdotes to which a multitude of characterizations, facts, and reminiscences are attached, allowing for leaps, disjunctures, absurd and violent connections, departures, and seemingly arbitrary digressions. In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain remarks that he would normally apologize for a digression, except that “I digress constantly anyhow.”³⁵

Having arrived in Alexandria, for example, *Innocents Abroad*’s sudden return to the “miserable” survivors of the Jaffa colony does not appear to be a sloppy backtrack in a formal narrative but one more “bit” in a lecturer’s performance, each routine arrayed like pearls on a string, each a self-contained anecdote, joke, story, parody, comment, or description very loosely attached to a discursive skeleton formed by the tourist excursion’s itinerary. As Richard Bridgman observes in *Traveling in Mark Twain*, “Twain could rely on the sequence of the journey itself to provide at least a simulacrum of coherence for his materials.”³⁶ Engaging in wild contradictions, abrupt shifts, and clashing values, such a procedure creates an “associative mosaic”³⁷ with powerful emotional and psychological resonances underlying the apparent logic of traveling from place to place and beneath the seemingly facile surface of jokes.

With such “a simulacrum of coherence,” the associative quality produces an almost poetic juxtaposition of images as well as a pastiche of inconclusive and contradictory ideas—a disguised incoherence—organized by a narrator who is himself a “simulacrum.” Parodying sentimental travel writing, “Mark Twain” makes no attempt to represent reality; he uses reality to produce a literary commodity, the “simulacrum” of representation, by which the Holy Land—particularly its failures—can be colonized by means of American language, racial categories, and religion as much as George Washington Joshua Adams’s project of regeneration in Jaffa.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

“A White Man So Nervous and Uncomfortable and Savage”

TAKING THE difficult overland route from Damascus across Palestine, Mark Twain is struck by the fact that he treads on “ground that was once actually pressed by the feet of the Saviour.” He notes the conceptual distance between notions of sacred and profane, for “[t]he situation is suggestive of a reality and a tangibility that seem at variance with the vagueness and mystery and a ghostliness that one naturally attaches to the character of a god.” That Jesus actually trod the soil—that a ghostly conception could be made flesh—eludes comprehension, and, in the response common to the American Holy Land tourist, Twain expresses a sense of awe. But while he may sit “where a god has stood,” what disturbs him is not simply the thought that “the gods of my understanding have been always hidden in clouds and very far away”; his sensibility is jarred by the solidity of geography and the creatures who people it, for he is “surrounded by dusky men and women” whose ancestors, he reminds the reader, lived in the presence of the divine (472).

In the very next paragraph the reader is precipitated down from the clouds of gods to be very close to the sod of these “dusky” natives, as Twain describes how “the usual assemblage of squalid humanity” surrounded the camp during breakfast to wait “for such crumbs as pity might bestow upon their misery”:

They reminded me much of Indians, did these people. They had but little clothing, but such as they had was fanciful in character and fantastic in its arrangement. Any little absurd gewgaw or gimcrack they had they disposed in such a way as to make it attract attention most readily. They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous and uncomfortable and savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe. (472–73)

While the equation of Indians with Arabs by 1869 was a standard association made by other American travelers, Twain reinvigorates the trope through exaggeration and parodic destruction. Twain produces the familiar ascendancy of pilgrim-settler against the native, the discourse suddenly yanking the Holy Land from its ghostly incomprehensibility to the far more familiar exoticism of the California and Nevada mining camps.

The American landscape is again invoked, particularly through Twain’s horseplay with Arab names:

We are camped near *Temnin-el-Foka*—a name which the boys have simplified a good deal, for the sake of convenience in spelling. They call it Jacksonville. (438)

After nightfall we reached our tents, just outside of the nasty Arab village of Jonesborough. Of course, the real name of the place is El something or other, but the boys still refuse to recognize the Arab names or try to pronounce them. (467–68)

The “boys,” rejecting individuality and foreignness, along with touristic hokum, while at the same time celebrating banality, dub all their European guides “Ferguson”; and so, here, in Palestine, the process of making the foreign familiar is extended by drawing upon the linguistic violence of the frontier; the “boys” refuse to cooperate with the propriety of natives, renaming the land as “nervous” white men are wont to do, so that the equation of Indian-Arab, like that of

El Yuba Dam or El-something-or-other-Jonesborough, has the effect of colonizing the Holy Land for the American imagination through laughter.

Twain draws this unequal equation throughout his Holy Land tour, literally enclosing Palestine within the vast expanse of the American continent, an equation forced upon him, despite his protestations that he will see “with his own eyes,” by his inability to see the land and its people outside of a comparative framework. The Holy Land is a discrepancy—and always a discrepancy—between the “large impressions in boyhood” that have been built upon Scripture and the actualities that reduce such large impressions to the small province of Palestine: “I could not conceive of a small country having so large a history” (486). Playing upon the middle-class commodification of sightseeing that the *Quaker City* tour was inaugurating, Mark Twain concludes that in order “to profit by this tour,” he must “unlearn a great many things I have somehow absorbed concerning Palestine” (486). This “unlearning” process demands a new reading of sacred geography, one that requires “a system of reduction,” for his imagination, fertilized by American distances and Sunday-school enthusiasm, conceives Palestine “on too large a scale” (486). Once the Holy Land–America equation is drawn and the “system of reduction” applied, the Holy Land is literally enfolded within the bosom of the New World: “The State of Missouri could be split into three Palestines, and there would then be enough material left for part of another—possibly a whole one” (479).

Such a process—really, not just a “system” of reduction but one also of discrepancy, equation, and appropriation—occurs again and again, particularly in relation to “celebrated” marvels of nature, such as the Sea of Galilee, which is “not so large a sea as Lake Tahoe by a good deal—it is just about two-thirds as large.” Twain notes that

I measure all lakes by Tahoe, partly because I am far more familiar with it than with any other, and partly because I have such a high admiration for it and such a world of pleasant recollections of it, that it is very nearly impossible for me to speak of lakes and not mention it. (507)

His use of Lake Tahoe as a “measure” sets off the observation that, in terms of beauty, the Galilee “is no more to be compared to Tahoe than a meridian of longitude is to a rainbow,” for “the solitude of the one is as cheerful and fascinating as the solitude of the other is dismal and repellent.” He launches into a rhapsody on Tahoe’s beauty—its “limpid brilliancy,” “resistless fascination,” and so forth—until he suddenly reverts, by means of comparison, to a bitter rant against the Palestinian lake:

[T]his solemn, sailless, tintless lake, reposing within its rim of yellow hills and low, steep banks, and looking just as expressionless and unpoetical (when we leave its sublime history out of the question,) as any metropolitan reservoir in Christendom—if these things are not food for rock me to sleep, mother, none exist, I think. (508)

The process leading toward appropriation occurs through a displacement of the “celebrated” pretense of the Old World by “a world of pleasant recollections” engendered by the New World. Leslie Fiedler, noting such references to Lake Tahoe, observes that Mark Twain had lived in a Western landscape “so terrifyingly beautiful in its aloofness from man’s small necessities, so awesomely magnificent in its anti-human scale, that beside it the scenery of the Old World was bound to seem pallid, domesticated, dwarfed.”¹ To be sure, in Palestine there are none of the delights of the terrifyingly “sublime” found in the Sierras, yet Mark Twain discovers a different kind of terror in the “anti-human” contours of the Holy Land’s “dwarfed” nature, a terror of “unpeopled deserts,” of “rusty mounds of barrenness” (508), of desolation invested with too much meaning to be allowed simply to exist as scenery: something must displace the Sea of Galilee in order for Twain’s rage against the void to receive any sort of balm, and the “measure”

of Lake Tahoe arises, by comparative power, as not just a better view but, notwithstanding “sublime history,” a better meaning.

Edward Said observes that knowledge of the Orient in the nineteenth-century United States “never passed through the refining and reticulating and reconstructing processes” that affected the development of European Orientalism; lacking the political and economic imperatives engendered by European proximity to the Near East, “the imaginative investment was never made . . . perhaps because the American frontier, the one that counted, was the westward one.”² Certainly, Mark Twain, like other nineteenth-century American travelers, never participated in the processes that rendered the East to the Western mind as a re-presentation of the Orient in the same manner as the Holy Land travel narratives of Lamartine, Nerval, Thackeray, or the other French and English travelers Said describes. However, the fact that “the imaginative investment” of Americans was deposited in the frontier means that Twain’s “system” of discrepancy, reduction, equation, and appropriation of the Holy Land works principally toward inventing the frontier and only secondarily toward re-creating the Orient: Arabs dissolve into “Digger Indians,” the Sea of Galilee is swamped by Lake Tahoe, and the Holy Land ends up in California.

We can then consider Twain’s famous statement, on the eve of the pleasure excursion, that “I basked in the happiness of being for once in my life drifting with the tide of a great popular movement” (27) as being not quite accurate. Doubtless, the *Quaker City* “picnic on a gigantic scale” (19) augmented the post-Civil War flood of travelers abroad (helped considerably by Twain’s satirical publicity) and launched a new era of bourgeois tourism, but Samuel Clemens had already participated in yet another “great popular movement” of no small significance either to him or to America—the mass migration to the far West. The material as well as imaginative investment in such a movement was, of course, enormous, and it is telling that General William Tecumseh Sherman—whose status as a war hero added immeasurable luster to the excursion’s advertised passenger list—withdrawed from the *Quaker City* tour in order to fight Indians. Sherman explains in his letter declining to join the excursion in language echoing Twain’s quip on how indigenous peoples drive “nervous” white men to violence that he felt “bound in duty and honor to stand by my post, and to defer to some more opportune occasion the gratification of a natural desire to see other and older countries than our own” because “various tribes of Indians” who are “being pressed from every quarter, have become nervous, excited, and in some cases positively hostile.”³ Mark Twain, like Joaquin Miller, Bret Harte, and many other California writers seeking success “back East,” may have joined the tide of the *Quaker City*, but the further Twain traveled East the more insistent does the American West (either as Pacific slope or antebellum Missouri) make itself felt in his writing: in spirit, at least, he went with Sherman—or, rather, *after* Sherman, since actual rather than metaphoric Indian-killing was not his métier.

This then brings us back to the “tireless patience” of precapitalist, indigenous peoples that provokes a white man “to exterminate the whole tribe,” for it is evident that the mock frontier violence that plays a role in Twain’s ferocious humor becomes an increasingly prominent feature of his encounter with the Holy Land. To regard another example: while traveling across the plains south of Nazareth he observes a scene of “picturesque Arabs,” “a grand Oriental picture,” but he then goes on to expose the reality underlying such a tableau. The picture actually shows dirt, rags, fleas, and “besotted ignorance in the countenances,” about which he considers that

a couple of tons of powder placed under the party and touched off would heighten the effect and give to the scene a genuine interest and a charm which it would always be pleasant to recall, even though a man lived a thousand years. (544)

Such violence is a comic device mediated—and, at least in part, dissipated—through the schlemiel backwoodsman persona of “Mark Twain.” The fact that in the earlier passage, a white man is made “savage” by the “vile, uncomplaining impoliteness” of the Indian is a humorous undercutting, for while he can verbally blow up natives left and right, the “Mark Twain” persona always manages to remain human by his ineptitude. This dualism—of projecting the violent discourse of the white man while simultaneously undermining it—is a response that befits Clemens’s consciousness as a Southerner reconstituted in the territories, a sensibility that, already keenly aware of the racial divide, will later become even more acutely conscious of the duality of looking at the world through “his own eyes” as a “white man”: “There are many humorous things in the world; among them, the white man’s notion that the white man is even less savage than the other savages.”⁴ Twain was yet to be able to consider the possibility that the white man—in the person of King Leopold in the Congo or President McKinley in the Philippines—may be *even more* savage.

In *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain’s comic violence also, of course, “blows up” his fellow travelers, the Americans presenting an absurd and incongruous sight—a “fantastic mob of green-spectacled Yanks, with their flapping elbows and bobbing umbrellas” disturbing “the scenery of the Bible” (467), rapaciously mining the land for “specimens.” Yet, despite his conclusion that “I wouldn’t let any such caravan go through a country of mine” (467), the travelers proceed unmolested (even the feared bedouin are frauds) except for the all-pervasive degradation assaulting them. In the paragraph immediately after the Arab-Indian provokes the savage white man into wanting “to exterminate the whole tribe,” Twain observes that “[t]hese people about us had other peculiarities, which I have noticed in the noble red man, too: they were infested with vermin, and the dirt had caked on them till it amounted to bark” (473). No, there is nothing “noble” about the red man, the “dusky” Oriental, or disease; and, in this way, too, the identity between Arab and Indian is fashioned, although Mark Twain makes no distinction between the medieval decay of Ottoman Palestine and the decimation of American Indians as a result of settler-colonial invasion. Noting the “pitiable condition” of the children and the prevalence of blindness, he observes that what he thinks are “goggles” on their eyes are “nothing but a camp meeting of flies assembled around each of the child’s eyes” (473), having already noted that an American (white) mother would not tolerate such a condition.

What further transforms this scene of disquieting disgust into an “American” one is the multitude’s discovery that “we had a doctor in our party” who, moved by “the charity of his nature,” applied an eyewash to a child’s eyes. “That woman went off and started a whole nation, and it was a sight to see them swarm,” Twain observes, through satiric violence metaphorically transmogrifying the “tribe” into insects themselves. But what is most notable is the ameliorative power of the civilized “white man”; for the doctor, rather than exterminate the whole tribe, cures each supplicant who, in exchange, seems to worship him, “notwithstanding by nature they are a thankless and impassive race.” In the replication of the colonialist scene between enlightened white man and ignorant native, the “swarm” of savages about the doctor begins to worship the miracle-maker—“I believe they thought he was gifted like a god”—which leads Twain to remarkable observations about Jesus:

Christ knew how to preach to these simple, superstitious, disease-tortured creatures: He healed the sick. They flocked to our poor human doctor this morning when the fame of what he had done to the sick child went abroad in the land, and they worshipped him with their eyes while they did not know as yet whether there was virtue in his simples or not. The ancestors of these—people precisely like them in color, dress, manners, customs, simplicity—flocked in vast multitudes after Christ, and when they saw Him make the afflicted whole with a word, it is no wonder they worshipped Him. . . . [N]o wonder when there was a great commotion in a city in those days, one neighbor explained it to another in words to this effect: “They say that Jesus

of Nazareth is come!" (474–75)

Although Twain is careful to maintain the respectful demeanor demanded by propriety toward Christ, underlying this meditation is yet another "system of reduction." Not only is the American doctor turned into a Christ-like figure by his healing power, but, perhaps more significant, Christ's performance itself has been drawn within the circle of more familiar settler-Indian relations by equating the modern, "dusky" natives with their more significant, scriptural ancestors. Both the doctor and Christ appear to dispense genuine balm, yet "these simple, superstitious, disease-tortured creatures" seem also to be the credulous, easy marks of American humbuggery. No doubt such scenes inspired Mark Twain when he came to write *The Gilded Age* a few years later, particularly when fashioning "Beriah Sellers' Infallible Imperial Oriental Optic Liniment and Salvation for Sore Eyes—the Medical Wonder of the Ages." The substantial credulity of the American market is insufficient, for the astronomical superprofits of Colonel Sellers's fantastical scheme are to be found in exporting his miracle to the swarming Orient:

[I]n the Oriental countries people swarm like the sands of the desert; every square mile of ground upholds its thousands upon thousands of struggling human creatures—and every separate and individual devil of them's got the ophthalmia! It's as natural to them as noses are—and sin. . . . Why, our headquarters would be in Constantinople and our hindquarters in Further India! Factories and warehouses in Cairo, Ispahan, Bagdad, Damascus, Jerusalem.⁵

Although Jesus and the charitable doctor are not lampooned as hokum, they have been drawn into Sellers's ambience by the "system of reduction" that equates the swarming Indian-Arab scene as the biblical setting for divine miracles: the healers may not be bogus, but their patients may as well be. Twain only departs from this comparison through the mock recognition that, like Jesus, the doctor's "reputation is mighty in Galilee this day" (475).

Twain has not exhausted the possibilities of this situation, for the passage reaches its denouement with a description of one of the doctor's patients, the daughter of the tribe's sheik, "a poor old mummy that looked as if he would be more at home in a poor-house than in the Chief Magistracy of this tribe of hopeless, shirtless savages." Twain makes the judgment that the sheik's young daughter "was the only Syrian female we have seen yet who was not so sinfully ugly that she couldn't smile after ten o'clock Saturday night without breaking the Sabbath." In Twain's bad-boy relation toward women in *Innocents Abroad*, the Oriental woman is mainly depicted as either "sinfully ugly" or naked. The sheik's daughter, however, has a child, "a hard specimen . . . there wasn't enough of it to make a pie," and the paragraph concludes with the comment that upon seeing the child, the American travelers "were filled with compassion which was genuine and not put on" (475).

The passage reaches its conclusion after an avalanche of mock violence, even to the extent of the child-pie's metaphoric allusion to cannibalism—an allusion hearkening to frontier rants, such as in the Davy Crockett almanacs—which appears regularly throughout the book (at one point Twain joking that he would eat the whole race of Indians for breakfast); this is then followed by a moment of "genuine" compassion, and the reader would think the white man's benevolent extermination of the whole tribe is done. But the appropriation of the scene within American cultural contours is completed only by means of the jump-cut to the next paragraph. Without pause, without further explanation about the sick child, Mark Twain's "simulacrum of coherence" allows him to proceed abruptly with an entirely new subject:

But this last new horse I have got is trying to break his neck over the tentropes, and I shall have to go out and anchor him . . . I had some trouble at first to find a name for him, but I finally concluded to call him Baalbec, because he is such a magnificent ruin. I can not keep from talking about my horses, because I have a very long and tedious journey before me, and they naturally occupy my thoughts about as much as matters of apparently much greater importance. (475–76)

The frontier is invoked again by yet another hyperbolic motif, the running gag on the decrepit horse, the voracious camel, and other animals, as the scene of disease and healing, of heathen and Christ, of dusky native and enlightened white man is left behind as if glimpsed from a moving railroad car.

It is such interference—the business of traveling, the degradation of the natives, the continual cries for baksheesh, the demythologized mundane, the unrelenting, barren, rocky landscape, the parodic mauling of “Grimes,” the rewriting of sacred landscape into a secularized idiom—that occupies his thoughts “about as much as matters of apparently greater importance” and makes it impossible for him to obtain inspiration in a Holy Land fallen into the “real.” Mark Twain moves on to the next item of the itinerary, having “blown up” and consequently Americanized this piece of Palestine. The “matters of apparently much greater importance” that fill his mind repeatedly reveal themselves to be those recollections, reflections, comparisons, and “associative mosaics” that eclipse what he sees “with his own eyes” with an infinitely more sanctified America. The Mormons, like the Puritans before them, may have inscribed their divine mission to colonize by naming many of their settlements after Holy Land sites, but Mark Twain achieves another sort of colonial appropriation by erecting El Yuba Dam on the ruined landscape of the original Promised Land.

CHAPTER TWELVE

“Rejected Gospels”: The Boyhood of Jesus

WHILE IN Nazareth Mark Twain makes a quick, passing observation: “Whoever shall write the Boyhood of Jesus ingeniously, will make a book which will possess a vivid interest for young and old alike” (537). Although Twain does not take up his own challenge directly, he does insert a brief account that runs radically counter to the traditional representations of Jesus. Through his own “ingenious” strategy of intertextuality and parodic appropriation, Twain injects into Holy Land travel and religious discourse a version of Jesus as a “Bad Boy” that not only challenges received notions of Jesus but undermines the authority of sacred narrative itself. While presented as a brief comic incongruity, Twain’s “Boyhood of Jesus,” framed like the rest of *Innocents Abroad* by the dynamics of frontier violence and touristic commodity consumption, resonates with the religious uncertainties, social anxieties, and textual instabilities characteristic of the post-Civil War period of American settler-colonial expansion. The bad-boy deity who heedlessly toys with reality, a trickster figure impervious to moral bounds, becomes increasingly central to Twain’s narrative universe.

In *The Lands of the Saracen* Bayard Taylor provides a vivid example of the antebellum, romantic version of Jesus—palpably material yet ethereal—against which Twain fashions his disruptive double. Refusing to reject “the Palestine of my dreams,” despite his evident and, as with virtually all Holy Land travel accounts, inevitable disappointment with the actualities of nineteenth-century Ottoman Palestine, Taylor chooses to travel with the constant expectation of entering dreams—or forcing entry, if the door is not already ajar. On a romantic quest for the extraordinary and the exotic made even more acute by his earlier experiment with hashish in Damascus, Taylor regularly discovers himself in the precincts of text-made-flesh, such as occurs on his first evening in Jerusalem when he walks through the bazaars and encounters “a native Jew, whose face will haunt me the rest of my life.”

I was sauntering slowly along, asking myself “Is this Jerusalem?” when, lifting my eyes, they met those of Christ! It was the very face which Raphael has painted—the traditional features of the Saviour, as they are recognised and accepted by all Christendom. The waving brown hair, partly hidden by a Jewish cap, fell clustering about the ears; the face was the most perfect oval, and almost feminine in the purity of its outline; the serene, child-like mouth was shaded with a light moustache, and a silky brown beard clothed the chin; but the eyes—shall I ever look into such orbs again? Large, dark, unfathomable, they beamed with an expression of divine love and divine sorrow, such as I never before saw in human face. The man had just emerged from a dark archway, and the golden glow of the sunset, reflected from a white wall above, fell upon his face. Perhaps it was this transfiguration which made his beauty so unearthly; but, during the moment that I saw him, he was to me a revelation of the Saviour.¹

“There are still miracles in the Land of Judah,” Taylor sighs, although the miracle seems more the ability of such close association with text to project him into his own imagined version of Scripture—appropriately shaped by Raphael’s “almost feminine” Jesus—rather than to apprehend the actual Jew before him. Perhaps the sentimental fantasy approaches too closely “the sublimated, the *too French* enthusiasm of Lamartine” that Poe warned Holy Land travelers to avoid;² yet Taylor’s fictionalization marks a break from Calvinist restraints on imagining

Jesus, a “naturalizing” in line with the growing output of religious novels based on Old and New Testament narratives by William Ware and other antebellum fictionalists.³

Though Mark Twain in *Innocents Abroad* never indulges in anything resembling Bayard Taylor’s “revelation,” he, too, is prompted by his presence in the Holy Land to provide his own curious vision of Jesus. In Nazareth he observes that the city

has an air about it of being precisely as Jesus left it, and one finds himself saying, all the time, “The boy Jesus has stood in this doorway—has played in that street—has touched these stones with his hands—has rambled over these chalky hills.” (537)

Such associations—even equations—of site with biblical narrative are precisely what so many travelers hoped to derive from their sojourn, as Reverend Thomas de Witt Talmage in his sermons based on Holy Land travel exclaims:

Do you see how the Holy Land and the Holy Book fit each other? God with His left hand built Palestine, and with His right wrote the Scriptures, the two hands of the same Being. And in proportion as Palestine is brought under close inspection, the Bible will be found more glorious and more true.⁴

Talmage’s metaphors of reading blur into the theatrical ones that *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine* employs to urge travelers to envision all of Palestine as “the stage on which the wondrous events of the world’s history were enacted.” Vision frames the land as a proscenium through which “the traveller may see with his ‘mind’s eye’ each scene played over and over again.”⁵ Nazareth becomes a particularly intriguing passage of what Ernst Renan termed the Fifth Gospel because of the great lengths the traveler must go to read into or dramatize the baffling lapses in sacred text. With exclamatory fervor, *Murray’s Handbook* prompts the appropriate and, as even Twain echoes, conventional meditations upon the boyhood of Christ:

How often must the SAVIOUR have run in boyhood about these streets! How often must He have accompanied His mother to the fountain! How often must He have sat with His parents in the quiet evenings on the house-top, as the custom is! How often must He have wandered over those rocky hill-tops, meditating on His Divine mission, and holding sweet communion with the Father! We have no memorials of this period of the Saviour’s life; and even during the four years of His public life only two recorded incidents occurred “in the city where He had been brought up.”

Then, after quoting the scant scriptural mentions of Nazareth’s rejection of the adult Jesus, the *Handbook* finds nothing else of interest, dropping the curtain abruptly: “The subsequent history of Nazareth is not worth recording.”⁶

But what Mark Twain does find worth recording in Nazareth announces itself by its very literariness: his speculative interest in an ingenious book on the boyhood of Jesus, calling forth a version of Christ starkly at variance with Bayard Taylor’s image of the transfigured Jew. Confessing that “it was not possible . . . to frame more than a vague, far-away idea of the majestic Personage,” Twain offers “with a new interest” an atypical excursion for a Palestine book: he stops up a few of the narrative gaps in Christ’s biography with excerpts from a “quaint volume of rejected gospels,” which are worth quoting in their entirety:

“Christ, kissed by a bride made dumb by sorcerers, cures her. A leprous girl cured by the water in which the infant Christ was washed, and becomes the servant of Joseph and Mary. The leprous son of a Prince cured in like manner.

“A young man who had been bewitched and turned into a mule, miraculously cured by the infant Saviour being put on his back, and is married to the girl who had been cured of leprosy. Whereupon the bystanders praise God.

“Chapter 16. Christ miraculously widens or contracts gates, milk-pails, sieves or boxes, not properly made by Joseph, he not being skilful at his carpenter’s trade. The King of Jerusalem gives Joseph an order for a throne. Joseph works on it for two years and makes it two spans too short. The King being angry with him, Jesus comforts him—commands him to pull one side of the throne while he pulls the other, and brings it to its proper dimensions.

“Chapter 19. Jesus, charged with throwing a boy from the roof of a house, miraculously causes the dead boy to speak and acquit him; fetches water for his mother, breaks the pitcher and miraculously gathers the water in his mantle and brings it home.

“Sent to a schoolmaster, refuses to tell his letters, and the schoolmaster going to whip him, his hand withers.” (537–38)

Here Twain has adapted selected chapter summaries from the apocryphal “First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ,” known today as the “Infancy Gospel of Thomas,” which had been published in London by William Hone in 1820.⁷ Based in part on Jeremiah Jones’s translation published in 1726 (and not in 1621 as Twain claims in his travel book), the Apocryphal New Testament was reprinted throughout the nineteenth century, with no other comparable English translation appearing for over a hundred years: “Hone’s book has long held the field,” according to Montague Rhodes James, who sought finally to supplant Hone’s version with a new translation in 1924, “and it has enjoyed a popularity which is in truth far beyond its deserts” because of its “misleading” and “unoriginal” qualities.⁸

Twain’s passages from the infancy gospel, which cast Jesus as a prototype of Tom Sawyer during the “evasion” of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or as a model of Satan/No. 44 in “The Mysterious Stranger” manuscripts, are arrayed in the travel book’s associative mosaic—along with other “extracts,” such as a passage on “the fabled phoenix” and a verse on fools appropriate for a barb about congressmen—between major fulminations on the literary (and racial) crimes of “Grimes” and other Palestine authors: “Commend me to Fennimore [*sic*] Cooper to find beauty in the Indians, and to Grimes to find it in the Arabs” (532). Twain’s casual inclusion of noncanonical gospels does not announce itself as anything other than one more attempt to penetrate successive layers of convention, hokum, and touristic expectation in order to reach the anti-touristic authentic or “real.”

Everywhere in Europe he encounters traditions of nonbiblical personages and their miracles, but they all can be found in this edition, “and though they have been ruled out of our modern Bible, it is claimed that they were accepted gospel twelve or fifteen centuries ago, and ranked as high in credit as any” (539). Such a book helps the traveler to appreciate the depths of Catholic credulity; but it is also a guide-book of a different sort, one appropriate for the transformation of pilgrimage (even the uncomfortable pilgrimage in which Protestants reluctantly engage) to tourism: “One needs to read this book before he visits those venerable cathedrals, with their treasures of tabooed and forgotten tradition” (539). Anti-Catholic animus provides an acceptable tradition for exploding all official religion. In Italy, “in the heart and home of priestcraft,” his denunciation of the “happy, cheerful, contented ignorance, superstition, degradation, poverty, indolence, and everlasting un aspiring worthlessness” (209) of the church enumerates, by way of antonyms, a credo of rationalist virtues: knowledge, enlightenment, elevation, affluence, industry, and everlasting aspiring worth.⁹ However, it would be wrong to consider that Twain wore his rationalist mantle comfortably as a Protestant, since he was ambivalent toward all religious certainties. While Presbyterian decorum and smugness disgusted him, its clear, comfortable distinctions between saints and sinners also attracted him; while the emotional attractions of “wildcat” heterodoxies excited him, their overheated controversies, vagaries, and excesses also repelled him: “[I]t is mighty hard to believe what you don’t know,”¹⁰ he said of his investigation of spiritualism in San Francisco, and the skeptic’s insistence on “what you don’t know” remained central to his outlook, especially to his humor.

George Sandys sought in his “double travels,” the intersection of physical journey and literary project, to make topographic realities comprehensible by framing them with classical and biblical intertextualities, thereby investing mere landscape with multiple meanings, narratives, and

mythic values. Twain similarly slices through multiple texts into which both space and time collapse: “How it wears a man out to have to read up a hundred pages of history every two or three miles” (502). But unlike the Elizabethan humanist, Twain’s construction of a textual basis for comprehension draws its associative layering not only from classical and biblical sources but from an overabundant, redundant archive of hundreds of nineteenth-century British and American Holy Land books.

The culminative effect of such a dense archive of Holy Land literature, besides exhausting the pilgrim-tourist, is to free Twain from too fixed a religious commitment. Instead, he can calculate his fellow bourgeois tourists’—as well as his readers’—pretensions toward piety according to the degree to which their responses derive from the literature’s whole expanse, particularly from its sentimental conventions and insistent clichés. The burden of Holy Land intertextuality, which shapes, for example, Taylor’s Raphaelesque, “traditional” Jesus, both complicates and damages the process of reading or dramatizing Bible and landscape, transforming travelers into inauthentic tourists rather than authentic subjects in possession of genuine eyes and tongues:

I can almost tell, in set phrase, what they will say when they see Tabor, Nazareth, Jericho and Jerusalem—*because I have the books they will “smouch” their ideas from.* These authors write pictures and frame rhapsodies, and lesser men follow and see with the author’s eyes instead of their own, and speak with his tongue. . . . The Pilgrims will tell of Palestine, when they get home, not as it appeared to *them*, but as it appeared to Thompson and Robinson and Grimes—with the tints varied to suit each pilgrim’s creed. (511–12)

To Grimes—Twain’s barely masked pseudonym for the travel writer William C. Prime—is reserved the honor of having become the main butt of Twain’s satire throughout the Palestine section of *Innocents Abroad*. Twain targets Prime’s work as “the representative of a *class* of Palestine books” (536) whose authors read the landscape through a film of Lamartine-like tears and then dish out “the kind of gruel which has been served out from Palestine for ages” (532). Twain, quoting Grimes/Prime, allows the traveler from Washington Irving’s Hudson Valley to lacerate himself:

Then once more I bowed my head. It is no shame to have wept in Palestine. I wept, when I saw Jerusalem, I wept when I lay in the starlight at Bethlehem, I wept on the blessed shores of Galilee. . . . Let himwho would sneer at my emotion close this volume here, for he will find little to his taste in my journeyings through Holy Land. (535)

To which Twain wisecracks, “He never bored but he struck water.” Yet, while Prime’s *Tent Life in the Holy Land* is infused with pompous piety, self-inflated bravado, and syrupy sentiment, what, if not tears, does Twain strike in his own drilling beneath the texts? To insert into the dense layers of intertextuality the unconventional representation of Jesus as a comical American boy, mischievous and playful, is to Americanize the New Jerusalem at the same time that parody subverts the authority of official Scripture through laughter.

Here Twain bores into a dangerous vein—none other than the travesty and desanctification of the Bible—with seeming insouciance. Just a few years earlier, in a letter to his brother, Twain defined his role in religious terms as “a ‘call’ to literature, of a low order—*i.e.* humorous,” and his ambition “to excite the *laughter* of God’s creatures”¹¹ is a profoundly spiritual mission, despite his self-deprecations and the class definitions that lessen the literary worth of humor. Twain’s laughter in *Innocents Abroad* can strip away the incongruity of surfaces to stare into a nihilistic void, a social, linguistic, cosmic carnivalization made tolerable by compassion. Yet laughter, elusive as it is, could also be transgressive, threatening all authority, sacred as well as secular, such excitation often acting, like a revolver, as a great equalizer. Certainly, by the time he wrote *Innocents Abroad* Twain had already become well acquainted with the dangers—as well as the joys—of tampering with religion’s official texts: while as an apprentice printer the

wrath incurred by his friend's joking insertion of "Jesus H. Christ" into the newspaper copy of Alexander Campbell's sermon provided one early lesson.¹² In his travel book Twain treads upon sensitive conventions by incorporating a dubious, comic boyhood, a violation of propriety highlighted by the great ambivalence, even reluctance, most of Twain's literary contemporaries have in depicting Jesus in literature at all.

