

Cover Letter

This portfolio contains a series of writings analyzing the era of American Romanticism and the different perspectives that populated it. Over the semester, I found myself drawn to the darker side of the literary works that emerged in this age. I was fascinated by the acknowledgement of the imperfection of the United States as a country as well as by the thirst for freedom that seemed present in each text. Each essay in this portfolio analyzes examples of the different voices present in discussions of enslavement, the occupation of Native American land, the rights of women in society, and the question of property.

My scholarly voice underwent several significant changes as the semester progressed. While my scholarly voice in pieces that are not creative is primarily based on the analysis and comparison of different aspects that are either present in the same text or present in different texts. My writing process begins with the creation of a structure that I follow closely throughout the essay. This led to several issues in my writing as it resulted in an over-dependence on introducing the idea rather than simply beginning my analysis of the text (which proved distracting for the audience). The revision of several of my essays today involved the removal of these phrases which left space for the expansion of the essay. Moreover, I found myself inspired by the diverse range of voices I was exposed to this semester (both through the process of reviewing and through the process of reading and analyzing works by different authors). Two writers I was particularly struck by were Nathaniel Hawthorne and Harriet Jacobs. While the former allowed me to explore my creative work by allowing me to experiment with the tone and structure of my work, the latter expanded my understanding of the inequality present in society as well as the

representation of emotion in writing. This, when combined with texts like *Frankenstein* and my readings for a class on democracy, allowed me to truly engage with the idea of separation in society and the ways in which it manifests in scholarly works.

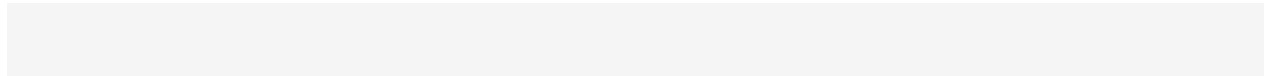
While this semester contributed to my understanding of this period of writing, I was surprised to find a more significant understanding of my own capacities as a read and writer. The peer reviews proved particularly helpful as they allowed me to develop as a reviewer and I began to notice different aspects of people's works and how those related to my own. I found that creating lists of significant changes helped me keep track of my own editing process. This also aided me in the formulation of peer reviews that provided clear directions in which people could improve or expand their work.

In my creative writings, you may note that the most significant changes involve the development of descriptions, while my scholarly essays witnessed significant expansions of ideas as I worked on forming clearer comparisons between voices. These are skills that I will continue to work on, along with my ability to introduce and conclude points without explicitly stating that the point is being introduced (since that is an aspect that I have steadily begun to notice in my other courses). I would like to pursue further study on the American literary circle in and around the east coast as I was curious about the areas surrounding the university and the different ideological backdrops that have been present throughout history.

Table of Contents

<i>Cover Letter</i>	1
<i>The Horseman (FLAGSHIP)</i>	3

<i>Sovereignty.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Narrative Dissonance</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Ensnared in Expectation</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Duality of Declarations.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Monotone.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>The Great Tomb of Man</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Free Soil</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Review 1.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Review 2.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Review 3.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Review 4.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Review 5.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Reflection on Poetry Recitation.....</i>	<i>30</i>



The Horseman (FLAGSHIP)

The discovery of a rather strange, and very moldy, document detailing Colonel Pyncheon's suspicions in shaky script stirred the town into a frenzy. Stories of the days and nights following

the old man's death were resurrected as the townspeople discussed the great tragedy in hushed tones around the dining-table. Tales describing the furious gallop of a magnificent black stallion and the fiendish grin that marred its riders face, garbed in pitch black robes with a towering hat, thundering down Pyncheon-street with his pale hands drenched in gore and a sheet of parchment clenched tightly in his fist.

Once again, the family found themselves at the center of attention as accusations were flung towards old Pyncheon's nephew (who, fortunately, had died a decade prior), as he was made once again the unfortunate victim of a changed will. The ghost of old Matthew Maule seemed to haunt the town as memories of Colonel Pyncheon's bloody demise found life again.

Remembering how he was found with his mouth lying slack as though God had, indeed, given him "blood to drink." His descendants remained hidden, watching as the town began to search for the mysterious figure.

