Prolegomena

Alain Geoffroy

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The American Monthly Magazine: *a fashionable title*

The following texts are fictions selected from two early American literary periodicals sharing the same title and published between 1829 and 1838, successively in Boston and New York. Their common title, *The American Monthly Magazine*, suggests that the publication was continuous, but the genealogy of the magazines shows that they had several fathers, which makes them distinct and diverse, even if the vocation of both was basically to promote local literature. In fact, this fashionable title was recurrently used by several periodicals published in the United States in the nineteenth century: a first version, issued by Job Palmer in Philadelphia in 1824, was edited by the Irish physician James McHenry (1775-1845) who settled in America in 1817 and seemed to have had more interest in literature than in his profession.[1] No text in the following pages was borrowed from this early publication.

After several years of interruption, the same title was taken up again in 1829 by Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-1867), former editor of *The Legendary* (1828) and of *The Token* (1829).[2] The new magazine was published in Boston by Pierce & Williams from April 1829 to March 1831, and from April to July 1831 by Willis himself. Its pages contained essays, fiction, criticism and poetry often written by the editor himself. Among its contributors were the historians John Lathrop Motley[3] and Richard Hildreth,[4] Lydia Huntley Sigour-

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[1] He wrote collections of poems such as *Waltham, an American Revolutionary Tale, in Three Cantos* (1823) and *The Antediluvians, or the World Destroyed, a Narrative Poem in Ten Books* (1840), fictions such as *The Wilderness, or Braddock's Times, a Tale of the West* (1823) and *Meredith, or the Mystery of the Meschianza, a Tale of the Revolution* (1831), and even a play, *The Usurper, an Historical Tragedy, in Five Acts*, performed at the Old Chestnut Street Theater in Philadelphia in 1829.

[2] As an author, Willis published *Fugitive Poetry* (1829), collections of travel sketches, *Inklings of Adventure* (1836), *Loiterings of Travel* and *American Scenery* (1840) and plays, *Bianca Visconti; or, The Heart Overtasked* (1837) and *Tortesa; or, The Usurer* (1839).

[3] John Lathrop Motley, (1814-1877), American historian, specialized in Dutch history and in the biography of the English trader Thomas Morton (1622-1647).

[4] Richard Hildreth (1807-1865), American historian and writer, the author of a six-volume *History of the United States* (1849) and of a novel, *The Slave; or, Memoirs of Archy Moore* (1836).

ney[5], and Albert Pike.[6] However, financial difficulties led the magazine to be absorbed by George Pope Morris's[7] *New York Mirror* in August 1831.

The name of the publication rose from its ashes two years later in New York, on the initiative of Henry William Herbert (1807-1858), a novelist of British origin,[8] who later made a name for himself by writing on sports and fishing in America under the pseudonym of Frank Forester. Recently settled in America (1831), Herbert revived the *American Monthly Magazine* in March 1833 with the contribution of A. D. Patterson, who however soon retired. Then he conducted the review alone—"nearly one half the matter of which was composed by him"[9]—until it was sold to Charles Fenno Hoffman[10] in 1835, with Herbert still acting as a joint editor. The magazine, which had absorbed Joseph Tinker Buckingham's (1779-1861) *New England Magazine* in 1835,[11] published, among the writings of various famous authors, Edgar Allan Poe's "Von Jung, the Mystic"[12] and Hoffman's continuous novel "Vanderlyn" in 1837. When politics started to take a larger place in the magazine in 1836,[13] Herbert resigned and was replaced by Park Benjamin until the publication terminated in October 1838.[14]

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[5] Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865), American writer and poetess, author of works often inspired by morality and religion.

[6] Albert Pike (1809-1891), American lawyer, the author of *Prose Sketches and Poems Written in the Western Country* (1834).

[7] George Pope Morris (1802-1864), American journalist, poet and short story writer, co-founder with the poet Samuel Woodworth (1785-1842) of the *New York Mirror* in 1823. The publication discontinued in 1843.

[8] He was the author of *The Brothers, a Tale of the Fronde* (1834) and of a series of historical studies, among which *The Knights of England, France and Scotland* (1852) and *The Captains of the Old World* (1851), all of them focussing on European history.

[9] "Henry William Herbert, 'Frank Forester'," *The International Review of Literature, Art, and Science,* 1 June 1851, New York.

[10] Charles Fenno Hoffman (1806-1884), American journalist and poet; in 1833, he founded *The Knickerbocker*, published in New York, which the *American Monthly Magazine* was supposed to rival. It published such famous pens as Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Longfellow, Greeley and Hawthorne.

[11] The *New England Magazine* was published in Boston from 1831 to 1835.

[12] June 1837; revised as "Mystification," *Broadway Journal*, 27 December 1845.

[13] Henry Clay's (1777-1852) and Horace Greeley's (1811-1872) political papers largely contributed to modify the magazine's focus.

[14] Park Benjamin (1809-1864), the former editor and owner of the *New England Magazine* after Joseph Buckingham's retirement; the editor of *The New Yorker* in association with Horace Greeley, and the founder of the weekly newspaper *The New World* (1839-1845).

An oriented selection

The collection of narratives appearing in the present work are most of the time unsigned and their authors remain anonymous,[15] as often the case in similar literary magazines of the time. They may seem disparate and ill-assorted, and it is true that they tell stories which apparently have little in common but the fact that they all belong to American literature of the early nineteenth century. However, beyond their displaying of such typical American features as their geographical or historical settings or of American-oriented points of view on the way the world goes, they all share one characteristic which may not be perceptible at the first reading in their diegetic make-up, but which is the very essence of the "seeds" or "germs"[16] generating them and determining their literary pattern. All these pieces tell stories which cannot be completely elucidated. Even when a detailed, sometimes sophisticated, explanation is *in fine* explicitly provided, there remains a black spot in the rationale of the text which resists logical reading and consistent interpretation.

We note for instance, that the Hudson stories are still permeated by the legendary—Indian or literary—atmosphere of the ancient times, governed by mystery and the irrational, culminating in the last narrative of this series, unquestionably a supernatural tale.[17] Many stories rest on mistakes which can hardly be conceived by a logical mind or on fabrications which paradoxically implausible coincidences only could make credible. Indeed, chance events and serendipity are often at the core of the narratives and constitute in themselves sources of lasting puzzlement, whether they be unscrupulously exploited by the protagonists or the cause of their fortune or misfortune. Beyond the realm of superstitions and their dramatic influence, mental disorders provide much material for many of these uncanny stories, exotic or local.