"The Christian world would not tolerate a novel with Jesus Christ its hero, and I knew it," Lew Wallace, the century's most popular religious fictionalist, reveals in "How I Came to Write *Ben Hur*." "Nevertheless, writing of Him was imperative, and He must appear, speak and act." Wallace solves this dilemma by writing *around* Jesus, withholding the appearance of the adult Savior "until the very last hours," while his arrival is always anticipated "with an infinite yearning." "He should not be present as an actor in any scene of my creation," he reasons, and when Jesus finally does appear Wallace is "religiously careful that every word He uttered should be a literal quotation from one of His sainted biographers."¹³

Wallace did make one other attempt worth comparing directly to Twain's writing. Perhaps responding to Twain's suggestion to write "ingeniously" about the infancy of Jesus, Wallace published in the 1886 Christmas issue of *Harper's* his story, "The Boyhood of Christ." The elderly Uncle Midas—like Wallace, "a lawyer, a soldier, an author, and a traveller" who had "dabbled in art, diplomacy, and politics"—speaks to a gathering of children who have escaped a frolicking Christmas party to come to Uncle Midas's "conservatory full of verdant treasures," which include a palm tree "given me by the monks of Mar-Saaba" and a vine "from a garden just outside the walls of Jerusalem." There the children ask the kindly gentleman to speak about the Messiah's boyhood. "[I]t is so hard to think of him as a boy," one complains. "I mean to think of him running, jumping, playing marbles, flying kites, spinning tops, and going about all day on mischiefs, such as throwing stones and robbing birds' nests." To which Uncle Midas admonishes, in line with the increasing tendency throughout nineteenth-century American Protestantism to humanize Christ, that "his human birth was as much a divine fact as anything in all his sublime story."¹⁴

Uncle Midas goes on to envision, despite "the meagreness of the record," a decidedly middle-class American boyhood, speculating that the gifts of the Magi allowed his family to escape poverty for an appropriately "comfortable" existence—"Exactly the condition to allow our Saviour a marginal time in which to taste something of natural boyish freedom"—until "the terrible Talmudic rules fell upon him" and "put existence in iron jackets." Midas describes his face according to the feminizing conventions, although he also allows some room for more "muscular" imagery: Christ's forehead is "covered by a mass of projecting sunburned blond hair"; his eyes, "softened to exceeding tenderness by lashes of the great length sometimes seen on children, but seldom, if ever, on men," are shaded, "leaving a doubt" as to their color, yet with "the parallelism of arch between brow and upper lid usually characteristic of children and beautiful women"; and his cheeks are "ruddy and round," although his mouth, while small, displays "a certain squareness of chin."¹⁵

Wallace relates a few possible domestic scenes—such as Mary teaching the boy how to read with the Torah spread upon her knees or the young shepherd tending his sheep, both accompanied by typical Sunday-school illustrations—but what makes his depiction of Jesus noteworthy is just how little of it he actually does provide. His reticence derives from the quandary of how—and at how early an age—the Father would reveal to the Son his powers, his role, even his fate. Surely, Midas-Wallace contends, if Jesus "came while a child to know the mysteries of his birth . . . all desire for pastime by childish means would have then ended" by the

realization of the utter seriousness of his mission. Admonishing the children to avoid “conjecture,” since “people of good intent are never troubled in the matter of religion except as they stray off into that field,” Midas-Wallace can only conclude “that in fact Christ had no boyhood at all.”¹⁶

Henry Ward Beecher, who along with General Sherman withdrew from the *Quaker City* tour before its departure, may have also followed Twain’s advice to excite vivid interest in the boyhood of Jesus. In his popular *The Life of Jesus the Christ*, first published in 1871 and “completed” in 1891, Beecher finds it “impossible to restrain the imagination” when considering what is not made explicit in the Gospels:

There will always be a filling up of the vacant spaces. If not done by the pen, it will none the less be done in some more fanciful way by free thoughts, which, incited both by curiosity and devotion, will hover over the probabilities when there is nothing better.

“Nor need this be mischievous,” Beecher goes on to explain, as if addressing Twain’s own perverse tendencies. “There are certain generic experiences which must have befallen Jesus, because they belong to all human life.” Then, seeming to close the matter with acknowledgment of humanity with affirmation of paternity, he concludes, “He was a child, He was subject to parental authority.”¹⁷

Beecher contemplates a “natural” being, not “a white and slender figure floating in a half-spiritual transfiguration through the days of a glorified childhood,” emphasizing instead that “[t]here was nothing that we know of, to distinguish this child from any other that ever was born.”¹⁸

Nothing could be more unnatural than to suppose that he was a child without a childhood, a full and perfect being cleft from the Almighty, as Minerva was fabled to have come from the head of Jupiter. . . . He was “the Son of Man,”—a real boy, as afterwards he was a most manly man. He knew every step of growth; he underwent the babe’s experience of knowing nothing, the child’s, of knowing a little, the universal necessity of development!¹⁹

In the end, though, Beecher draws yet another generalized portrait of a typical, American middle-class boyhood, choosing instead to dwell on “a distinct conception, not of Christ’s person, but of his personality” as demonstrated through his mission.²⁰ Like Wallace, Beecher’s attempt at biography, despite its two volumes, remains notable by what is not said. Above all, despite his assertion that the human Jesus passed through “every step of growth,” Beecher pointedly avoids what was becoming an insistent question in child rearing, the degree to which misbehavior was “natural” in a boy’s life, and how discipline, whether gentle or harsh, would be applied to mold “a most manly man,” while Beecher also avoids the even more disconcerting “step” of what it meant for Jesus to pass through the “generic experiences” of sexual awakening.

Twain’s mind, however, is more mischievous. The playful representation of the boyhood of Jesus Twain inserts into his travel book, contrasting with both Beecher’s and Wallace’s constrained imaginings, deliberately plunges into the “mischiefs” Uncle Midas’s little friend finds so hard to imagine. The apocryphal Jesus has divine powers that are appealingly pragmatic and easily applied to American uses: to raise the dead as legal witnesses; to aid mechanic arts with more malleable material; to bring about marriage with the miracle of babies rather than the other way around. The quotidian, casual quality of this Jesus is underscored by the way the brief passage is presented as merely one more disjuncture or incongruity between Holy Land text and Palestine actuality, which Twain’s “system of reduction”—his satiric process of coming to terms with his own boyhood imagination’s overexaggerated conception of biblical geography—

attempts to distill into “truth.” “But why should not the truth be spoken of this region?” (511), he asks, as he rages against the “partialities and prejudices” of other writers, even honest ones, who “entered the country with their verdicts already prepared” to discover a Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, or Episcopalian Palestine. “I claim the right to correct misstatements” (509), he declares in his mock trial of the Galilee, using parodic countertexts to vent his outrage at the disappointing landscape. Yet the playful “truth” about the boyhood of Christ Twain exposes in these “rejected gospels” is far more problematic and conflictive than the easy exposure of other travel writers’ misleadingly romanticized or sectarian appropriations of the Palestinian landscape.

By quoting from Hone’s edition of the Apocryphal New Testament, Twain draws into Holy Land intertextuality a new source, one that would have otherwise been considered scandalously inappropriate if not violently antithetical to the genuine hermeneutics of the land. William Hone published writings “not included in the New Testament by its compilers,” as he pointedly describes them on the book’s title page. Hone’s counter-compilation combines ancient texts that were considered pseudoepigraphic and therefore “rejected” with nonbiblical but accepted writings of the apostolic Fathers. For Hone, these documents were “printed proofs that other texts beside the canonized books of the Bible once pretended to the title ‘sacred.’ ” By presenting them together as excluded by “compilers,” Hone highlights the arbitrary character through which the canon was formed, casting doubt on the authenticity and authority of the New Testament itself, privileging instead the “priesthood” of the individual’s quest for truth:

[T]he Editor has been charged with expressing too little veneration for the councils of the Church. He feels none. . . . After eighteen centuries of bloodshed and cruelties perpetrated in the name of christianity, [the Apocryphal New Testament] is gradually emerging from the mystifying subtleties of fathers, councils and hierarchies, and the encumbering edicts of soldier-kings and papal decretals. Charmed by the loveliness of its primitive simplicity, every sincere human heart will become a temple for its habitation, and every man become a priest unto himself.²¹

Twain’s opinion that “[t]he few chapters relating to the infancy of the Saviour contain many things which seem frivolous and not worth preserving” only closes the barn door after the horses have fled, particularly when set off by the laconic comment that “[a] large part of the remaining portions of the book read like good Scripture, however” (538). Lew Wallace, in a version of his Christmas story that he later extended into a book, has Midas also discourse on the same “First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ,” but his rejection is far more definitive. Recoiling from the notion of Jesus as a mischievous boy, Wallace insists that such a “hive of legends” should remain on the shelf “with other religious literary curiosities, such as the Koran and the Mormon Bible,” concluding that such texts “are only useful as instruments for the measurement of the capacity of faith.”²²

These “novelistic miracle stories” of Jesus before his twelfth birthday, although rejected by the Nicene Council, were very popular among early Christian congregants. Such tales were consistent with traditions of antiquity in which magical or divine characteristics were displayed even from birth by heroes, such as Alexander the Great and Caesar Augustus, which foreshadowed their future status and career. For example, in the “Infancy Gospel of Thomas” that Twain employs, the future Messiah, according to Ron Cameron in *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts*,

is depicted as an *enfant terrible*, always clever and mischievous, often intractable and even malicious. The biographic legends of Jesus, at school and at play, display nothing distinctively Christian at all: Jesus is portrayed simply as a child of the gods, a *Wunderkind* in whose life are manifested epiphanies of the divine. Ironically, the descriptions of the precocious glee of the infant Jesus both hint at his humanity and detract from it as well.²³

One could see why church fathers resisted “the tyranny of the miracle tradition,” finding such a text so problematic that they preferred the lacunae in the Gospels and encouraged Christ’s boyhood to remain a mystery rather than to include the far more troubling narratives of an enfant terrible.

Even Twain had to be cautious to restrain the boy, showing him as no worse than clever or mischievous, a lover of pranks like the hero of Thomas Bailey Aldrich’s *The Story of a Bad Boy*, “a real human boy, such as you may meet anywhere in New England, and no more like the impossible boy in a story-book than a sound orange is like one that has been sucked dry.”²⁴ In addition to being endowed with the natural capacity of outgrowing his mischievousness, such “a sound orange” is “bad” in ways that are not too destructive, vicious, or violent, a restraint in the newly emerging, more “realistic” depictions of boyhood like those of Aldrich. While countering “the impossible boy” of didactic juvenile literature, such representations held back the real human boy from falling into the lurid excesses of the dime novel.

As a consequence, Twain deliberately expurgated his pastiche. For example, Twain editorially rejected passages in which Jesus, making clay figures with his playmates, alarms them and their parents by bringing them to life, or in which his playmates hide in a “furnace” (a cellar) while playing hide-and-seek, and when their mothers refuse to reveal their whereabouts, Jesus turns them into goats, only transforming them back after tearful pleas by their mothers. Perhaps even more telling is how he edits the last “extract” in his selection: he accurately quotes the story that “the schoolmaster going to whip him, his hand withers,” but Twain truncates the tale, deleting the summary’s last shocking phrase: “and he dies.” Mischievous as these “rejected gospels” make Jesus out to be, Twain could not have portrayed him as a murderer without losing the element of “innocence,” not to mention his own already tenuous respectability. Twain did include these portions when he first published excerpts from this “curious book” in a correspondence from New York for the *Alta California*, but the bounds of respectability for the predominantly male readers of the Pacific slope were considerably broader than for a national readership disciplined by the religious and cultural stewards of the settled core. Certainly, if Twain were to have quoted the final verse after the young God had dispensed with his teacher, he might have even been, at least figuratively, burned at the stake: “Then said Joseph to St. Mary, Henceforth we will not allow him out of the house; for everyone who displeases him is killed” (First Gospel 20:16).

Nonetheless, Twain’s inclusion of the malevolent “child of the gods” fits American traditions of “tall” and ranting humor very well, such as related in the half-man, half-crocodile Davy Crockett tales: the apocryphal Jesus conveniently displays the violent “innocence” of the settler-colonial white man who, displaced and in motion himself, displaces the Other. Twain’s dry comment on the gunslinger Jesus to his California readers is doubly apt: “His society was pleasant, but attended by serious drawbacks.”²⁵ The conflict between Wallace’s “serious” nonchildhood and Twain’s more-than-mischievous wunderkind, particularly as Twain’s fascination with boyhood took more elaborate narrative expression in his later novels, arises from differing perceptions in the way the child is father of the man, particularly the settler-colonial man—with the displaced Westerner disrupting the settled Easterner’s decorous gentility hitherto unencumbered by the violent disruptions of frontiers or even of urban working-class and immigrant contact zones. The “Bad Boy,” increasingly cited as a juvenile delinquent after the Civil War, threatened the role of parental—particularly paternal—authority: discipline of restless, troublesome youths exceeded the control of families, calling forth other, more social correctives—the reform school and the truancy officer, in addition to the great allure of lighting

out for the territories—that diminished parental roles at the same time as they attempted to reinforce them. If Jesus were such a wayward youth as the unexpurgated apocrypha presents him, his “natural” boyhood, under the influence of dime novels and social disequilibrium, would transgress the authority of the Father, a notion, like Jesus’ sexual awakening, almost impossible to contemplate. By the end of his career, however, Twain could conceive such a creature so innocently (and so murderously) devoid of “Moral Sense,” extending the Gnostic permutations of his apocryphal Jesus into the characterizations of Satan/Philip Traum/No. 44 in *The Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts.²⁶

But, again, the elaborations of a bad boy are entwined with the multiplicities of “bad” Scripture. In other writings of this early period, Twain engages official religion in literary, particularly parodic, terms, often employing boys (or boy-like men) along with characteristic mock violence. In the 1866 sketch “Sabbath Reflections,” the high language of a brief dramatic monologue on the conventional, ideal Sabbath is countered by the vernacular interruptions of a howling dog, crowing rooster, and fighting cats, the vulgar, material world overpowering spiritual pretense in the linguistic realm. In 1865, “Grandfather Twain” provides his own Christmas story of a malicious boy, “The Story of the Bad Little Boy that Bore a Charmed Life,” in which “everything turned out differently” for the bad James “from the way it does to the bad Jameses” in the Sunday-school tracts, “those mild little books with marbled backs.”²⁷ Instead of retribution, all of James’s sins are rewarded:

And he grew up, and married, and raised a large family, and brained them all with an axe one night, and got wealthy by all manner of cheating and rascality, and now he is the infernalesst wickedest scoundrel in his native village, and is universally respected, and belongs to the Legislature.²⁸

In a companion piece published five years later, “Story of a Good Little Boy Who Did Not Prosper,” the virtuous Jacob Blivens, who “always obeyed his parents, no matter how absurd and unreasonable their demands were” and was “so honest that he was simply ridiculous,” had the ambition “to be put in a Sunday-school book,” although “[i]t did make him feel a little uncomfortable sometimes when he reflected that the good little boys always died.”²⁹ Jacob meets with such ill fortune that nitroglycerine scatters the boy before he is even able to make his last, virtuous dying speech according to the template of such didactic tales:

[A]lthough the bulk of him came down all right in a tree-top in an adjoining county, the rest of him was apportioned around among four townships, and so they had to hold five inquests on him to find out whether he was dead or not, and how it occurred.³⁰

Sunday-school tracts circulated moral narratives for youths to imitate, an extension of the way Christians were urged to model themselves on the example of Jesus’ life. Such tracts may have been an easier, safer target to detonate—particularly because Twain had even heard a Presbyterian minister attack their preposterous moralism in San Francisco³¹—than blasting “a class of Palestine books” that drew their strength from the original, sanctified Palestine book itself, but the same literariness is at play, drawing Twain, like William Hone, deeper into dangerously shifting linguistic-religious currents.

Innocents Abroad, as an initial parodic impulse of literary realism, defines itself against the body of those Palestine books—including the Bible itself—divining the “truth” or the “real” only to the degree that it tears the fabric of their complex intertextuality. Because Twain’s associative mosaic constantly employs travesties and burlesques, such as his retelling of the Legend of the Seven Sleepers in vernacular (“Behold, the jig is up—let us die” [428]), the insertion of “rejected

gospels” may appear as only one more comic effect, a ludic shtick and nothing more. Yet, paradoxically, as much as parody honors the source-text, reaffirming its authority, the parody also appropriates its source, replaces it by replication, destroys the original’s aura, counters its authoritarian, one-dimensional language with a multiplicity of unconstrained unofficial languages. Hone’s publication of the Apocryphal New Testament, for example, has the effect of ridiculing “official” Gospels by presenting a parodic double (albeit one that exists in its own right as a genuinely ancient, although noncanonical, document and not a fresh invention). As his critic Montague Rhodes James charges, Hone takes great care to present the texts as

a supplement to the New Testament. Printed in double columns, with all the books divided into chapters and verses, with a summary prefixed to each chapter in italic type, with head-lines of the same character on every page, with an ‘Order of Books’ . . . it presents the familiar aspect of the English Bible to any one who opens it.³²

The “animus” of this “rejected” double is to speak not only to what was excluded from the canon but also to the (no less) desanctified nature of what was eventually included, even to the arbitrariness of the act of inclusion itself, all heightened by the double’s “familiar aspect.”

The fact that Hone was brought before English courts several times on charges of publishing blasphemous political parodies based on Anglican prayers and church services—“Bible-smashings,” as such broadsides were called—only demonstrates how much of a threat the parodic double could pose to the authorities of both church and state. In *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, Joss Marsh makes clear what was at stake in Hone’s use of religious vehicles for carrying secular messages meant to ridicule political targets: “Parodic ‘decomposition’ reveals the problematic inventedness—and *literariness*—of what is parodied. Sacred texts treated as mere literary constructs are demoted to such. Parody cancels Scripture; only Literature remains.”³³ Brought to three trials on three successive days, Hone successfully argued that “[t]he purpose of the parodies was not to revile religion but to rebuke a repressive government” and was found innocent of all charges.³⁴ But Hone’s masterful use of wit and rhetorical skills—his parodies were hailed even by his enemies for their literary qualities—alerted conservative forces to the danger of parodic “decomposition” of sacred authority. Though he won the trials, the war was lost, for “[w]ithin two decades of Hone’s trials, ridicule could be found criminal, and parody was subject to careful limitations,” while the use of blasphemy charges became a tool of political repression in Britain.³⁵

Twain’s insertion of Hone’s countertext inevitably implicates him in the blasphemer’s violation, despite his cautious truncations and edits, and despite Twain’s own parodic deflation of Hone’s apocrypha. While the mischievous boy as Savior appears to be Twain’s “innocent” parodic double (quite disruptive in his own right), the heterodox power of Hone’s disguised parody remains: what Twain excises only makes the explosion easier to discern. To be sure, Twain does not make a frontal attack on Scripture, offering praise of the Bible:

Who taught those ancient writers their simplicity of language, their felicity of expression, their pathos, and above all, their faculty of sinking themselves entirely out of sight of the reader and making the narrative stand out alone and seem to tell itself? Shakespeare is always present when one reads his book; Macaulay is present when we follow the march of his stately sentences; but the Old Testament writers are hidden from view. (492)

But even his praise of hidden narrators remains only in the realm of literary technique and not of literalist truth: sacred Scripture has become, after the assaults of higher criticism, yet another vehicle for literary effect, one in which fiction can triumph over revelation, allowing endless imaginative revisions of Christ. And though Twain genuinely honors the Prince of Peace at appropriate points, his allowing the mischievous (malicious) boy to slip into his own book cons

the reader into seeing “with his own eyes” (as the “Preface” announces as the goal of the travel book) a darker, more “irreverent” double of Jesus than the reader—or even Twain—may have been willing to acknowledge.

Although *Innocents Abroad* can clearly be read as a parodic double of travel literature, the book can also, as the subtitle “The New Pilgrim’s Progress” insists, be read as a parody of religious genres—of spiritual quests and allegories like Bunyan’s original, of course, but even of other “wildcat” sacred texts, as well as the Bible itself. The boundaries between canonical texts, noncanonical antiquities, discoveries, hoaxes, fictions, parodies, and new revelations were extremely flexible, permeable and imprecise throughout the nineteenth century. One of the features of Joseph Smith’s remarkable translation of “reformed Egyptian” plates, for example, is its great uncertainty, for the Book of Mormon has been contested as either a discovery, a parody, a hoax, or a new revelation—or *all* of these categories at the same time. Such “religious literary curiosities,” each as indeterminate or suspect or authentic as the Book of Mormon, flourished in America’s climate of almost constant religious ferment to serve a variety of purposes. Consider, for example, not only Joseph Smith’s contribution, but also Manuel Mordecai Noah’s 1840 publication of “The Book of Jasher,” which despite Noah’s intention that the recovery of the text serve as a bridge between Judaism and Christianity, William Gordon Bennet lambasted with virulent anti-Jewish scorn.³⁶

After the Civil War, such literary output increased, even expanded into new realms, including the proliferation of agnostic and infidel texts like those of “the silver-tongued” Colonel Robert Ingersoll.³⁷ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward published *The Gates Ajar*, her unorthodox, imaginative rendering of the afterlife, in 1868, and Mary Baker Eddy’s *Science and Health* would appear, to Twain’s great vexation, just a few years after the publication of his travel book. Twain, no matter how much he objected to such “wildcat” phenomena, participated in this multiplication of sacred and religious texts by giving free rein to his own penchant for impersonating and parodying religious forms as his career advanced. For example, *Captain Stormfield’s Visit to Heaven*, which he first began writing as a response to *The Gates Ajar*; his 1871 jab at corruption, “The Revised Catechism” (“Money is God. Gold and greenbacks and stocks—father, son, and the ghost of the same—three persons in one: these are the true and only God, mighty and supreme; and William Tweed is his prophet”³⁸); “The War Prayer,” during his anti-imperialist maturity; and the many occasions in which he put words in the mouths of Adam, Eve, Joan of Arc, and Satan.

In this regard, Twain’s remark to William Dean Howells that *Innocents Abroad* “sells right along just like the Bible” bears further examination as something more than a comic boast of the book’s immense success.³⁹ As Elisha Bliss’s army of subscription salespeople—often disabled Civil War veterans and women—canvassed door to door in rural areas and small towns with the American Publishing Company’s prospectus of Twain’s book in their hands, they were instructed to make their final sales pitch by turning to the 9”x12” fold-out ad for the company’s “Large Quarto Photograph Album Family Bible.” Subscription books were meant for parlor tables of small farmers and aspiring merchants, and a book like *Innocents Abroad* “had to be so thick and heavy and emblazoned with gold that it could keep company with the bulky and high-priced Bible.”⁴⁰ The Holy Book and what the prospectus heralded as “The Most Unique and Spicy Volume in Existence” were hawked together as big, gaudy, ornamental, and overpriced volumes: “If both Bible and *The Innocents Abroad* were destined to share space on those marble-topped, mahogany-legged parlor tables, then the American Publishing Company would see that they shared space in the agent’s prospectus.”⁴¹

The intersection of destiny and marketing parallels the “uneasy union” of culture and capital “at the center of Gilded Age literary production.”⁴² Subscription books extended the reach of print-capitalism to markets previously unavailable, particularly to those too far from urban-based bookstores who yet desired the proper markers of cultural attainment on their parlor table. The parlor—yet another stage set, like the Holy Land, only this one fashioned for the private performance of refinement—held the unstable contradiction between the aspiring middle-class family’s identification as Jacksonian producers (who hardly ever used the room for fear of dirtying it) and as natural aristocrats (who would use the room without hardly ever seeming to notice its luxury). Parlors, as Richard Bushman in *The Refinement of America* describes them, were spaces “made for genteel performance, in imitation of aristocratic drawing rooms.” These roped-off inner sanctums of theatricality “were tokens of the family’s covenant with gentility, their claim on the dignity of a higher level of existence, when actually they spent most of their lives in hard work.” In effect, the parlor, like the Holy Land, was a sanctified space invested with values for the construction of an imagined personality, the “very power” of which “depended on its naive purity.” Like a church or pilgrimage site, the room with its ritual objects, established through the accumulation of capital, was reserved for the idea, if not the reality, of transcendence from precisely the values that had created it: “The walnut chairs and tables, the finished porcelains, the gilt clocks, the carpets, the flowers and shrubs had no functional use in the world of business. Their productive value was nil. They existed to sustain a life whose virtues contradicted the virtues of work and business.”⁴³ Yet, for the upper classes, who still expected Whiggish deference, both the new readership and the books themselves held no “naive purity.” Instead, both readers and books were considered degenerate parodies of the authentically acculturated and their authentic products, particularly since Bliss and his sales army focused primarily on marketing the *images* rather than the substance of culture their customers sought to mimic.

Elisha Bliss took several risks with *Innocents Abroad*, including the scandal of irreverence, but it was also the first book of literary quality sold by the American Publishing Company, since this form of publishing did not as yet attempt to produce and sell literary travel books like Twain’s or novels (in fact, *The Gilded Age*, following the success of *Innocents Abroad*, would be the first). In a sense, Twain’s travel book is also a parodic double of a subliterary text, a genuine literary article masquerading as its lower order, like the characterization of the author illustrated on the cover of the prospectus—“Mark Twain on the War-Path”—in which the author as a “nervous” white man is decked out in buckskins, tomahawk, and other signs of American savagery. Subscription books, precisely because they constituted a new, lower order of market-based literature, allowed Twain to violate the borders of genres with ease, the same way the touristic reproduction of the Holy Land and the parodic doubling of Jesus himself allowed Twain to cross the “frontiers” of sacred and profane through the “marketable sentiment” (141) of laughter.

Physical presence, particularly bulk, was of far more importance than literary merit in the typical subscription volume, “the text often serv[ing] as nothing more than an excuse for the binding.”⁴⁴ As one anonymous critic in a publishing trade journal jibed in 1872:

A gorgeous binding, usually in very bad taste, thick but cheap paper, outrageously poor wood-cuts, the largest type with the thickest leads, add up into a very big, gaudy book which a glib tongue or persistent boring cheats folks into buying at five dollars, when the reading matter which it contains, if worth anything, would make about a dollar-and-a-half book in the regular trade.⁴⁵

Richard Lowry has pointed out how owning books “entitled similar claims to distinction as reading them,”⁴⁶ and how their positioning as “the most telling furniture which can be placed in a room,” as George Palmer Putnam explains in “Suggestions for Household Libraries” in 1880,⁴⁷ was encouraged to provide a “staged” image of culture very similar to the touristic appropriation of Twain’s fellow *Quaker City* excursionists whom he satirizes. Subscription books would find their place of prominence in the family parlor—along with the reproductions of “The Last Supper” and other Old Masters on the walls, which Twain regarded as better than their originals—right next to the “authentic” family Bible, which, in Elisha Bliss’s edition, even had room for the family to affix itself, at least photographically, directly to its sanctified bulk. Bible sales were the backbone of the publishing industry, and as the sacred character of the narrative itself was increasingly regarded as less weighty—as biblical inerrancy was questioned, as the inevitable corruptions of translation were acknowledged, as the miraculous was historicized and naturalized by higher criticism and Darwinism—the book itself compensated for doubt by increasing in substance, became even heavier as a piece of furniture embodying middle-class gentility, just as the middle class took on the bulk of more and more symbolic objects in its parlors to allay doubts of its own cultural authenticity.

The joint marketing of the Bible and *Innocents Abroad* heralds an affinity based on a common textual instability; such an affinity, flowing from the contradictions and indeterminacies of parodic doubling, also radiates with the shifting (and shifty) definitions of commodification, an instability Twain himself, despite his satirization of “marketable sentiment,” does not escape. In this “New Pilgrim’s Progress,” Christian tears himself away from his tearful family to embark on a pilgrimage that, instead of reaching Bunyan’s goal of salvation, reveals only the contingency and changeability of exchange value as a reified, parodic double of the Word of God. Such a development allows Twain’s book itself to be regarded as a dangerous enfant terrible, a Gnostic Jesus bound between covers. “Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand,” Satan would declare in “The Mysterious Stranger,”⁴⁸ which only seems to answer, with devastating implications, the deceptively simple question William Hone plied to his jury in his Pyrrhic victory against blasphemy: “Was a laugh treason?”⁴⁹

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Reverence and Race

“THE IRREVERENCE of the volume appears to be a tip-top good feature of it, (financially) diplomatically speaking,” Twain wrote to his publisher Elisha Bliss, acknowledging the way this “Most Unique and Spicy Volume in Existence” delighted a key reviewer. Twain’s pleasure in the acclaim accorded *Innocents Abroad* was not unalloyed, however, for he immediately qualified his remark: “though I wish with all my heart there wasn’t an irreverent passage in it.”¹ The violated proprieties of Olivia Langdon and Mary Fairbanks account for only one source of Twain’s internal conflict. His ambivalence revolved around those contradictions inherent in touristic sensibility along with the uneasy implications of his own “wildcat” skepticism discussed earlier; but Twain’s reservations also involved less apparent conflicts over the deference due other types of authority, particularly racial authority.

“There may be a question of taste in Mr. Clemens permitting such a man as ‘Mark Twain’ to go to the Holy Land at all,” Bret Harte offers in defense of the author’s irreverent double, “but we contend that such a traveler would be more likely to report its external aspect truthfully than a man of larger reverence.”² Harte is careful to extol a man of “smaller reverence” as a better, more impartial witness by limiting Twain’s vision to the “external aspect” of the land and leaving the loftier hermeneutics of sacred geography to other, presumably more reverent (and larger), souls. Though Twain’s irreverence may be troubling by its depth and implications, his disappointment with the textualized landscape is no more excessive than that of other Holy Land travelers, including many of his companions onboard the *Quaker City*. Mary Fairbanks, who recognized Twain as “a diamond in the rough” and who, giving him “his first lessons in courtesy,” became his lifelong friend, was very much a larger, or at least more genteel, soul.³ Yet she, too, in terms strikingly similar to those employed by Twain, notes the disjunctures and draws out the customary comparisons and references to prophecy in language that, while not as violent or disruptive as Twain’s, is far less restrained than we might expect from “Mother” Fairbanks:

[T]here is no fervor in my fancy, and I feel to-night that I would rather remember “that sweet story of old” as I learned it in my childhood, than encumber it with any of the unlovely associations of modern Palestine.

I am conscious that what I have written does not accord with what you and I have read and I am chagrined that it is so. “Tent Life in the Holy Land” is a charming book to read in your library, but when, with your finger upon a certain line of glowing description, you look around in vain for the original of the picture, a feeling of resentment comes over you as when you have been deceived. . . .

Only this idea I wish to convey, when you come to this land of Bible scenes, leave behind you all your fancies. You will see no beautiful Rebecca at the well. Sarah at the door of her tent answers not to our tableau version of it. Joseph and Benjamin are very unattractive boys. Abraham and Jacob walk not in patriarchal dignity and flowing beards.

Cleanliness, which “is next to Godliness,” is not the crowning virtue here, but if, folding your robes about you, you can move amid the people, every step will reveal to you some fulfilment of prophecy, while your heart will be overflowing with thankfulness at the thought of beautiful dearly-loved America.⁴

Twain did not write in isolation: Emily Severance “sharpened his pencils with such precision that

automatically he handed them again to her for treatment,” while Mrs. Fairbanks edited his copy to “eliminate the profanity which had, through his hard knocks, become as habitual to him as the air he breathed.”⁵ An ensemble formed around the humorist—a collective or workshop in today’s terms—with both women, as well as others in his small circle onboard the tour ship, writing their own impressions, even, as in Mrs. Fairbanks’s correspondence to the *Cleveland Herald*, with similar professional pressures. Mark Twain’s irreverence was not uncharacteristic, for her perceptions of “unlovely associations,” “unattractive boys,” and other disappointments allow Mrs. Fairbanks to designate modern Palestine as the true source of irreverence, although each time the absence of the sacred in the land confirmed its presence elsewhere—notably, “beautiful dearly-loved America”—the realization would come as a shock. The point of this is to underscore the degree to which Twain’s irreverence—even his excesses of male humor—pleased even arbiters of female “taste” in the public sphere: Mary Fairbanks, Emily Severance, and, eventually, Olivia Langdon all attempted to guide his humor, not repress it, as did Bret Harte, who also tried to defend it.

While his terms of disappointment and consequent irreverence could appeal, within limits, to the taste of his workshop, Twain does manage to find a saving grace to the land in ways Mrs. Fairbanks, Emily Severance, and the other correspondents onboard the *Quaker City* could not. Precisely by manipulating its “external aspect,” Twain creates a double of it by means of perceptual blurring, a surface literary effect with profound “internal” consequences: the disappointing, dead land, if not simply transposed as a better, more vital “copy” in the New World, is resurrected only in the imagination by the effects of distancing or through nature’s theatricality. The only time to see the Galilee, for example, is at night, for “Gennesaret under these lustrous stars has nothing repulsive about it.” Under the stars, the lake “has no boundaries but the broad compass of the heavens, and is a theatre meet for great events,” an appropriately biblical idiom. In the sunlight, the fact that sacred narrative was enacted upon such a “little acre of rocks and sand” seems beyond belief: “One can comprehend it only when night has hidden all incongruities and created a theatre proper for so grand a drama” (512–13). Only through appropriate lighting—or at a distance, in bed—can the stage set serve its associative purpose, for, contrary to Reverend de Witt Talmage’s conceit, the more the material Palestine is “brought under close inspection,” the *less* the Bible is found glorious and true.