For few but the Maules would be able to tell the tale of their forefather lurking around street corners, unseen and unheard, with a malicious gleam in his eye that promised retribution. Some watched the figure survey the growing structure of the Pyncheon house, with his cool eyes shaded by the broad rim of his hat. Fewer still recalled the smirk that slashed across the thin mouth as the town descended into chaos, providing him with the perfect opportunity to slip past the gates of the Pyncheon house as he moved assuredly down the long corridors that swept and curled about the house as though each board had been placed there by himself.

Had they ventured to peer through the cracks in their windowpanes, peeking past the curtains, they would have noticed that wraith-like figure as he crept back up to the Pyncheon house. They

would recall the way the mist grew heavy that fateful night, cloaking the figure in mystery. They would remember the way the night turned to such pitch-black darkness that it seemed as though the stars themselves were shielding the figure as he began to dig, furiously, with his pale hands calloused and covered in soil. Nobody would notice the patch of freshly dug earth beneath the great tree since the figure had coaxed the grass and the flowers that had been peacefully growing to spring back to life with renewed energy.

The tree watched quietly as the stranger came back to retrieve the case and galloped off into the night, taking with him the only evidence of old Pyncheon's suspicion. Several townsfolk from other towns in New England claimed to have seen the horseman on his grim journey towards the coast, where he would rid himself of this final reminder of the gruesome business. There, he hid the chest amongst some trader's wares, from whence it was carried across the ocean to the shores of England.

For the parchment was first hidden beneath the Pyncheon-elm. As the tree had watched over the old house for decades, witnessing generations of Pyncheons as the family's legacy continued to grow, so too had it stood guard as a dark figure buried the sole evidence of Colonel Pyncheon's fear far beneath its roots in a wooden chest, still covered in wood chips and sawdust from its hasty creation. So too had it watched as the intruder packed the earth over the chest, hiding the freshly dug mud with shrubbery. Sneaking about the house as though its floors were second nature to him.

Of the document's journey, little can be found. Perhaps the sailors dismissed the chest and its mysterious contents, placing it in a hidden corner to be tossed about by the currents. Or perhaps the chest blended with the other boxes being transported across the frothing waters of the Atlantic.

Eventually, it found its way into the chaos of the city, and the townspeople began to view it with growing suspicion. As the box passed from one owner to the next, it began to leave a trail of unexplained deaths in its wake. Sudden disaster struck the families in possession of the chest, as its influence began to sicken even the healthiest of young men. Misfortune razed these families to the ground as even the oldest legacies crumbled in the wake of the innocuous chest and its dark contents.

Only in the hands of a Maule would the document remain hidden. It would remain cursed until it was willingly relinquished by the family.

Generations passed as the Maule family told the story of their forefather's revenge and the missing chest that may doom them all. The centuries-old dispute between the two men continued to haunt the family's footsteps, just as Colonel Pyncheon's legacy stifled the lives of his descendants. The Maule family spent almost a century hidden in plain sight, nestled between the branches of the great wood behind what was formerly their property. They cradled the tarnished remains of their legacy, watching with quiet satisfaction as the Pyncheon family began to sink into collapse.

They began to pity old Hepzibah as she hobbled through town, staggering under the weight of her family's legacy. Only they knew, and understood, the pain caused by the townspeople's rejection. In her, they found a kindred spirit. Efforts to find the chest began with a renewed

fervor as they resolved to lay the hostility to rest. One such Maule found himself sailing across the ocean in pursuit of the document.

It was across this treacherous passage that he encountered the bright minds who would lend meaning to his life. As he conversed with intellectuals from across Europe, young Holgrave's understanding of the world around him began to widen as he began to explore the new inventions and ideas emerging throughout both England and Europe. He haunted the auction houses and old curiosity shops, listening for tales of a cursed chest that remained unopened, but notorious.

The Daguerreotypist returned to America with the chest tucked beneath his cloak. The journey had altered his fate and revitalized his mind. He began to foster a growing obsession with strange objects and inventions that few ventured to touch. People watched with growing fascination as he showcased his talents. His propensity for the strange seemed to be confirmed by his ability to capture a person's exact likeness. A skill he had learnt from a travelling Frenchman who he had befriended during his years abroad.

And yet, even as young Holgrave grew distracted from his mission—his mind was haunted by the sorrows of the two families and years later, he returned to his birthplace.