Finally, this enumeration of strange facts and disturbing feats would not be complete without the devilish presence of disquieting

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[15] With the exception of "The Totem" (1837) by Alfred Billings Street (1811-1881) and "The Snow Pile" (1836) by Joseph Holt Ingraham (1809-1860), the other stories are either unsigned or signed with initials.

[16] In the sense given by Henry James (1843-1916) to that term in his *Notebooks*. See *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, Leon Edel & Lyall H. Powers eds. (New York: Oxford University Press) 1987.

[17] "Mohegan-Ana: or Scenes and Stories of the Hudson" (n.d.).

creatures and their master Satan himself, sometimes prowling frighteningly about unseen, but often caricatured or ridiculed as certainly sounded proper in days when science and technical progress—but also new trends in religion[18]—questioned the status of mankind and the traditional order of the universe. This recurrent use of a sometimes very subtle subversion of rationality, both contradicting— resisting—modernity and appearing as an outcome of it, is the token of a literary Americanness already inspiring founders of American literature such as Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), William Austin (1778-1841) or Washington Irving (1783-1859), and flourishing in some more mature texts of their successors, Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) or Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).[19] Moreover, many of the texts we have selected display a mystical not to say enigmatic approach to nature which goes beyond the Romantic vision of it, and some of them can be read as precursors of transcendentalism. At any rate, all the narratives tell weird stories in which the irrational, subtly or more saliently, plays a significant part in announcing an American modernity.

The European heritage

It is a well-known fact that the young American literature had solid European roots. The elite in pre- and post-revolutionary times read classic European books, mainly British, which quenched their thirst for knowledge and the imaginary along with their need to grasp the functioning of the universe, both in the philosophical or political fields and in the realm of science. This collection of texts confirms this predominantly European influence through their numerous references to the works of prominent writers and thinkers.

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[18] Born in Europe in the 1650s, Unitarianism spread in New England during the nineteenth century and became a major faith among the Bostonian elite (see *supra* note 297). Promoted by brilliant voices such as Henry Ware (1764-1845) or William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), the unitarian doctrine advocated religious toleration and the primacy of reason and conscience.

[19] One thinks, among others, of texts like Brown's *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798) and *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799); Austin's "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man" (1824, 1826, 1827) and "Martha Gardner: or Moral Reaction" (1837); Irving's "Rip van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (1819); Hawthorne's "Wakefield" and "Doctor Heidegger's Experiment" (1837) or even "Rappaccini's Daughter (1844); or, of course, Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" (1844) and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845).

Among them, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is more often quoted, explicitly or not, than any other author. His most famous plays are often cited, without any reference but generally most accurately and with quotation marks, which shows that these early American writers were familiar with the works of the English playwright. *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*, but also lesser known pieces such as *Timon of Athens,* are recurrently quoted as epigraphs or in the texts themselves. Sometimes quotations are inserted in the narrative as mere implicit allusions—for instance, *Othello*'s "green-eyed monster"[20]—possibly identifiable by the learned reader. More than merely flaunting the author's erudition, they sound like a conventional wink at the learned community of New England and its shared literary background, and beyond scholarship considerations at its common cultural identity.

Apparently almost as fashionable as William Shakespeare was Lord Byron (1788-1824) and to a lesser extent Goethe (1749-1832) and the revered novelist Walter Scott (1771-1832). The three of them are quoted almost as often as all the other European authors combined. If Walter Scott was seen as an undisputed master in nineteenth-century literary circles,[21] Byron and Goethe evoke in these selected pieces a more mature Romanticism,[22] together with Victor Hugo (1802-1885) and Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), or even the Gothic novels of Charles Maturin (1782-1824). They come with the more classical references to Dante (1265-1321), Pope (1688-1744) and Milton (1608-1674), or to prominent thinkers such as Voltaire (1694-1778), eighteenth-century novelists such as Smollett (1721-1771) or Fielding (1707-1754), and celebrated theologians such as Isaac Watts (1674-1748) or Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667).

Moreover, the authors of these short stories recurrently plunge their readers into the far-off past of Europe and numerous allusions are made to the pantheon of Ancient Greece and Rome and to their celebrated authors such as Ovid (43 BC-18 AD), Virgil (70 BC-19 BC) or Titus Livius (*circa* 59 BC-AD 17). Here again, the classics

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[20] See *supra* note 374.

[21] This is what led Washington Irving to spend Summer 1817 at the master's home. The Scottish novelist advised him to study German literature in which the American found inspiration for some of his tales. "Rip van Winkle", for instance, is an Americanized version of the German *Märchen* "Der Ziegenhirt" ("The goatherd") which Irving must have discovered in Otmar's *Volkssagen* (1800).

[22] Even if Scott's historical novels could be read as precursors.

appear as an essential part of the foundations of the culture of the American elite which it provides with genuine acknowledged roots and for which it constitutes the distinctive rallying sign of a privileged, educated caste.[23] However, these prestigious references are not always to be taken at face value, as they are often used not so much to anchor the texts slavishly into a conventional literary tradition, but rather to distinguish them from those written by their elders by means of irony, caricature, or humor. By mimicking the conquest of independence on the literary ground, these authors introduce a measure of distance from their European elders which contributes undeniably to making their narratives specifically American.

Europe is not only omnipresent intellectually and artistically, but also geographically. The Old World appears recurrently in place names but also through its nationals, most of the time immigrants, recent or long-established, in America. England of course, but also Ireland, France, Germany, Italy and Spain are alternately evoked. But the homesickness so often affecting immigrants or even their descendants is here totally absent. On the contrary, these fictions reveal that prejudices directed at Europeans were already very popular. England is seen as a country where gentlemen and politicians inexplicably lose their minds. Natives from Yorkshire and Cockneys are naïve and easily duped by unscrupulous American pranksters.[24] The Irish are poor, while Dutch colonists are thriving and hardworking, but they often acquired their wealth by trade or speculation, disregarding ethics and worshiping profit for profit's sake.[25] Spaniards are proud, cold-blooded Roman Catholics, whereas Germans are learned and clever; but their minds are too complicated and their metaphysics incomprehensible.[26] As for the French, they are accused of having fomented a bloody revolution, betrayed their elite forced to flee their homeland and too happy to find refuge on the other side of the Atlantic and to adopt American values. In a more elusive way, the stress is laid on Fulton's invention,[27] disregarding the fact that the very French Jouffroy d'Abbans was the first to operate a steamboat

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[23] A large part of the audience of the *American Monthly Magazine* was provided by the Boston Brahmins, the intellectual, spiritual and social elite of New England.