But this dynamic of external definitions and internal truths (and the need to harmonize them), here applied to text and land, stands at the core of *all* relations of deference: outer ceremony (or rhetoric or surface) signifies or reveals inner worth—or at least is regarded as if it does. Certainly, the disastrous experience of his Whittier Banquet speech—during which Twain believed he had scandalized the Brahman literati by presenting vernacular, Mother Lode burlesques of the celebrated authors in attendance a few years after his *Quaker City* excursion—would bring home the degree to which literary authority could be just as demanding of reverence as any gatekeeper of the sacred. Twain’s lack of deference toward literary authority (that is, to the class rhetoric of the settled seaboard core) was no doubt also a source of some of his anxieties over *Innocents Abroad*. Such irreverence perhaps could only be exceeded in volatility by a lack of obeisance to the outer forms (and to their consequent inner social truths) of American racial categories. The disruptive power of such irreverence was already quite evident in Twain’s Virginia City miscegenation hoax (as well as the even more infamous one perpetrated in 1864 by New York reporters meant to discredit abolitionists as racial “amalgamationists”).⁶ In this regard, Twain’s remark to Bliss can also be read as an expression of regret over mocking the supremacy of the “nervous” white man, even though he attempts throughout the excursion to

maintain a proper sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority. Still, the more the white man is brought under close inspection, the less he, too, is found glorious and true, an epistemological routine he would continue throughout his career.

Race is an inevitable presence, constant though often ghostly, in *Innocents Abroad*. For example, the Orient—the exoticism of which is most satisfyingly discovered in the surface of “thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign” Tangier—can be a place where “no white men [were] visible, yet swarms of humanity are all about us” (76). The East, of course, remains defined by the prevailing Manichean split of European Orientalism: “Napoleon III., the representative of the highest modern civilization, progress, and refinement,” is ranged against “Abdul Aziz, the representative of a people by nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, superstitious” (126). At the same time that Twain replicates a European division between East and West, a religio-cultural bifurcation easily shared by Euro-Americans, he also denominates nationalities and religious communities, such as Italians or Jews, according to a broader “racial” taxonomy not fully dependent on the American color line. “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts,” Twain offers in the travel book genre’s more “serious,” didactic register. “Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can not be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime” (650). But often, when Twain offers some kind of “charitable,” democratic gesture toward the Other, he does so within the patronizing bounds of Euro-American notions of uplift: “These people [Arabs] are naturally good-hearted and intelligent, and with education and liberty, would be a happy and contented race” (444).

Yet, as we have seen, so much of Twain’s humor stems from the incongruities of the American Vandal played out at the expense of the foreign, as well as from the class disjunctures between the unstable frontiersman and the settled gentleman. “The joke is a great union element,” Samuel “Sunset” Cox (former congressman and fellow Oriental travel writer) contends in *Why We Laugh*. “If velvet paw can only shake horny hand over a joke, a velvet paw and horny hand are a community at once of equal franchises.”⁷ But Cox’s appeal for the democratic (though deferential) effect of humor in asserting “union” is meant only if paw and hand were white: if the joke somehow were genuinely to cross the color line, or if too much irony were to blur or relativize absolute distinctions, racial structures predicated on subordination and enforced by outright terror—structures that allow for Cox’s humor of herrenvolk cross-class solidarity to blossom—could be undermined.

I have already discussed Twain’s equation of Indian-Arab as an appropriation of sacred landscape—and of the transgressive ambiguities of Jesus walking among “dusky” Digger Indians—but I would also add how such an equation is rendered even more complex by his own frequent impersonations of Indians: “I shall visit Paris again some day, and then let the guides beware! I shall go in my war-paint—I shall carry my tomahawk along” (123–24). Such impersonations—which at once mock Old World contempt for settler-colonial barbarism, assert New World vigor, lampoon “noble savage” romanticism, and reinforce white superiority through seemingly preposterous racial incongruity—come fully authorized in American culture as a complex theatricality of denigration, identification, and appropriation, which, while sharing certain characteristics with blackface and even with donning Eastern robes and turbans, retains an independent dynamic. The white man has regularly masqueraded as an Indian, absorbing perceived noble or wilderness virtues while discarding the savage nonwhite body beneath the buckskin, from the Boston Tea Party to the placards held by segregationists protesting the integration of the National Football League, which read “Keep Redskins White.” But the

illustration of “Mark Twain in War-Paint” can also project such impersonations into a further, destabilizing dimension through self-mockery, just as the all-too-accurate invocation of the “nervous” white man to commit massacres is exploded by Twain’s schlemiel ineptitude.

Twain indulges in yet another irreverence toward an absolute of American racial categories in *Innocents Abroad*, although it is only faintly registered: that obsession with the “external aspect” of Africa by which so much of American settler-colonial experience—and Twain’s own later fiction—can be read. Indeed, there are “original, genuine negroes, as black as Moses” among the “howling dervishes” and other multitudes in Tangier (78), and there are even a few, scattered mentions of America’s recent internecine conflict—such as the deflating realization that so many foreigners, if they had heard of America, “knew it only as a barbarous province away off somewhere, that had lately been at war with somebody” (645). Yet what is absent—and consequently so conspicuously and eerily present, particularly in the aftermath of the Civil War—is “that dramatic polarity created by skin color” out of which flows what Toni Morrison has eloquently termed “an American Africanism—a fabricated brew of darkness, otherness, alarm, and desire that is uniquely American.”⁸

In the celebrated passage of Twain’s weeping at the grave of Adam in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for example, the African, though invisible, can be detected even in the gesture of mocking “the grave of a blood relation,” for the lament at the tomb—which stands alongside “the genuine center of the earth” out of which the dust was taken to create “the father of the human race”—resonates with allusions to contending theories of human origins. “True,” Adam is “a distant one, but still a relation” (567), Twain humorously quibbles, but it is a joke that, in addition to its irreverence to religion, could also trigger racial anxieties: such a “blood relation” was not universally admitted of Africans; or, if such a relation were accepted, it was only after rationalizing some kind of disruption or intervention in biblical genealogy. The debate over “polygenesis,” which regarded white and black races to have been created separately as distinct species (with even the suggestion that blacks were created *before* Adam and Eve, or, in some versions, born of the serpent), versus “monogenesis,” which held that all of humanity had a distant, yet single, common ancestry, and that all racial differences were attributed to differing physical conditions and social environments, raged throughout scientific and intellectual circles, a controversy with distinct political ramifications in the early Reconstruction period.⁹

“Polygenesis,” advanced by the “American school of ethnology” and endorsed by none other than the celebrated naturalist Louis Agassiz, was popular among those who could not countenance the fundamental human coincidence of white and black: for example, ethnologist Samuel George Morton argued that Negroes had been created separately to inhabit tropical Africa, while Caucasians were the only authentic descendants of Adam.¹⁰ Even those who accepted a single, common ancestry—a theory which better accommodated orthodox biblical accounts of Genesis—found other ways to justify postslavery white supremacy, notably by invoking the curse of Ham, the mark of Cain, and other scriptural formulations, while the new theories of Charles Darwin, despite their adding yet other dimensions to the irreverence of weeping at the tomb of “the father of the human race,” could be marshaled to the defense of either narrative. Mock tears at the tomb of Adam do not amount to a particular stand by Twain on these debates, of course, although such a burlesque may appear far less “innocent” when viewed through the lens of race terror.

In Egypt, Twain maintains the identification of Arabs with Indians as “savages,” creating perhaps the most comically manic moments in the travel book at the culmination of his journey to the heart of the Orient. Twain abruptly moves from the surface “fairy vision” of the Pyramid

of Cheops to the internal truth of “a corrugated, unsightly mountain of stone” (621), from making absurd bets that an Arab racing up the side of an adjacent pyramid for baksheesh would fall and break his neck—“ ‘Sirrah, I will give you a hundred dollars to jump off this pyramid head first’ ” (625)—to expostulating on the sublimity of the Sphinx in phrases all too similar to the purple effusions of other Holy Land writers—“The Sphinx is grand in its loneliness; it is impossible in its magnitude; it is impressive in the mystery that hangs over its story” (629). All the while Twain makes no overt reference to blackness, Africa, or slavery, despite the fact that black identification with the escape from bondage of Exodus and racial speculations over the origins of the pharaohs (and, consequently, of the origins of Western civilization) made Egypt a locale insistently drawn into so many contending mythic narratives and pseudoscientific debates. Certainly, the look of the Sphinx itself drew out such associations: “The features are very Negroid, and were once stained red,” Emily Severance reports matter-of-factly to her family, a common enough observation Twain chose not to make.¹¹

Yet the virtual absence of allusions to African slavery in the Holy Land portions of *Innocents Abroad* seems most remarkable of all, considering the degree to which Scripture was constantly deployed to justify positions on both sides of the conflict. In his *Autobiography*, Twain explains how his mother, “kindhearted and compassionate as she was . . . was not conscious that slavery was a bald, grotesque and unwarrantable usurpation.”

She had never heard it assailed in any pulpit but had heard it defended and sanctified in a thousand; her ears were familiar with Bible texts that approved it but if there were any that disapproved it they had not been quoted by her pastors; as far as her experience went, the wise and the good and the holy were unanimous in the conviction that slavery was right, righteous, sacred, the peculiar pet of the Deity and a condition which the slave himself ought to be daily and nightly thankful for.¹²

Perhaps the fact that *Innocents Abroad* was dedicated to “my most patient reader and most charitable critic, my aged mother” may indicate why “blowing up” such hermeneutic malfeasance may have been too offensive, especially since the relations of racial domination that had “stupefied” otherwise compassionate, kindhearted people remained operative.¹³

However, Twain, while virtually erasing the peculiar institution from sacred geography, does manage—as does Poe in the pro-slavery allusions he makes in his review of John Lloyd Stephens’s *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land*—to invoke American chattel slavery in the context of Ottoman experience. While Twain notes that slave sales were no longer public, he conjures a mock “SLAVE GIRL MARKET REPORT,” written as if “the American metropolitan newspapers were published here in Constantinople,” in which he blends male voyeurism and calculating business logic for satiric effect, although the critique of the American institution remains indirect. While the burlesque is introduced by a jab at Mormon polygamy—“It makes our cheeks burn with shame to see such a thing permitted here in Turkey. We do not mind it so much in Salt Lake, however”—the titillations of the slave mart, “where tender young girls were stripped for inspection, and criticised and discussed just as if they were horses at an agricultural fair” (368), arise from Twain’s wildly vacillating peek-show eroticism, which could swing comically back and forth between settled, feminized prudery and frontier, masculinist aggression in virtually the same sentence: while watching the can-can in Paris, Twain “placed my hands before my face for very shame,” then confesses, “But I looked through my fingers” (136). With all the slavemart’s titillations, the burlesque does not require any demonstrable marker to call attention to the prevalence of precisely such scenes in the South just a few years before, although the joke only seems to revolve—like so many of Twain’s spoofs on “marketable sentiments”—around the incongruity of flat, journalistic, commercial jargon

employed in terms of three-dimensional, female flesh:

The Georgians now on hand are mostly last year's crop, which was unusually poor. The new crop is a little backward, but will be coming in shortly. As regards its quantity and quality, the accounts are most encouraging. In this connection we can safely say, also, that the new crop of Circassians is looking extremely well. His Majesty the Sultan has already sent in large orders for his new harem, which will be finished within a fortnight, and this has naturally strengthened the market and given Circassian stock a strong upward tendency. Taking advantage of the inflated market, many of our shrewdest operators are selling short. There are hints of a "corner" on Wallachians. (369)

That the women are in fact white—Georgians and Circassians are literally Caucasians, while Wallachians comprise present-day Rumanians—alludes to one of the great terrors of chattel slavery: the chance that someone whose "external aspect" was white could still be enslaved either because of her inner, one-drop-of-blood truth as black or even, most horrible of all, if such a truth were entirely fabricated (a nightmarish ambiguity Twain would play upon with devastating effect in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*). Yet blackness is directly evident even in this "white" burlesque, for immediately after the "hints" on cornering the market on Wallachians, the commercial report goes on: "There is nothing new in Nubians. Slow sale." Indeed, the Civil War had "slowed" the sale of "Nubian" Americans considerably, a humorous "nothing new" immediately rendered more disquieting by a quick-switch "con" pulled on the male gaze that Twain has so cunningly teased: "Eunuchs—None offering; however, large cargoes are expected from Egypt to-day."

After the allusion to castration at the end of the slave-mart report, Twain ratchets up the perverse eroticism of the scene. While noting how starving parents would sell their own daughters cheap—"It is sad to think of so distressing a thing as this"—his deadpan punch line is delivered in nothing less than the moralizing tones of genteel philanthropy: "and I for one am sincerely glad the prices are up again" (369). Never once does he let on to the blandly cruel absurdity of either the "commercial report" or his "sincere" concern, nor does he acknowledge how the American contours of the joke exceed the satire, which is certainly potent enough, of cool, commercial language euphemistically toying with the hot realities of white (sexual) slavery. The joke would play well with his overwhelmingly male readers in San Francisco—in 1867 still demographically the most sexually imbalanced major urban center in the country—where prostitution was a major and tolerated industry. Twain leaves the obvious racial registers of the passage to the reader's own capacity to perceive "internal (racial) truth" through what should be the transparent surface ironies of male sexuality.

One passage, however, goes beyond the indirect and ghostly to articulate a quite material African American presence. In Venice, once again railing at "Fergusons" and the pretensions of high art, Twain complains of the way his guide "crushed out my swelling enthusiasm" for a painting with the condescending remark: "It is nothing—it is of the *Renaissance*." Seemingly unaware of what—or who—the renaissance is, Twain blurts out the shocking confession, for which the surprised reader has been caught wholly unprepared: "I could not bear to be ignorant before a cultivated negro, the offspring of a South Carolina slave" (240). The unexpected guide explains "that Renaissance was not a man, that *renaissance* was a term used to signify what was at best but an imperfect rejuvenation of art." Here, in one brief, almost telegraphic paragraph that radiates with multiple racial ambiguities, Twain explains the presence in one of the exalted sites of European high culture of none other than that apparent oxymoron, the "cultivated negro":

The guide I have spoken of is the only one we have had yet who knew anything. He was born in South Carolina, of slave parents. They came to Venice while he was an infant. He has grown up here. He is well educated. He reads, writes, and speaks English, Italian, Spanish, and French, with perfect facility; is a worshipper of art and thoroughly conversant with it; knows the history of Venice by heart and never tires of talking of her illustrious career. He dresses better than any of us, I think, and is

daintily polite. Negroes are deemed as good as white people, in Venice, and so this man feels no desire to go back to his native land. His judgment is correct. (240–42)

Although the “cultivated negro” may have been an invention—Twain does not mention him in the newspaper correspondence from which he developed *Innocents Abroad*—the educated colored man abroad, whether in exile or on a mission of seeking solidarity in the anti-slavery struggle, was already quite evident (William Wells Brown is one prominent example), so the nameless guide could very well have existed. Yet he stands out as an anomaly to shock white presumptions, for prevailing opinion regarded the intellectual capacities of the African as barbarously low, if at all extant, with the apparently contradictory evidence of a Frederick Douglass, for example, often attributed only to the white blood of anonymous, slave-master patriarchs.

That Twain has set himself up, according to the conventions of “tall” humor, to be the naive “tenderfoot” gulled by a knowing black “oldtimer,” is an astonishing reversal, particularly when located in the epistemological and aesthetic terrain of European high culture. Twain could not “bear” to display his ignorance before the offspring of a slave, yet he does just that, allowing himself to be humiliated as a stand-in for all white manhood. Not only does the black man guide the white, he is “the only one we have had yet who knew anything,” his acumen surpassing all other European guides, allowing him to be the representative American able to beat Europe at its own game, a performance serving further to underscore the degeneracy of Europeans who could be bested even by a *black* American. But not only is this child of slaves cultivated, he is supremely educated, dresses better than the white excursionists, and, in a prissy counter to the image of black vulgarity, “is daintily polite.” The joke, presumably, is on Twain; but it is also on his fellow excursionists and, by extension, on the white reader, the humorous reversal suddenly creating a possible “community of equal franchises” for many who, no doubt, had no intention of offering any. At the same time, the allusion to racial equality is both reinforced and rendered ambiguous by Twain’s final fillip. The response to the fact that because of equal treatment in Venice, “this man”—note how the offspring of a slave is now designated as none other than a “man”—“feels no desire to go back to his native land,” can be regarded as a cutting, deeply ironic criticism of Twain’s own native land; however, that his choice to remain an exile is deemed “correct” radiates additional nuances that do not necessarily imply support for racial compatibility at all.

“Away with the Negroes!” summarizes the sentiments of many whites, even those who had opposed slavery,¹⁴ and the fact that a black person, cultivated or not, would locate in Venice rather than, say, Vicksburg would rather have pleased many of them. Thomas Jefferson had long ago articulated in *Notes on the State of Virginia* the prevailing, even enlightened view that it was impossible “to incorporate the blacks into the state” because “deep-rooted prejudices” of whites, “ten thousand recollections by the blacks of the injuries they have sustained,” as well as “the real distinctions nature has made,” all of which “will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of one or the other race.”¹⁵ During the war, Samuel “Sunset” Cox, then representing Ohio in Congress, found no humor in the possibility of equal franchises, expounding that this country was “made for white men; that this Government is a Government of white men; that the men who made it never intended by anything they did to place the black race upon an equality with the white.”¹⁶ At the start of Reconstruction, President Johnson reiterated Jeffersonian notions of racial incompatibility, insisting that “[t]he great difference between the two races in physical, mental, and moral characteristics will prevent an amalgamation or fusion of them together in one homogeneous

mass.”¹⁷

In accord with such presumed incompatibility, numerous racial theories and policies were advanced—along with such provocations as miscegenation hoaxes. These included the proposal that freed slaves should return to Africa either through inducements or force, a proposal more “reasonable,” more consonant with the impossibility of fusion or equality which, though more popular before the war, still remained salient. Twain’s remark that the black exile’s “judgment is correct” calls to mind favorable attitudes toward expulsion or “colonization” more than present-day readers may at first perceive. Although Twain does include the black man as a representative American and not as an interloper or false claimant, and he once again subverts the nervous white man, Twain is not quite ready to tear up the text of race the way Huck Finn tears up his letter turning in Miss Watson’s runaway slave: “All right, then, I’ll *go* to hell.”¹⁸ In fact, though Twain’s paradoxically painful and redemptive treatment of racial categories characterizes so much of his subsequent writing, he never again depicts such a “cultivated negro,” perhaps saving the nervous white man from a trip to hell even more unnerving than Huck Finn could imagine.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The “Cultivated Negro” and the Curse of Ham

EDWARD WILMOT BLYDEN, who traveled to Egypt and Palestine in 1866 shortly before the *Quaker City* excursion, was precisely the “cultivated negro” Mark Twain would find so comically humiliating. Indeed, Blyden was one of the most accomplished, celebrated, controversial—and largely forgotten—black intellectuals of the nineteenth century. Curiously, not only did Blyden’s life, which spanned the years from 1832 to 1912, virtually overlap Twain’s, but his career also embodied similar, albeit often inverted or reconfigured, contradictions of settler-colonial identity. Blyden—ardent advocate of Liberian colonization, Presbyterian minister, diplomat, scholar, and educator—was hardly a humorist, although he wrote eloquently, in great quantities, and with the evident ability to skewer white presumption with rueful wit when he chose to. His travel book *From West Africa to Palestine* (1873) proved also to be an important juncture in his career, although it never became the mass cultural marker of *Innocents Abroad*.

From West Africa to Palestine is a “factual, precise, and unromanticized” account, as historian of African American religion Albert Raboteau describes it,¹ in which Blyden also sets out to see sacred landscape with his own eyes, although he is keenly aware that he is, as one American missionary terms the Liberian traveler, “the only living referee in your country on matters relating to the Holy Land.”² Nevertheless, while journeying to Palestine as a representative Negro from the new republic of Liberia—if not *the* representative Negro from the entire African world—Blyden does not set out to be the typical arbiter of the hermeneutics of the “Fifth Gospel” of sacred landscape, but to enact an “Ethiopianist” countertextualization as part of a very conscious ideological program.

Though *From West Africa to Palestine* is the most significant African American contribution to Holy Land literature in this period, Blyden’s account was not the first: he was preceded by David F. Dorr, who privately printed *A Colored Man Round the World* with the ascription “by a quadroon” in 1858.³ Dorr accompanied his New Orleans master as more of a traveling companion than a slave for a three-year tour of Europe and the East. “This gentleman treated me as his own son, and could look on me as as free a man as walks the earth.”⁴ Dorr writes of his master, who nevertheless, upon their return, reneged on his many promises to free him and allow him to marry, forcing Dorr to flee north to the slave’s Canaan. *A Colored Man Round the World*, like other books by escaped slaves, is thus an expression of freedom, the book itself serving as material evidence of the will-to-be, even as a trophy of victory over oppressive forces that would deny a colored man his world, much less the mastery and mobility to encircle it. Unlike slave narratives, however, *A Colored Man Round the World* does not recount the horrors of Dorr’s life as a slave (which, by the evidence of his travels, was considerably less harsh than most), nor is the book at all infused with a sense of mission, although he regularly injects comments on the inhumanity of the peculiar institution throughout the narrative.

Instead, Dorr has produced a travel book unique not only to African American literature but to

the entire corpus of antebellum travel literature for its flouting of conventions and genteel proprieties. Like Twain, Dorr “has the satisfaction of looking with his own eyes and reason,”⁵ yet “his own eyes,” even more than Twain’s, view the Old World as a field for exotic encounters and erotic exploits more than anything else. Dorr takes little interest in ruins and monuments or in displaying erudition to prove just how “cultivated” a Negro can be: he assumes the prerogatives of gentlemanly cultivation, taking as his right the pleasures of the tourist. While he does make note of cathedrals and the like, even quoting from Byron and others at the appropriate moments, Dorr exudes the élan of a hedonistic New Orleans dandy who, above all, relishes the sexual and racial freedoms of every place he visits. Playfully recording each erotic encounter (such as viewing an illicit review of “a dozen beautiful women habited like Eve before she devised the fig leaf covering”⁶ in Paris), while at the same time excoriating slavery and wryly noting the hypocrisies of white Americans, Dorr produces a far more “irreverent” book than Mark Twain—even without the constrictions of Olivia Langdon and Mary Fairbanks—would have allowed himself even to contemplate.

Perhaps the most memorable parts of *A Colored Man Round the World* concern Frank Parish, a black man of huge size from Tennessee. In the chapter titled, with typical gusto, “A Colored Man from Tennessee Shaking Hands with the Sultan, and Men Putting Women in the Bath and Taking Them Out,” Dorr recounts how, while observing the royal procession in Constantinople, Parish so shocks the sultan by his great bulk that the entire royal entourage comes to a halt:

Frank had brass enough to look at the Sultan as he did at other people. Frank took his pipe from his mouth and walked up to the Sultan’s carriage and offered his hand which the Sultan took, to the approbation of all present. The seven Sultanas were looking at Frank all the time through their eyelids as if they liked the looks of him. . . . He was a free man and owned property in Nashville. The Sultan could plainly see that his loyal subjects were but as infants by the giant-like man that stood over them. Being surrounded by such dwarf-like men, he showed off to great advantage. The Sultan is a weak looking man, and has the marks of fatigue well written on his forehead and limbs; he also looks like a man surfeiting on the fat of the world.⁷

Parish, who had been recovering from wounds suffered in saving the life of a white man from Nashville attacked by Arabs, is offered as the representative of Western manhood against Eastern degeneracy—in the same Manichean framework as Twain’s—except the man is not only American but black. In Athens, Parish—whose reddish coloring quite literally made him “brass”—“took another liberty with royalty,” this time with King Otho of Greece:

As the King and his wife rode up to the band, his horses stopped just at Frank’s elbow, and Frank walked to the carriage and offered his red hand to the king, and it was, through courtesy, accepted. Athens is to-day a small town, and the King lives here. The whole population of Greece is not quite a million. Our slaves would make four kingdoms as powerful in population as Greece. Oh, when will we be the “freest government in the world?”⁸

Dorr exudes a freshness and verve similar to that of Twain, while his heightened subjectivity as an American is accentuated even further by his loathing of slavery and hypocrisy: for example, at the American exhibit at the Crystal Palace in London, disappointing for its lack of American marvels, such as steamboats, he saw “everything that was a prevailing disgrace to our country except slaves.”⁹

Unfortunately, Dorr’s depiction of Palestine is “so sketchy,” in Raboteau’s judgment, “that its veracity may justly be questioned.”¹⁰ Dorr expresses the same disappointments as other travelers confronted by mythic sites—“I came to Jerusalem with a submissive heart, but when I heard all the absurdities of these ignorant people, I was more inclined to ridicule right over these sacred dead bodies, and spots, than pay homage”¹¹—and he departs the Holy Land with no pretense toward its supposed sanctity: “I leave it, never wishing to return again.”¹² Dorr’s frankness is

disarming, displaying an innocence more genuine than that of Twain: “Like an anxious boy, in the ardor of anxiety to describe, I may fall, but I tell the thing as I saw it”—while his countertext, though slight, flows from similar “frontier” sources as those of Twain.¹³

Edward Wilmot Blyden was probably not familiar with Dorr’s account; no doubt, if he were to have read *A Colored Man Round the World* he would have been scandalized, the book only confirming the degeneracy he ascribed to quadroons and others of mixed race. Yet Blyden also took his vision as his right, although he did travel with a deeply ingrained sense of mission to appropriate his travels for the construction of a new identity that though not so “spicy,” was even more provocative than that of Dorr. *From West Africa to Palestine* presents a complex negotiation of African diaspora in terms of an acute—and paradoxical—hybridity: as an African, Blyden insists on cultivating Western culture; as a Christian, he promotes accommodation with Islam as the religion best suited for Africa; as a proponent of liberation, he favors African American colonization and European domination of the continent; and as an advocate of nineteenth-century progress, he persists in drawing immutable racial boundaries based on the mythic genealogy of the sons of Noah.

Some may even question how appropriate it is to describe Blyden as an American writer. Yet, while he claimed Liberia as his homeland, to the great extent that Liberia and the American Colonization Society, which settled that country and which Blyden represented, were creatures of American racial oppression, Blyden is unmistakably an African American (as well as an American African) author. More important, Blyden was a creation of the same settler-colonial dynamics of appropriation, migration, and displacement that shaped Mark Twain, although his particular pattern of mobility—which took the form of constant circulation among the Caribbean, the United States, Great Britain, and West Africa—was not identical. Blyden thrived in that motion as part of what Paul Gilroy has termed “the black Atlantic,” that anglophone zone of diasporic circulation “where movement, relocation, displacement, and restlessness are the norms rather than the exceptions,” and where self-exploration is associated with the exploration of new territories “and the cultural differences that exist both between and within the groups that get called races.”¹⁴ One need not subscribe to all of Gilroy’s conclusions to recognize the potency of “the black Atlantic” as a concept, certainly its pertinence to Blyden and his evangelical, colonizationist, and literary predecessor, Oluudah Equiano. However, what I would add to this designation of subjective agency is the fact that at least for Blyden, the “return” element in this diasporic circularity of chattel, cash, and culture—a return that attempted to embody the negation of the negation through a geographic, “mapped” transformation—was predicated on a settler-colonial project that replicated Anglo-American practices, even to the extent of lighter-skinned settlers imposing a Southern-style plantation system dependent on the forced labor of blacker, indigenous peoples.

Edward Wilmot Blyden was born in 1832 in Charlotte Amalie, the capital of the Danish island of St. Thomas, to a family and in a milieu marked by relative privilege and cosmopolitan sophistication.¹⁵ Born free—his father was a tailor, his mother a schoolteacher—Blyden was raised with a keen pride in his “pure black” Ibo ancestry amid a vibrant English-speaking community of Sephardic Jews, among whom numbered the eventual treasurer of the Confederacy, Judah Benjamin, and artist Camille Pissarro:

For years, the next door neighbours of my parents were Jews. I played with Jewish boys, and looked forward as eagerly as they did to the annual festivals and fasts of their Church. I always went to the Synagogue on the solemn Day of Atonement—not inside. I took up an outside position from which I could witness the proceedings of the worshippers, hear the prayers and the reading, the singing and the sermon. The Synagogue stood on the side of a hill; and, from a terrace immediately above it, we Christian boys who were interested could look down upon the mysterious assembly, which we did in breathless silence, with

an awe and a reverence which have followed me all the days of my life.¹⁶

Blyden's cosmopolitan experience with Jews made a deep impression on him: he eventually learned Hebrew and inculcated a sense of destiny based on the idea that "Africa is distinguished as having served and suffered" in a way "not unlike that of God's ancient people, the Hebrews."¹⁷ Both peoples shared a common mission to act as "the spiritual saviours or regenerators of humanity,"¹⁸ a sense of parallel destiny that would allow Blyden to welcome Theodor Herzl's own colonizationist project with such great enthusiasm that he would even suggest, years before London's proposal for Uganda to be the site for the Jewish homeland, that the Jewish state be established in Africa.

As a youth Blyden attended the integrated Dutch Reformed Church, where he met Reverend John P. Knox, who encouraged him in his studies. At eighteen Blyden, already a tailor, decided to train for the ministry, and in 1850 Knox sponsored him to go to the United States to enroll at Rutgers Theological College. After Rutgers and two other colleges refused to accept him because of his race, Blyden attended a Thanksgiving Day service in New York City at which the pastor preached concerning the new Fugitive Slave Act. As Blyden describes the sermon, "which was in justification of the law":

[T]he minister took a view of the condition and character of the colored people in the United States, in which he made an assertion to the effect that the efforts of those who were endeavoring to elevate Africans in America, were, and always would be, fruitless. "The decree," he remarked, "has gone forth, and we cannot reverse it. 'Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall be unto his brethren.'" This was the first of our hearing such weight given to that interpretation and application of Noah's malediction; and though not over eighteen years old, we experienced, as it were, an intuitive revulsion of mind never to be forgotten.¹⁹

Noah's malediction—and the Africanist attempt to reinterpret it—would become a central feature of Blyden's struggle within Christianity and a continual theme of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. However, at this time, with his educational ambitions thwarted and his liberty at peril because of the new law, Blyden accepted backing by white colonizationists to sail for Liberia, where he was able to obtain his education and become a Presbyterian minister as well as an adamant, articulate spokesman for colonization.

Blyden toured the United States in 1862 in the midst of the war to call for immigrants, became president of the newly established College of Liberia, the first institution of higher learning in the settler nation, and served as secretary of state before resigning to make his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1866. Although an advocate of colonization, in order to forge an "African nationality" in the course of black settlers "civilizing" indigenous peoples, Blyden had already made extensive contact with the tribal peoples in the West African interior and had become impressed with the powerful influence of Islam, particularly the fact that Islam, unlike Christianity, had never imposed any racial discrimination. Indeed, "the object of my voyage was partly to get some insight into the Arabic language" (37) in order to further his work with Muslim tribes, Blyden explains of his 1866 pilgrimage, and these two preoccupations—a deepening interest in Islam's vitality and civilizing influence joined to a revision of Noah's malediction (and the racial schema that flows from it)—frame not only *From West Africa to Palestine* but much of the ideological struggle that would shape the rest of his long career.

While Blyden made his journey east in 1866, his travel book was only published in 1873 in Sierra Leone where he lived in exile. Upon his return from his pilgrimage, Blyden had taken the side of blacks against mulattoes in the struggle for power in Liberia, advocating more immigrants from the West Indies (who tended to be "pure black") rather than from the southern

United States (who tended to be racially mixed), as well as increased contact with the interior, which the mulatto faction opposed as a threat to their control of commerce. As well, Blyden instituted Arabic language courses at the College of Liberia, criticized what he perceived to be attempts by mulattoes to exclude pure black students, and proposed relocating the school farther inland rather than in Monrovia, precisely to include those students. In 1870, Edward James Roye, of pure Ibo descent, was elected president with a bold program of improvements financed by a loan from a British bank made on onerous terms. Blyden was an enthusiastic ally and frequent visitor to the president and his wife, the first full-black First Lady.