His brows furrowed as he noted the decrepit state of the House of Seven Gables and the sorrow of its inmates. The old woman, fighting against some invisible force. The old man, freed from imprisonment and yet bound by notoriety. The young girl, who brightened the day with her presence. As he grew closer to the Pyncheon family, he became entranced by young Phoebe. The chest lay forgotten in his chambers as he lost all will to present them with a document that could renew their hatred towards his family.

It was only decades later that he recalled the document. It was met with cool indifference, for Hepzibah had fought and vanquished the ghostly intimidation of her forefather and cared little for the contents of the parchment. And so, they burnt it—reducing a centuries-old feud to a pile of ashes.

Changes:

- Worked on making the story less opaque (by revealing the killer and working on some of the descriptions (particularly with regards to the mysterious figure))
- Established a different narrative voice for the Maule family that sets their perspective apart from the rest of the townspeople's. While I mimicked Hawthorne's narrative voice in some parts (Paragraphs 2 and 4). This seemed appropriate as it finally gave them control over their own story.
- Continued the story and linked it back to the House of Seven Gables in the last few paragraphs.
- Added elements hinting towards the Maule family's magical talents (For example: the "cursed" chest, and the flowers growing back immediately)

Sovereignty

The term “sovereignty,” as outlined by *The Cherokee Memorials* and Elias Boudinot’s *Address to the Whites*, defines a people’s rights to govern their own land as well as their right to improve as a nation.

While the two texts make use of similar definitions of sovereignty, the arguments used by their writers differ greatly as *The Cherokee Memorials* adopt a more urgent tone and aim to directly accuse the government of the United States. The comparison between settlers from Great Britain and the government of the United States provides a striking example of how the Cherokee people challenge the narrative of freedom that the government takes pride. They state that their “right to self-government was affected and destroyed by the Declaration of Independence,” implying that while the declaration represents the spirit of freedom for some, to them it represents their subjugation. This is a more aggressive approach than the one undertaken by Boudinot, who uses phrases such as “is he not formed...” where the use of the words “is he” rather than “am I” create a purposeful distance between Boudinot and the rest of his people.

The Cherokee Memorials describe the Cherokee people as a group who ancestrally “were not subjects, but a distinct nation” that “is not under the jurisdiction of any state,” which extends its definition of sovereignty to the right to self-government free from the influence of other powers. The “rights of soil and domain” are also established by referencing past treaties dating back to when the British first landed in America, which implies that the land is ancestral property that has been respected for decades. The memorials carry forth their defense of the right to own land by quoting the President of the United States’ assurance that “so far as he understood the Cherokee people had rights, protection should be afforded,” this implies that, although the

Cherokee people reserve the right to self-governance, the United States is also capable of helping them without entrapping them within the government's jurisdiction.

Boudinot's speech (*An Address to the Whites*) acknowledges that the Cherokee people have a government that "is well suited to the condition of the inhabitants," but the United States is an external power that can present them with monetary aid. Both texts use words such as "fostering" and "patronage", which describe a relationship wherein one party provides temporary aid (usually financially). This defines the political boundaries controlling the relationship between the United States and the Cherokee people as separate sovereign bodies as it limits the influence of the government of the United States and prevents the government from exerting legal or territorial control over the Cherokee people.

The differences between the definitions of sovereignty in both texts as well as the manner in which the arguments are presented rest mainly in the purpose behind the texts. While Boudinot attempts to gain assistance in terms of monetary aid for his people, *The Cherokee Memorials* denounce the influence of the United States on their land and seek solely to remain on ancestral soil as they are "attached" to this land. Therefore, while Boudinot's writing is based on a much gentler argument in favor of the Cherokee people's sovereignty by seeking to bridge the gap between the two groups, *The Cherokee Memorials* provide a much stronger argument by delineating the lines of sovereignty and where they cannot be encroached upon by the government of the United States.

Changes:

- Removed redundant sentences (primarily sentences that introduced the point—like “The *Cherokee Memorials* describe a firm stance on the question of [...] that is both implied and explicitly stated”) as these distracted from my argument.
- Elaborated on my point on the ideal relationship between the United States and the Cherokee people by further explaining my analysis of the use of the words “fostering” and “patronage.”
- Emphasized on how both texts employ different methods of argument in support of the definition of sovereignty (comparison with the British and the denouncement of the Declaration of Independence as opposed to making the Cherokee people seem as though they were blended into the typical qualities of a citizen of the United States) .
- Added a paragraph about the purpose of both texts and how that affects the representation of sovereignty in the text.