[24] In "The Gold-Hunter; a Tale of Massachusetts" (1837) and "Married by Mistake" (1837).

[25] Respectively in "The Cold Hand" (1837) and "Hans, the Horse-Breaker" (1837).

[26] As respectively in "The Hermit of Agualta" (1831) and "De Diabolo" (1836).

[27] See *supra* note 253.

on a river twenty-seven years before him.[28] In another tale set in Normandy, "la belle France" is seen as a filthy place and the French, at home and abroad, as born dissemblers.[29] In brief, more than fifty years after Independence, the attitude toward Europe remains ambiguous and not devoid of clichés: if the Old World is still undeniably seen as the cradle of culture, America is presented as a place where hard work, intelligence and even craftiness are cardinal virtues allowing men and women of good will to enjoy healthy and profitable lives.

American references

While Europe provides the main part of the quoted authors, few famous American writers are explicitly cited in these short stories, with the exception of James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), whose work is criticized with fierce irony,[30] and Washington Irving (1783-1859) whose Rip van Winkle haunts several narratives, and whose style visibly inspired several other stories.[31] Many texts however announce the atmosphere and the favorite themes of Hawthorne (1804-1864),[32] Poe (1809-1849)[33] or Melville (1819-1891).[34]

Nevertheless, if America had not had time to produce many great writers yet, it already had its pantheon of great men, among whom towers the personality of George Washington (1732-1799), whose courage and shrewdness are acclaimed in a long narrative based on actual facts that occurred during the French and Indian War.[35] Less heroic historical figures like Roger Williams,[36] President

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[28] The French engineer Claude François Jouffroy d'Abbans (1751-1832) invented the first experimental craft propelled by a steam engine in 1776. In 1780, he sailed up the river Saône in a more sophisticated 46-meter long steamboat.

[29] In "The Exile" (1829) and "A Legend of Mont Saint Michel"(1836).

[30] In "De Diabolo"(1836).

[31] Irving's influence is more perceptible in "A September Trip to Catskill" (1838) and "Recollections of the village of—" (1830) but it tinges more than one passage of several other stories, such as "The Gold-Hunter ; a Tale of Massachusetts" (1837).

[32] Although it was published anonymously, "A Visit to the Clerk of the Weather" (1836) was most probably written by Hawthorne.

[33] "The Crazy Eye" (1836) or "A Mystery at Sea" (1829).

[34] "A Mystery at Sea" (1829).

[35] "The Totem" (1837), by the American poet Alfred Billings Street (1811-1881).

[36] Roger Williams (c.1603–1683), the founder of Rhode Island. See *supra* note 329.

Harrison[37] or Vice-President George Clinton[38] appear now and again as so many generally allusive signals contributing to establishing an unvoiced complicity with the reader who shares the same historical past. Numerous allusions are made to historical facts whose symbolic value in American history reaches that of founding myths: the Independence War (1775-1783), of course,[39] but also the French and Indian War (1689–1763),[40] the Great Awakening,[41] or less crucial issues such as the heroic fight of Captain Lovell.[42] This background, inspired by real facts, firmly sets the narratives into history, which not only confers on them an American identity but also a touch of reality which often enough makes them almost plausible.

But what makes these narratives definitely inscribed in American history is the omnipresence of Native Americans, whether it be in toponyms or in the names of real Native tribes: Cherokees, Choctaws, Mohawks, Mohegans, Mohican, Narragansett, Natchez, Pequot, Shawnees, all belong to American history and were still present at the time when these narratives were written. Yet, the descriptions of Native characters are most of the time racially biased and they are too often portrayed derogatorily. If one author implicitly takes sides with the pursued couple of Native lovers in "Sebago Pond" (1829) and another one bows before the infallible sense of honor and the uncommon bravery of Onwawisset,[43] many underline the savagery of the majority of the Natives whom they depict in terms of bestiality and treacherousness,[44] or as debased degenerate creatures.[45] Undoubtedly, early Native Americans are still the object of strong ethnic prejudices, not unlike the Africans in the exotic stories related in these pages who are also seen as devilish dangerous creatures disrespectful of human life.[46]

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37 William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), the ninth President of the United States. See *supra* note 103.

38 George Clinton (1739–1812). See *supra* note 234.

39 Bunker Hill in "Recollections of the Village of——" (1830) or Saratoga in "Mohegan-Ana : or Scenes and Stories of the Hudson" (n.d.).

40 In "The Totem" (1837).

41 In "Anna's Landing" (1830). See note 365.

42 In "Recollections of the Village of——" (1830). See *supra* note 111.

43 Although the young Native was brought up in a white family to which he remained faithful, and was thus not totally "uncivilized." "The Totem" (1837).

44 In "The Totem" (1837) and "Recollections of the Village of——" (1830).

45 In "Mohegan-Ana : or Scenes and Stories of the Hudson" (n.d.).

46 In "The Hermit of Agualta"(1831).

Yet, many of these narratives reveal their belonging to a typical American literature by putting forward an American-oriented point of view, together with an unquestionable sense of place. Even when some authors set, partly or entirely, their stories abroad,[47] the reader soon realizes that either the narrator was born in the New World or that he reports some detail which only an American would appreciate and even sometimes know about.[48] Moreover, many texts refer to specific American places which are used as backgrounds for the various fictional events reported. The North-East is actually the privileged setting of the majority of these stories when they are set in the United States: the Appalachians and the Hudson valley, but also Long Island and its Sound; cities like Boston, New York, New Haven and Providence, but also smaller places with high historical value such as Saratoga, Fort Duquesne or Fort Oswego; New England States such as Massachusetts, Maine or Rhode Island.