In 1871, the factional struggle, inflamed by controversy over the British loan, exploded into violence. Blyden, who was accused of adulterous relations with Mrs. Roye, was dragged by a mob through Monrovia with a rope around his neck and saved only by the intervention of a friend, while President Roye was deposed and soon after killed. Blyden fled to Sierra Leone where he continued his work as an educator and launched a newspaper, the *Negro*, in which he praised the Italian nationalist Mazzini and the philosophers Fichte, Hegel, and other European nationalist thinkers, while advocating a separatist black identity to form an African nation, the core of which he saw as a pure black Muslim nation in the interior. Blyden maintained his repugnance for people of mixed race throughout his career. While noting the brilliance, for example, of Frederick Douglass, Blyden was ambivalent toward him, their sharp differences over colonization aside. Blyden's antipathy took on an almost pathological cast by the fact that his wife was also a mulatto who was, as he described her, "[u]ncongenial, incompatible, unsympathetic."²⁰

None of this chaotic, troubling tale makes its way directly into *From West Africa to Palestine*. Blyden refrains from mentioning any of his political difficulties, which by the time he published the book had been resolved enough to allow him to return from exile, while his career, whose international repute would continue to ascend for another four decades, would always be marked by a quixotic loyalty to the idea of Liberia despite that black Zion's evident failure. The ruling caste of Americo-Liberians relegated him to oblivion because "they felt his revolutionary views might threaten the safety of the state," although interest in his work was revived, ironically, only a few years before the settler regime was overthrown in the 1980 coup.²¹ However, his influence was considerable on Alexander Crummel, Martin Delaney, W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and others who advocated some form of pan-Africanist identity, if not explicit back-to-Africa programs. According to Leopold Senghor, "All the themes which were to be developed by the Negritude movement were already treated by Blyden in the middle of the 19th century, both the virtues of Negritude and the proper modes of illustrating these virtues: through scholarly studies, life styles, and cultural creation."²² Yet what makes the account of his travels, along with his theological, political, and racial precepts, especially moving is the way they run against the grain of the actual history of the settler-colonial project: the fact that his pilgrimage occurred years before the black-mulatto strife allows him to inscribe an almost idealized Africanist vision presented in a purposely restrained, didactic style aimed at a barely formed Liberian or pan-African readership with no distraction from the book's "pioneering" quality by polemics, recriminations, or, for that matter, the harsh realities of colonial violence.

Blyden opens his account with a discussion of the two ways in which those living on the west coast of Africa can make their way to Egypt and the Holy Land: either by land across the continent or by ship through the Mediterranean.

After mature deliberation I chose the sea. I was not proceeding to the Holy Land in obedience to any irresistible impulse—I had not seen a vision or dreamed a dream; I was not moved by the inspiration of "Jerusalem on the brain," which, from the

time of the Crusades, has seemed to sway, with uncontrollable power, not a few good and otherwise discreet men, who, in pursuance of the various enterprises which grow out of their own all-pervading idea, attempt the most impossible things. I was not guided by any infallible suggestions. (9–10)

Blyden inaugurates his pilgrimage with a demarcation from a fanatical “all-pervading idea” to seek “the most impossible things.” His is a religious quest, yet one informed by a rationalist intelligence, unlike that of a “less favoured” American immigrant who, twelve years earlier, having come to Liberia with nothing but the clothes on his back, was “under the impression that, by some strange and supernatural ‘revelation,’ he was commissioned to go to Jerusalem by land across the African continent” (10). Despite the warnings of all about him, he “raved and foamed at the mouth like a madman” (11), as he insisted in traveling beyond “the last civilized town” to reach the Holy City. Blyden considers that “of all crochets in the word the most mischievous . . . are religious crochets,” which are impossible to dislodge: “to the obstinacy of nature brought into religion, they add the obstinacy of prejudice” (11–12). Six months later Blyden learns of the death of the “poor pilgrim” in the Ashantee country, his son, “dilapidated in constitution,” returning to his mother’s arms. “It is to be hoped,” he concludes, “that the deluded old man, forgiven for his unfathomable folly, has gained entrance into that higher and better Jerusalem” (12).

With this anecdote, Blyden dispenses with both “inspiration” and interior travel in favor of the far safer “watery highway” (12). He also demarcates himself from the type of messianic urge for “the most impossible things,” such as that which infused the extreme millennialism of Nat Turner, who was to be crucified in Jerusalem, Virginia, in his attempt to destroy the New World city of “abominations.”²³ Blyden, instead, sets himself apart from such “crochets” in favor of a more controlled, more deliberate attempt to make an African Holy Land pilgrimage.

Blyden’s “watery highway” took him to Sierra Leone en route to Liverpool, a stopover during which he traveled to London to visit the House of Lords and the Royal Geographical Society, hear Charles Dickens read, and enjoy visits to the countryside. His route then took him to Alexandria and Cairo, thence Beirut, where he met Reverend Daniel Bliss, who had just founded what would become the American University at Beirut, William Thomson (the celebrated author of *The Land and the Book* who would soon after lecture the excursionists onboard the *Quaker City*), and other consular and missionary notables with whom he discussed the use of Arabic in evangelizing West Africa, and for whom he delivered an address titled “Liberia, Past, Present and Future” at a commemoration of Liberian independence. After spending the summer in Lebanon, he went on to Jaffa and Jerusalem, where he again met with missionaries to whom he delivered a lecture in the English cathedral on Mt. Zion titled “Religious and Political Condition and Prospects of West Africa.” Departing Jerusalem at the end of September, he sailed for Beirut to visit Dr. Bliss and other missionaries one last time before returning to West Africa.

While avoiding the dangers of the interior route, Blyden’s journey does take him through a European world almost as dangerous as uncharted Africa, a world in which “race was on the brain”: a persistent, inescapable morbidity. While his race excites interest to the more sophisticated—as one Jerusalem missionary writes in his farewell note: “You are the first Christian representative of your race—of Ethiopia, I would say—whom we have had the pleasure of welcoming as a Brother within the walls of the City of the Great King” (188)—it also causes him to suffer innumerable indignities en route. Indeed, while his choice of the “watery highway” allows him to avoid beasts and uncivilized tribes, he still must contend with the crudities of his purportedly “civilized” fellow passengers. In order to obtain his goal—his honored welcome by the elite in England, his embrace as a colleague by serious missionaries in

the East—he must first pass through the scum of the West.

Meeting traders, colonial agents, and missionaries, he endures insufferable ignorance and bigotry with great dignity and bitter wit. Colonial trading agents, he observes, “seemed to have attained to a kind of vegetable existence” (14) due to a continual state of drunkenness, while many missionaries to Africa are “false brethren” who “take a senseless delight in casting slurs and insinuations on the African passengers” (26–27). One missionary, while having “a great deal to say to the ‘hopeless inferiority’ of the negro . . . failed, however, to impress me with his superiority, which I did not recognize half so distinctly as I did his absolute want of good-breeding, his immense vanity and self-conceit”:

All this talk, however, about African inferiority and about the sense of repulsion and radical antagonism experienced by Europeans, growing out of diversity of race, is the most stupendous nonsense and flimsy pretence, especially considering the character and habits of the men who generally indulge in such talk. (27–28)

Segregated in a large cabin with four other African passengers, they form a “drawing-room” to entertain themselves with wit, repartee, and music, while he inveighs against an unnamed travel writer who, “afflicted with a sort of chronic garrulity,” deems it “‘a political as well as a social mistake to permit these men (Africans) to dine in the main cabin’ ” (31).

Despite the pretensions of most of his white fellow passengers, Blyden can only regard them with great disdain. When finally allowed to dine with the other passengers onboard another ship en route to Alexandria, he is overcome by depression and “a strong suspicion that I was utterly unfit for the adventures upon which I was setting out.” It is worth repeating the cause of this depression at length:

Mingling with a large number of passengers, I found not one with whom I could easily associate. They were mostly men under the influence of one all-pervading idea—bent upon the acquisition of gold, upon gaining military honours, or winning civil promotions—and cared not one jot for anything that interested me. It having been reported among some of the passengers that I was going to Jerusalem, the following conversation took place at the table:—“Where are you from?” said one sitting next to me. “From Liberia,” I replied. “And you are going to Jerusalem?” “It is probable,” I answered. “Where is Liberia?” said a bluff-looking youngster across the table. All seemed puzzled for a reply. At length, a gaunt, sallow-looking one, with that exuberance of vanity and self-confidence which does not suffer some people to plead guilty to ignorance on any subject, boldly cut the Gordian knot by exclaiming, “Oh, Liberia is on the west coast of South America!” I smiled and corrected the slight mistake. The first interrogator then resumed, in a blustering, ostentatious manner: “Why do you come this way from Liberia to go to Jerusalem? I should think you could have *walked* much more conveniently from West Africa.” He was correct as to the possibility of *walking*, showing that his *geography* was all right; but when he mentioned the great “convenience,” the ears protruded from beneath the lion’s skin. I made no reply. (68–69)

These fellow passengers, who would have greatly preferred that Blyden had taken the overland route to have avoided his presence, dismiss even his desire to go to Jerusalem, since it is “not much of a place of business.” In response, Blyden muses, with sardonic magnanimity, that “I suppose that these sons of Japheth, so thoroughly material in their feelings, are necessary to the spread of the arts and sciences over the world” (70).

Blyden’s sarcastic scorn toward this version of Twain’s bombastic “Oracle” is brilliant. While Twain can assume superiority to his “Oracle” as a chuckle-headed pedant who mixes a modicum of misconstrued guidebooks with a massive dose of ego, Blyden’s rejection of any sense of inferiority cannot be assumed as the prerogative of a knowing narrator but must be self-consciously asserted. There is no “veil” over his African identity; instead, his journey is an ever-deepening penetration into the heart of white darkness which, despite the light provided by his more gracious (albeit still race-conscious) hosts, can be observed no less among the educated and refined than among the ignorant colonial money-grubbers. When he attends a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London to hear an account of explorations of the Nile tributaries

by Mr. S. W. Baker, he “was somewhat surprised and very much grieved to hear him throw out, quite unnecessarily, disparaging remarks on the negro.” Blyden is perplexed over the “continual thrusts at the negro” by Baker, as well as by “the Burtons and Hunts of Anthropological notoriety”:

It shows that, while making great pretension to science, they are miserably defective in Christian sentiment and manly English principle. . . . The negro is brought forward for persecution and misrepresentation on all occasions, and without occasion. The feeling against him in these men has been so long and carefully fostered that it has become exaggerated, morbid beyond control, and altogether unchecked by any regard for accuracy or truth. (62–63)

Though he mourns the failure of that “English characteristic never to strike a man when he is down” (62), Blyden’s stance is complicated by his own adoption—albeit modified—of similar theories. “Like [Richard] Burton,” one of Blyden’s biographers observes, “whom he resembled in character as well as ideas, Blyden accepted several spurious theories about the physical differences of the races.”²⁴ He was steeped in the ideas of Gobineau and other racial theorists. Moreover, as an anglophile, he continually asserted the Christian and “manly English” value of Britain’s colonial domination of the continent: Africa had, indeed, fallen, and Western progress offered the best way to lift it up, although, as he would explain later of the unique leadership role of black settlers: “The Sphinx must solve her own riddle at last. The opening up of Africa is to be the work of Africans.”²⁵

Blyden’s welcome to England had been preceded by a celebrated letter, which the then unknown educator from Monrovia wrote to Chancellor of the Exchequer William Gladstone in 1860. The letter, which had praised the budget Gladstone had presented to Parliament that year, denounced slavery as “some ‘Screw loose’ in the commercial machinery of the world” and thanked Gladstone for his “noble efforts in the course of free trade” (and, as a consequence, of free labor). Introducing the Liberian project and its infant educational institutions, Blyden concluded with a request for “a succinct account of the manner in which you pursued your classical studies” and a plea for the donation of “a small library” of classics.²⁶ Read before the entire House of Commons, his letter, liberally sprinkled with quotations in Latin and Greek, produced a sensation within anti-slavery circles as decisive evidence of Negro intellect. When Blyden first traveled to Britain in 1861, he was invited to visit Gladstone in the company of the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society.²⁷ Consequently, upon his return in 1866 he was welcomed with utmost dignity to the House of Lords, entertained as a celebrity by aristocracy, and even allowed to hear his race disparaged at the Royal Geographical Society as something of an exceptional curiosity, the “cultivated negro” of Twain’s astonishment.

Blyden did not romanticize the authenticity of primitive Africa, to which he sought to bring the benefits of the West (such as the volumes of Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton he requested of Gladstone) as part of his advocacy of black colonization. His famous letter was considerably more than a fawning gesture, and he found nothing problematic in absorbing the achievements of European culture as part of his program of uplift. European colonialism was not only inevitable, but a blessing in disguise: he later even advocated U.S. support for Liberian colonization by promoting the fact that America had an advantage over the European powers then “scrambling” for Africa by harboring a black population of potential settlers he believed well suited for acclimatizing itself to the continent. This puts Blyden’s triumphant 1866 sojourn in London, as well as his welcome by missionaries in the Levant, in an ambiguous light. His adoption of European terms of racial difference places Blyden in the contradictory, unstable position of being the object of colonialism seeking, through a kind of transformative mimicry, to become a

subjective agent *as a result* of colonialism, a stance he asserts—to increase its paradoxical quality—is enforced by scriptural injunction.

As his ship passes Gibraltar en route to Alexandria, Blyden sees the mountainous coast of Africa, the sight of which provides a typology for this passage between worlds:

For several days we kept in sight of these mountain ranges, resembling gigantic stone fences erected for the purpose of effectually separating the habitation of Ham from that of Japheth. “God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of all the earth, and hath appointed the *bounds* of their habitations.” (80)

For Blyden, the world is one in which firm boundaries are drawn, stone fences one may cross but never dissolve, a world of genealogical distinctiveness symbolized by the passage between two continents. Four years later Blyden would articulate this sense of distinct racial difference, while at the same time rejecting polygenesis, in “Africa and the Africans”:

[T]o our mind it is not a question between the two races of inferiority or superiority. There is no absolute or essential superiority on the one side, nor absolute or essential inferiority on the other side. It is a question of difference of endowment and difference of destiny. No amount of training or culture will make the Negro a European; on the other hand, no lack of training or deficiency of culture will make the European a Negro. The two races are not moving in the same groove, with an immeasurable distance between them, but on parallel lines. They will never meet in the plane of their activities so as to coincide in capacity or performance. They are not identical, as some think, but unequal; they are distinct but equal; an idea that is no way incompatible with the Scriptural truth that God hath made of one blood all nations of men.²⁸

With imagery as powerful as Booker T. Washington’s metaphor of separate fingers on the same hand, Blyden accepts, by means of Ham and Japheth, the province of separate realms. Unlike Washington—whose policies he would largely come to support as a way for African Americans to survive while awaiting emigration—this sense of “distinct but equal” does not flow from accommodation to a white man’s America but from a sense of “parallel” destinies in parallel continents.

On this racial map Egypt is the capital of Ham’s realm, the site of ancient accomplishment and the source of modern inspiration, and it is in Egypt that Blyden achieves the racial epiphany of his pilgrimage. Standing in the “land of my ‘father’s sepulchers’ ” (128), Blyden declares that the Pyramids

have been kept in existence by God himself, as a standing evidence to succeeding generations of the power of the earlier races of mankind; to show to the Nebuchadnezzars of every age that their ancestors possessed a grandeur of conception and power of execution not dreamt of in their philosophy; to rebuke the pride of kings and potentates, when they would become too exalted in their own estimation. (120–21)

The “evidence” Blyden confronts is of the mythic source of African potentiality and identity, evidence predating all the accomplishments of Anglo-Saxon domination. In this very core of difference, after he actually climbs into the interior of the Great Pyramid itself, Blyden launches into rhapsodic prose:

Feelings came over me far different from those which I have felt when looking at the mighty works of European genius. I felt that I had a peculiar “heritage in the Great Pyramid”—built before the tribes of mankind had been so generally scattered, and, therefore, before they had acquired their different geographical characteristics, but built by that branch of the descendants of Noah, the enterprising sons of Ham, from whom I am descended. The blood seemed to flow faster through my veins. I seemed to hear the echo of those illustrious Africans. I seemed to feel the impulse from those stirring characters who sent civilization into Greece—the teachers of the father of poetry, history, and mathematics—Homer, Herodotus, and Euclid. I seemed to catch the sound of the “stately steppings” of Jupiter, as, with his brilliant celestial retinue, he perambulates the land on a visit to my ancestors, the “blameless Ethiopians.” I felt lifted out of the commonplace grandeur of modern times; and, could my voice have reached every African in the world, I would have earnestly addressed him in the language of [Liberian poet] Hilary Teage

—
“Retake your fame!” (104–5)

Blyden's epiphany at the Pyramids was not an isolated experience for African American travelers, since attempts to de-Africanize the racial legacy of ancient Egypt stood at the center of white supremacist "ethnology," with Josiah C. Nott, George R. Glidden, and Samuel G. Morton, for example, arguing that ancient Egyptians could not be related to the "inferior" blacks of interior Africa or, if they were of mixed lineage, Caucasian blood dominated.²⁹ "It has been the fashion of American writers," Frederick Douglass wrote to his son from his tour of Egypt in 1887, "to deny that the Egyptians were Negroes and claim that they are of the same race as themselves. This has, I have no doubt, been largely due to a wish to deprive the Negro of the moral support of Ancient Greatness and to appropriate the same to the white race."³⁰ Opposition to these claims of whiteness went back at least to the end of the eighteenth century, while in 1825 the very first issue of the colonizationist newspaper *African Repository* defended the greatness of the ancient Egyptians, noting that Herodotus described them as black, as part of the argument for the possibilities of African regeneration through colonization: return would lead to restoration. David Dorr had "the satisfaction of looking with his own eyes and reason at the ruins of the ancestors of which he is the posterity," exclaiming over Egyptian scientific and cultural achievements: "Such were Egyptian kings of olden time, though black."³¹

But what of Noah's malediction? Given the accomplishments of Egypt, how can the curse upon Ham be accounted for? According to the ninth chapter of Genesis, of Noah's three sons "was the earth overspread," but not until after Ham's transgression. Ham inadvertently "saw the nakedness of his father" while humanity's new, post-flood patriarch "was uncovered in his tent" in a drunken stupor. Ham told his brothers, after which Shem and Japheth walked backward with a cloth, their faces turned, to cover Noah's nakedness, who, upon waking and realizing what had occurred, cursed Ham for seeing his father exposed: "a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (KJV Gen. 9:20–27). This brief passage, in addition to providing the basis for the lineage of the world's peoples, of which Africans were considered to be the descendants of Ham, offered—like the interpretations of the curses upon the Holy Land and the Jews—a rationale from which to read contemporary black enslavement and subordination *back into* the reified density of sacred text.

The curse, of course, radiates sexual transgression, of which Howard Eilberg-Schwartz observes how the myth of Noah, like that of Adam and Eve, regards

shame about nakedness as a foundational moment in the emergence of human culture. The myth of Noah shows that this general human concern is regarded as particularly important for protecting the father's honor. Noah, as the only father to survive the flood and, hence, the paradigmatic father of humankind, must have his dignity protected. To be uncovered is to reintroduce a state of disorder. Culture is preserved by the virtuous sons who cover their father's nakedness.³²

Violating the dignity of the patriarch is only one aspect of Ham's transgression. Eilberg-Schwartz goes on to examine multiple implications of incest and homoeroticism in the passage, and although he does not specifically draw out the racial implications of the passage, the mythic violation clearly plays into pathological white perceptions of black sexual perversity and cultural disruption, which justify not only servitude but skin color and bestialization as well. While nobility could be ascribed to savage redskins, no matter their ambivalent scriptural identity as Amalkites or lost tribes of Israel, the curse allowed Africans to be regarded as less than human. Winthrop Jordan has traced how thoroughly this exegesis created deeply embedded "running equations" within the covenantal assumptions of early English colonialism's "program of outward migration and displacement and exploitation of other peoples," equations in which "English perceptions could integrate sexuality with blackness, the devil, and the judgment of a

God who had originally created man not only ‘Angelike’ but ‘white’ ” with great ease.³³

For Blyden, however, these disturbing cultural and sexual implications have simply been erased, for, while accepting the validity of charting all of humanity’s lineage from the three sons of Noah, he applies the Baconian rationalism of literalist hermeneutics to displace the curse altogether from the present-day descendants of Ham. Immediately after his rhapsody inside the pyramid, Blyden launches into an exegesis on “who were the earliest civilizers,” in which he describes the “scattering” of the sons of Ham through the lineage of his son Cush, reaching the conclusion that “all the descendants of Ham were not included in the curse pronounced by Noah upon Canaan”:

For it would have been a very singular thing that a people doomed to servitude should begin, the first thing, to found “great cities,” organise kingdoms, and establish rule—putting up structures that have come down to this day as a witness to their *superiority* over all their contemporaries; and that, by a providential decree, the people whom they were destined to serve should be doomed to be *their* servants for four hundred years. (Genesis xv., 13) [i.e., the descendants of Abraham as slaves to the Pharaohs] No; it is evident that curse of Noah was restricted to Canaan and his descendants. . . . There is not the slightest probability that any of the Canaanites ever found their way into Africa. (108)

In a masterful exercise of interpretive reconfiguration, comparable to Poe’s ornate explanation for why John Lloyd Stephens escaped “the curse of Edom,” Blyden casts off the malediction from Africa while still retaining the sacred text’s narrative integrity. This he preserves by rationalizing the relative youth of the Negro race, a surprising switch on those advocates of polygenesis who insisted on the pre-Adamite descent of Africans. Blyden is acutely aware that this

is a very plain dilemma to which we bring our adversaries. Either Negroes existed in those early days [and thus received the malediction] or they did not exist. If they did exist, then they must have had a part in the founding of those great empires; if they did not exist, then they are a comparatively youthful race, whose career is yet to be run. (108–9)

Continuing his virtuoso performance, Blyden conjectures that the race along the western coast of Africa from which America has been supplied with slaves “is of comparatively recent origin.” Deeming Africans to be recent descendants of Ham who are thus free of the famous curse, Blyden makes even more of a virtue of African youth. Their recent descent accounts “for their wonderful tenacity of life, and their rapid increase, like the youthful and elastic Hebrews of old, amid the unparalleled oppressions of their captivity.” Having drawn the Africans close to the mythic Hebrews of old—an identification between the two spiritual peoples, as we have seen, crucial to Blyden’s rehabilitation of Ham’s progeny—he concludes his argument with a pyrotechnic display of pseudoscientific evolutionist environmentalist race history, displacing the burden of “age” onto another people:

While the American Indians, who were, without doubt, an old and worn-out people, could not survive the introduction of the new phases of life brought among them from Europe, but sunk beneath the unaccustomed aspects which their country assumed under the vigorous hand of the fresh and youthful Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic races, the Guinea Negro, in an entirely new and distant country, has rather delighted in the change of climate and circumstances, and has prospered, physically, on all that great continent and its islands, from Canada to Cape Horn. (109–10)

Since the descendants of Ham “had a share . . . in the founding of cities and in the organisation of government, so members of the same family . . . will have an important part in the closing of the great drama” (110). By assigning old age to Indians—while avoiding speculation on their being the lost tribes of Israel—Blyden has transferred to them, if not the onus of the curse, at least the burden of decay, allowing him to construct an “important” future for a more youthful, and therefore more promising, race. Out of the horrors of slavery he fashions a supremely

ironical “delight” for the change of climate and circumstances, which equals the vitality of the masters while sanitizing the violence of their settler-colonial primitive accumulation. Through textual manipulation he inscribes innocence in place of malediction, quite literally carving his name, the date, and “LIBERIA” on the pyramid: “I felt that my perilous adventure had given me the right of inscribing my name among the hundreds which I saw engraved over and on each side of the entrance” (112).

After his epiphany in Egypt, Blyden’s response to Palestine seems considerably more subdued, decentered, even, at times, ironic. Anchored at the roadstead of Jaffa, he hires a boat to reach the shore. As he gazes “with longing eyes” at the city before him and wonders over pertinent biblical passages, his meditations are interrupted by one of the Arab boatmen. “Do you speak English?” the boatman asks:

I replied in the affirmative. “Well,” he continued, “how many died to-day?” How many died to-day? thought I. What can he mean, seeing it is but the first hour of the day? I asked him what he meant: he hung his head, fastening his eyes on the bottom of the boat, like one trying to solve an enigma. We were both bewildered. (153–54)

A fellow passenger speculates that this was all the English he knew, a question the boatman probably learned during the cholera epidemic the year before. It is a strange welcome to the Holy Land, which once again makes itself felt to travelers as an entrance to the nether regions, a locale of horror or dis-ease rather than of joy.

Blyden’s Palestine, although filled with all the appropriate shrines and missionary eminences, is out of joint. Dutifully quoting biblical passages as he comes upon every notable site, Blyden must contend with the same slippage between sacred text and textualized landscape as other travelers. However, even here he projects a particularly African hermeneutics, for when he begins to realize fully that he was “in the midst of scriptural localities,” he recalls that he was near Gaza, “on the road to which Philip, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, met the Ethiopian eunuch returning home, and having ‘preached unto him Jesus,’ baptised him and sent him ‘on his way rejoicing’—the first Christian missionary to Africa” (156). The Ethiopian eunuch figures greatly in Blyden’s theology, along with the central millennialist reading of the verse from Psalms 68 that “Ethiopia shall yet stretch forth her hands unto God; Princes shall come out of Egypt.” Still, his tone in Palestine is muted when compared to the ecstatic passages in the African Holy Land of Egypt.

When he sees Jerusalem for the first time—the classic moment of all Holy Land literature—he qualifies his exultation:

A new class of feelings was excited in my bosom, different from those which I had experienced at the pyramids. *There* the interest I felt was of the earth, earthy; drawn from worldly considerations, and dwelt upon at length, because there have been such persevering efforts in modern times to ignore the participation of the African descendants of Ham in the great works of ancient civilisation. But *here* the emotions I felt were such as are shared by every son of Adam who has been made to rejoice in the light of the gospel. (157–58)

Somewhat apologetic because of his previous enthusiasm over the “earthy” Egypt of Africa, he declares himself “utterly unable to describe the emotions by which I was overpowered on my approach to Jerusalem,” falling back on a series of extensive quotations from the breadth of American and English Holy Land travel literature in which he cites lengthy extracts from Edward Robinson, William F. Lynch, William Thomson, and others. It is as if he has become a medium for the ventriloquism of white writers who can better express the anticipated wonderment, his loss of voice seeming as much a result of deflation as of awe. Blyden’s language, confronting such a well-documented scene, collapses into a collage of other, “better” voices, for he responds with more vigor as a son of Ham in Egypt than as “every son of Adam”

in Palestine. Of course, spiritual failure is not the only factor, for Blyden, who, as “the only living referee” of the Holy Land for his intended readers, feels the heavy weight of representation, and he chooses, as he does in his request for books for the school library in his letter to Gladstone, to collate a “library” of Holy Land texts for Liberians through representative excerpts.

Blyden walks “with open Bible in hand, trying to identify localities,” just like other Protestant pilgrims, although he is invested with a consciousness far more “worldly”—or at least capable of seeing cultural diversity without presuppositions of his own superiority—than most European and American travelers. In Lebanon, for example, he is invited to an Arab wedding where he witnesses a typically sensuous Arab dance by women, which he describes with remarkable aplomb:

This exercise was not new to me, as I had seen women in the West Indies engage in it with equally good effect. The dancing is quite different from that seen in the west. It consists of various graceful evolutions of the body and arms, and is done with such skill as often to elicit considerable applause from the spectators. (145)

He describes men’s narrative dances of love or war also through the lens of comparative experience: “Precisely such are the set dancers of the aborigines of West Africa” (146). Blyden can observe “natives” with a certain sense of empathy or solidarity if not complete identification, a trait mostly missing in other Western travelers.

In another example, he notes “the misrule of the Turks” as other travelers do, yet he deems it “a misrule rather of negligence and omission than of elaborate design.” In customary Protestant fashion Blyden views Ottoman decay as a confirmation of the prophecy that the land “is desolate and overthrown by strangers.” Although he occasionally notes backward conditions, he refrains from long tirades on Ottoman ruin in which other travel writers indulge, judging such conditions to be fostered by the “continued jealousy” of the European powers, which “keep the decrepit state alive because they cannot agree what to do upon its death,” (193) rather than as a result of innate Oriental depravity.

This measured, respectful empathy pervades Blyden’s observations of religion in the Holy Land. Like other Protestant travelers, he recoils at “nominal” Christians as they worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, “evidently absorbed more in the presumed sanctity of the place than in the worship of God” (166). Noting “the disorders among discordant sects,” he observes that “[t]he Christian world may well pray for the *peace* of the literal Jerusalem” (199). At the same time he pays especial attention to the sacral character of the Holy Land for Muslims and Jews, not just Christians. He describes the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque in great detail, and he even encounters African Muslim pilgrims (although he seems not to have met the community of Senegalese and other Africans who had been living in Jerusalem for centuries as guardians of the shrines). Despite the Africanized Christianity Blyden projects, his pilgrimage marks the point from which he begins to make his most radical departures from traditional, European Christianity, developing a peculiarly accommodating relationship with Islam, which he would more fully express in terms of his accustomed mythologized cast of characters in an essay published in 1884:

It is interesting to feel that the religion of Isaac and the religion of Ishmael, both having their root in Abraham, confront each other on this continent. Japheth introducing Isaac, and Shem bringing Ishmael, Ham will receive both. The moonlight of the Crescent, and the sunlight of the Cross, will dispel the darkness which has so long covered the land. The “Dark Continent” will no longer be a name of reproach for this vast peninsula, for there shall be no darkness here. Where the light from the Cross ceases to stream upon the gloom, there the beams of the Crescent will give illumination; and as the glorious orb of Christianity rises, the twilight of Islam will be lost in the greater light of the Sun of Righteousness. Then Isaac and Ishmael will be united, and rejoice together in the faith of their common progenitor—Abraham Khalil Allah—Abraham, the Friend of

God.³⁴

Finally, Blyden feels an especial affinity with Jews. “No site in Jerusalem affected me more” than the Wailing Wall, he confesses, although he interprets the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of prophecy, the punishment for Jewish “blindness and obstinacy” in rejecting Jesus. Nevertheless, he concurs with the prevalent restorationist sentiment, asserting with what in hindsight seems tragic blindness that

[t]here is one subject . . . upon which there seems to be remarkable unanimity among the principal sects—Jews, Christians and Moslems—viz., as to the final destiny of Jerusalem; that it is to be the scene of latter-day glories; that the Jews are to be restored to the land of their fathers, and the Messiah is to be enthroned in personal reign in the “City of the Great King.” (199)

His previous life with Jews, his mythic objectification of them, his identification of Africans with Jews as “a suppressed element . . . in the spiritual culture and regeneration of humanity”—all anticipate his later heralding of what he would call “that marvellous movement called Zionism.”³⁵ Eric Sundquist, in his perceptive study of race in American literature, observes that Blyden “inverted the traditional reading” of the curse of Ham “by arguing that the diaspora was an opportunity for the regeneration of Africa,” interpreting this and other passages of Scripture “to refer to Africa’s piety, kindness, and fidelity, and to its people’s vast economic service to the world, like that of the Hebrews.” Like the Hebrews, Africans possessed a special “spiritual conservatory” to counter the materialism of the sons of Japheth, but it was a gift that could only be tendered through “return” and “restoration.”³⁶

The American missionary was more astute than he imagined when he deemed Blyden a “referee” of the Holy Land, for *From West Africa to Palestine* allows Blyden to take a major step not only in reinterpreting the curse of Ham but also in transposing the myth of Jewish restoration to a sense of modern black nationalism. Blyden, however, was not the first in America to associate Jews and New World Africans in similar restorationist visions: recall how, at the end of the eighteenth century, Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles formulated both proposals in their elaboration of “disinterested benevolence.” The choice of utopianist settler-colonialism as moral surgery to ease the psychic anxieties of elites resulting from social displacement was by no means exhausted for Euro-Americans in the nineteenth century, so the impulse to restore a sense of wholeness to the categories of “Christian” or “white” or “American” through the benevolent reading and writing of subject-peoples is not surprising. “Colonization was an emancipationist scheme calculated primarily to benefit the emancipators,” as Winthrop Jordan puts it. “Essentially it was a means of profiting white Americans by getting rid of the twin tyrannies of Negroes and slavery.”³⁷

Yet what also must be considered are the ways oppressed peoples internalize dominant formulations, replicating them at the same time as they seem to “invert” them. Though the notion that Africans could “reclaim their fame” through “restoring” themselves by means of settler-colonial imposition upon an indigenous population could feel particularly alluring, the idea contained, like Zionism itself, the destabilizing contradiction of being a peculiarly Western device for achieving autonomy by means of domination that was employed in a desperate attempt precisely to escape such Western domination. The framework employed by all covenantal settler-colonial projects is constructed from contradictory narratives of divine escape, trial by wandering, promised conquest, and selective contract, which predicated freedom of the chosen on oppression of those who were not. Such a configuration and reenactment of Holy Land narrative would prove very difficult (although logically not impossible) for New World

Africans to achieve, particularly since African “restoration” was not perceived by Euro-Americans with the same near-universality, intensity, and strategic interest as the “prophetic fulfilment” demanded of the Jews, a restoration far more central to making the white Christian whole.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Desolating Narrations: Tom Sawyer's Crusade

ON THE WAY to Jericho, Mark Twain's party on horseback passes through the desolation of the Judean wilderness—"It was such a dreary, repulsive, horrible solitude!" (590)—when the cry goes out, "Bedouins!" What follows is a paragraph-long catalog of cowardly braggadocio by "armed white Christians" as they screw up their courage to face "the prowling vagabonds of the desert":

Every man shrunk up and disappeared in his clothes like a mud-turtle. My first impulse was to dash forward and destroy the Bedouins. My second was to dash to the rear to see if there were any coming in that direction. I acted on the latter impulse. So did all the others. (590)

Piled up in the rear, all the travelers work themselves into a frenzy of ludicrous bravado, with each man in turn boasting how he would bloody the enemy on the field of battle in "a medley of strange and unheard-of inventions of cruelty you could not conceive of." One would not yield an inch, another would wait until "he could count the stripes upon the first Bedouin's jacket, then count them and let him have it," another would scalp them "and take his bald-headed sons of the desert home with him alive for trophies," and so forth. However, one "wild-eyed pilgrim rhapsodist" remains ominously silent about the violence he would unleash. Twain presents the pilgrim's mad rage in lurid, sensationalist style:

His orbs gleamed with a deadly light, but his lips moved not. Anxiety grew, and he was questioned. If he had got a Bedouin, what would he have done with him—shot him? He smiled a smile of grim contempt and shook his head. Would he have stabbed him? Another shake. Would he have quartered him—flayed him? More shakes. Oh! horror, what *would* he have done? "Eat him!"