Narrative Dissonance

Sojourner Truth’s *Narrative* contains not one, but two voices that make up the text, which creates a faint dissonance in the way in which it recounts Sojourner Truth’s experiences as an enslaved woman. This dissonance is caused by Gilbert’s interceptions in Truth’s recounted experiences (leading to the formation of two overlapping voices), either to question the truthfulness of Sojourner Truth’s statements or to prompt an emotive response from the audience. The text makes it clear that Gilbert is in a position where she pities Sojourner Truth

despite being unable to relate to her struggle. One of these instances takes place in the first paragraph of the text, where she introduces Sojourner Truth to the reader.

Gilbert begins her recollection of Sojourner Truth's narration by writing that "the subject of this biography, SOJOURNER TRUTH, as she now calls herself—but whose name, originally, was Isabella—was born, as near as she can now calculate, between the years 1797 and 1800." By presenting her as the "subject of this biography," Gilbert presents Sojourner Truth as more of a "subject" to be studied and examined by the reader. This creates an immediate separation between her voice and Sojourner Truth's as it places Gilbert in the position of the writer, and Truth in that of the storyteller.

The capitalization of Sojourner Truth's name also implies Gilbert's reliance on what she believes to be the truth rather than what Sojourner Truth's truth is. The capitalization of her name presents it as though it were a stage name, curated specifically for the public. This aspect of Gilbert's voice is continued as she adds that Sojourner Truth is what "she now calls herself." Gilbert's use of the word "now" furthers this idea of "Sojourner Truth" being a stage name as it implies inconsistency. The use of the word "originally" leaves the reader with an idea of what Gilbert considers to be true and chooses to include in the narrative.

Gilbert's voice is typified by the slightly removed way she writes of Sojourner Truth's experiences as an enslaved woman. At times, choosing to emphasize on what she sees as fact rather than focusing on Sojourner Truth's narrative alone. Her continual use of phrases such as "she was" or "she shudders" separates Sojourner Truth's story from its recollection as Gilbert constantly implies the manner in which the text was written by presenting it as though it were an interview that was being described by the listener and specifically targeted towards a certain audience.

She continually interrupts the narrative to include her reactions to what Sojourner Truth is telling the reader, or to prompt a sympathetic response from the reader. Gilbert does this when Truth describes the conditions under which the enslaved live, when she interjects, writing that “for cruelty it certainly is, to be so unmindful of death...” seeming to prompt an emotive response from the reader. This reappears a few pages later when she interrupts Sojourner Truth’s recollection of her mother’s death by questioning “who among us, located in pleasant homes, surrounded with every comfort, and so many kind and sympathizing friends, can picture to ourselves...”. The use of the words “us” and “ourselves” places herself and the readers in a group that Sojourner Truth is not part of. A group that must respond to the call for the abolition of enslavement.

The separation between audience and storyteller created by Gilbert implies that the purpose of this text is to invoke pathos in the audience (who are presumably in the position to provide assistance in the fight against slavery). This further implies that the audience may hold a trace of uncertainty in the veracity of Truth’s story, which is removed when it is presented to them by a member of their own community (presumably a white, upper- or middle-class woman). Her use of these ‘asides’ is clearly aimed towards stirring up emotion when she writes “O their profane use of the sacred name of Liberty! O their impious appeals to the God of the oppressed, for his divine benediction, while they are making merchandise of his image! Do they not blush? Nay, they glory in their shame!” where the fierce derision in her tone presents this portion of the text as a lamentation aimed towards producing a similar sentiment in the reader. By assuring the reader of the truth and the strong use of pathos, it is evident that Gilbert is well aware of the objective of this narrative.

Changes:

- Paragraph about how the splitting of the two narrative voices can at times reveal the purpose of the text.
- Elaborated on the dissonance between the two voices in the first paragraph.
- Added a deeper analysis on the purposeful creation of pathos (which can be found in the paragraph about the purpose of the two texts).
- Removed words and phrases that suggested uncertainty in my argument (Such as “seems” when I wrote that “Gilbert’s voice *seems* to be typified by...”)