Most of the stories set overseas begin, end, are told in, or refer to America. All the toponyms mentioned correspond to real places which are depicted faithfully and often in detail. Here again, this literary geographical network helps establish or reinforce a sense of complicity between writers and readers who feel more committed to narratives in which they feel at home. The dense combination of historical and local, geographical references in these fictions contributes to founding and moulding a genuine American literature whose value for the readers—and the authors—rests on interactive echoes between their everyday lives, a common cultural and geographical background, and the collective imaginary. Following Irving's tracks, they establish bridges between European roots and American settings, illustrating Thomas Cole's enthusiastic statement: "The Rhine has its castled crags, its vine-clad hills, and ancient villages; the Hudson has its wooded mountains, its rugged precipices, its green undulating shores—a natural majesty, and an unbounded capacity for improvement by art."[49] Like Cole in his painting of the North-East countryside, these stories make the best of their American sources.

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[47] "The Crazy Eye" (1836) is est in Great Britain; "The Exile" (1829) is partly situated in France, like "A Legend of Mont Saint Michel" (1836), while "The Hermit of Agualta" (1831) is set in Jamaica and "Alice Vere" (1836) mainly in the Pacific Islands.

[48] An unexpected and almost anachronistic reference to tornadoes in the New World, for instance, in "A Legend of Mont Saint Michel" (1836).

[49] Thomas Cole (1801-1848), "Essay on American Scenery" *The American Monthly Magazine* (1836). See *supra* note 99.

From Nature to Supernature

Most of the stories presented here are either narratives based on actual experiences in the Irvingian tradition of the travel account, or texts sounding genuine and factual thanks to literary tricks that generate, to various degrees, some sort of "real effect." Washington Irving was a pioneer in the mixing of fictions and actual reports in his works, as well as in blurring the conventional limits between the real and the imaginary[50] in literary hoaxes. Thus, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819) gathers essays and tales supposedly written after the papers of the historian Dietrich Knickerbocker, "an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch History of the province and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers."[51] In the same vein, *Bracebridge Hall* (1822) or *The Alhambra* (1832) merge sketches inspired by tales or reports whose status has often to be decided *in fine* by the reader himself. Similarly, the Bostonian William Austin (1778-1841) published his "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man" in the "Original Communications" columns of the *New England Galaxy.* It was presented as an authentic report by a certain Jonathan Dunwell, so that after the first section had been published, some New England readers were so eager to know more about their unfortunate fellow citizen that Austin was prompted to add two complementary sections to his tall story.[52]

The collected stories presented in these pages are similarly both diverse in their themes and often ambiguous in their forms. Some are apparently mere reports based on real facts or experiences such as "A September Trip to Catskill" (1838), a narrative which sounds like a quite convincing echo of Irving's sketches. While nothing indicates that the text is fictional, the geography of the place seems to be the very creation of Washington Irving, and Rip van Winkle is recur-

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[50] In "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," (1820) he announced prophetically: "If ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley." Irving actually settled in Tarrytown (New York) after his return from Europe in 1832.

[51] Prologue to "Rip van Winkle."

[52] William Austin, "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man", was published in three sections in Joseph T. Buckingham's *New England Galaxy* (1824, 1826, 1827). The narrator, Jonathan Dunwell, was supposed to be an occasional correspondent of the magazine, and nothing distinguishes Austin's tale from the other communications.

rently evoked as if he had really lived there. Moreover, the narrator keeps on wondering when he finds, as carved in the landscape itself, the traces of Irving's fictional hero, which confers to his narration a marvellous tone that subtly alters the nature of the text. The homage goes beyond an enthusiastic deference to a celebrated author. It shows that Rip van Winkle, far from being a mere Hudsonian version of the German Peter Klaus of Sittendorf,[53] has reached the status of a legendary hero whose fictional life is now marked forever in the American landscapes.

Even in realistic texts, landscapes often bear the marks of legendary events,[54] and fortuitous natural phenomena suggest the intervention of supernatural powers. In "Sebago Pond" (1829), the curious shape of the two rocks by the lake bear witness to the heroic escape of the Native lovers; in other texts, lightning, uncannily appearing just in time, spares a tragic death to the besieged white settlers in "Recollections of the Village of ——" (1829) and to a desperately suicidal Catharine in "The Cold Hand; A Tale" (1837). As a general rule, Nature is seen as a mysterious entity capable of empathy, reflecting the narrator's mood and bearing the marks of history and legends or determining them.

In fact, in these fictions, Nature bridges the real world which inspires the artist and the philosopher and the world of the unknown, often unseen powers which eventually govern our lives. On the one hand, we can notice, in perfect accordance with Thomas Cole's vision, that in these narratives

> ... rural nature is full of the same quickening spirit—it is, in fact, the exhaustless mine from which the poet and the painter have brought such wondrous treasures—an unfailing fountain of intellectual enjoyment, where all may drink, and be awakened to a deeper feeling of the works of genius, and a keener perception of the beauty of our existence.[55]

But on the other hand, Nature and natural elements betray their divine dimension when they intervene significantly in the lives of the

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[53] See *infra* note 21.

[54] In "Recollections of the Village of ——" (1829).

[55] "Essay on American Scenery."

protagonists. Sometimes the harbingers of doom and good luck,[56] sometimes the determining protagonists triggering off the final denouement, the elements provide many of these stories with an ambivalent framework both visible and invisible.

The visible part is made up of rural landscapes, most of the time spectacular and picturesque: the Catskill mountains in the bosom of which "the kingly Hudson rolls to the deeps,"[57] and myriads of islands and lakes edged with mysterious forests and vertiginous cliffs, or else, when the story is set overseas, lush tropical sceneries. Contrarily to the traditional symbolism of islands, they are not always mere sanctuaries and can be inhospitable or treacherous places, and when they shelter unfortunate castaways, they sever them from civilisation,[58] as in this emblematic situation:

> There was one poor fellow who had been caught by the rising of the river in a mill on an island rock. He had but time to escape from the shed ere it was swept away, and he was cut off from communication with the main land until the subsiding of the river.[59]

Woods are also dangerous places. They still represent that impenetrable wilderness which frightened the first settlers, in which live mysterious creatures, men or beasts and some of them half of each, even if "the incommunicable trees"[60] shelter a less frightening fauna of birds and game.[61] As for lakes and rivers, they are fictional means of communication allowing the passage from Culture to Nature, from the rational world to the realm of imagination. Yet, as a general rule, Nature's major function is to reflect the narrator's mood and prepare him for the coming events, in the Romantic tradition. Many of the descriptions of natural sceneries echo Bryant's verses:

> Yet fair as thou art, thou shunnest to glide,
> Beautiful stream! by the village side;
> But windest away from haunts of men,

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56 In "The Snow Pile" (1838).