Such was the awful sentence that thundered from his lips. What was grammar to a desperado like that? (591)

After such an "awful sentence" of a punch line, Twain proceeds to describe the approaching bedouins—"those sanguinary outlaws who are always going to do something desperate, but never do it"—as nothing more than "a reinforcement of cadaverous Arabs" (591) hired to guard the excursionists, a fact which, after the absurd deflation of armed white (male) Christian honor, launches Twain into denouncing the "nuisance of an Arab guard" (592) as nothing but a trick for profit, another humbug of the East.

However, I want to linger at the desperado pilgrim eating his enemy. Cannibalism presents itself quite regularly throughout *Innocents Abroad* as one of Twain's comic motifs, although usually Twain is the one who contemplates the meal, devouring Indians or tourists or Arab children, as the case may be. His cannibal humor, while similar to gallows humor, is also very familiar in other ways, as it harkens to the "mythic universe beyond boundaries and civilization" of the Davy Crockett tales. Such myths of the Jacksonian era trumpeted "the autonomous young man of the frontier" as "the mirror image of the fragile and dependent son of the Eastern reformers." The Jacksonian frontiersman, as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has argued, was a liminal character who embodied "the explosive power of formlessness at war with structure at a time

when antistructure was still victorious and form in disarray.”¹ In other words, Davy Crockett was a representation of that borderland permeability of barbarism and “sivilization” that so fascinated and horrified Crèvecoeur, Jefferson, and countless others, the myth thriving at that moment of initial contact and conquest just before rigid boundaries, social hierarchies, and grammar are imposed around and within the settled core. Davy Crockett—drunken, violent, dirty, masturbatory, animalistic—challenged the settled core’s sense of order: “Outside class boundaries and the proprieties so dear to the bourgeois heart, Crockett denied the naturalness, the desirability, and the inevitability of bourgeois values and class distinctions.”²

However, Smith-Rosenberg emphasizes, the myth took form as a sequence of jokes, such as Twain’s culinary wisecracks in *Innocents Abroad*. What became a comic myth served as a vent for social pressures that, at the same time, naturalized “young male violence,” which, while inevitably targeting women, was more overtly directed toward “the inhabitants of the wilderness—toward Indians, Mexicans, and escaped slaves.” At the core of such myths is a virulent racism “whose objective is to justify barbarism and cannibalism against nonwhites.”³ The myth may have appealed to broader sectors—to those grammarians of the eastern seaboard who may no longer have considered themselves settlers—with additional, complex political ramifications, as Alexander Saxton has shown.⁴ However, though the joke originally arose from a material relation, a reality of brutal appropriation that went far beyond the actions of individual backwoodsmen (who, often enough, actually lived on good terms with the other “inhabitants of the wilderness”), the comic myth itself became a material force, shaping the attitudes, actions, and self-images of those armed white Christians in the Judean wilderness independent of the original political or cultural intentions of the myth’s creators.

Of course, by the time Mark Twain indulges in his own cannibalism, the Crockett myth, already in its third or fourth generation, had taken on additional permutations. “Eat him!” provoked laughter in a different register than originally intended: the burst of Jacksonian white supremacist “formlessness” of the thirties and forties had transmuted as a result of the sectional conflict and the new concentrations of wealth and urbanization after the war, although settler expansion, racial violence, and the “frontier” of the city’s own formlessness had by no means lessened despite qualitative changes in settler-colonial modes of supplying cheap labor. The desperado pilgrim is now ridiculously ineffective rather than merely overexaggerated, a parody rather than a claim. Instead of the crowing of a backwoodsman, “Eat him!” is merely the hollow boasting of the genteel easterner playacting (not just a tenderfoot but a “dude”) or, as in the case of the schlemiel narrator, of a nervous white man.

“Eat him!” has also become the cry of the tourist, for to become a consumer of travel means precisely that: the transformation of sites into sights, of distinct peoples into indistinguishable natives, entails a kind of ingestion; experiences are then digested as exchange values; the tourist waxes large in psychic bulk, with such increase of cultural capital visibly represented by bottles of water from the River Jordan, chips from the nose of the Sphinx, or travel books (while the alteration or deformation of “authenticity” can perhaps be seen as excrement). At the same time, the constant chorus of “Baksheesh!” by Arabs—who expect wealthy Western travelers to assert their status by providing gifts according to precapitalist practices of benevolence, protection, and patronage—presents a counter-cry. More than the marauding yet ineffectual bedouins, the crowds of supplicants threaten to devour the tourists at the same time that the tourists themselves threaten to cannibalize the Holy Land. It is not simply that the crowds are ever-present and irritating, overwhelming sacred shrines with profane cries and thereby ruining the pleasures of appreciation and appropriation, but that their precapitalist objectification of the travelers as alms-

bearing notables mirrors the excursionists' own commodification of the natives as items on the touristic menu despite the two very different modes of valuation.

Moreover, to Muslims—as well as to Jews and even to many local Christians—the armed white Christian was very much a cannibal. The original, not-so-peaceful Crusades that first brought the Frankish invader to the Holy Land left indelible cultural imprints upon those who were conquered. When on December 12, 1098, for example, Bohemond entered the Syrian city of Ma'arra, which had surrendered on the basis of the Crusader's promises of safety, the Christian forces embarked upon a rampage of atrocities of immense and—even by medieval or colonial standards of carnage—horrific proportions. “In Ma'arra our troops boiled pagan adults in cooking-pots,” wrote the chronicler Radulph of Caen. “They impaled children on spits and devoured them grilled.”⁵ As another chronicler recorded, with misplaced disgust: “Not only did our troops not shrink from eating dead Turks and Saracens; they also ate dogs.”⁶

Whether the cannibalism was committed because the Crusaders were starving or because they were swept up in morbid fanaticism and blood lust, the grotesque outrage opened up a chasm between East and West that few, if any, nineteenth-century Holy Land travelers could perceive. “The memory of these atrocities, preserved and transmitted by local poets and oral tradition, shaped an image of the Franj that would not easily fade,” writes Amin Maalouf in *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*. The Arabs regarded the Franks, in the words of one Arab chronicler, “as beasts superior in courage and fighting ardour but in nothing else,” while Maalouf relates how “the Turks would never forget the cannibalism of the Occidentals. Throughout their epic literature, the Franj are invariably described as anthropophagi.”⁷ When this horrific event is linked to the more familiar Muslim revulsion to Christian communion as a form of idolatrous cannibalism—eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a man blasphemously deemed God—one can easily detect, even without reference to more recent colonial impositions, how Arabs and Turks could revile Westerners. In this light, George Sandys's New World commentary on the anthropophagus Cyclops becomes even more of a bizarrely ironic projection, while Mark Twain's cry of “Eat him!” seems something more than a joke.

But could Mark Twain, who conned his American readers into seeing the Old World through “his own eyes,” actually see the Crusades—especially the nineteenth century's “Peaceful Crusade”—through Arab (or Turkish or Jewish) eyes? Certainly, all of Twain's satires of the sanctimonious pilgrim or of the craven tourist were comic attempts to look at the American from the outside based on an ironic distancing or alienation effect that, as discussed earlier, draws the reader into a circle of confidence, a covenant, so to speak, that the reader like the writer is chosen, even when writer and reader each divide in two and mock themselves. At best, laughing at the absurd getups of his horseback party, Twain jokes that he would not let such a crowd traipse through his own country, or he sarcastically comments on how his fellow tourists desecrate mosques. Still, the miner in Virginia City, the rural reader in Ohio, and the urban (and urbane) reader in Boston could all be convinced that Twain's eyes were their own, assuring themselves that they, too, were objective and truthful and *not* ridiculous (like those *other* tourists). Yet, because Twain's perception—and his own impersonation—of the American Vandal is from a position on the margins of settlement, his outside status is only partial: though Twain can see the violent deformation of the white man, he still cannot fully fathom the impassive look of the native that was so provocative in the first place, much less peer through that native's eyes.

Clearly, most American tourists to the Holy Land in 1867 had very few resources for understanding how they could actually be perceived by others, although respect or empathy or

compassion, while limited, could at least raise the possibility of such perception, as it could to some extent with Adventist Clorinda Minor, missionary William Thomson, or colonizationist Edward Wilmot Blyden. The question of Mark Twain's ability to see through the eyes of the Other extends beyond *Innocents Abroad*, of course, particularly in relation to the more proximate racial Others of African Americans and American Indians, but also, as in *Following the Equator*, in relation to South Asians, Australian aborigines, and other colonized peoples. However, Twain did return to the Middle East and to Jews on at least two occasions after his Holy Land excursion, so we can consider the degree to which he was (or was not) able to see through their eyes—or, at the very least, how “his own eyes” began to change their optics—as his encounter with Palestine, Arabs, and Jews in *Innocents Abroad* radiated throughout his career.

Mark Twain made an imaginative reprise of at least parts of his Holy Land pilgrimage in *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, although this 1896 “pot-boiler” is an overall failure: no moral tension seems to drive the plot, the travel yarn abruptly ending with Tom, Huck, and Jim literally snapping back home like an overstretched rubber band suddenly released to smoke a pipe, not really going anywhere.⁸ Yet the book does contain evocative scenes when regarded from the vantage point of Holy Land literature, along with a number of brilliant, backwoods Socratic dialogues between Tom on one side and Huck and Jim on the other, similar to the minstrel-like dialogues between Huck and Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*.

These dialogues commence in the first chapter when Tom seeks to recruit Huck and Jim into a new adventure called a crusade. Huck, of course, has no idea what Tom is talking about, and Tom's increasingly frustrated replies, worth quoting at length, begin the trio's first entry into what becomes a series of linguistic cul-de-sacs:

“A crusade is a war to recover the Holy Land from the paynim.”

“Which Holy Land?”

“Why, *the* Holy Land—there ain't but one.”

“What do *we* want of it?”

“Why, can't you understand? It's in the hands of the paynim, and it's our duty to take it away from them.”

“How did we come to let them git hold of it?”

“We didn't come to let them git hold of it. They always had it.”

“Why, Tom, then it must belong to them, don't it?”

“Why, of course it does. Who said it didn't?”

I studied over it, but couldn't seem to git at the right of it, no way. I says:

“It's too many for me, Tom Sawyer. If I had a farm and it was mine, and another person wanted it, would it be right for him to—”

“Oh, shucks! you don't know enough to come in when it rains, Huck Finn. It ain't a farm, it's entirely different. You see, it's like this. They own the land, just the mere land, and that's all they *do* own; but it was our folks, our Jews and Christians, that made it holy, and so they haven't any business to be there defiling it. It's a shame, and we ought not to stand it a minute. We ought to march against them and take it away from them.”

“Why, it does seem to me it's the most mixed-up thing I ever see! Now, if I had a farm and another person—”

“Don't I tell you it hasn't got anything to do with farming? Farming is business, just common low-down business: that's all it is, it's all you can say for it; but this is higher, this is religious, and totally different.”

“Religious to go and take the land away from people that owns it?”

“Certainly; it's always been considered so.”⁹

What Tom argues, of course, is the rationale for the “Peaceful Crusade,” the particular way Europeans and Americans, whether or not they were sanctioned by their respective governments, intervened in the Eastern Question—that logjam of competing imperial interests that sustained the moribund Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century—through fervid, Christian intervention in Palestine. The effects of this Crusade were considerably more evident in 1896 than when the *Quaker City* excursionists first cannibalized the territory only a year after the

German Palestine explorer Titus Tobler put out an initial call in 1866: “The Peaceful Crusade has begun. Jerusalem must be ours.”¹⁰ Over the course of those three decades French, German, Russian, American, and British Christians had embarked on a number of colonial projects. The German Templars had founded four settlements between 1868 and 1873. After the dispirited Jaffa colonists dispersed, the Spafford family launched the next New World Protestant experiment, the American Colony, in 1881.¹¹ The next year a mass French Catholic pilgrimage, which “eclipsed all previous western European pilgrimages” with over a thousand participants, “conquered” Jerusalem, each pilgrim bearing the red cross of the Crusaders on his chest or shoulder, the procession carrying flags with Bourbon lilies and the Crusader motto, “Dieux el veult!” (“God wills it!”).¹² Pilgrimages and tourist excursions, including those organized by Thomas Cook, multiplied many times. Construction of European-style stone churches, hospices, hotels, consulates, and other buildings boomed in Jerusalem and other cities, while wharves and carriage roads, and even the long-awaited railroad from Jaffa to Jerusalem, began to be built—all signs of European penetration, which both local inhabitants and Ottoman authorities recognized as double-edged and accepted only with reluctance.¹³ Most significant of all, 1882 also saw “our Jews” establish the first Zionist settlements, while Tom’s “crusade” appeared in print the same year as did Theodor Herzl’s *The Jewish State*. Mark Twain was already quite aware of how Melville’s “preposterous Jew mania” had ripened and had become internalized and transformed by a sector of Jewish nationalists themselves.

After Tom’s assertion of the religious prerogative of “our Jews and Christians” to take the land owned by someone else, Jim enters the debate, insisting that Tom must be mistaken, since “‘I’s religious myself, en I knows plenty religious people, but I hain’t run across none dat acts like dat.’ ” To this, Tom raves how “such mullet-headed ignorance” could set itself against “Richard Cur de Loon, and the Pope, and Godfrey de Bulleyn, and lots more of the most noble-hearted and pious people in the world” who “hacked and hammered at the paynims for more than two hundred years trying to take their land away from them.” Tom’s recourse to the authority of history and his slap at the “cheek” of “a couple of sapheaded country yahoos out in the backwoods of Missouri” silences his opponents.¹⁴ Still, Jim feels odd killing people he doesn’t know and suggests (in an echo of the robber-band game in *Huckleberry Finn*) a practice murder of people the trio do know by taking axes to a sick family across the river. Disgusted at this, Tom quits arguing with people who “try to reason out a thing that’s pure theology by the laws that protect real estate!”¹⁵ Huck, as the narrator, comments on Tom’s unfairness to Jim’s attempt “to get at the *how* of it,” taking Tom’s disdainful rejection of his friends rather lightly, ending the chapter with his own judgment of Tom’s “pure theology”:

I am peaceable, and don’t get up rows with people that ain’t doing nothing to me. I allowed if the paynim was satisfied I was, and we would let it stand at that.

Now Tom he got all that notion out of Walter Scott’s book, which he was always reading. And it was a wild notion, because in my opinion he never could’ve raised the men, and if he did, as like as not he would’ve got licked. I took the book and read all about it, and as near as I could make it out, most of the folks that shook farming to go crusading had a mighty rocky time of it.¹⁶

Mark Twain poses the binary opposites of “pure theology” and “the laws that protect real estate”—of unlimited and hegemonic religious, romantic, or political fantasy versus the restraints of reason and the material world. All three characters are “innocents” of a sort in regard to this tension: the boyhood fascination with adventure and heroic exploits even draws Tom into such a designation despite his book learning, while Huck and Jim by virtue of their backwoods

ignorance can blithely puncture the absurd contradictions of the pious and noble representatives of civilization. However, Tom—his obsessions drawn from historical romance, particularly from Twain’s nemesis Sir Walter Scott—presents a figure more troubling than, say, Don Quixote. His ambiguous innocence teasing out reality according to fantasy, Tom has the same sinister quality as he does in the much disputed ending of *Huckleberry Finn* in which he acts out his “evasion” “to set a free nigger free.”¹⁷ The “evasion” is a genuinely toxic innocence, one that enforces re-enslavement through a kind of reification by means of narrative framing, a procedure very similar to touristic commodification. Whether romance, as in Sir Walter Scott’s crusader tales, or “pure theology,” as in the notions that led Maine farmers who followed George Adams to end up having “a mighty rocky time of it,” the compulsion to enact fiction, whether sacred, mythic, or fantastical, is one of the tyrannies of narrative that maddens Twain at the same time as the act of narrating itself delights him.

The double-edged ability of narrative both to liberate and to tyrannize is often compellingly figured in the nineteenth-century fascination with *Arabian Nights*. The most telling Socratic-minstrel dialogue in *Tom Sawyer Abroad*—as the trio floats above the Sahara in a magic-carpet balloon “right in the midst of the *Arabian Nights*”—involves Tom’s account of an *Arabian Nights* tale of a man who responds to a request by a camel driver seeking a lost camel.¹⁸ The man asks questions of the camel driver that seem to indicate that he had indeed seen the beast, but it turns out that he has only deduced the characteristics of the camel (blind, lame, etc.) from its signs or tracks without actually having seen it. Jim and Huck, who have no trouble following the logic of this tale, still cannot be drawn into its interpretive circle. “What ’come o’ de camel?” Jim insistently asks: to Jim and Huck the tale is not complete, is not aesthetically or morally whole, until they can learn the answer to the camel driver’s practical question—What did happen to the camel?—a question totally irrelevant to the point of Tom’s performance. “Some people can see, and some can’t—just as that man said,” Tom laments bitterly, his two auditors incapable of taking delight in the pure pleasures of reason.¹⁹ If Jim and Huck were conscious, they would be engaged in frontier gulling, but they are indeed “innocents” and not pulling Tom’s leg; they truly cannot take the leap into fantasy, hermeneutics, faith, or critical comprehension that Tom assumes to be a natural and not culturally determined reflex. They are lost because, like the Jews of Augustine’s “*Adversus Judaeos*,” they cannot read the prophetic signs of their own books—or, in this case, of their own culturally appropriated, riddle-like joke.

It is also worth noting that while Mark Twain labored over *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* he was simultaneously completing “1,002^d Arabian Night,” a burlesque of the classic that, following Howells’s advice that “it was not your best or your second-best” and “falls short of being amusing,” Twain left unpublished.²⁰ The comparison between the two texts bears deeper investigation—for example, the new Arabian tale revolves around a provocative sexual confusion (a boy raised as a girl and vice versa)—but what is pertinent for this discussion is the fact that at the same time Twain was contemplating the narrative despotism of Tom’s “evasion,” “1,002^d Arabian Night” hinges on the joke of Scheherazade’s narrative prolixity exhausting, even killing, her auditors. King Shahriar, calling in his executioner, is stopped from doing away with his latest queen by the prospect of yet another enchanting tale, the details of which are so tediously drawn out that by the tale’s conclusion, not just one, but two executioners die of exhaustion, as does the king himself: “But the beautiful Scherezade remained as fresh as in the beginning, and straightway ordered up another king; and another, and still another; and so continued until all the people were alarmed for the perpetuity of their royal line, its material being by this time very greatly reduced.”²¹ While “all the nation” implores the beautiful

storyteller “to desist from her desolating narrations,” she refuses “until she has sent as many kings to the tomb as the late king had sent poor unoffending Queens.” After 1,095 royal deaths, she determines that “her poor slaughtered predecessors were avenged and she was satisfied. Whereupon she coiled her weapon away, and from that time forth gave it and the royal stock a rest.”

This revision of *Arabian Nights* plays with several dualities and dialectical tensions about *spieling* narratives that intrigued Twain. The teller has the potential for liberation: for example, she can save her own life through the ceaseless tale’s power to stay the executioner’s hand. The teller also has the capacity to destroy, even to kill, not only through the tedium of a badly wrought tale, but by the oblivion induced by the success of enchantment itself. The auditor can be transported by delight and as a consequence become more of himself; but he can also feel the effects of an intoxicating drug, even a poison, and become deranged, lost, absorbed, dissolved. That is, so long as the listener can “see” the narration in the first place. In *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, Huck and Jim cannot “see” Tom’s Arabian tale, cannot read the signs, and are inoculated from the pleasures as well as pathologies of “desolating narrations”: if either Huck or Jim were King Shahriar, Scheherazade would not have lasted through the first night.

Tom Sawyer Abroad employs another narrative device rooted in Orientalist tradition—the balloon ride. The trope of ascent and transformative vision from great height can be found in the various carpets and horses in flight in *Arabian Nights*, of course. But Twain’s immediate source for sending the trio aloft in a balloon—his desire to cash in on the popularity of Jules Verne’s *voyages imaginaires*—also flows from more modernist traditions of Oriental appropriation. In Comte de Volney’s vision-tract of the French Revolution, *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires* (1792), the narrator, after contemplating the cyclical rise and fall of empires in the ruins of Palmyra, is accosted by a Genius (or Genie) who, in order to explain how to stop the cyclical repetitions of history, takes the narrator up into “the aerial heights” to describe “a scene altogether new,” the visual comprehension of the earth in its entirety as a sphere.²² Volney’s ascension is modeled on the then recent scientific marvel of the Montgolfier brothers, the sight of which threw crowds of Parisians—at one time numbering half the population of Paris—into feverish exultations on the eve of the revolution.²³ Percy Bysshe Shelley appropriates the same trope in his vision poem of anticlerical radicalism, *Queen Mab*, which borrows directly from Volney’s *Ruins*, with the Fairy Queen, like Volney’s Genius, taking Shelley’s narrator aloft to explain the world and the necessity for reform.

Both Volney’s and Shelley’s rationalist visions employ the epic panoramic view, the trope of flight and great height closely associated with ascendancy, knowledge, and freedom; at the same time, both flights arise from Oriental landscapes, frameworks, preoccupations, and devices. Shelley’s friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, a fellow student at Oxford, recalled his words as the young poet marveled at the liberatory possibilities of the balloon:

Why are we still so ignorant of the interior of Africa?—why do we not despatch intrepid aeronauts to cross it in every direction, and to survey the whole peninsula in a few weeks? The shadow of the first balloon, which a vertical sun would project precisely underneath it, as it glided silently over that hitherto unhappy country, would virtually emancipate every slave, and would annihilate slavery for ever.²⁴

When Volney’s Genius “wafts” the traveler to the “aerial heights,” and when Shelley’s Fairy calls to Ianthe’s spirit to “[a]scend the car with me,” the trope of flight and height presents a recasting of scriptural narratives in secular terms, “a panoramic view of history in a cosmic setting,” as M. H. Abrams has described the Romantic epic, “in which the agents are in part

historical and in part allegorical or mythological and the overall design is apocalyptic.”²⁵ Both of these secular attempts at sacred text gained prominent places on the shelves of infidel radicals from Britain and America alike, their panoramic views providing a breadth of vision equal to the challenge of reform in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the emancipatory shadow of the balloon’s flight was also complicated by the panoramic view’s hegemonic allure. Planetary vision from panoramic heights proved to be not only wide but interventionist, allowing for the immediate, ameliorative, and appropriative transformation of the fallen, Oriental landscape as a result of the vision’s encircling comprehension. A paradoxical figure of both liberation and domination thus takes shape, the flying-carpet vision playing a crucial role of investing the ascendant rationalist discourse, including its Orientalist and colonialist impulses, with totalizing power.

Mary Louise Pratt has identified as a common convention of representation in European exploration accounts (as well as in other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary forms) what she calls the “monarch-of-all-I-survey” scene: the narrator, who is also traveler, discoverer, and protagonist, stands up on a high place of some kind and describes the panorama below, rendering a verbal and visual word picture. This “monarch-of-all-I-survey” device, which invites the reader to share in the panorama, presents a relation of dominance mediated by aestheticization that gives ideological force to passages of seemingly neutral, descriptive language.²⁶ Certainly, the great height and technological facility of the balloon magnified the possibilities of such relations of dominance in which Shelley’s abolitionist fantasy of freedom in the shadow of the balloon’s ascent would be overtaken by Jules Verne’s more overtly colonialist *Five Weeks in a Balloon*.²⁷

In *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, the trio (in part historical, in part New World mythological) is abducted by a genie—this time a mad scientist demonstrating his invention in St. Louis—and taken aloft, during which they gain the encircling, panoramic comprehension: “By and by the earth was a ball—just a round ball, of a dull color, with shiny stripes wriggling and winding around over it, which was rivers” (16). Soon, however, the mad scientist dies, and the trio, intending to steer for Europe, instead ends up crossing the Sahara until they reach Egypt. Twain’s flight above the desert is a burlesque of this older tradition of the Orientalist panorama, playing on the interventionist and hegemonistic ambitions of Tom Sawyer’s “desolating narrations.” Indeed, the trio ends up enacting Tom’s apocalyptic crusade after all, as their encounter with Egypt becomes a satire, not only of the Peaceful Crusade and of European imperialist “robbery” in general, but of the prevalent, Anglo-Saxonist crusader rhetoric of American imperialists not long before the war with Spain. The fact that the trio’s appropriation hinges on a business scheme to import Saharan sand to America via the technological wonder of balloon aviation—and the scheme’s derailment due to impossible tariffs, a Republican policy that Twain abhorred—situates the “crusade” more firmly within a contemporary American context, one in which the altruistic rhetoric of the liberation of Spanish colonies can easily enlarge itself to include the practical imperatives of establishing imperial coaling stations.

In *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, Moslems and Arabs remain as vague as in *Innocents Abroad*, mostly defined by the demands of satire. A Moslem “was a person that wasn’t a Presbyterian,” Tom explains, after which Huck reasons that “there is plenty of them in Missouri, though I didn’t know it before”;²⁸ and when they encounter dead Arabs of a caravan covered by a sandstorm, they are described far more vividly than any living characters. Nonetheless, the landscape is richly encoded with other racial and colonial meanings. Realizing that the Sahara is in Africa, “Jim’s eyes bugged out, and he begun to stare down with no end of interest, because that was where his originals come from.”²⁹ At the Pyramids, Jim is astonished and gets on his knees

“because he said it wasn’t fitten’ for a humble poor nigger to come any other way where such men had been as Moses and Joseph and Pharaoh and the other prophets.”³⁰ Once again, the African “originals” of Egyptian and Western culture are alluded to, with Jim “being excited because the land was so full of history,” although Tom is “just as excited too, because the land was so full of history that was in *his* line, about Nouredin, and Bedreddin, and such like monstrous giants, that made Jim’s wool rise, and a raft of other *Arabian Nights* folks.”³¹ Tom’s Orientalist appropriation wins out over Jim’s biblical allusions, as Jim spots in the distance “de biggest giant outen de *Rabian Nights* a-comin’ for us,” which turns out to be none other than the Sphinx.³²

Jim is landed on top of the Sphinx’s head “with an American flag to protect him, it being a foreign land.” Tom then steers the balloon to various distant points “to git what Tom called effects and perspectives and proportions,” while Jim strikes different clownish poses, including standing on his head. “The further we got away, the littler Jim got, and the grander the Sphinx got, till at last it was only a clothes-pin on a dome, as you might say.” Such distance would seem to produce a humbling perspective, a vision of the smallness and vanity of human production, but Twain has Tom pull a switch on the expected insight. “ ‘That’s the way perspective brings out the correct proportions,’ ” Tom claims, explaining that “ ‘Julus Cesar’s niggers didn’t know how big he was, they was too close to him.’ ”³³ With such distance, the historic relation of the huge achievement of African builders to the giant monuments they left behind can be reversed: only from the panoramic comprehension of settlement and chattel slavery—only from the perspective of hegemonic “history”—can the master’s creation of value exceed that of his slaves.

Reaching their farthest distance, Tom and Huck stop to meditate until they see what seem to be bugs creeping along the desert and climbing up the Sphinx’s back. The bugs turn out to be Arabs attacking the African American planted on the head of Oriental mystery. Tom and Huck race back to rescue Jim from his siege, although Tom

was very indignant, and asked him why he didn’t show the flag and command them to *git*, in the name of the United States. Jim said he done it, but they never paid no attention. Tom said he would have this thing looked into at Washington, and says:

“You’ll see that they’ll have to apologize for insulting the flag, and pay an indemnity, too, on top of it, even if they git off *that* easy.”³⁴

The dialogue continues with Jim figuring that they could collect the cash for the indemnity rather than the government, an idea which intrigues Huck. He asks Tom “if countries always apologized when they had done wrong,” who answers, “Yes; the little ones does.”³⁵ With that spoof on the inequities of international diplomacy, the miniscule American invasion of Egypt (which ignores the Anglo-French condominium then dominating the bankrupt khedive) comes to an end.

The unstated controversies about the racial nature of Egyptian civilization and about America’s imperial destiny saturate the scene of Jim planted on the head of the Sphinx, adding yet another dimension to the obvious incongruities: in 1893 Frederick Douglass made his appeal for Negro inclusion in the Columbian Exposition; in 1895 Booker T. Washington used the metaphor of five separate fingers on one hand to accommodate to “separate but equal”; while 1896 saw the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision enshrining pure race theology in the laws of real estate. Yet here Tom’s crusade could raise Old Glory even on the skull of civilization’s source, seeming to short-circuit all the proprietary arguments of African “originals”: if black Africa were to claim Egypt, only the white man would put him there. Tom’s flag is yet another exercise of filibustering fantasy in the tradition of American Holy Land literature (Stephens sailing up the

Nile, Lynch floating down the Jordan, each with the flag aloft), but the addition of the black man (who, on the giant structure of American power, seems to be in the “correct” perspective of subordination) alters the display. The fact that Huck testifies, as he does in *Huckleberry Finn* as well, that Jim “was only nigger outside; inside he was as white as you be,” complicates these racial and nationalist dynamics.³⁶ In one sense the statement reads as a compliment: the “external aspect” of blackness does not accurately reveal internal truth, for Jim is as “white”—that is, as much a man—as Tom or the reader. However, the possibility of Tom’s actual (and sinister) enactment of narrative makes the statement far more ironic, even critical. Is it really so good to be “white”? Is it “white” to violate the laws that protect real estate in the name of pure theology?

Soon President McKinley would hear God’s command, African American soldiers would be fighting guerilla insurgents in the Philippines, and those “buffalo soldiers” serving imperial power would seem “as white as you be”—or at least as equally conned and complicitous abroad, if far from equal at home. The fact that Twain’s satire does not take the prescient allusion any further is not so much a result of Twain’s creative exhaustion as a piece of unfortunate timing. If Twain were to have written the novella just a few years later—after the full scope of American atrocities against Filipino insurgents had become known to him and he had divested himself of any illusions of America assisting in a war of liberation—he might have unraveled a longer narrative line as well as a less abrupt conclusion. Tom’s invasion of Egypt might very well have become an extended occupation, one in which the innocent invaders, as in the Philippines, would have become latter-day crusader cannibals—although, in such an imagined version, Tom, Huck, and Jim would have more than likely ended up having “a mighty rocky time of it” after all.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Desolating Narrations: “*Der Jude Mark Twain*”

JEWS DO NOT figure greatly in *Innocents Abroad*, at least not directly. One paragraph of Twain’s traveling through Tiberias presents a classic, stereotypical sketch of an utterly alien creature:

They say that the long-nosed, lanky, dyspeptic-looking body-snatchers, with the indescribable hats on, and a long curl dangling down in front of each ear, are the old, familiar, self-righteous Pharisees we read of in the Scriptures. Verily, they look it. Judging merely by their general style, and without other evidence, one might easily suspect that self-righteousness was their specialty. (505–6)

However, Twain’s satire of self-righteousness is not exclusively anti-Judaic—he could well be alluding to the “general style” of certain Calvinist divines or to sanctimonious Plymouth Church pilgrims warbling over their hymnals. While “body-snatchers” is a word laden with allusions to Jewish “snatching” of Jesus from life and to blood libels, what is striking in the passage is the great distance from which Twain views the Jew—and how quickly he associates what he sees with what “we read of in the Scriptures.” Missing is any special “racial” animus.

The one other major passage in the travel book is the brief narrative of the Wandering Jew Twain inserts into his tour of Jerusalem. The Wandering Jew, like the trope of flight and height, has a long Orientalist genealogy; indeed, despite emancipation, “our Jews,” not yet fully embraced by the West in the flesh, were still very much the Oriental figures of legend, like Melville’s Cartaphilus and Shelley’s Ahasuerus. In his infidel epic *Queen Mab*, Shelley adapts Schubart’s version of the legend to present Ahasuerus as a fiction called forth by yet another fiction (Queen Mab) to denounce the grandest fiction of all, God. Shelley employs the “panoramic” position of Jews as witnesses throughout debased European history to create a hyperdefiant, Promethean figure. Shelley’s Wandering Jew is, as one critic puts it, “a symbol of mortality accused yet able to defy the oppressor who cursed him”; he is “in revolt, unbending and impious.”¹ Melville’s Cartaphilus, the character dramatized by the monks of Mar Saba in their “masque” in part 3 of *Clarel*, is an embodiment or correlative of the Jerusalem curse, that desolating evidence of man’s crime and Jehovah’s cruelty locked in the Holy City’s “blank, blank walls.” “O city yonder,” the monk-Cartaphilus apostrophizes,

Exposed in penalty and wonder,
Again thou seest me! Hither I
Still drawn am by the guilty tie
Between us. . .