Ensnared in Expectation

Hawthorne’s constant references to Hepzibah’s age as well as the fact that she is unmarried paint her as a character who has failed to fulfill society’s expectations of her as a woman. Hepzibah is introduced as a woman who suffers a “solitary pillow” and struggles to go about her day with “stiffened knees” and a “wretched scowl” (that is later revealed to be a squint). Phoebe’s character helps build this characterization of Hepzibah as a woman who has exhausted her potential (and has been cast aside by society because of this). Hepzibah’s failure to maintain the Pyncheon house, as well as her failed attempts to take care of her brother following his return from prison, makes her seem as though she is a character who lacks the qualities society may expect of her. Where Phoebe is described as a character who is “tiny and lightsome,” Hepzibah’s “gaunt, bony frame” leaves a more unfavorable image of her character in

comparison. Where Hepzibah's attempts to amuse Clifford are described to be "pitiful" as she "troubled her auditor, moreover, by innumerable sins of emphasis," Phoebe's "voice and song, moreover, came sifted through the golden texture of a cheery spirit." The similarity between the two descriptions in Hawthorne's use of the word "moreover" creates an implicit comparison between the two women. The comparison places Phoebe in the role of a woman who has potential (due to her youth) and is able to contribute to society and Clifford's happiness, while Hepzibah is presented as a woman who is no longer useful to those around her.

It could be said that Hepzibah is trapped by her own pride. Her character's awareness of the manner in which society views her is accompanied by a repeated desire to prove herself, perhaps to prove her ability to contribute to society and the Pyncheon legacy. She feels "a reverence" for Colonel Pyncheon and is described to be a lady "who had fed herself from childhood with the shadowy food of aristocratic reminiscences. Suggesting that her character may be driven towards upholding her forefather's legacy. It is implied that the furniture of the house has been sold as Hawthorne writes that "as for the ornamental articles of furniture, we recollect but two," the first being "a map of the Pyncheon territory" and the second being "the portrait of old Colonel Pyncheon." This emphasizes on Hepzibah's admiration of her ancestors as both the articles she resisted selling are deeply entrenched in the Pyncheon legacy. Her refusal to accept help from Holgrave while stating that "a Pyncheon must not, at all events, under her forefathers' roof, receive money for a morsel of bread" thus highlighting the fact that even whilst her family falls to ruin, the sense of pride inspired by her forefathers prevents Hepzibah from accepting help despite being desperately in need of it.

Upon viewing the people looking at her shop, she wonders whether "substituting a fairer apple for one which appeared to be specked" would help her display her wares. The question seems

like a metaphor for her existence as society's unfavorable opinion of her is rested in her character's appearance. When she sees the "elderly gentleman" viewing her store, she wonders if it "please(s) him," which implies her yearning to prove herself useful despite her age. The townspeople harsh treatment of Hepzibah places her in a position where she is intimidated as she is met with "the augury of ill-success" as "they cared nothing for her dignity, and just as little for her degradation" while trying to remain in a position where she may claim superiority over the townsfolk due to her bloodline. The descriptions of her customers as they yanked the door open "spitefully," while "fiercely demanding" goods and held a "cold shyness" exemplified Hepzibah's intimidation as well as her inability to participate in pleasant interactions with her neighbors. This difference prevents her from forming relationships with the townspeople as her experiences vary greatly from theirs. Her constant attempts to fulfill some of society's expectations of her by taking care of Clifford as well as her attempts to save her family from poverty speak of a woman desperate to prove herself to society, and yet entrapped by all the ways in which society seems determined to alienate her.

Changes:

- Expanded on Hepzibah's admiration of the Pyncheon name and the resulting pressure (in the second paragraph)
- Elaborated on Hepzibah's relationship with the townspeople (focusing on her struggle to create and maintain interpersonal relationships).
- Removed the introductory paragraph as it seemed redundant when read with the rest of the essay (it also distracted the reader from my first point).

Duality of Declarations

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's composition of her "Declaration of Sentiments" uses the same structure as the "Declaration of Independence," thereby implicitly connecting the two documents and providing a framework for readers to compare the two texts and understand the cause for which she is fighting. Stanton's similar phrasing in the first lines of the beginning paragraphs of her "Declaration of Sentiments" introduces the changes she wishes to make to the "Declaration of Independence" by calling for the inclusion of women in the political and social spheres of American society.