57 William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), "Catterskill Falls" (1836).

58 In "The Hermit of Agualta" (1831), "Alice Vere" (1836) or "The Exile" (1829).

59 "Recollection of the Village of——" (1829).

60 Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), *Nature* (1836). See *supra* note 81.

61 In "The Totem" (1837) or in "Mohegan-Ana : or Scenes and Stories of the Hudson" (n.d.).

> To quiet valley and shaded glen;
> And forest, and meadow, and slope of hill,
> Around thee, are lonely, lovely, and still.[62]

The reader is thus recurrently invited to discover both the reality of a land meticulously detailed and the almost mystical vision of Nature inspired to the narrator by his experience, with a flavor unmistakably announcing Transcendentalism. Thus, several narratives, such as "Recollection of the Village of—— (1829), "Sebago Pond" (1829) or "Mohegan-Ana" (n.d.), could as well have begun with Emerson's words:

> I go with my friend to the shore of our little river, and with one stroke of the paddle, I leave the village politics and personalities, yes, and the world of villages and personalities behind, and pass into a delicate realm of sunset and moonlight, too bright almost for spotted man to enter without novitiate and probation.[63]

The quasi sacredness of rural landscapes inevitably suggests that a variety of innermost forces are at work in Nature. They remain unseen and manifest themselves through the medium of natural phenomena. Salvatory strokes of lightning, in "Recollections of the Village of——" (1829) and "The Cold Hand" (1837), but also the secret powers of the sea which make people vanish in inscrutable dramatic circumstances in "Alice Vere" (1836) and "A Mystery of the Sea" (1829), or even the die-hard snow which inexplicably survives the end of winter and brings happiness and merriment in "The Snow Pile" (1838). In "Mohegan-Anna" (n.d.), Nature seems a reflection of the tragic events which occurred in a legendary past, and every element of the landscape appears as a sign referring, not only to the bloodshed perpetrated ages ago, but above all to its supernatural upshot, the apparition of the ghostly "Flying Head" which has haunted the premises since then. Ubiquitous, inhabited by a sense of good and evil and supported by a divine will, Nature becomes Supernature, in the same vein as the vengeful "black cloud" in William Austin's "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man" (1824, 1826, 1827).[64]

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62 William Cullen Bryant, "Green River" (1820).

63 Emerson, *op. cit.*

64 Peter Rugg is obstinately pursued by a thunderstorm which prevents him from going back home for fifty years after he has defied the elements.

The fantastic dimension of Nature, in its nautical version, culminates in "A mystery of the Sea" (1829) in which an enigmatic sailor inexplicably disappears on board a ship, at midnight in the open sea, as if abducted by a mysterious light. From the outset, the ocean is introduced as a place in which ordinary landmarks are missing and whose memory engulfs all the acts, "whether good or ill," and keep them out of reach, so that the waves become the ideal breeding field of "the living horrors and grovelling fears of superstition." Like Nature inland, the open sea is a book which can be read in search of "signs and omens" of marvellous events to come. The looming presence of the "Flying Dutchman" and the final assertion by the author that "this is no fiction" contribute to giving this story an authentic supernatural flavor.

The Real and the Fabulous

Many of these stories question, one way or another, their own status as writings. Most of the time, this questioning is the outcome of literary devices linked to the position assumed by the narrator. Some narratives are told in the first person ("I" or "we") which confers on the narrator the part of a more or less reliable witness. Classically, references to established historical facts[65] or to real place-names[66] make the story more plausible—if not unreservedly credible—especially when the narrator plays a decisive role in the story. If "The Exile" (1829), for instance, may sound like a true story, it is not only because the events related are set in real places in France and America, but also because the narrator travels from one continent to the other and unexpectedly meets the same people in both several times. The historical background—the French Revolution, Fulton's experimental steamboat sailing up the River Seine—added to the specific geographical settings—Paris, the Oneida lake area—give an appearance of reality to the story, attested by the protagonist-narrator, despite the unlikelihood of some elements of his account. What is at stake here is not without importance as to the mechanism of the fiction itself, and its side effects on the reader. Had the narrative sounded like an imaginary relation, then the coincident-

65 "The Totem" (1837); "A Legend of Mont Saint Michel" (1836); "The Exile" (1829).

66 All the narratives, without any exception, mention real place-names, but some of them, such as the Hudson stories, are set in them, which makes them closer to real life.

al meetings would have seemed but a coarse trick in a more or less sophisticated made-up story. But as long as the reader is incited—even within the framework of literary conventions—to consider the veracity of the story, then the coincidence appears as more than remarkable and worth being related. This contrast between the real and some improbable or incredible event is precisely at the core of many of the stories gathered in these pages.

Paradoxically, the presence of a secondary narrator in the story, even when his account is obviously a tale or a legend, brings by contrast some realness to the primary narration. It is a well-known literary trick, often used in texts in which a certain amount of realism is necessary to make the appearance of the supernatural possible.[67] This is, for instance, what gives the ending of "Mohegan Anna" (n.d.) its mysterious undertones, and makes the narration of "A Legend of Mont Saint Michel" (1836) waver between fiction and real facts, as its subtitle—"a Sketch of History"—suggests. "The Crazy Eye" (1836) presents two "anecdotes" related by a narrator who insists on the reliability of his second-hand report which "was received from an English gentleman of undoubted veracity, and an eye-witness of most that he related." In "A Mystery of the Sea" (1829), the veracity of Captain Sharp's narrative is supposedly vouched for by the primary narrator who introduces himself as someone particularly reliable, pretending that he was immune to superstitions and irrational fears, although he would not deny that some enigmas could not be solved by reason alone. To make sure that Captain Sharp's account could not be mistaken for a tale, he adds as a conclusion to his own narration: "Reader, this is no fiction. Captain Sharp is living only forty miles from the place where I am now writing, and 'can be produced.'" Here again, it is the juxtaposition of supposedly real elements and inexplicable facts which gives substance to that undeniably supernatural story.