(3.19. 20–23)²

Melville’s Wandering Jew is a walking Jerusalem, the fleshy embodiment of those “diabolical landscapes” that “suggested to the Jewish prophets, their terrific [ghastly] theology.”³ Melville’s anti-Judaic impetus is propelled by his own spiritual wandering, for Cartaphilus-Jerusalem also stands in for the poet’s own wreckage: “In the emptiness of the lifeless antiquity of Jerusalem,”

he wrote in his journal, “the emigrant Jews are like flies that have taken up their abode in a skull.”⁴ Jews also took up residence in Melville’s own skull as part of his obsession with unraveling “their terrific/ghastly theology,” as we have seen in the poem’s complex interweaving of Jews, New World sensibility, and identity, so the conflation of Cartaphilus, Jerusalem, and Clarel-Melville vibrates along a central symbolic nerve linked to the spiritual torment of indeterminacy, uncertainty, and failure that activates the poem.

Twain’s version of the myth, however, is neither defiant nor a stand-in for obsessive guilt. Instead, it is another opportunity to inflict the comic torture of “desolating narrations,” with Twain offering the tantalizing nightmare, both pleasurable and horrific, of never being able to die, of never being able to reach the end of the tale. Shown “the veritable house where the unhappy wretch once lived” in Jerusalem, Twain hinges his version of the legend on the fact that “the miscreant” is always “courting death but always in vain,” yet is ever prodded on. Couching his story in “hoary traditions,” Twain recalls the various times the Wandering Jew sought to be killed by invaders but never succeeded, whether at the hand of Titus, Mohammed, or Crusader knights, the myth of his failure to die becoming a burlesque of capitalist relations:

Since then the Wandering Jew has carried on a kind of desultory toying with the most promising of the aids and implements of destruction, but with small hope, as a general thing. He has speculated some in cholera and railroads, and has taken almost a lively interest in infernal machines and patent medicines. He is old, now, and grave, as becomes an age like his; he indulges in no light amusements save that he goes sometimes to executions, and is fond of funerals. (576–77)

Twain carries through the commercial burlesque by describing how the Wandering Jew “must never fail to report in Jerusalem every fiftieth year.” He views the city with “bitter, bitter tears,” yet “collects his rent and leaves again,” as the economic image of the predatory Jew (who could reduce both cholera and railroads to the equality of exchange values) would require. He yearns for rest in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, yet he is never allowed to enter, attempting again and again only to have the doors slam shut each time. “It is hopeless, but then it is hard to break habits one has been eighteen hundred years accustomed to,” Twain comments laconically, then yanks the tale back to the present:

The old tourist is far away on his wanderings, now. How he must smile to see a pack of blockheads like us, galloping about the world, and looking wise, and imagining we are finding out a good deal about it! He must have a consuming contempt for the ignorant, complacent asses that go skurrying about the world in these railroading days and call it traveling. (578)

The Wandering Jew is transformed into an “old tourist”—not a defiant rebel or a guilty deicide. He smiles upon his nineteenth-century colleagues in a remarkable equation: the man who can never sit still to die is linked to “blockheads . . . ignorant, complacent asses” who have also been set in constant motion by a curse. But rather than being set off by the Wandering Jew’s contempt for the authentically divine, the curse of tourism in “these railroading days” has driven modern wanderers to a frantic quest for the divinely authentic. These tourists imagine they discover “a good deal” about the world, but the great speed of railroads (and steamships), like the great speed of circulating capital, makes for the illusion of narrative structure (“traveling”) but without the variegated, thick density of the nonrailroading, contemplative engagement of walking or even riding a carriage. Fragmented sights, brief glimpses, flattened landscapes, the collapse of space into time, the traveler as disembodied parcel—all of the changes of perception resulting from the onset of railroading days mean a qualitative disruption of narrative/travel underscored by the contemptuous condescension of the Wandering Jew—Twain’s ultimate anti-tourist—for the tourist’s frenetic, acquisitive motion.⁵ The Wandering Jew’s guilt is considerably less relevant than his deliberate, repetitive itinerary, his habit, his inability to stop, his failure to

die. Twain then concludes the passage with yet another twist:

When the guide pointed out where the Wandering Jew had left his familiar mark upon a wall, I was filled with astonishment. It read:

S. T.—1860—X.

All I have revealed about the Wandering Jew can be amply proven by reference to our guide. (578)

In such manner, the eternal wanderer finds his rest: the hoary legend has become insubstantial, its mythic weight dispersed as a joke, and the endless, toxic tale finally comes to a crashing close through the absurdity of touristic inauthenticity.

The Wandering Jew is a fictional device, of course. The legendary character bears even less resemblance to actual Jews Twain might have encountered on his tour than the self-righteous body-snatcher, although the legend did offer one of a number of compelling narratives for ascribing the source of anti-Jewish hostility to Jews themselves. After *Innocents Abroad* Twain would have little occasion even to engage Jews as fictional devices or stock characters, and only toward the end of his life would he regard both Jews and the “Jewish Question” in a deeper and peculiarly personal manner, in “Extract from Captain Stormfield’s Visit to Heaven” and most comprehensively expressed in the humorously polemical essay “Concerning the Jews,” written during Twain’s twenty-month sojourn in Vienna between 1897 and 1899.⁶

“Concerning the Jews” is a complex brief for the defense; however, in its satiric detonation of aggression, the essay trades in the very same canards and stereotypes it seeks to displace.⁷ Twain had no contact with—and apparently no real concept of—the pauperized state of the vast mass of Jews then under czarist rule, and he had left the United States in 1891, just when the tide of Eastern European Jewish immigration was reaching qualitative levels. Instead, he formulated his arguments on commonplace legends about Jewish wealth and on a long-held belief that Jews “are peculiarly and conspicuously the world’s intellectual aristocracy.”⁸ Twain always responded ambivalently towards any idea of aristocracy, wildly vacillating between adulation and hostility, but in this philo-Semitism he stood squarely within the ongoing preoccupations of American Protestantism.

“Concerning the Jews” is filled with some of Twain’s wittiest digressions and most vibrant attempts at the aphoristic humor that so engaged him during this period. Asked by a Jewish correspondent to explain the outburst of anti-Semitism in Austria according to his “vantage point of cold view,” Twain stakes out a position he asserts to be free from prejudices:

I am quite sure that (bar one) I have no race prejudices nor color prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. Indeed, I know it. I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being—that is enough for me; he can’t be any worse.⁹

By this time, claiming egalitarian principles by means of misanthropy—even by eccentric lapse, such as his one overexaggerated prejudice against the French—had become one hallmark of Twain’s sardonic style. His democratic inclinations allow him immediately to delve into his lack of prejudice even against Satan, whom he claims is slandered (like the Jew) without adequate defense:

We have none but the evidence for the prosecution, and yet we have rendered the verdict. To my mind, this is irregular. It is un-English; it is un-American; it is French. Without this precedent Dreyfus could not have been condemned.¹⁰

I could go on; clearly, a very close reading would be instructive in understanding how such brilliantly crafted gems of comic logic operate, yet what I want to highlight here are just a few

key components of the essay, particularly as they are linked to the peculiar circumstances of its composition.

The crux of Twain's argument is that "Jewish persecution is not a religious passion, it is a business passion."¹¹ He asserts that antipathy toward Jews antedates the crucifixion, calling upon an extended exegesis of how Joseph "cornered" the grain market in Egypt to prove his point. Yet this business passion has a basis because of the Jew's great ability as a result of the strictures put upon his economic development:

Ages of restriction to the one tool which the law was not able to take from him—his brain—have made that tool singularly competent; ages of compulsory disuse of his hands have atrophied them, and he never uses them now. This history has a very, very commercial look, a most sordid and practical commercial look, the business aspect of a Chinese cheap-labor crusade. Religious prejudices may account for one part of it, but not for the other nine.¹²

As a consequence of Jewish attention to commerce and moneymaking, "I am persuaded that in Russia, Austria, and Germany nine-tenths of the hostility to the Jew comes from the average Christian's inability to compete successfully with the average Jew in business—in either straight business or the questionable sort."¹³ Although such statements are clearly naive and overbroad—as Philip Foner puts it, "The hook-nosed, pawnshop owner was replaced by the intellectual genius who far outshone everyone else in the world of commerce and the professions, and who thereby aroused the envy of the lesser breeds of humanity"¹⁴—Twain actually did touch the tender core of antipathy toward Jews, at least as perceived by the new anti-Semites of Austria, including their envy of Jewish rivals. This admixture of philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism he expressed even more directly in a letter about the Austrian situation to his friend Reverend Joseph Twitchell in Hartford:

It is Christian and Jew by the horns—the advantage with the superior man, as usual—the superior man being the Jew every time and in all countries. Land, Joe, what chance would the Christian have in a country where there were 3 Jews to 10 Christians! Oh, not the shade of a shadow of a chance. The difference between the brain of the average Christian and that of the average Jew—certainly in Europe—is about the difference between a tadpole's and an Archbishop's. It's a marvelous race —by long odds the most marvelous that the world has produced, I suppose.¹⁵

Twain's ascription of hatred of this superior, "marvelous race" to a "business passion" echoes Marx's construction of the Jew as an economic category: "The monotheism of the Jew is therefore in reality the polytheism of many needs, a polytheism that makes even the lavatory an object of divine law. . . . Exchange is the actual god of the Jew."¹⁶ At the same time, Twain's formulation that hatred toward Jews antedates Christianity anticipates the similar assertion by Abram Leon, who almost half a century later extended the Marxist search for the "actual Jew."¹⁷ Moreover, Twain's reference to "the business aspect of a Chinese cheap-labor crusade"—the innovation of a Chinese race-caste as a labor supply intriguing Twain in the Sandwich Islands and San Francisco even before he left on the *Quaker City*, while Austrian anti-Semites like Georg Shonerer "turned to the United States for a legislative model for racial discrimination: the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882"¹⁸—also anticipates Leon's characterization of Jews as a "people-class," an ethnic-caste formation that draws its cohesive identity from either its current or residual economic role, such as being the bearer of money values within the natural economy of the feudal manor, a sense of peoplehood and continuity forged more by economic differentiation than by religion. I raise these parallels to underscore the ways in which Twain—hardly a Marxist, despite (or because of) his tendencies toward mechanical materialism—was actually articulating a version of fairly advanced theories of social development at the time. These secular narratives of Jewish difference formulated on self-consciously nontheological

bases, no matter how reductionist, were equally available to the new “scientific” racism of anti-Semites, the emerging settler-colonial, “blood and soil” nationalism of Zionists, and the “panoramic” universalism of socialists.

Twain’s main advice for Jews—to follow the example of “the ignorant Irish hod carrier” in America—employed yet another ethnic commonplace: the Irish ward heeler.¹⁹ Jews should “concentrate” their energies politically; they should learn “the value of combination” and organize. With an opening provided by this turn toward the political, Twain offers the one major comment on Zionism of his career, joking how Dr. Herzl, with “a clear insight into the value” of concentration, proposes

to gather the Jews of the world together in Palestine, with a government of their own—under the suzerainty of the Sultan, I suppose. At the [first Zionist] Convention of Berne, last year, there were delegates from everywhere, and the proposal was received with decided favor. I am not the Sultan, and I am not objecting; but if that concentration of the cunningest brains in the world were going to be made on a free country (bar Scotland), I think it would be politic to stop it. It will not be well to let that race find out its strength. If the horses knew theirs, we should not ride any more.²⁰

Throughout his career Twain avoided discussions of “Jewish restoration”—even in *Innocents Abroad*, when he viewed the survivors of the Adams colony, the specifically restorationist aspect of their project was not a target of his barbs—although he was exposed to the proto-Zionism of George Eliot, whose *Daniel Deronda* in 1876 introduced a fully embodied Zionist character for the first time to English fiction, and of one of his favorite authors, W. E. H. Lecky, among others.²¹ The notion of “our Jews and Christians” seizing the Holy Land in the Peaceful Crusade did arouse his satire, as we saw, but the idea existed more as a symbol for all imperialist crusader myths, particularly American ones, rather than as a fully articulated critique of “our Jews” colonizing Palestine. Twain was interviewed by the *feuilletonist* Theodor Herzl in Paris in 1894 while the not-yet-Zionist Viennese journalist was covering the Dreyfus trial, an interview that first introduced the American humorist to the Austrian public. Twain, who already admired the work of Jewish writers, such as the Anglo-Jewish playwright and author Israel Zangwill, was favorably impressed by Herzl’s pre-Zionist drama *The New Ghetto*, even attempting a translation for Broadway.²² Without doubt, he was well aware of Herzl’s proposal, although, given how important Zionism would become in the course of the next century, Twain’s backhanded compliment can only be read as frustratingly inconclusive.

Twain’s religious skepticism, along with his increasingly anti-imperialist opinions, may have placed him outside the most important American ideological reformulation of restorationist doctrine since Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles. In 1891, the year Twain left the United States and years before Herzl embraced the settler-colonial project, the proto-fundamentalist William E. Blackstone presented his memorial, titled “Palestine for the Jews,” to President Benjamin Harrison. “What shall be done for the Russian Jews?” the petition asked.

Why not give Palestine back to them again? According to God’s distribution of nations, it is their home, an inalienable possession, from which they were expelled by force. . . . Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Servia to the Servians now give Palestine back to the Jews? . . . Let us now restore them to the land of which they were so cruelly despoiled by our Roman ancestors.²³

Although Blackstone couched his restorationist memorial in primarily liberal secular terms, his proposal was actually founded on the new theological formulations of dispensational premillennialism, which began to flower with the first of the Niagara Prophecy Conferences in 1878 and which Blackstone initially elaborated in his popular tract *Jesus Is Coming*, published that same year.²⁴ Premillennialism’s innovation, in terms of the doctrine of Jewish restoration,

was to revise the previously dominant postmillennial narrative to call for Jewish return to the Holy Land *before* rather than after Jewish conversion to Christianity. This innovation continued to objectify Jews according to Christian eschatology—and even, through the narratives of cataclysm and Armageddon that envisioned the destruction of almost all the Jews gathered to the new-old homeland as a prelude to the return of Jesus, could be said to increase the dangers inherent in such objectification. But, most radically, the new formulation encouraged Jews to maintain both their religious distinctiveness and ethnic identity, allowing for newer, easier forms of naturalizing the doctrine within secular as well as religious contexts. Perhaps most important, the new doctrine created common ground for both Christians and Jews to advocate “return,” despite their differing narratives. The over four hundred distinguished signatories to the petition included then Congressman William McKinley, evangelist Dwight L. Moody, businessman John D. Rockefeller, fellow Holy Land travel writer George William Curtis, along with a small number of Jews—although the list of notables did not include Mark Twain, who, despite bankruptcy, still ranked as a literary luminary.

Nonetheless, given his critical responses to settler-colonial impositions in New Caledonia and Australia in the recently published *Following the Equator*, as well as his acute awareness of the tensions between “pure theology” and “the laws that protect real estate,” readers may very well have expected Twain’s opinions on the potential for colonial violence to be considerably sharper than they had been in *Innocents Abroad*; yet, in “Concerning the Jews,” Twain’s joke avoids the colonialist indelicacies of Blackstone’s and Herzl’s proposals. It may be that Twain, like others contemplating Herzl’s colonizing project, either could not “see” the local population, rendering its Arab inhabitants as invisible (“A land without a people for a people without a land”), or he rationalized their acquiescence to, even their enthusiasm for, colonialist “progress” (as did Edward Wilmot Blyden), or—a more prevalent and therefore more probable attitude—he simply dismissed the practicality of the idea altogether. Most of those who signed the Blackstone Memorial, for example, appeared to be more interested in sending a signal to President Harrison on the dangers of unrestricted Jewish immigration and did not regard the feasibility of the idea too seriously. In any case, Twain’s joke pivots on “that concentration of the cunningest brains in the world,” the idea that shrewd operators like Jews gaining control of a government would allow for a possible “corner” on international power. While Twain regards “the word Jew as if it stood for both religion and race”²⁵—a formulation locating him within the same conceptual orbit of “scientific” race theories from which both anti-Semitism and Zionism drew their strengths—he intends a compliment to the “race,” of course. If anything, Twain’s essay argues for a type of assimilation, for Jews to be less “foreign,” since “even the angels dislike a foreigner.”²⁶ Still, the contradictory directions that necessarily energize satire—such as, in the case of the “cunningest brains,” the tug between praise and disparagement—allow for a great deal of ambiguity, particularly when auditors of such a desolating narration are not clear which pole is the norm and which the incongruity. Such is the case for much of the humor of this essay, so much so that in the 1930s American Nazis, bowdlerizing the text against its purpose, could offer Twain’s definition of Jewish persecution as a “business passion” as evidence for why the American icon “Mark Twain” should be inducted into the ranks of anti-Semites.²⁷

All of this is made even more unstable by the remarkable fact that Mark Twain was a Jew—or at least regarded as one in Vienna. Throughout his career Twain was never taken to be an African or Native American, an “ignorant Irish hod-carrier,” or any other racial or religious “foreigner,” so his experience in Vienna offered him a unique opportunity to see through the eyes of the Other in ways that his usual transports of narrative imagination would not take him. It

so happened, with serendipitous irony, that the Other he became was “*der Jude Mark Twain*.”

Twain arrived in 1897 to advance his daughter Clara’s musical education when Vienna was embroiled in violent struggle over rising nationalist sentiments within the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire. He soon found himself witnessing some of the most virulent episodes of the politics of “the sharper key,” what Carl Schorske has described as “a mode of political behavior at once more abrasive, more creative, and more satisfying to the life of feeling than the deliberative style of the liberals.”²⁸ Twain’s stay in Austria happened to coincide with the most intense crisis affecting the empire in decades, a crisis that may have sounded the death knell to both the empire and the liberalism it represented and that took the form of raucous, violent sessions in parliament followed by its military occupation and dissolution by the emperor, street riots, the assassination of the Empress Elisabeth, and the ascension to the mayoralty of Vienna by the Social Christian anti-Semite Dr. Karl Lueger. Twain would write about the parliamentary crisis in “Stirring Times in Austria,” the article that won him many enemies even before he wrote “Concerning the Jews,” but even before that foray he had unwittingly stepped into the noose the moment he had arrived by making the unfortunate gaffe of presenting a short burlesque on the convolutions of the German language for his introductory speech to the Austrian intelligentsia:

I would effect only a few changes. I just want to compress the method of speech—the luxurious, elaborate construction; to suppress, abolish, eradicate the eternal parentheses; to forbid the introducing of more than thirteen subjects in one sentence; to pull the verb so far forward that one may discover it without a telescope. In a word, gentlemen, I want to simplify your beloved language so that when you need it for prayer it can be understood Up Yonder.²⁹

His good-natured chauvinism was lost on Austrians inflamed by Czech demands for language rights, while the fact that he gave his speech at the predominantly Jewish Concordia Club, where he had the temerity to mock German abilities to be heard “Up Yonder,” quickly set off the anti-Semitic press in its “sharper key.”

Although hatred of Judaism and Jews has an ancient lineage, *Antisemitismus* as a specifically racialized, “modern” hatred of Jews was virtually invented in Vienna, of course, and the physical as well as verbal violence of its adherents was notorious. As Carl Dolmetsch fully documents in “*Our Famous Guest*”: *Mark Twain in Vienna*, the celebrated American humorist was inevitably caught in the maelstrom because he tended, in the highly polarized atmosphere of newspaper circulation wars, to consort with independent, liberal, or left-wing journalists who were Jewish or who worked for Jewish editors, of which there were many. Additionally, Austrians would have assumed that anyone with such a prominent nose and the real (and concealed) first name of Samuel must have been Jewish, since “[f]ew Old Testament names are in the Calendar of the Saints from which, according to Catholic dogma then observed in Austria, baptismal names had to be taken.”³⁰ To make matters worse, when Twain was asked by a Jewish reporter to try his hand at writing German, he offered a translation of one of his Pudd’nhead Wilson maxims —“Truth is the most valuable thing we have. Let us economize it”—which only had the unfortunate effect of confirming his parsimonious Jewishness by those who were fishing for it in the first place:

Mark Twain, with [those] words, so to speak, gave the “Motto” of the whole of Jewish journalism: “Let us not squander the truth, let us economize it!” One cannot better characterize the Jewish lying-press. That could be done only by a charming Jewish humorist!³¹

Lambasting Mark Twain as “*der judische amerikanische Humorist*” was only a ploy in the virulent political debate of the time in which German nationalists targeted, in the words of Georg

Schonerer, the “Semitic rule of money and the word [i.e., the press].”³² The immediate, concrete reasons for the attack on Jews—such as their advances since emancipation in commerce and the professions, their adherence as a “state-people” to the multinational empire rather than to linguistic-nationalist particularity, the reluctance of bourgeois Jews to expand the franchise—were complex and multifaceted, but the overt presence of anti-Jewish sentiment became undeniably pervasive, coloring all political and social activities in Vienna. As a consequence, the debate over the Jews frequently swirled even in Mark Twain’s domestic circle, as his daughter Clara (who would confound the situation even more by marrying the Jewish Russian pianist Ossip Gabrilowitsch ten years later) writes:

Father had always been a great admirer of the Jewish race and now had the opportunity in Vienna to test and prove the soundness of his good opinion of that great people. . . . Arguments as to the virtues or non-virtues of the Jews were often the topic of discussion in our drawing-room, and Father always grew eloquent in defense of Christ’s race. Indeed, so often were his remarks on this subject quoted that it was rumored at one time Father himself was a Jew.³³

While Twain may have been rumored to be a Jew, he once again situated himself on the periphery to view identity from the outside, from the margins of civilization, so to speak. “Neither Jew nor Christian will approve of it,” he wrote Henry Huttleston Rogers of “Concerning the Jews,”

but people who are neither Jews *nor* Christians will, for they are in a condition to know truth when they see it. I really believe that I am the only man in the world who is equipped to write upon the subject without prejudice. For I *am* without prejudice. It is my hope that both the Christians *and* the Jews will be damned; and to that end I am working all my influence. Help me pray.³⁴

What Twain perhaps did not realize was that such a stance in Vienna—of being *neither*—made him, in effect, a Jew—or at least that type of assimilationist Jew (Freud is a good example) who abandoned orthodox Jewish religious observance for a secularized identity while never formally receiving baptism. In other words, Twain’s cosmopolitan identity, his rejection of all religion, his conversion to “neither,” would not necessarily be accepted by anti-Semites as evidence of gentile purity, particularly if the rest of his letter’s satiric comments were to have been made public:

If I have any leaning it is toward the Jew, not the Christian. (There is one thing I’d like to say, but I *dasn’t*: Christianity has deluged the world with blood and tears—Judaism has caused neither for religion’s sake.) I’ve had hard luck with *them*.

Twain, of course, “*dasn’t*” say these views, but his philo-Semitic attitude is clearly evident in the essay. One could ferret out in “Concerning the Jews” the ways in which Twain could very well identify with Jews or Jewish concerns: for example, Joseph’s “corner” on the grain market and the other examples of Jewish “money-getting” acumen parallel Twain’s own constant, if less successful, “business passion”; or one could draw out the ways in which Twain, like Jews, thrived in a texture of paradoxical contradictions. Though such parallels might very well be, in Twain’s parlance, stretchers, to the degree that his cosmopolitan diminution or blurring of the barriers of identity could be identified as a particularly “Jewish” response in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, I believe even Twain might very well have viewed himself as somewhat “Jewish.”

Now that the typological figure has returned to itself with some irony—the Christian-as-new-Jew collapsing once again into the Jew-as-fallen (or, in the charade concerning Twain, false)-Christian—this study may have come full circle, so to speak. It may be worth concluding with a reconsideration of the question Melville has Clarel pose to the “Prodigal” concerning Palestine: “[D]o you not / concede some strangeness to her lot?” Indeed, as we have seen, the concession

must be made: Palestine is, for Melville and Twain and for the numerous other Holy Land travelers who came before and even after them, inescapably “strange.”

Travelers today continue to respond to the innate strangeness of the Israeli/Palestinian landscape: the drastic changes in climate and topography in so small a space from coastal plain to mountains to desert; the sandy, pinkish sunlight that colors Jerusalem; the eerie, numinous quality emanating from the country’s rock outcrops, high places, and desert wilderness—all of this independent even of the intensity and agony offered by the “strangeness” of the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The obvious connection persists between religious narratives and the terrain of their original enactment and insistent reenactment imagined as “sacred geography.”

There are many who still insist upon “reading” such a geography, delving into the mesh of signification between terrain and sacred text; there are many as well who engage America similarly as an exegetical landscape, a Holy Land itself invested with a sacred, providential destiny, even if often voiced in the secular registers of an “American Dream.” Melville and Twain sustained even as they countered such hermeneutical equations, their infidel countertexts arising from the entire history of such engagements. In their different ways, Melville and Twain attempted to refashion the hermeneutical circle, and in their most radical moments they even entertained the possibility of breaking it altogether. Ironically, such resistance may have only strengthened the current: the ruin of the Old Holy Land, even the ruin of disappointment and disjuncture, still tended further to confirm the election of God’s New Israel throughout the nineteenth century.

Perhaps it is appropriate to end this study, then, by pondering the “strangeness” of Christianography that still pervades the cultural landscape of the United States. Consider the questions that can still be posed of the habits and structures of feeling of exegetical identity that so troubled and delighted Melville and Twain; interrogate those legacies of colonial settlement so deeply embedded within American discourse: Can an America be conceived without a covenantal framework? Can the land and its people be freed from the presumption of God’s special destiny?

Notes

PREFACE

MANIAS AND MATERIALITIES

1. Herman Melville, letter to James Billson, 10 October 1884, in Herman Melville, *Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth, from work by Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1993), 483.
2. William Dean Howells, *My Mark Twain: Reminiscences and Criticisms* (New York: Harper, 1910), 8.
3. Edward Wilmot Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine* (Freetown, Sierra Leone: T. J. Sawyer, 1873), 9–12.
4. Herman Melville, *Journals*, ed. Howard C. Horsford with Lynn Horth (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1989), 94, 92.
5. Reports of religious insanity appeared in the very first issue of the *American Journal of Insanity*. See “Millerism,” 1 (1844–45): 249–53. “They are monomaniacs,” the report observes of their apparent rationality, “and the more their attention is directed to the subject of their delusions by reasoning with them, the more is their *diseased faith* increased” (251). See also “On the Connexion between Morbid Physical and Religious Phenomena,” 11 (1854–55): 290–93; “Spiritual Rappers; Physiological Explanation,” 11 (1854–55): 294–95; “Case of Mania with the Delusions and Phenomena of Spiritualism,” 16 (1859–60): 321–40; and “Religious Insanity,” 33 (1876–77): 126–31.
6. Medical observers noted the similarity between religious mania and other mass excitements: “There is in many minds what may be called a mania or fanaticism of *invention*, and the history of the ‘Southsea bubble,’ the ‘Tulip mania,’ the ‘Western land fever,’ the ‘Petroleum fever,’ the ‘Wall Street panics,’ the ‘California mining speculations,’ the fruits of which may still be seen in the overcrowded asylum of that State, illustrates the fact that fanaticisms are not confined to religious subjects alone” (“Religious Insanity,” 127).
7. This sketch of nineteenth-century Palestine is drawn from the following sources: Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century: The Old City* (Jerusalem and New York: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi Institute and St. Martin’s Press, 1984); K. J. Asali, “Jerusalem under the Ottomans, 1516–1831 AD,” in *Jerusalem in History*, ed. K. J. Asali (Essex, UK: Scorpion, 1989); Amnon Cohen, *Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973); Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Gad G. Gilbar, *Ottoman Palestine, 1800–1914* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990); Ahmad Sasan Joudah, *Revolt in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: The Era of Shaykh Zahir al-'Umar* (Princeton: Kingston Press, 1987); Ruth Kark, *Jaffa: A City in Evolution, 1799–1917* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1990); Moshe Ma'oz, ed., *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975); idem, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840–1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); Roger Owen, *Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981); Alexander Scholch, “European Penetration and the Economic Development of Palestine, 1856–82,” in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (Oxford: St. Anthony’s, 1982); idem, “Jerusalem in the 19th Century (1831–1917 AD),” in *Jerusalem in History*; idem, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882 Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993); and Ma’oz, *Studies on Palestine*.
8. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 11.
9. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 6. For more on the historiography of Palestine, see Beshara Doumani, “Rediscovering Palestinian History: Writing Palestinians into History,” *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 21 (Winter 1992): 5–28.
10. Joudah, *Revolt in Palestine*, 16. See also Cohen, *Palestine in the Eighteenth Century*.
11. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 16–53.
12. Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha, quoted in Scholch, “European Penetration,” 37. According to Scholch, in 1872 Grand Vizier Mahmud Nadim Pasha cancelled his own order to form a province of Jerusalem “when he was supposedly alerted to the dangers to the Ottoman government that could arise from bringing all the ‘holy places’ together in a single province. . . . The Porte . . . was trying by administrative means to make the European penetration of the ‘Holy Land’ more complicated” (*Palestine in Transformation*, 14).
13. Frederick Engels, quoted in E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875* (New York: New American Library, 1979), 63.
14. Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 55; and Owen, *Middle East in the World Economy*, 173–79.
15. Scholch, “European Penetration,” 12.
16. *Ibid.*, 29.
17. Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 119–20.
18. Ben-Arieh, *Rediscovery of the Holy Land*, 15.

19. Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 68.

20. R. P. de Damas, quoted in *ibid.*, 67.

CHAPTER ONE

HOLY LANDS AND SETTLER IDENTITIES

1. Leon Vincent, *John Heyl Vincent: A Biographical Sketch* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), 91. J. H. Vincent first elaborated his “Palestine Class” in *Little Footprints in Bible Lands; or, Simple Lessons in Sacred History and Geography, for the Use of Palestine Classes and Sabbath Schools* (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1861). Vincent’s textbook is “a compend of sacred history, biography, and geography” (3) in the form of questions and answers through which a student could ascend in knowledge according to travel modes similar to those of an actual Holy Land traveler: “Thus the ‘Pilgrim’ must be familiar with all the prescribed lessons before he can become successively ‘Resident,’ ‘Explorer,’ ‘Dweller in Jerusalem,’ and ‘Templar’ ” (89).

On Chhattauqua, see Lester I. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 1–4. The Palestine Park continues in Chhattauqua. See Dinitia Smith, “A Utopia Awakens and Shakes Itself: Chhattauqua, Once a Cultural Haven for Religious Teachers, Survives,” *New York Times*, 17 August 1998, B1.

On Banvard, Church, and Morris, as well as Chhattauqua, see John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 65–72, 168–208, 49–51, 89–97.

2. William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book; or, Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1859); Elder Orson Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem, or a Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde* (Boston: Albert Morgan, 1842); Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841); and William F. Lynch, *Narrative of the United States’ Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849; reprint, Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850).

3. Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens), *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim’s Progress* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1869), 27.

4. Franklin Walker, *Irreverent Pilgrims: Melville, Browne, and Mark Twain in the Holy Land* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974). Studies of Melville’s and Twain’s overall work are too numerous to mention here. Relatively few studies of *Clarel* have been produced, though recent attempts include Shirley M. Dettlaff’s examination of the imagery of Victorian faith-crisis in “‘Counter Natures in Mankind’: Hebraism and Hellenism in *Clarel*,” in *Melville’s Evermoving Dawn: Centennial Essays*, ed. John Bryant and Robert Milder (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997); and Stan Goldman’s theological interpretation in *Melville’s Protest Theism: The Hidden and Silent God in Clarel* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993). Though *Innocents Abroad* has been discussed within broader contexts of Twain’s work, such as Richard Bridgman’s *Traveling in Mark Twain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), comprehensive studies include Dewey Ganzel, *Mark Twain Abroad: The Cruise of the “Quaker City”* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); and Robert H. Hirst, “The Making of *The Innocents Abroad: 1867–1872*” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1975).

5. David H. Finnie, *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

For the Holy Land Project, see the collections of articles and colloquium papers in *With Eyes toward Zion: Scholars Colloquium on America–Holy Land Studies*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York, Arno Press, 1977); *With Eyes toward Zion II: Themes and Sources in the Archives of the United States, Great Britain, Turkey, and Israel*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Praeger, 1986); and *With Eyes toward Zion—III: Western Societies and the Holy Land*, ed. Moshe Davis and Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (New York: Praeger, 1991). Other key texts include Moshe Davis, *America and the Holy Land: With Eyes toward Zion—IV* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995); Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979); Robert T. Handy, ed. *The Holy Land in American Protestant Life, 1800–1948: A Documentary History* (New York: Arno Press, 1981); Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, and *idem*, “Zion as Place and Past: An American Myth, Ottoman Palestine in the American Mind Perceived through Protestant Consciousness and Experience” (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1984).

6. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978). Said has opened new ground here and in other studies for a fuller and more critical examination of Orientalism as a mode of colonial discourse, a way in which “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (3). Other recent studies in Western attitudes toward Islam and the East include Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996); and Fuad Sha’ban, *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought: The Roots of Orientalism in America* (Durham, NC: Acorn Press, 1991).