While the Declaration of Independence uses its structure and phrasing to emphasize the United States of America's intent to break free from British rule, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiment" emphasizes the intent to fight against gender-based discrimination. Stanton effectively uses the same structure but completely changes the list of grievances. She argues that "the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman" and explicitly points out how men have created "a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women," ridiculing the idea of men and women living by different rules. It is interesting to see the difference in tone between the two texts as the "Declaration of Sentiment" demands freedom rather than simply taking it like in the "Declaration of Independence" using words like "insist" which imply that while she can demand rights, she is not positioned to declare them. Meanwhile, the "Declaration of Independence" states that they "have warned them from Time to Time of attempts of their legislature to extend

an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us,” suggesting that, while the right to self-jurisdiction was demanded, they are now simply taking and declaring their rights as a sovereign body.

The two texts are marked clearly by their difference in circumstance. While the writers of the Declaration of Independence wrote the document following a great war (which allowed them to “claim” it), Stanton’s Declaration of Sentiments was written when an existing power structure had been constructed and observes. This would explain the difference in tone between the two documents as Stanton does not seek to erase the existing power structure, rather, she asks for consideration and for the existing structure to be altered to include women (much like she has altered the Declaration of Independence while maintaining the same spirit).

Stanton makes it clear that “when, in the course of human events it becomes necessary for *one portion* of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied,” when she changes the ending to the beginning sentence of the Declaration of Independence, which states that “ when in the course of human events , it becomes necessary for *one People* to dissolve the political bands which have connected them together.” Her change of wording introduces the idea that it was not “one people” that were granted complete freedom in the Declaration of Independence, rather it was “one portion” of the people of whom the founding fathers spoke that were granted rights. She uses the same method to introduce her document as a text advocating for women’s rights by changing the first line of the second paragraph to say, “we hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men *and women* are created equal,” as opposed to the original document that states that “ we hold these truths to be

self-evident that all men are created equal,” thereby stating her intent to fight for the rights that women were denied in the original Declaration of Independence. Stanton’s mimicry of the structure and phrasing of the “Declaration of Independence” continues as she lists the ways in which women have been deprived of their rights in society, like how the “Declaration of Independence” describes how the American people were oppressed under British rule.

By using the original framework of the Declaration of Independence, but changing its tone and wording, Stanton effectively creates a document behind which women can rally and eloquently puts forth her argument as to the way women have been denied their rights. While the Declaration of independence can be seen as the men declaring independence, Stanton’s declaration expertly adds the voices of women to the conversation by using the structure of the Declaration of Independence to create (or imply) discourse between the two groups. Her rewording of the Declaration of Independence makes it seem as though she were interrupting the original document by pointing out its clear discrepancies.

Changes:

- Linked each quote to the corresponding comparison in the opposite text.
- Shifted the 3rd Paragraph towards the beginning of the essay, to help emphasize on the difference in tone between the two documents.
- Expanded on the difference in purpose between the two documents (a separate paragraph on context was added in between the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs).

- Emphasized on which aspects of the quotes were similar (For example: emphasizing on “hold these truths to be self-evident” as a point linking the two quotes.

Monotone

I am a relatively young man. As such, my meticulous catalogue of the names and faces I encounter remains short and serves to neither impress nor surprise many. There are few who have walked through these doors that appear worthy of mention or note, however, my interactions with the deceased appear to have left a lasting impression. Bartleby, or the scrivener as many of you may know him, was placed under my guidance as a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington. Ere long, both of us were discharged on account of a change of management. I received employment forthwith in the offices of Mr.-, where I worked as a copyist. Of the period succeeding my correspondence with Bartleby, I can say little (Save for the fact that he died tragically). To fully understand the circumstances of Bartleby’s death, I find it necessary to provide you with a recollection of the events preceding the termination of his employment in Washington.

The original office had been shifted some time prior to a quiet street corner. The room offered, at least, four small windows on the left-hand side wall, which would let in thin shafts of light. Each employee was provided with a small desk upon which to write and conduct their study. I resolved to assign Bartleby a desk to the far-right corner of the room amongst the teetering piles of letters and packages. Boxes lined the walls in unruly stacks, often shrouding the gloomy gray

light streaming in. Employees were tasked with sorting letters into piles based on which could be identified. The rest of the letters would go to the fires.