In a less subtle manner, although no less efficient, many authors mix real toponyms and abridged names. Thus, "Anna's Landing" (1830) supposedly takes place in New England "in the village of P." The apparent deliberate discretion about the name of the village seems here necessary to preserve the identity of the protagonists, as

[67] A long-lasting, if not traditional, device in Fantastic literature, from Washington Irving's "The Storm Ship" (1822) and Edgar Allan Poe's "A Descent into the Maelstrom" (1841), to Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898).

if they were real persons. Similarly, Alice Vere, in the eponymous story (1836), visits the ****Islands in the Pacific "[i]n the spring of 18—," while the names of the other protagonists are abridged into "Rev., Mr. B** of—, in Connecticut" and "Rev. E*** T***," as if their anonymity had to be preserved. The use of conventional deontological precautions dedicated to real situations provides these stories with a semblance of realness, which gives credit and more dramatic impact to the astonishing events they relate. "The Crazy Eye" (1836) goes one step further in borrowing a pseudo-scientific rationale and making explicit the necessity to protect the identity of the persons involved for "[a]s the incident took place within the last fifteen years, it has been thought advisable to suppress the names of the parties." Not only are the names of the protagonists truncated into "Charles W——," "Miss P. youngest daughter of the Earl of H——" and "Sir William P—— [...], a member of parliament from B——" but the patronymic of the narrator himself is kept secret and only evoked as "G——." Moreover, the two medical cases evoked are preceded by a long, learned, apparently scientific introduction and followed by a conclusion in the same vein, ending in the following words: "in the hope that it may lead to some further investigation of this remarkable phenomenon, the foregoing relation is submitted to the attention of the curious." This last sentence reveals a modesty from the author's part which suggests that he is sincere and that, consequently, his report should be trusted. Here again, the extraordinary needs a realistic setting to come out as such, which makes these short stories, on the extreme verge of reason and common sense, close to the supernatural genre.

Fantastic coincidences

Even texts which sound radically alien to the supernatural genre are structured by the unexpected consequences of extraordinary coincidences. In "The Exile" (1829), the narrator meets, by the most incredible happenstance, a couple of French aristocrats he had known in the Quartier Saint-Germain, while he was sailing on the Oneida Lake, and he meets them again years after, by sheer chance, in Paris, on the Pont Neuf. The probability of such a series of meetings is very low, as in the case of Melancourt in "The Totem"

(1837), whose life is saved by the sacrifice of his Indian stepbrother, whom he had not seen for years and who happened to be the chief of the Native tribe by which he was taken prisoner. Similarly, the fact that the protagonist of "The Snow Pile" (1838) meets his future wife and is cured of a chronic illness thanks to a snow bank which should have melted long before is more than a meaningless fortuity and seems to imply the intervention of Providence or of some mystifying divine power.

In "Married by Mistake" (1837), two gentlemen from England, who accidentally meet on board a steamboat, fight one another in a duel and, as they surprisingly happen to bear the same name, the survivor is led to marry very officially the betrothed of the other without being obliged to reveal the fraud. The extraordinary does not only lie in the fact that they share "a too common name" but in the series of coincidences which led them to be literally *on the same boat* and thus the preys of unprincipled and cynical pranksters. The same confusion of names is the pretext of "Captain Thomson" (1831) in which the protagonist mistakes an old sea-dog, an inveterate bachelor, for the loving husband of a woman he has circumstantially taken under his wing. Yet, the most astonishing part of the story is that the old sailor not only bears the same name and has the same rank of captain, but he put up in the very hotel in which the loving husband was supposed to stay, and has apparently good reasons to believe that a woman and her child may try to rejoin him and ask for some explanations... Beyond the cliché of the sailor with a woman waiting for him in each port, the reader feels that the uncanny parallel between the two Captain Thompsons is so puzzling in every detail that it makes one the dark twin of the other, which transforms the story into a quasi fantastic narrative. As a matter of fact, throughout the stories presented here, this network of meaningful coincidences takes on the dimension of a framework for human destiny, seen as governed by the irrational, which sounds like an early return of the repressed in a world already fascinated by reason.

Ramblings of the Mind

Strikingly enough, the new-born American literature was very early captivated by often morbid meanderings of the

mind, as is illustrated by the seminal works of Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810).[68] Many stories presented in *The American Monthly Magazine* follow this early tradition and illustrate various forms of the mind's deviancies. Among them, superstitions are often evoked to explain aberrant behaviors, like in "The Hermit of Agualta" (1831) in which the females of a family of Spanish exiles are contaminated by traditional local beliefs. Close to superstition is religion in its fanatical manifestations, a theme which inspires "Anna's Landing" (1830) in which a fragile young woman falls under the unhealthy ascendency of a mentally deranged itinerant preacher, in the obscure years of the Great Awakening.[69]

If the torments of the heart often induce those of the mind, the reverse is also true as the unfortunate eponymous heroine of "Alice Vere" (1836) exemplifies in her exotic peregrinations in the Pacific islands, in her quest for a husband she has never met before. Having led so far a life of affective frustration "in great seclusion in a clergyman's family," the ingenuous young woman experiences love at first sight with the wrong person, which leads her to make a fool of herself and eventually commit suicide out of despair. Such a life of emotional frustration is also that of Catharine in "The Cold Hand; A Tale" (1837); her lack of physical beauty drives her to be pathologically jealous of her more gifted sister Jane. After Jane's death, an intense sense of guilt brings her to the verge of suicide and forces her to seek refuge in the deceitful fumes of opium. She eventually comes out of a harrowing hallucinogenic experience—abundantly depicted—radically transformed, and later, she identifies herself with her both envied and hated sister.