Sacvan Bercovitch’s explication in *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) of how covenantal discourse shapes American culture fundamentally redirected much of American studies. Earlier studies of the covenant and American society include those by Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956); Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1970); and Conrad Cherry, *God’s New Israel: Religious Interpretation of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

7. Annette Kolodny, “Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions: Notes toward a New Literary History of the American Frontiers,” in *Subjects & Citizens: Nation, Race, and Gender from Oroonoko to Anita Hill*, ed. Michael Moon and Cathy N. Davidson

(Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 17.

8. For an explication of “civil religion” and the covenant, see Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); for recent speculations on biblical America, see J. Huston McCulloch, “The Bat Creek Inscription: Did Judean Refugees Escape to Tennessee?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 19 (July/August, 1993): 46–53, 82; and for fundamentalist support of Israel, see Hal Lindsey with C. C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970); *All in the Name of the Bible: Selected Essays on Israel and American Christian Fundamentalism*, ed. Hassan Haddad and Donald Wagner (Brattleboro, VT: Amana, 1986); Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes towards Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865–1945* (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1991); Yona Malchy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1978); and Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

The conversation between Congressman Jack Kemp and the American Jew in Israel recounted in *Near East Report* is worth quoting at length. Kemp

met “a young guy in Metulla, from Chicago.” The American immigrant was running a restaurant with the help of his wife. He was working hard. Kemp told him that he didn’t think he would “have the guts to pick up roots and move to *my* homeland.” The former American thought awhile and then told Kemp why he had come to Israel: “Congressman, it was just the American thing to do.”

“File for the Record: Jack Kemp: Israel Aid Vital,” *Near East Report* 28 (31 December 1984): 215.

9. Barbara W. Tuchman, “Preface from the 1983–1984 Edition,” *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (1956; reprint, New York: Ballantine, 1984), x, xii.

10. George M. Fredrickson, “Colonialism and Racism,” in *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 218. Also see D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967); and Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

11. Fredrickson, “Colonialism and Racism,” 218–19.

12. *Ibid.*, 220.

13. *Ibid.*, 221.

14. Finnie, *Pioneers East*, 30–31.

15. See George Alexander Kohut, *Ezra Stiles and the Jews: Selected Passages from His Literary Diary Concerning Jews and Judaism* (New York: Philip Cowen, 1902).

16. Bayard Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen; or, Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1855), 177; Lynch, *Narrative*, 26.

CHAPTER TWO

GEORGE SANDYS: “DOUBLE TRAVELS” AND COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

1. “Good Newes from Virginia” (London, 1623), quoted in Richard Beale Davis, *George Sandys, Poet-Adventurer: A Study in Anglo-American Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Bodley Head, 1955), 129. Biographical information on Sandys is taken from Davis, the only major biographical study to date.

2. Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), 172.

3. J. Frederick Fausz, “Opechancanough: Indian Resistance Leader,” in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, ed. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 31.

4. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 19 (1625), quoted in Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 160.

5. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 172.

6. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625) 4, quoted in Frances Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 80; and John Winthrop, “General Considerations for the Plantation in New England” (1629), quoted in *ibid.*, 82.

7. Edward Waterhouse, *A Declaration of the State of the Colony in Virginia* (1622), quoted in Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 172.

8. George Sandys, “To the Reader,” in his *Ovid’s Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologiz’d and Represented in Figures* (London, 1632).

9. Douglas Bush, *Mythology and Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1932), quoted in Davis, *George Sandys*, 218.

10. For a discussion of the many literary sources used by Sandys, see Davis, *George Sandys*, 218–26.

11. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 155.

12. Sandys, “To the Reader,” *Ovid’s Metamorphosis*.

13. *Ibid.*, 263.

14. Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 43.

15. George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610. Foure Bookes Containing a description of the Turkish Empire, of AEGypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote parts of Italy, and Ilands adioyning* (London, 1615; facsimile, New York and Amsterdam: De Capo Press, 1973). All parenthetical references will be made from this edition, with some modernization of

spelling for reading ease.

Jonathan Haynes, in his study of Sandys's travel book, characterizes his outlook as representative of the full range of humanist preoccupations: "In his vision of civilization as something glorious and heroic, in his faith in human powers mingled with a Christian recognition of man's frailty, in the appeal to a benign natural law of harmony and correspondences, in his belief in the continuity of private and public virtues and in the power of rhetoric to express and bind them together, and in his preoccupation with historical achievement and historical loss, Sandys shows us English humanism in its fullest flowering." *The Humanist as Traveler: George Sandys's Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986), 18.

16. Judith Adler, "Travel as Performed Art," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (May 1989): 1376.

17. *Ibid.*, 1370.

18. Haynes, *The Humanist as Traveler*, 104. Sandys "moves around in a state of sceptical alienation, entailing a constant stream of verbal qualifications," numerous samples of which Haynes presents in collage fashion.

19. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage* 8 (London, 1613), 185, quoted in *ibid.*, 107.

20. Haynes, *The Humanist as Traveler*, 121.

21. *Ibid.*, 122.

22. See Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 100–101; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 10–11; and Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (1956; reprint, New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), 1–79.

23. John Rolfe, *A Relation of the State of Virginia* (1616), quoted in Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 119.

24. Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins*, 138.

25. See Steven N. Zwicker, "England, Israel, and the Triumph of Roman Virtue," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought, 1650–1800*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 37–64. For a comparison of Greco-Roman and Christian views, see M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 34–37.

CHAPTER THREE

"CHRISTIANOGRAPHY" AND COVENANT

1. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of the New-England* (1702; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 42.

2. For an interpretation challenging the common view that New England orthodoxy was monolithic, see Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

3. Moshe Davis offers the estimate of over one thousand biblical place-names. For a list of 373 biblical names in the United States, see "Biblical Place-Names," in *With Eyes toward Zion: Scholars Colloquium on America–Holy Land Studies*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 246–52.

4. Mather, *Magnalia Christi*, 14.

5. John Cotton, quoted in Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 25. See also Mason I. Lowance, Jr., *The Language of Canaan: Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 59.

6. For a discussion of other chosen-people identities, including those of Great Britain, Germany, and France, as well as Switzerland and Sweden, see William R. Hutchison and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

7. Donald Harman Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel, and Ulster* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 42.

8. John Winthrop, quoted in Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 14–15.

9. Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Biblical Basis of the American Myth," in *The Bible and American Arts and Letters*, ed. Giles Gunn (Philadelphia and Chico: Fortress Press and Scholars Press, 1983), 221–22.

10. Ezra Stiles, "The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor," in *The Pulpit of the American Revolution: or, The Political Sermons of the Period of 1776*, ed. John Wingate Thornton (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), 403–6, 442.

11. " 'It has long been the opinion of the Author,' [Joel Barlow] wrote, 'that such a state of peace and happiness as is foretold in scripture and commonly called the millennial period, may rationally be expected to be introduced without a miracle.' The civilizing of the world was a matter of three principal stages: the population of its various parts, the development of mutual knowledge on the part of the various nations, and the increase of their 'imaginary wants . . . in order to inspire a passion for commerce.' " James A. Field, *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776–1882* (Princeton, Princeton: University Press, 1969), 15.

12. Philip Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge, "A Poem, On the Rising Glory of America" (1771), quoted in Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins*, 146.

13. John Adams, quoted in Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 22; Conrad Cherry, *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretation of American*

Destiny (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 65; Field, *America and the Mediterranean World*, 3; and Lowance, *The Language of Canaan*, 183.

14. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 164.
15. Herman Melville, *White-Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War* (1850; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 153.
16. George Berkeley, "America or the Muse's Refuge: A Prophecy" (1726), in Harry M. Bracken, "Bishop Berkeley's Messianism," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought, 1650–1800*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 71.
17. *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the A.B.C.F.M. to the Rev. Levi Parsons and the Rev. Pliny Fisk, Missionaries Designated for Palestine (delivered in the Old South Church, Boston, Sabbath Evening, October 31, 1819)* (Boston: Samuel F. Armstrong, 1819), 44.
18. William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607–1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 77–79, 101–2. Also see Oliver W. Elsbee, "The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in New England, 1790–1815," *New England Quarterly* 1 (1928): 295–322.
19. Samuel Hopkins, "A Treatise on the Millennium," in *The Works of Samuel Hopkins*, 3 vols., ed. Sewall Harding (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1852), 2:273–75, 2:285–87, 2:289–90. See the treatment of Hopkins's treatise in Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 59–64. While the maturation of capitalist productive relations and the challenge of Enlightenment rationalism are no doubt key factors in the transformation from premillennialist to postmillennialist outlooks, an examination of the complex economic, social, and theological reasons for this change is beyond the scope of this study.
20. Lorenzo Dow, *A Journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, or the Road to Peace and True Happiness: Prefaced with an Essay on the Rights of Man* (1812), quoted in Christopher Merriman Beam, "Millennialism in American Thought, 1740–1840" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1976), 141.
21. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, "Address to the Christian Public," in *First Ten Reports* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1834), 28.
22. Carl Frederick Ehle, Jr., "Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America: The Views of Increase Mather and William E. Blackstone Concerning the Doctrine of the Restoration of Israel" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977), 331.
23. For a short survey of the origins of postmillennialism and its relation to Jewish restoration, see *ibid.*, 187–219.
24. Levi Parsons, in Daniel O. Morton, *Memoir of Rev. Levi Parsons, Late Missionary to Palestine* (1824; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 217–18.
25. John Adams, quoted in Davis, "The Holy Land in American Spiritual History," in *With Eyes toward Zion*, 19.
26. *Dictionary of American Biography*, S.V. "David Austin"; and Timothy Dwight, quoted in Beam, "Millennialism in American Thought," 155.
27. Levi Parsons, *The Dereliction and Restoration of the Jews. A Sermon, Preached in Park-Street Church Boston, Sabbath, Oct, 31, 1819, Just Before the Departure of the Palestine Mission* (1819; facsimile) in *Holy Land Missions and Missionaries* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 14.
28. *Ibid.*, 15.
29. *Ibid.*, 12.
30. Gershon Greenberg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought, 1620–1948: The Symbiosis of American Religious Approaches to Scripture's Sacred Territory* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 228–29.
31. Elder Orson Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem, or a Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde* (Boston: Albert Morgan, 1842), 19.
32. James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 34–35.
33. John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 66–68.
34. Bayard Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen; or, Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1855), 99–100.
35. *Ibid.*, 104.

CHAPTER FOUR

READING AND WRITING SACRED GEOGRAPHY

1. Herman Melville, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, with Walter Bezanson (1876; reprint, Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1991). Parenthetical references to this edition of *Clarel* will be in roman numerals according to part, canto, and line.
2. William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book: or, Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1859), 2:xv. Thomson provides a particularly vivid rendering of what had become a shared trope: "God is careful to attest his word," according to Bishop Henry White Warren. "He hath left all Palestine as one great comment on the Bible." *Sights and Insights; or, Knowledge by Travel* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1874), 250.
3. Thomas De Witt Talmage, *Talmage on Palestine: A Series of Sermons* (1890; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 140.

4. *Ibid.*, 7.
5. Bayard Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen; or, Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1855), 23.
6. Sarah Rogers Haight, *Letters from the Old World by a Lady of New York*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1840), 2:34.
7. William C. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1857), 220–21.
8. *Ibid.*, 314.
9. Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petraea*, 3 vols. (1841; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 1:46.
10. Prime, *Tent Life*, 22.
11. *Ibid.*, 22–23.
12. Warren, *Sights and Insights*, 246; John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 16.
13. Warren, *Sights and Insights*, 246.
14. Davis, *The Landscape of Belief*, 17.
15. Herman Melville, *Journals*, ed. Howard C. Horsford with Lynn Horth (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1989), 57.
16. *Ibid.*, 72.
17. Alexander W. Kinglake, *Eothen, or Traces of Travel Brought Home "From the East"* (1844; Leipzig: Bernh. Tauchnitz, 1846), 2, 4. Kinglake, explains Eric J. Leed, "perceived himself to be separated from a zone of hygiene identified with Christendom, respectability, and machines, and entering one of pollution and disease. Kinglake experienced this passage from the holy to the unholy, from the clean to the unclean, not with grief or mourning but with relief and a sense of liberation." According to Leed, much of Kinglake's sense of relief stems from his release from repressed homosexuality, which the Orient affords. *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgameth to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 42.
18. Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens), *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim's Progress* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1869), 76.
19. Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen*, 141–42.
20. William Cullen Bryant, quoted in Parke Godwin, *A Biography of William Cullen Bryant*, 2 vols. (New York: Russel and Russel, 1883), 2:76.
21. Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 642.
22. John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land*, ed. Victor Wolfgang von Hagan (1837; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 283.
23. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 306.
24. Alexander Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1830?). This is an abridged version of the earlier *Evidence of Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfillment of Prophecy: Particularly as Illustrated by the History of the Jews, and by the Discoveries of Recent Travellers* (London: Ward, n.d.). Other texts by Keith include *Sketch of the Evidence of Prophecy: Containing an Account of those Prophecies which were Distinctly Foretold, and which have been Clearly or Literally Fulfilled* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1823) and *The Land of Israel, According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1844).
25. David H. Finnie, *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 35.
26. *Christian Examiner*, quoted in Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, xxxv.
27. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 138–39.
28. *Ibid.*, 306.
29. James A. Harrison, ed., introduction to *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (1902; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1965), 10:viii.
30. Edgar Allan Poe, "Review of Stephens' Arabia Petraea," *New York Review* (October 1837), in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 10:12.
31. *Ibid.*, 10:19.
32. *Ibid.*, 10:10.
33. *Ibid.*, 10:9.
34. *Ibid.*, 10:19.
35. Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 511.
36. *Ibid.*, preface, 607–8.
37. Jonathan D. Sarna, "Comment," in *With Eyes toward Zion II: Themes and Sources in the Archives of the United States, Great Britain, Turkey, and Israel*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Praeger, 1986), 347.
38. Melville, *Journals*, 83.
39. Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 505, 500.
40. Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen*, 79.
41. George William Curtis, *The Howadji in Syria* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1852), 190.
42. Pliny Fisk, in Alvan Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, A. M., Late Missionary to Palestine* (1828; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 283.
43. *Ibid.*, 283.
44. "The darkness and silence of the streets increases the awe that broods over these sombre walls at night, in this city without

wheels. This stillness continues till midnight, when I am often awaked by a sullen jar that sounds like distant thunder, and grieve to think of the weakness, suffering, and toil which occasions it. It is the sound of countless rude mill-stones, which are here mostly turned by women, who nightly commence to grind about this time, and continue till morning; the labor is so heavy, that it is too great for their weak frames to endure in the heat of the day. I have made one effort, and could scarcely move one of their smallest stones. The process is so slow, that it generally takes a woman an hour for each member of her family!" [Clorinda Minor], *Meshullam! or, Tidings from Jerusalem* (1851; facsimile, New York, Arno Press, 1977), 48–49.

45. Poe, *Works*, 10:1.

46. *Ibid.*, 10:25.

47. Henry B. Smith and Roswell D. Hitchcock, *The Life, Writings and Character of Edward Robinson, D.D., LL.D.* (1863; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 6–7.

48. Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, 1:331.

49. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 1:355n.

50. For a brief assessment of Robinson's accomplishments, see Neil Asher Silberman, *Digging for God and Country: Exploration in the Holy Land, 1799–1917* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 37–47; and Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruder: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (London: Collins, 1987), 80–83.

51. Melville, *Journals*, 97.

52. James Turner Barclay, *The City of the Great King: Or, Jerusalem As It Was, As It Is, and As It Is To Be* (Philadelphia: James Challen and Sons, 1858), xiii.

53. William F. Lynch, *Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849; reprint, Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850), v.

54. *Ibid.*, 26.

55. *Ibid.*, 62.

56. *Ibid.*, 238.

57. Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen*, 52.

58. Stephen Olin, quoted in Moshe Davis, "The Holy Land Idea in American Spiritual History," in *With Eyes toward Zion: Scholars Colloquium on America–Holy Land Studies*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York, Arno Press, 1977), 13.

59. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 1:17.

60. Melville, *Journals*, 93.

61. *Ibid.*, 94.

62. J. Augustus Johnson, "The Colonization of Palestine," *The Century* 2 (1882): 293.

63. J. Ross Browne, *Yusef; or, The Journey of the Frangi, A Crusade in the East* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1855), 214.

64. Melville, *Journals*, 91.

65. Browne, *Yusef*, 375.

66. Melville, *Journals*, 90.

67. Bret Harte, "Review of *Going to Jericho*," *Overland Monthly* 1 (July 1868): 101.

68. Gustave Flaubert, quoted in Franklin Walker, *Irreverent Pilgrims: Melville, Browne, and Mark Twain in the Holy Land* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 226n. 23.

69. Taylor, *The Land of the Saracen*, 85.

CHAPTER FIVE

"A PROFOUND REMOVE": ANNIHILATION AND COVENANT

1. Herman Melville, *Journals*, ed. Howard C. Horsford with Lynn Horth (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1989), 7. Parenthetical page references are to this edition.

2. For an account of Melville's Orientalist development, see Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein, *Melville's Orienda* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

3. Herman Melville, *Redburn: His First Voyage* (1849; reprint Middlesex, England: Penquin Books, 1986), 46.

4. Alexander W. Kinglake, *Eothen, or Traces of Travel Brought Home "From the East"* (1844; reprint, Leipzig: Bernh. Tauchnitz, 1846), 90.

5. Herman Melville, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, with Walter Bezanson (1876; reprint, Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1991). Parenthetical references to this edition of *Clarel* will be in roman numerals according to part, canto, and line.

6. Herman Melville, letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, [1 June] 1851, in Herman Melville, *Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth, from work by Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1993), 191. "Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough, any way; but to go down as a 'man who lived among the cannibals'!" (193).

7. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 321.

8. *Ibid.*, 321–22.

9. Alfred Kazin, in *God and the American Writer* (New York: Knopf, 1997), is one of the few critics to locate at the core of Melville's spiritual development the constellation of his journey to the Holy Land, his journal, and *Clarel*. According to Kazin, Melville's journal "astonishingly resembles Leopold Bloom's journey into his innermost consciousness . . . a tormented stream-of-consciousness monologue presenting his solitary struggle with the land of faith" (94, 101), while in *Clarel* he "benevolently

relapsed into a Victorian poet intellectually beset by the ever-sacred land and trying to get over the crisis produced by Darwinism and modern science" (101). In the end, "[w]hat is clearest in *Clarel*, as in all reports from the Holy land through the ages, is the monomania that often attaches itself to religious sites" (105).

10. Herman Melville, letter to James Billson, 10 October 1884, Melville, *Correspondence*, 483.
11. *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* (October 1876), quoted in editorial appendix in Melville, *Clarel*, 544.
12. Robert Penn Warren, introduction to *Selected Poems of Herman Melville: A Reader's Edition* (New York: Random House, 1967), 44–45.
13. "Editorial Appendix" in Melville, *Clarel*, 568–69.
14. Earl Miner, "Butler: Hating Our Physician," in *The Restoration Mode from Milton to Dryden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 159.
15. George Wasserman, *Samuel "Hudibras" Butler, Updated Edition* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 138.
16. *Ibid.*, 63. M. H. Abrams, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 5th ed. (Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985), describes the major feature of Mennipean satire as "a series of extended dialogues and debates (often conducted at a banquet or party) in which a group of loquacious eccentrics, pedants, literary people, and representatives of various professions or philosophical points of view serves to make ludicrous the attitudes and viewpoints they typify by the arguments they urge in their support" (167). Mikhail Bakhtin, in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], 112–21), affords great importance to Mennipean satire as a "carnivalized genre" whose "outstanding characteristic" is "[t]he organic combination of philosophical dialogue, lofty symbol systems, the adventure-fantastic, and slum naturalism" (115).
17. *Canterbury Tales* also stands, inevitably, as yet another antecedent, although I suggest Chaucer's sequence of narratives is a secondary model to the archetypal descent into hell.
18. As an undergraduate at Kent State in 1972, Richard Blevins heard Edward Dorn declare that "the great unread *Clarel* will prove, in this century, to be The Great American Poem." Richard Blevins, "Recasting Melville: *The Confidence-Man* and *Clarel* in Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger*," *Melville Society Extracts* 77 (May 1989): 15–16.
19. Edward Dorn, *Gunslinger* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 155.
20. Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael: A Study of Melville* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1947), 99.
21. Warren, *Selected Poems of Herman Melville*, 35.
22. On Melville and the customs house, see Stanton Garner, "Surviving the Gilded Age: Herman Melville in the Customs Service," *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 15 (June 1986): 1–13; and "Herman Melville and the Customs Service," in *Melville's Evermoving Dawn: Centennial Essays*, ed. John Bryant and Robert Milder (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 276–93.
23. John Hoadley, letter to George S. Boutwell, 9 January 1873, quoted in Michael Paul Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 292.
24. Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy*, 293.
25. This theoretical description of pilgrimage has been developed from the work of Edith and Victor Turner. See, in particular, Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 166–230; and Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 1–39.
26. Alan Morinis, "Introduction: The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage," in *Sacred Journey: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 24. Morinis also points out how universal application of the Turners' concepts about "communitas" has been challenged by fieldwork in a wide variety of religious traditions. I believe, however, that the concept remains valid, at least for much of Christianity, albeit the typical aversion to sacramentalism of the Calvinist tradition Melville shared makes the contemplation of pilgrimage, much less the "normative communitas" that might arise from it, always a conflicted consideration.
27. Nathaniel Hawthorne recorded his account of his meeting with Melville in his journal of 20 November 1856, quoted in "Editorial Appendix" to Melville, *Journals*, 628.
28. For a close reading of *Moby-Dick's* tragic joke structure, see Hilton Obenzinger, "The W(h)ale in *Moby-Dick*," *Interpretations* 3 (Spring 1991): 7–11.
29. Stan Goldman, *Melville's Protest Theism: The Hidden and Silent God in Clarel* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 15.
30. Elizabeth Melville to her mother, 26 May 1873, quoted in "Historical and Critical Note" in Melville, *Clarel*, 535.
31. Elizabeth Melville, quoted in *ibid.*, 539.
32. George Adler, *Letters of a Lunatic, A Brief Exposition of My University Life, During the Years 1853–54*. When Melville met the respected lexicographer of a German-English dictionary while crossing the Atlantic in 1849 his persecutions, whether real or imagined, had "made me leave America in disgust" (27).
33. Shirley Dettlaff, quoted in "Editorial Appendix" to Melville, *Clarel*, 666.
34. [Clorinda Minor], *Meshullam! Or, Tidings From Jerusalem* (1851; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 79.
35. James Duban, "From Bethlehem to Tahiti: Transcultural 'Hope' in *Clarel*," *Philological Quarterly* 70 (Fall 1991): 475–83.
36. "Summary of News," (New York) *Christian Inquirer*, 14 July 1860, quoted in *ibid.*, 476.
37. For the romantic relationship between desert and ocean, see W. H. Auden, *The Enchafed Flood, or The Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1950).
38. Douglas, *Feminization*, 321.
39. The body of the text in this edition offers "their terrific theology," which the textual notes indicate as an earlier draft in

Melville's notebook. I have added the variant "ghastly," which gives a better sense of the nineteenth-century meaning of "terrific." "Ghastly" was the preferred choice in the previous edition of this journal. *Journal of a Visit to Europe and the Levant, October 11, 1856-May 6, 1857*, ed. Howard C. Horsford (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 151.

40. Franklin Walker, *Irreverent Pilgrims: Melville, Browne, and Mark Twain in the Holy Land* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 131.

41. Samuel Purchas, quoted in Morinis, *Sacred Journey*, 23.

CHAPTER SIX

"THAT STRANGE PERVERT": THE PURITAN ZIONIST

1. Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein, *Melville's Orienda* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 267.

2. Elliott Colla, "Hooked on Pharaonics: Literary Appropriations of Ancient Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999), n.p.

3. George K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), 19.

4. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

5. David Hoffman, *Chronicles Selected from the Originals of Cartaphilus, the Wandering Jew, Embracing a Period of Nearly XIX Centuries*, 3 vols. (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1853–54).

6. Anderson describes Hoffman's *Chronicles* as "a mine of nineteenth-century historiographic scholarship, thoroughly gentlemanly and pleasingly amateurish" (160). Anderson also notes—and I would concur—that reading Hoffman's turgid prose is something of a penitential ordeal. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*, 160, 153–60.

7. *Ibid.*, 231–39; and Eugene Sue, *The Wandering Jew*, 3 vols. (London and New York: Routledge, 1889).

8. Hoffman, *Chronicles*, 1:xxii.

9. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*, 235.

10. Sue, *Wandering Jew*, 1:xiii.

11. Bernard Rosenthal, "Herman Melville's Wandering Jews," in *Puritan Influences in American Literature*, ed. Emory Elliott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 171–72.

12. On the career and conversion of Mohammed Effendi (George Bethune English), see David H. Finnie, *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 143–49; James A. Field, *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776–1882* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 133; and George Bethune English, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Dongola and Sennaar* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1823). Field characterizes English as a "remarkable individual who had progressed from a study of divinity at Harvard through doubt to an acceptance of Islam, and from the editing of a country newspaper through the Marine Corps to become an Egyptian general of artillery" (133).

13. Finkelstein, *Melville's Orienda*, 267.

14. John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 77.

15. Lucy Crawford, quoted in *ibid.*, 76.

16. *Ibid.*, 78.

17. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Ambitious Guest," in *Selected Tales and Sketches*, ed. Michael J. Colacurcio (New York: Penguin, 1987), 167, 162–71.

18. I am indebted to Bernard Rosenthal for first identifying the link to Galatians.

19. Alexander Keith, quoted in Yeschayahu Nir, *The Bible and the Image: The History of Photography in the Holy Land, 1839–1899* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 34.

20. Keith, quoted in *ibid.*, 35.

21. For more on the history of premillennialism, see Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes towards Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865–1945* (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1991); Carl Frederick Ehle, Jr., "Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America: The Views of Increase Mather and William E. Blackstone Concerning the Doctrine of the Restoration of Israel," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977); Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1978); George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); David A. Rausch, *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism, 1878–1918* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1979); and Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

22. William E. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), 37, and *passim*.

23. Rosenthal, "Melville's Wandering Jews," 173.

24. *Ibid.*, 174.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"THE GREAT JEWISH COUNTERFEIT DETECTOR":

WARDER CRESSON, "CARNAL" HERMENEUTICS, AND ZION'S BODY

1. *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate* 21 (1863): 208, 248.

2. Quoted in Warder Cresson, *The Key of David. David the True Messiah, or The Anointed of the God of Jacob. The Two Women Who Came to King Solomon Were Designed, in the Greatest Depth of Wisdom, to Represent the True and False*

Churches, and the Living and Dead Child, or Messiah. Also, Reasons for Becoming a Jew; With an Appendix (1852; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 203. All parenthetical references are to *The Key of David*.

The main source on Cresson's lunacy trial is his own account in *The Key of David*, which includes newspaper articles and General Horatio Hubbel's closing arguments to the jury with an introduction by Isaac Leeser as reprinted in *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate* 21, nos. 5, 6, 7 (1863). According to Frank Fox, who provides the most thorough biography of Cresson, the trial's records were destroyed in a fire in 1879. "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi: Warder Cresson, The Story of a Philadelphia Mystic," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95 (April 1971): 175n. 55.

Another important source on Warder Cresson is Abraham Karp, "The Zionism of Warder Cresson," in *Early History of Zionism in America*, ed. Isidore S. Meyer (New York: American Jewish Historical Society and Theodor Herzl Foundation, 1958), 1–38.

3. Warder Cresson, *Jerusalem, the Centre and Joy of the Whole Earth, and the Jew The Recipient of the Glory of God* (London, 1844), title page.

4. *Occident* 21 (1863): 253–54.

5. Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 175.

6. For a thorough analysis of religious insanity during the 1840s, see Ronald L. Numbers and Janet S. Numbers, "Millerism and Madness: A Study of 'Religious Insanity' in Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 92–118.

7. Benjamin Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind* (1812; facsimile, New York: Hafner, 1962), 36–37, 44–47; and R. Numbers and J. Numbers, "Millerism and Madness," 94–95.

8. *Occident* 21 (1863): 204, 303–4; Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 174–75; and Cresson, *The Key of David*, 216–17.

9. Leeser acknowledges that "whatever may have been the eccentricities of Mr. Cresson, and we are willing to admit them, he was a sincere convert to our religion." *Occident* 21 (1863): 203.

10. *Occident* 21 (1863): 306; and Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 176–77.

11. *Occident* 21 (1863): 206.

12. *Ibid.*, 205–6.

13. *Ibid.*, 209.

14. Warder Cresson, *An Humble and Affectionate Address to the Select Members of Abington Quarterly Meeting* (Philadelphia, 1827); *Babylon the Great Is Falling! The Morning Star, or Light from on High, Written in Defence of the Rights of the Poor and Oppressed* (Philadelphia, 1830); *The Good Olive Tree, Israel; Shewing the Pre-Eminence and Ascendancy of Israel in the Coming Dispensation, above All Nations of the Earth* (London, 1844); *The Two Witnesses—Moses and Elijah* (London, 1844); and *Jerusalem, the Centre and Joy of the Whole Earth, and the Jew the Recipient of the Glory of God* (London, 1844).

15. Herbert Friedenwald, *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1903), quoted in Karp, "The Zionism of Warder Cresson," 8.

16. Mordecai Manuel Noah, *Discourse on the Restoration of the Jews*, in *Call to America to Build Zion* (1845; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 25.

17. *Ibid.*, 10.

18. William F. Lynch, *Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849; reprint, Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850), 238.

19. Saint Augustine, "In Answer to the Jews," in *Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari, trans. Charles T. Wilcox, et al. (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955), 392.

20. Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The *Adversus Judaeos* Tradition in the Church Fathers: The Exegesis of Christian Anti-Judaism," in *Essential Papers on Judaism in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 186.

21. *Ibid.*, 187.

22. Augustine, "In Answer to the Jews," 186.

23. For an explication of Miller's two-column chart of "rules" and "proofs," see Wayne R. Judd, "William Miller: Disappointed Prophet," in *The Disappointed*, 20–21.

24. Franz Kobler, *The Vision Was There: A History of the British Movement for the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine* (London: Lincolns-Prager, 1956), 58–75; Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 188–90; and A. L. Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine, 1800–1901: A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 29–57.

25. Resolution of the Albany Conference, 29 April 1845, quoted in Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1978), 26–27.

26. See Robert D. Cross, "The Meaning of the Holy Land to American Catholics in the 19th-Century," in *With Eyes toward Zion II: Themes and Sources in the Archives of the United States, Great Britain, Turkey, and Israel*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Praeger, 1986), 333–41.

27. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 34.

28. Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel*, 10.

29. See Leeser's review of Noah's *Discourse* in *Occident* 2 (1845): 600–606; and Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 156–57.

30. Karp, "The Zionism of Warder Cresson," 2; and Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 159–60.

31. Karp, "The Zionism of Warder Cresson," 2–3; and Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 160.

32. Samuel D. Ingham, letter to John C. Calhoun, 25 May 1844, quoted in Fox, "Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi," 160.

33. *Occident* 21 (1863): 251.