The visible effects of the meanderings of the mind are sometimes so radical that the wild behavior of the afflicted person evokes a fit of madness. In "Incidents in the Life of a Quiet Man" (1830), a sketch in three parts, a male nurse relates a few of the most striking "distressing scenes" he has witnessed wherever "human nature is brought into extremity." Gradually, his narrative drifts from the spectacular to the bizarre, as his reports become less and less explicable. In the first one, he is assaulted by a lunatic without any particular

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[68] In *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798), Theodore Wieland murders his family under the influence of pseudo-heavenly voices; *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799) questions, in a Gothic murder story, the borderline between dream and reality.

[69] See note 365.

motive but the fact that *he* was there. In the second account, he tries to prevent a fierce uncontrollable cat from mutilating a corpse he is keeping watch over for the night. Nothing really explains why the cat is so frantically ferocious, except a so-called "demoniacal appetite these animals have for the flesh of the dead." The sudden appearance of the cat and her most unusual wildness, added to the fact that the other watchers are not awakened by the noise of the fight opposing the animal and the narrator, remain unexplained. We can only notice that the wild behavior of the cat echoes that of the madman in the previous part of the narrative, both appearing totally impervious to logic and interpretation. In the last section, the narrator reports the persistent insomnias affecting one of his friends during the full-moon nights, and how he accompanied him once in one of his nocturnal ramblings during which his half-awake companion skated forty miles on a frozen river without seeming to be aware of what he was doing. If violence is apparently absent in this section of the narrative, the compulsive attitude of the skater, evoking somnambulism, remains unexplained.

In "The Crazy Eye" (1836), the circumstances of the appearance of two undeniable cases of madness are related in detail. From a medical point of view, the sudden degradation of the mental condition of so far perfectly normal persons sounds plausible and corresponds to observations reported in classical psychiatry handbooks of the nineteenth century. Yet, a long time before modern hypnotism was formalized by James Braid (1795-1860),[70] the interventions of the "tamer" remain mysterious, for, as the narrator confesses, "[c]oncerning the origin of this ocular influence, no conjecture in the present state of our experience can be hazarded." Consequently, the impact of this story on an uninitiated nineteenth-century audience must have been more that of a nearly supernatural narration than that of a scientific report of two enigmatic medical cases.

In fact, all the stories dealing with madness presented in these pages sound more like weird narratives than like psychological or medical reports. The authors use more the theme of mental imbalance to suggest eeriness and mystery and, to some extent, to subvert logic and conventions, than to explore the meanders of the human mind, with the exception of "The Cold Hand; A Tale" (1837) in

[70] See *supra* note 357.

which the anamnesis of Catharine's pathological jealousy can be inferred from her introspective remarks. However, some seventy years before the invention of psychoanalysis, they establish and question at the same time the necessity of postulating the unconscious as a key to solving the riddles they ask.

Fooling with the Devil

Four of the fictions collected here do not pretend to be real accounts and, on the contrary, deliberately mimic and caricature the traditional devilish tale which they subvert by displaying undeniable humorous qualities. In those years of scientific and religious awakening,[71] the Devil is no longer feared and can be ridiculed with impunity, at least among the Bostonian elite. Thus meetings with the Devil—or its benign avatar, the Clerk of the Weather—are pretexts to satirize the manners of the time by establishing a salutary distance from the ordinary world, which entitles these authors to teach a few bitter lessons to their fellow-citizens. In "A Visit to the Clerk of the Weather" (1836), planet Earth is only vaguely known by the powerful lord of the place, which prompts his visitor to remain modest. "De Diabolo" (1836) parodies Dante's *Inferno*[72] to better criticize writers on both sides of the Atlantic, together with American publishing circles, in terms of sins and expiation. The introductory sentence of the tale is relevant of the change in the secular conceptions of the Evil One: "The very existence of the Devil has been denied in these latter days of unbelief and schism; and this I pronounce to be a most foul, abominable, and soul-destroying heresy." According to the author, printed matter is now in charge of the insidious corruption of the minds, since a good number of writers and publishers have taken over Satan's destructive work.

The two other tales, "Lazy Jake. Or the Devil Nonplussed" (1836) and "Hans the Horse-Breaker" (1837) tell basically similar stories inspired by Goethe's literary myth of Faust. Here again, humor replaces the tragic flavor of the original fiction. In the first story, the Devil is portrayed as a friendly gentleman of "good breeding" ready to seduce Benjamin's young daughter, while he has the looks

[71] On the spread in Boston of Unitarian advanced conceptions of religion, see *infra* note 18 and *supra* note 297.

[72] See *supra* notes 303; 303; 303.

of "a gentlemanly stranger, clad in black, and mounted on a powerful charger" in the second one. But his too good manners conceal a fiendish soul and during his "midnight prowl" the Devil seduces various notables of the village, whose so far unconfessed faults are consequently unveiled to the reader, an opportunity for the author to satirize the mores of his time. Yet, what distinguishes these American tales radically from their original European counterpart is their happy endings: in both cases, the victims outdo their evil master and get rid of him for the rest of their happy lives. Hans literally rides on the Devil's back and brings him to heel as if he were a young untamed colt, whereas Jake's incurable laziness remains out of the Devil's reach, which saves his neighbor Benjamin who had bet his salvation on the former's inveterate indolence. In both cases, success is not due to cardinal virtues but, on the contrary, to major shortcomings, generally considered as close to deadly sins: violence, betting on horses and heavy drinking on the one hand, laziness and cupidity on the other. Yet, this is no wonder in tales in which eternal youth is not at stake—nor any moral improvement—but more prosaically easy money and wealth, which deprives these parodies of any trace of the original Romanticism of Goethe's work, even in a caricatural manner. In fact, by importing the tragic myth of Faust, these American writers have changed its very nature by adapting it sarcastically to some of the pragmatic ideals of their country, in which personal achievement could hardly be reached without making money and being a winner. The moral of these stories teaches their readers that strength, cunning and wealth are now American cardinal values and the keys to success and salvation.

Transgressing fundamental values

It can be thoroughly argued whether or not literature ought to reflect the ideology of the times of its production and the mentalities of the readers to whom it is dedicated. Yet, as far as this collection of short stories is concerned, they clearly address, beyond the variety of their styles and the sundry themes they develop, a selected audience of learned readers, mainly that of the Boston Brahmins, who were among the few capable of grasping all the cultural references peppering them. However, although they were mainly ori-

ented toward the dominant class, these narratives, even the most conventional ones, convey enough ambiguousness to shelter the seeds of subversion in their lines. First in humor and satire, in the literary tradition established by Washington Irving,[73] relevantly the most cited reference, explicitly or not, in the present volume. The last four stories, in ridiculing the supposedly feared figure of Satan, employ humor—sometimes black humor—to satirise the nineteenth-century United States. Then in the transgression of universally agreed social behaviors, such as, for instance, mystifications and fabrications about one's identity, like in "Married by Mistake" (1837) in which two gentlemen are mistaken one for the other because they bear the same name, and "The Alias—or Mr. St. John" (1831) in which an American dandy conceals his real identity and gives a false name to seduce his friend's sister. The theme of mistaken identity—or when a person is not recognized—is a fecund source of inspiration. In "Alice Vere" (1836), the betrothed young woman mistakes a nice-looking officer for her future husband. In "The Totem" (1837), a young Indian chief fails to recognize his step-brother in the person of his prisoner, whereas in "Captain Thompson" (1831), the young traveller mistakes one Captain Thompson for the other. Except in "The Totem," mistaken or false identities generate situations which are socially and morally reproved. In "Married by Mistake," a man marries another man's fiancée, whereas in "The Alias," a woman falls in love with a man who pretends to be someone else. Alice Vere is a victim of love at first sight on the eve of her marriage, and the student of "Captain Thompson" secretly desires the sailor's young wife and is longing to seduce her. In each case, the mistaken identity implies a transgression in the field of marital relationships and sexual desire and thus appears as subversive of social order.

Treacherous behaviors are also often the germs of these short stories. It is the case in "Married by Mistake" in which the future husband is the English victim of a prank of particularly bad taste fomented by two American jokers, and in "The Alias" in which the

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[73] Irving's early career announced his taste and talent for humor and satire. In 1807, he published with his brother William (1766-1821) and J. K. Paulding (1778-1860), a satirical miscellany, *Salmagundi; or, The Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff & Others,* proposing a series of humorous essays. In 1809, under the pseudonym of Diedrich Knickerbocker, he published the burlesque history book *A History of New York*, a satire of the political mores of his times and one of the first great American books of comic literature.

protagonist plays a bad trick on the woman he wants to seduce. "The Gold-Hunter; a Tale of Massachusetts" (1831) tells the story of a too naïve farmer, unscrupulously robbed of a hundred guineas by so-called friends who took him for a nightly ride in marshes where he thought he would find gold. In "Lazy Jake. Or the Devil Nonplussed" (1836), the Evil One himself is tricked, and in "The Cold hand; a Tale" (1837) Jane is deceived by her jealous sister. Treasons are nevertheless much more dramatic when they imply the death of their victims. In "The Hermit of Agualta" (1831), a Spanish exile is betrayed by his Jamaican servant who poisons his wife and children out of vengeance, while "A Legend of Mont St. Michel" (1836) tells how the army of the "Count de Montgomeri" was slaughtered because of the treason of one of their allies. In "Recollection of the Village of——" (1829), the treason of a messenger is probably the cause of the failure of an Indian raid, which was a blessing for the white settlers, but entailed many Native deaths, like in "Mohegan-Ana: or Scenes and Stories of the Hudson" (n.d.) in which the younger members of an old Native tribe settle the dispute which opposes them to their elders by committing treacherous bloodshed.

If madness or neurotic behaviors—recurrent issues in these short stories—are easily seen as subversive or transgressive,[74] deviancies from the social or historical order are sometimes more subtle, although no less radical. In the first two narratives set in the Hudson valley,[75] the shadow of Rip van Winkle still haunts the minds of the authors as well as the valley itself. Yet, Irving's anti-hero is far from being an example, not only because of his proverbial laziness, but above all because, unlike his fellow citizens, he missed the founding event which gave birth to the United States, *i.e.* the Revolution, which he spent sleeping in the mountains. The same "breach of historicism" affects William Austin's Peter Rugg who, like Rip, skips the Revolution, which inspires the following sentence to an anonymous voice at the end of the story: "You were cut off from the last age, and you can never be fitted to the present. Your home is gone, and you can never have another home in this world."[76] The repeat by

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[74] It is a central theme of "The Crazy Eye" (1836); "Incident in the Life of a Quiet Man" (1830); "The Cold Hand; A Tale" (1837); "Anna's Landing" (1830); "Alice Vere" (1836).

[75] "A September Trip in Catskill" (1838) and "Recollections of the Village of——" (1830).

[76] William Austin, "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man" (1824, 1826, 1827).

Austin of Irving's unconventional theme and the significantly drastic ending of the second version show how important it was for an American to be caught in his or her own history, failing which exclusion was the inevitable sanction, which is implicitly—and probably unintentionally—recalled in the concerned narratives of this collection.

The questioning of the order of the world is actually more obvious in texts belonging to the supernatural genre.[77] The Fantastic opens a breach in the real which remains intrinsically unaccountable. The ghostly Flying Head in "Mohegan Anna" is the outcome of the rebellious young Natives' felony: it is the supernatural, indestructible testimony of the reality of their patricide, the token of the most serious transgression of the social order governing their tribe. In "A Mystery of the Sea" (1829), no one knows who Michael Dodds actually is or where he comes from. The other sailors did not like his "unsocial habits" nor "his whole deportment [which] was strange in the extreme," and they are perturbed by his talking in his sleep "like a man in a fit of the nightmare." His neglect of the social rules indispensable to the cohesion of a crew, confined with no privacy on board a ship for months in a row, certainly accounts for his disappearance. Like Peter Rugg, he does not really belong to this world and is logically expelled from it. By showing what happens to transgressors, this supernatural story serves as a moral lesson and warns those who may be tempted to disrespect habits and customs. In fact, everybody on board the ship feels concerned: "[the men] evidently felt that eyes not of earth nor heaven were fastened on them, and they clustered together, as if each feared that his turn would come next." The Fantastic in these fictions wavers between transgression and subversion on the one hand, and moral and conformism on the other, a dialectic which is common to all the presented texts, so that they can be read as so many multifaceted mirrors of American mentalities of the early nineteenth century.

[77] Let us note that Irving's and Austin's short stories precisely ushered in the bloom of American fantastic literature.