34. Cresson, *Jerusalem*, 1.

35. *Ibid.*, 1–20.
36. Cresson, *The Good Olive Tree*, 4.
37. Cresson, *Jersusalem*, 11.
38. Clifton Jackson Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810–1860* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1969), 153–54; and Tibawi, *British Interests*, 58.
39. William Thackeray, *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* (London, 1846), 227.
40. *Ibid.*, 226–27.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Leeser reports of “a private letter from Mr. Warder Cresson, U.S. Consul at the Holy City” that “gives a very melancholy picture of the destitution of the Israelites in the seat of their ancient glory, and avers that the conversions which have been reported as having taken place under the patronage of the Protestant Episcopal Mission, were owing to the *wants* of the converts, not to their conviction. This is a curious testimony from an ardent Christian.” *Occident* 2 (1844): 167–68. See also Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century: The Old City* (Jerusalem and New York: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi Institute and St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 272, 333–35.
43. Cresson, *Babylon the Great Is Falling*, 20.
44. *Ibid.*, 20; and Fox, “Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi,” 154.
45. Henry B. Smith and Roswell D. Hitchcock, *The Life, Writings and Character of Edward Robinson* (1863; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 7.
46. *Occident* 21 (1863): 252.
47. Warder Cresson, *The Great Restoration and Consolidation of Israel in Palestine and The Masora, Or Jewish Counterfeit Detector* (Philadelphia, 1851), 4.
48. Cresson tells of a conversation with Dr. John P. Durbin, who was quoted as an authority on the East in his trial: “After my return from the East, I visited Dr. Durbin at his house. He said, ‘Mr. Cresson, I was born a Christian, but from my late researches in the East, if I had been born a Jew, I would have had no reason to change my religion.’ I replied: ‘Dr. Durbin, I also was born a Christian, but from my late researches in the East, I had reason to change my Religion, and I became a Jew.’” Warder Cresson, *Siemen Messiah* (N.p., n.d. [1851?]), 10.
49. Cresson, *The Great Restoration*, 8–9.
50. *Ibid.*, 9.
51. *Ibid.*, 3–4.
52. *Ibid.*, 4.
53. *Ibid.*, 3, 6. Cresson also employs the question of slavery in a satirical piece in *The Key of David*. To dramatize the primacy of the literal over the spiritual, he presents a dialogue between a visiting abolitionist English Episcopal minister and a slave, in which the slave employs the minister’s own spiritualist sophistry to defeat his well-intentioned anti-slavery arguments. If “all the promises must *first* be fulfilled *Spiritually*, or only in the *spiritual sense*,” as the slave offers in a Socratic rebuff to the minister’s “spiritual first” stance, then “slavery is only a state of slavery, belonging to mind, and not to the body—I am, therefore, *no Slave*” (200). Unable to square this inconsistency, the minister urges the slave to keep their conversation quiet, revealing an anxiety of his own subjugation to Jewish (and Warder Cresson’s) supremacy: If the slave were to “make public all that we said, the whole FOUNDATION of the Christian Religion would be exposed as *false*, and then the Jews, the ‘Carnal Jews,’ would come into power and bring all our Christian Ministers and our adherents into subjection to them” (202).
54. *Occident* 10 (1852): 610.
55. *Ibid.*, 609–10.
56. *Ibid.*, 610; and Karp, “The Zionism of Warder Cresson,” 10. “It is the classical Zionist argument that the *galut* [exile] has sapped the strength and vitality of the Jewish people, and only its restoration to the homeland will restore its vigor” (10).
57. *Occident* 13 (1855): 137.
58. Fox, “Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi,” 188.
59. *Occident* 10 (1852): 611–12.
60. *Ibid.*, 361; and Fox, “Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi,” 185–87.
61. *Occident* 11 (1853): 486; Karp, “The Zionism of Warder Cresson,” 12; and Fox, “Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi,” 190–91.
62. *Occident* 12 (1854): 351, 355; and Fox, “Quaker, Shaker, Rabbi,” 190.
63. *Occident* 14 (1856): 122–28.
64. Abraham Shusterman, “The Last Two Centuries,” in *Conversion to Judaism: A History and Analysis*, ed. David Max Eichhorn (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1965), 138–40.
65. Howard C. Horsford with Lynn Horth, “Discussions,” in Herman Melville, *Journals*, ed. Howard C. Horsford and Lynn Horth (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1989), 441–42.
66. Karp, “The Zionism of Warder Cresson,” 15.
67. Paul Mendes-Flohr, “In Pursuit of Normalcy: Zionism’s Ambivalence toward Israel’s Election,” in *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism*, ed. William R. Hutchison and Hartmut Lehmann (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 205–6.
68. See Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 95–98, 137–38, 148–54.
69. “File for the Record: Jack Kemp: Israel Aid Vital,” *Near East Report* 28 (31 December 1984): 215.
70. Conrad Cherry, quoted in James H. Moorhead, “The American Israel: Protestant Tribalism and Universal Mission,” in

Many Are Chosen, 146.

CHAPTER EIGHT

UNGAR "HIS WAY ECCENTRIC":

THE CONFEDERATE CHEROKEE'S MAP OF PALESTINE

1. James A. Field, *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776–1882* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 391.
2. See Field, chapter 11, "The Khedive's Egypt, 1869–1882," for a survey of the American experience in Egypt. See also William B. Hesseltine and Hazel C. Wolf, *The Blue and the Gray on the Nile* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); and Pierre Crabites, *Americans in the Egyptian Army* (London: Routledge, 1938). After his service to the khedive came to an end after the British occupation in 1882, General Stone went on to supervise the construction of the foundation for the Statue of Liberty.
3. Neil Asher Silberman, *Digging for God and Country: Exploration in the Holy Land, 1799–1917* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 86–88, 113–27.
4. William Thomson, quoted in *ibid.*, 86.
5. *Ibid.*, 115.
6. *Ibid.*, 119.
7. C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 116.
8. See "Editorial Appendix," in Herman Melville, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, with Walter Bezanson (1876; reprint, Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1991), 821–23.
9. Herman Melville, *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War*, ed. Sidney Kaplan (1866; facsimile, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 267–69.
10. R. Halliburton, Jr., *Red over Black: Black Slavery among the Cherokee Indians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 137. See also W. Craig Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokees: John Drew's Regiment of Mounted Rifles* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540–1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979); Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838–1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977).
11. Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society*, 50–57.
12. Halliburton, *Red over Black*, 143.
13. Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society*, 106.
14. Halliburton, *Red Over Black*, 143–44.
15. Gaines, *Confederate Cherokees*, 125, 120; and Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation*, 174.
16. Carolyn L. Karcher, *Shadow over the Promised Land: Slavery, Race, and Violence in Melville's America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 286.
17. "The blood labels, which reached a height during the fourteenth-century plagues, can be traced back at least to the story of William of Norwich and perhaps back as far as the first crusade. . . . the tales of both William of Norwich and Hugh of Lincoln seem . . . to be involved in attempts to establish local saints and thereby aggrandize the spiritual prestige and temporal revenues of the cathedrals in question." Louise O. Fradenburg, "Criticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale," *Exemplaria* 1 (March 1989): 87. For more, see Gavin Langmuir, "The Knight's Tale of Young Hugh of Lincoln," *Speculum* 47 (1972): 459–82; and *idem*, "Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder," *Speculum* 59 (1984): 820–46.
18. C. Vann Woodward discusses Henry Adams's and Henry James's novels, along with *Clarel*, in his essay, "A Southern Critique for the Gilded Age," in *The Burden of Southern History*.
19. William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (New York: New American Library, 1983), 151.
20. *Ibid.*, 298–99.
21. Herman Melville, *White-Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War* (1850; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 153.
22. Herman Melville, *Redburn; His First Voyage* (1849; reprint, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1986), 239.
23. Karcher, *Shadow over the Promised Land*, 283.
24. See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1–37. On Charles Bierstadt, see John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 74.
25. Herman Melville, letter to Catherine Gansevoort Lansing, 12 October 1876, in Herman Melville, *Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth, from work by Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1993), 447.

CHAPTER NINE

AUTHORITY AND AUTHENTICITY

1. Justin G. Turner and Linda Levitt Turner, *Mary Todd Lincoln: Her Life and Letters* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 218. Lester I. Vogel brought the Holy Land–Lincoln connection to my attention in *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 41.
2. Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., *Twenty Days* (Secaucus, NJ: Castle Books, 1965), 29.
3. Mary Todd Lincoln, letter to James Smith, 17 December 1866, quoted in J. Turner and L. Turner, *Mary Todd Lincoln*, 400.

4. *Westminster Review* (1826), quoted in James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture,' 1800–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 80.
5. Foster Rhea Dulles, *Americans Abroad: Two Centuries of European Travel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 102–3; Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 219; and Jeffrey Steinbrink, “Why the Innocents Went Abroad: Mark Twain and American Tourism in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *American Literary Realism* 16 (Autumn 1983): 278–86.
6. John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant* (New York: American News Co., 1879), 334.
7. *Ibid.*, 218. Grant also brought other humorous books along, including one by Artemus Ward. See Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 54–56, 87.
8. William S. McFeely, *Grant* (New York: Norton, 1981), 467.
9. Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens), *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1869). This edition was issued under the additional imprint of H. H. Bancroft and Company in San Francisco. Obtained from the Stanford University library, a penciled note under the copyright attests to the status of Twain's volume: “Gift of Stanford estate.” All parenthetical references in part 3 are to this edition.
10. *Syracuse Daily Standard*, 5 October 1869, p. 2, quoted in Robert H. Hirst, “The Making of *The Innocents Abroad: 1867–1872*” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1975), 383.
11. “I shall never concede to these crazy Christians any road improvement in Palestine as they would then transform Jerusalem into a Christian madhouse,” Grand Vizir Fuad Pasha is reported to have said in 1865. Quoted in Alexander Scholch, “European Penetration and the Economic Development of Palestine, 1856–82,” in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (Oxford: St. Anthony's, 1982), 37.
12. For a recent example of the use of Mark Twain's authority for partisan purposes, see Jane Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 154–55, 159–60. For background on conditions in Ottoman Palestine, see preface note 7.
13. Attributed to a clipping from the *Hartford Courant* of 11 September 1872 in an unidentified scrapbook at the University of Texas, Austin, quoted in Hirst, “The Making of *The Innocents Abroad*,” 320.
14. William Dean Howells, *My Mark Twain: Reminiscences and Criticisms* (New York: Harper, 1910), 8.
15. Louis J. Budd, *Our Mark Twain: The Making of His Public Personality* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 30; and James D. Hart, *The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 147.
16. Everett Emerson, *The Authentic Mark Twain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 54; *Traveling with the Innocents Abroad: Mark Twain's Original Reports from Europe and the Holy Land*, ed. and intro. Daniel Morley McKeithan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), xi; and Steinbrink, “Why the Innocents Went Abroad,” 278.
17. Prospectus for *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), quoted in J. Frank Papovich, “Popular Appeal and Sales Strategy: The Prospectus of *The Innocents Abroad*,” *English Language Notes* 19 (September 1981): 47.
18. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., “The Great American Joke,” in *The Comic Imagination in American Literature*, ed. Louis D. Rubin, Jr. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 12.
19. Henry B. Wonham, *Mark Twain and the Art of the Tall Tale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 20–21. The phrases quoted by Wonham are from Rubin, “The Great American Joke.”
20. Mark Twain, “The American Vandal Abroad,” lecture prompt copy, quoted in Hirst, “The Making of *The Innocents Abroad*,” 175.
21. The discussion of tourism has recently produced important exchanges. I have employed the innovative semiotic framework first elaborated by Dean MacCannell in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976; reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1989); the critique of MacCannell by Jonathan Culler, “The Semiotics of Tourism,” in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); and the attempt to embrace both touristic and anti-touristic perspectives by Buzard.
22. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun: or, The Romance of Monte Beni* (1860; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 3.
23. Henry James, *The American*, ed. James W. Tuttleton (1877; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 19, 21.
24. Richard S. Lowry, “Framing the Authentic: The Modern Tourist and *The Innocents Abroad*,” *New Orleans Review* 18 (Summer 1991): 23. Lowry elaborates further in “*Litterary Man*”: *Mark Twain and Modern Authorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): “Sights, for Twain, are commodities, their cultural value established not by any ‘aura’ of authenticity but by guides and guide-books, by the planned activity of tourism and its relentless itinerary, and, most of all, by the act of consumption itself” (57–58).
25. Henry Ward Beecher, quoted in Lowry, “Framing the Authentic,” 18.
26. Lowry, “Framing the Authentic,” 20.
27. *Ibid.* 21.
28. Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 6.
29. *Ibid.*, 6.
30. James M. Cox, “Mark Twain: The Height of Humor,” in Rubin, *The Comic Imagination in American Literature*, 141.
31. *Ibid.*, 141–42; and idem, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 17.
32. Hirst, “The Making of *The Innocents Abroad*,” 93–95; and Colonel William Denny diary, quoted in *ibid.*, 95.
33. Wonham, *Mark Twain and the Tall Tale*, 85.
34. Neil Asher Silberman, *Digging for God and Country: Exploration in the Holy Land, 1799–1917* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 65, 152–53.

35. Lowry, "Framing the Authentic," 27.
36. Lowry, "Littery Man," 64.
37. Samuel S. Cox, *Why We Laugh* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1880), 58–59.
38. *St. Louis Republic*, 1 June 1902, quoted in Budd, *Our Mark Twain*, 37.
39. *Ibid.*, 38.

CHAPTER TEN

THE JAFFA COLONISTS AND OTHER FAILURES

1. Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Notebook*, ed. Albert Bigelow Paine (New York: Harper and Bros., 1935), 99.
2. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 100–101.
3. Leslie A. Fiedler, afterword to *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim's Progress*, by Mark Twain (New York: The New American Library, 1980), 481.
4. *Ibid.*, 478.
5. For an explication on the cultural significance of Greenwood Cemetery, see John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 106–7.
6. This brief account of the Adams colony has been drawn from several sources: Peter Amann, "Prophet in Zion: The Saga of George J. Adams," *New England Quarterly* 37 (December 1964): 477–500; Harold Davis, "The Jaffa Colonists from Downeast," *American Quarterly* 3 (Winter 1951): 344–56; Shlomo Eidelberg, "The Adams Colony in Jaffa (1866–1868)," *Midstream* 3 (Summer 1957): 52–61; Ruth Kark, *Jaffa: A City in Evolution, 1799–1917* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1990), 83–88; Ruth Kark, "Millenarism and Agricultural Settlement in the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Historical Geography* 9, no. 1 (1983): 47–62; Reed M. Holmes, *The Forerunners* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1981); and Lester I. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 134–52.
7. Holmes, *The Forerunners*, 13–64. Of all the studies of the Adams colony, *The Forerunners*, although marred by lack of documentation, presents the most complete background on George Adams's involvement in Mormonism.
8. Davis, "The Jaffa Colonists from Downeast," 347.
9. John Franklin Swift, *Going to Jericho* (New York: A. Roman, 1868), 200–201.
10. "Jerusalem and the Holy Land, Editorial Journeying," *The Sword of the Truth and Harbinger of Peace* (November 1865), quoted in Amann, "Prophet in Zion," 483.
11. Adams, quoted in Holmes, *The Forerunners*, 128.
12. Swift, *Going to Jericho*, 196.
13. Adams, quoted in Holmes, *The Forerunners*, 128.
14. Amann, "Prophet in Zion," 485.
15. Anonymous colonist, quoted in *ibid.*, 486.
16. Sworn statement, M. G. Smith [17 January 1867], filed with CD, Jerusalem. 2, no. 21, quoted in *ibid.*, 487–88.
17. *New York Times*, 15 April 1867, p. 5.
18. Swift, *Going to Jericho*, 201.
19. *Ibid.*, 204.
20. Davis, "The Jaffa Colonists from Downeast," 354; and *New York Times*, 22 August 1867, p. 3.
21. *Machias Union*, 9 February 1869, quoted in Davis, "The Jaffa Colonists from Downeast," 355.
22. John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant* (New York: American News Co., 1879), 324.
23. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 148.
24. Eidelberg, "The Adams Colony in Jaffa," 57.
25. *Hamagid* 2, no. 2 (January 1867), quoted in *ibid.*, 58.
26. Swift, *Going to Jericho*, 193.
27. Mark Twain, *Traveling with the Innocents Abroad: Mark Twain's Original Reports from Europe and the Holy Land*, ed., Daniel Morley McKeithan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 307. In the *New York Tribune* article of 2 November 1867, Twain offers more description of the colony's eclectic, millennialist beliefs than in *Innocents Abroad*:

They speak vaguely of a flood which was promised, but turned out to be a drouth; they do not say what the flood had to do with their salvation, or how it was going to prosper their religion. They talk also of the long-prophecied assembling of the Jews in Palestine from the four quarters of the world, and the restoration of their ancient power and grandeur, but they do not make it appear that an immigration of Yankees to the Holy Land was contemplated by the old prophets as a part of that programme; and now that the Jews have not "swarmed," yet one is left at a loss to understand why that circumstance should distress the American colony of Mr. Adams. I can make neither head nor tail of this religion. I have been told all along that there was a strong free-love feature in it, but a glance at the colonists of both sexes on board this ship has swept that notion from my mind. (307)

28. Young, *Around the World with General Grant*, 324.
29. Kark, *Jaffa*, 88.
30. For more on the career of Samuel Brannan, see Paul Bailey, *Sam Brannan and the California Mormons* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1943); Kevin J. Mullen, *Let Justice Be Done: Crime and Politics in Early San Francisco* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989); Louis J. Stellman, *Sam Brannan: Builder of San Francisco* (New York: Exposition Press, 1953); as well as

the classic histories of California and San Francisco by Hubert Howe Bancroft.

31. Twain, *Traveling*, 307.

32. Charles W. Elliott, *Remarkable Characters and Places of the Holy Land* (Hartford, CT: J. B. Burr, 1867), 585–86.

33. J. Augustus Johnson, “The Colonization of Palestine,” *The Century* 2 (1882): 293. According to Johnson, “The success of colonies must of necessity depend on the climate and the products of the territory, and history teaches that successful colonies have never been established upon the sites of decayed empires, or upon ground exhausted by the civilizations of the past.” (296). Elliott poses the temporalgeographic incongruity in similar language: “There seems to be no emigration *backward*” (*Remarkable Characters and Places of the Holy Land*, 585).

34. Dewey Ganzel, *Mark Twain Abroad: The Cruise of the “Quaker City”* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 300–301; on James’s recently discovered photographs, see Robert H. Hirst and Brandt Rowles, “William E. James’s Stereoscopic Views of the *Quaker City* Excursion,” *Mark Twain Journal* 22 (Spring 1984): 15–33.

35. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 318.

36. Richard Bridgman, *Traveling in Mark Twain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 2.

37. *Ibid.*, 36.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

“A WHITE MAN SO NERVOUS AND UNCOMFORTABLE AND SAVAGE”

1. Leslie A. Fiedler, afterword to *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim’s Progress*, by Mark Twain (New York: The New American Library, 1980), 486.

2. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 290.

3. William T. Sherman, letter to “Gentlemen,” *New York Times*, 25 May 1867, 31 May 1867.

4. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator: A Journey around the World* (1897; facsimile, Mineola, NY: Dover, 1989), 213.

5. Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873; reprint, New York: The New American Library, 1969), 75.

CHAPTER TWELVE

“REJECTED GOSPELS”: THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

1. Bayard Taylor, *The Lands of the Saracen; or, Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1855), 81–82.

2. Edgar Allan Poe, “Review of Stephens’ Arabia Petraea,” *New York Review* (October 1837), in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison (1902; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1965), 10:25.

3. See David S. Reynolds, *Faith in Fiction: The Emergence of Religious Literature in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 123–44.

4. Thomas de Witt Talmage, *Talmage on Palestine: A Series of Sermons* (1890; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 140.

5. [Josias Leslie Porter,] *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine*, 2 vols. (London: Murray’s, 1858), 1:xi.

6. *Ibid.*, 2:360.

7. [William Hone,] *The Apocryphal New Testament, Being All the Gospels, Epistles, and Other Pieces Now Extant, Attributed in the First Four Centuries to Jesus Christ, His Apostles, and Their Companions, and Not Included in the New Testament by Its Compilers* (London: William Hone, 1820).

8. Montague Rhodes James, introduction to *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), xiv–xv.

9. I am obliged for the insight of these antonyms to John Q. Hays, *Mark Twain and Religion: A Mirror of American Eclecticism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 45.

10. Mark Twain, quoted in *ibid.*, 32.

11. Mark Twain, letter to Orion Clemens, 19 October 1865, quoted in James M. Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 33.

12. Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 99.

13. Lew Wallace, “How I Came to Write *Ben-Hur*,” *Youth’s Companion* 66 (2 February 1893): 57. Wallace did manage to keep Christ absent, other than appearances in a few biblical set pieces and a short scene when Jesus gives Ben-Hur a cup of water at the well near Nazareth.

14. Lew Wallace, “The Boyhood of Christ,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 74 (December 1886): 2–6.

15. *Ibid.*, 16.

16. *Ibid.*, 18.

17. Henry Ward Beecher, *The Life of Jesus the Christ*, 2 vols. (New York: Bromfield and Company, 1891), 1:56.

18. *Ibid.*, 1:57, 1:54.

19. *Ibid.*, 1:57.

20. *Ibid.*, 1:145.

21. [Hone,] *Apocryphal New Testament*, xiii, xv. The lowercasing of “christianity” is in the original.

22. Lew Wallace, *The Boyhood of Christ* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1889), 70.

23. Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 123.

24. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894), 2.

25. Mark Twain, *Mark Twain’s Travels with Mr. Brown*, ed. Franklin Walker and G. Ezra Dane (New York: Knopf, 1940), 252–53.

26. Gladys Bellamy first identified Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament* as the source of Twain's "rejected gospels" in *Innocents Abroad* and as an inspiration for Satan in "The Mysterious Stranger" in *Mark Twain as a Literary Artist* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1950), 352–53.
27. Mark Twain, "The Christmas Fireside. For Good Little Boys and Girls. By Grandfather Twain. The Story of the Bad Little Boy That Bore a Charmed Life," in *Tales, Speeches, Essays, and Sketches*, ed. Tom Quirk (New York: Penguin, 1994), 21.
28. Twain, "Bad Little Boy," 23.
29. Twain, "Story of a Good Little Boy Who Did Not Prosper," in Quirk, *Tales, Speeches, Essays, and Sketches*, 49.
30. Twain, "Good Little Boy," 52.
31. Hays, *Mark Twain and Religion*, 29.
32. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, xv.
33. Joss Marsh, *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 39.
34. *Ibid.*, 31.
35. *Ibid.*, 35. Marsh brings to light Hone's literary accomplishments "as a major player in English print culture" who was involved in "radical journalism; political squibbery; serial publishing; popular history; cheap magazines; the miscellany and the almanac; the illustrated book." Nevertheless, he was branded with the accusation of blasphemy and scorned as a parodist. Hone had violated "the border between the subliterary and 'proper' literature, scripture and fiction, the 'literary' and the 'political' " (25). While Twain's laughter unsettled conventions, he was at least spared Hone's ordeal of facing a judge as the initial part of a process that ultimately determined "taboos against profane and popular laughter, ridicule and parody" (25) in English society.
36. See Bennet's attack on Noah in the *New York Morning Herald*, 6 May 1840, p. 1.
37. Twain, *Autobiography*, 265.
38. Mark Twain, "The Revised Catechism," in *Mark Twain on the Damned Human Race*, ed. Janet Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), 72.
39. William Dean Howells, *My Mark Twain: Reminiscences and Criticisms* (New York: Harper, 1910), 8.
40. George Ade, "Mark Twain and the Old Time Subscription Book," *The American Review of Reviews* 41 (1910): 703.
41. J. Frank Papovich, "Popular Appeal and Sales Strategy: The Prospectus of *The Innocents Abroad*," *English Language Notes* 19 (September 1981): 48.
42. Richard S. Lowry, "Framing the Authentic: The Modern Tourist and *The Innocents Abroad*," *New Orleans Review* 18 (Summer 1991): 25. Lowry expands his analysis of "the economics of cultural consumption" in "*Littery Man*": *Mark Twain and Modern Authorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 50.
43. Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), xiv, 263–64.
44. Lowry, "Framing the Authentic," 26; and *idem*, "*Littery Man*," 61.
45. "The Subscription Book Trade," *Publisher's Weekly* 2 (23 July 1872): 93–94.
46. Lowry, "Framing the Authentic," 26; and *idem*, "*Littery Man*," 61–62.
47. George Palmer Putnam, "Suggestions for Household Libraries," in *Hints for Home Reading: A Series of Chapters on Books and Their Use*, ed. Lyman Abbott (New York: Putnam, 1880), 112: "[A]n opinion is formed at once, from [books], of the taste and cultivation of the family" (112). Lowry, "*Littery Man*," 62.
48. Mark Twain, "The Mysterious Stranger," in *Great Short Works of Mark Twain*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 360.
49. William Hone, quoted in Marsh, *Word Crimes*, 36.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN REVERENCE AND RACE

1. Mark Twain, letter to Elisha Bliss, 3 September 1869, in *Mark Twain's Letters to His Publishers, 1867–1894*, ed. Hamlin Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 28.
2. [Bret Harte,] "Current Literature," *Overland Monthly* 4 (January 1870): 100–101.
3. [Julia Severance Millikin,] in Emily A. Severance, *Journal Letters of Emily A. Severance, Quaker City, 1867* (Cleveland: Gates Press, 1938), 215–16.
4. Mary Fairbanks, *Cleveland Herald*, 5 December 1867, p. 1.
5. [Millikin,] in Severance, *Journal Letters*, 215–16.
6. See George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of University Press of New England, 1987), 171–74.
7. Samuel S. Cox, *Why We Laugh* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1880), 100.
8. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 38.
9. For an account of both polygenesis and monogenesis, see Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 71–96.
10. *Ibid.*, 75.
11. Severance, *Journal Letters*, 192.
12. Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 32.
13. *Ibid.*, 33.
14. Hinton Rowan Helper, quoted in Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 189.
15. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Penguin, 1977), 186.

16. Samuel S. Cox, *Crisis*, 7 May 1862, quoted in Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 197–98.
17. President Andrew Johnson, quoted in Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 190.
18. Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885), 272.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN THE “CULTIVATED NEGRO” AND THE CURSE OF HAM

1. Albert Raboteau, “Black Americans,” in *With Eyes toward Zion II: Themes and Sources in the Archives of the United States, Great Britain, Turkey and Israel*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Praeger, 1986), 317.
2. Dr. H.H. Jessup, quoted in Edward Wilmot Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine* (Freetown, Sierra Leone: T. J. Sawyer, 1873), 191. All subsequent parenthetical citations of Blyden’s travel book are from this edition.
3. David F. Dorr, *A Colored Man Round the World* (Cleveland: David F. Dorr, 1858). See also Alfred Bendixen, “Americans in Europe before 1865: A Study of the Travel Book,” Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1979), 257–89.
4. Dorr, *A Colored Man Round the World*, 12.
5. *Ibid.*, 11.
6. *Ibid.*, 95.
7. *Ibid.*, 126–27.
8. *Ibid.*, 141.
9. *Ibid.*, 20.
10. Raboteau, “Black Americans,” 322n. 17.
11. Dorr, *A Colored Man Round the World*, 186.
12. *Ibid.*, 187.
13. *Ibid.*, 191.
14. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 133. Gilroy asserts that a specific, diasporic, Africanist culture has developed, constituting “a non-traditional tradition, an irreducibly modern, ex-centric, unstable, and asymmetrical cultural ensemble that cannot be apprehended through the manichean logic of binary coding” (198). Acknowledging how others have been “squeamish,” Gilroy forthrightly addresses the historic and ideological parallels between Zionism and pan-Africanism in his exploration of the black Atlantic, although he does not discuss the negative ramifications of settler-colonialism in Palestine or West Africa, noting only briefly how contemporary political realities “intervene in any attempts to develop a dialogue about the significance of these convergences” (212).
15. This account of Blyden’s biography and Liberian history is drawn from several sources: Yekutiel Gershoni, *Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Scramble for the Hinterland* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1985); Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 208–11; Edith Holden, *Blyden of Liberia: An Account of the Life and Labors of Edward Wilmot Blyden, LL.D.* (New York: Vantage, 1966); David Jenkins, *Black Zion: The Return of Afro-Americans and West Indians to Africa* (London: Wildwood House, 1975); Hollis R. Lynch, introduction to *Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971); Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832–1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), 556–58; Robert G. Weisbord and Richard Kazarian, Jr., *Israel in the Black American Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985), 7–28; and Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970).
16. Edward Wilmot Blyden, *The Jewish Question* (Liverpool: Lionel Hart and Co., 1898), 5.
17. Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1887; reprint, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 120.
18. Blyden, *Jewish Question*, 11.
19. Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Liberia’s Offering* (New York, 1862), 34, quoted in Holden, *Blyden of Liberia*, 22.
20. Blyden, quoted in West, *Back to Africa*, 245.
21. Willie A. Givens, introduction to *Selected Works of Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden: Statesman, Politician, Linguist, Educator and Great Pan-Africanist (1832–1912)* (Robertsport, Liberia: Tubman Center of African Culture, 1976), 3.
22. Leopold Sedar Senghor, foreword to *Selected Letters of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1978), xx.
23. For a discussion of Nat Turner’s millennialism, see Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 71–75.
24. West, *Back to Africa*, 243.
25. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 127.
26. Edward Wilmot Blyden, letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, 20 April 1860, in *Selected Letters of Blyden*, 28–31. Blyden introduced himself as belonging

to a race, which, for centuries, has been despoiled by other races; we have been made to subserve the commercial and agricultural interests of the American continent, for no other reward than physical brutalization and mental deterioration. And I can conceive that every great effort made in England—the commercial mistress and law giver of the world—to place commerce on a just and proper basis, will tend to loosen the bonds and hasten the disenthralment of my people. (29)

27. Holden, *Blyden of Liberia*, 66–69.
28. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 277.

29. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of University Press of New England, 1987), 74–75; and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 204–5.
30. Frederick Douglass, letter to Lewis H. Douglass, 20 February 1887, quoted in William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 331–32.
31. Dorr, *A Colored Man Round the World*, 11, 170.
32. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 91.
33. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes towards the Negro, 1550–1812* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), 36, 40–43.
34. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 232–33.
35. Blyden, *Jewish Question*, 5, 7.

The question, in some of its aspects, is similar to that which at this moment agitates thousands of the descendants of Africa in America, anxious to return to the land of their fathers. It has been for many years my privilege and my duty to study the question from the African standpoint. And as the history of the African race—their enslavement, persecution, proscription, and sufferings—closely resembles that of the Jews, I have been led also by a natural process of thought and by a fellow feeling to study the great question now uppermost in the minds of thousands, if not millions, of Jews.

36. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 556–57.
37. Jordan, *White over Black*, 549.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DESOLATING NARRATIONS: TOM SAWYER'S CRUSADE

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2. *Ibid.*, 103.
3. *Ibid.*, 108.
4. See Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 77–84.
5. Radulph of Caen, quoted in Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London: Al Saqi Books, 1984), 39.
6. Albert of Aix, quoted in *ibid.*, 40.
7. Usamah Ibn Muniqidh, quoted in *ibid.*, 39.
8. Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, in *Tom Sawyer Abroad and Tom Sawyer, Detective* (New York: Signet, 1985).
9. *Ibid.*, 10–11.
10. Titus Tobler, quoted in Alexander Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882: Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), 68.
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14. Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, 11.
15. *Ibid.*, 12.
16. *Ibid.*, 13.
17. Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885), 362.
18. Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, 56.
19. *Ibid.*, 58.
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21. Mark Twain, “1,002^d Arabian Night,” in *Mark Twain's Satires & Burlesques*, 133.
22. C. F. Volney, *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires: and The Law of Nature*, trans. Joel Barlow, C. F. Volney, and Thomas Jefferson (1792; reprint, New York: Peter Eckler, 1890), 14.
23. L. T. C. Rolt, *The Aeronauts: A History of Ballooning, 1783–1903* (London: Longmans, 1966), 53.
24. Thomas Jefferson Hogg, quoted in Richard Holmes, *Shelley: The Pursuit* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1975), 41.
25. M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 332.
26. Mary Louise Pratt, “Conventions of Representation: Where Discourse and Ideology Meet,” in *Contemporary Perception of Language: Interdisciplinary Dimensions*, ed. Heidi Byrnes (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1982), 145; and *idem*, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 201–8.
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Co., 1869). The publisher's preface to this edition describes the novel as "a satire on modern books of African travel," but then goes on to vouch that "[s]o far as the geography, the inhabitants, the animals, and the features of the countries the travelers pass over are described, it is entirely accurate."

28. Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, 111.

29. *Ibid.*, 45.

30. *Ibid.*, 99.

31. *Ibid.*, 100.

32. *Ibid.*, 100–101.

33. *Ibid.*, 102.

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35. *Ibid.*, 104.

36. *Ibid.*, 97.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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2. Herman Melville, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, with Walter Bezanson (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1991).

3. Herman Melville, *Journals*, ed. Howard C. Horsford with Lynn Horth (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1989), 89, 574. See chapter 5, note 38 for an explanation for the terrific/ghastly variance in Melville's journal. While this edition employs "terrific," the "ghastly" employed in an earlier edition gives a better sense of the nineteenth-century meaning of "terrific."

4. Melville, *Journal*, 91.

5. For insight on the changes wrought upon perception as a result of the advent of the railroad, see Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

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16. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 60.

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19. Twain, "Concerning the Jews," 171.

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21. Kahn, "Mark Twain's Philosemitism," 18.

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23. William Blackstone, "Palestine for the Jews," in *Christian Protagonists for Jewish Restoration* (1891; facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 1. Also see William Blackstone, "May the United States Intercede for the Jews," *Our Day* 8 (October 1891), in *ibid.*

24. See William Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1908). For more discussion of Blackstone's theological innovation in Christian Zionism, see Hilton Obenzinger, "In the Shadow of 'God's Sun-Dial': The Construction of American Christian Zionism and the Blackstone Memorial," in *Stanford Humanities Review* 5, no. 1 (1995): 60–79.

25. Twain, "Concerning the Jews," 174.

26. *Ibid.*, 175.

27. Foner, *Mark Twain: Social Critic*, 304–5.

28. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, 119.

29. "Mark Twain's Concordia Speech," in Dolmetsch, "Our Famous Guest," 316.

30. Dolmetsch, "Our Famous Guest," 250.

One might occasionally meet an Adam, a Daniel, a David, a Jacob, or more often a Joseph among Catholic Austrians (then 90 percent of the population) but never a gentile Aaron, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Solomon, or another of the many Hebraic names in common use in nineteenth-century Protestant America. Clemens, which was both a common first name and a less common surname in Austria, was, like Kraus, indeterminate in its religious signification. Hence any Austrian not cosmopolitan enough to know better might easily have concluded that the pen name “Mark Twain” disguised Jewish identity. (250–51)

31. Karl Kraus, *Reichspost*, 12 October 1897, p. 3, quoted in *ibid.*, 170.

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34. *Mark Twain's Correspondence with Henry Huttleston Rogers, 1893–1909*, ed. Lewis Leary (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 354.

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