I still recall the lines of pale faces. Working in scant lighting throughout the day and oftentimes far into the night. It was a common sight to see the quiver of hands as workers set their pens down for the night, leaving the office in mute exhaustion. The piles of letters seemed never-ending, as each day brought with it a fresh stack of papers to be guided towards their destination. Bartleby's introduction to the office revitalized his coworkers as they observed his strong, assured presence, while he sorted through the mountainous piles with a quiet, unassailable determination.

Bartleby's desk did little to keep him from interacting with the rest of the *employés*. A community of young men and women was formed in the office, bound together by a collective desire to reach the bottom of the growing piles of letters scattered about the office. As Bartleby worked with feverish determination, so too did he join the ever-growing group of people to walk down the street at noon. The young man was credited with being an indispensable presence in the office.

Bartleby possessed the singular ability to sort through extraordinary piles of letters. Often staying late into the nights, squinting at pages in dim lighting to discern their messages. He was meticulous and seldom squandered his time. During the first year of his travails, I witnessed as the man shifted from being an industrious and fastidious worker to one who appeared lifeless.

It was on one such Monday that the clerks resolved to eat lunch together and invited young Bartleby to join them in their speculation of the day's letters. You can imagine their confusion, nay, their surprise, when the man who had been prone to neither circumlocution nor solitude replied in a curiously decisive tone that he would "prefer not to." Soon, Bartleby began to live in resolute isolation, seldom venturing out of the office and appearing as though he were an apparition that would disappear at a mere breath of air.

Mere months after, Bartleby had dissolved into a shadow of his former self. He had, as you may have noted, a distinctly dull light in his eyes and a frame that bordered on skeletal. During my time working with him I often contemplated the root cause of his illness. His character harkened back to that of the letters, wandering with no certainty of his destination, and suffering an endless monotony as time faded into itself.

Changes:

- Added a description of Bartleby working along with his relationship with his coworkers (to emphasize on the narrator's shock in the following paragraph.
- Added a description of the desolation of the office.

The Great Tomb of Man

William Bryant establishes humanity's connection with nature as well as each other through his representation of Earth as "the great tomb of man" in his poem *Thanatopsis*. Bryant describes a deep, almost familial, connection between the reader and the world around them when he writes

that we will “be a brother to the insensible rock.” He uses this phrasing to imply equality in death as well as the fact that all inanimate (or “insensible”) things may once have been human too, which implies an existing connection between the living and the nature.

Bryant’s use of the phrase “to be” is particularly interesting, as it implies a continued state of being rather than the new state of being which would have been implied had he used the phrase “to become.” The use of “to be” implies that everyone has, and always will “be a brother to the insensible rock” and that death prompts the recognition of this relationship between all things on earth. Bryant’s description of the earth and nature as a maternal figure and a godlike presence all at once substantiates the idea of a continued relationship between all things on earth as they are placed under nature’s protection.

He implies that this connection is brought about by death and its ability to return everyone to nature. This connection is introduced by Bryant’s description of the Earth as an entity that “nourishe(s),” which creates a nurturing image of the planet and the implication that all of its inhabitants are Earth’s children. The idea is carried past death when Bryant describes “the tribes/ That slumber in its bosom,” which evokes the nurturing image of a mother holding a sleeping child. The constant presence of the earth is brought about by Bryant’s description of the “all-beholden sun [that] shall see no more,” implying that although one may escape the watchful gaze of the sun (which is often seen as the highest power), one’s relationship with nature and the earth is inescapable (therefore implying that nature is more powerful than the sun).

The usage of the word “brother” implies equality when paired with Bryant’s presentation of death. He presents the return of humanity to the elements as a form of unity when he writes that “Thou shalt lie down / With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,/ The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,/ Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past” stating that no matter the

level of greatness achieved, all of humanity will find themselves in the same resting place. While humanity chases ideas such as greatness in life, the acknowledgement of the inherent equality that has always been present eludes us until we are forced to acknowledge it in death. This is evident in the line where Bryant claims that humans “go/to mix for ever with the elements,” which implies that one’s connection with nature and the universe remains after death as each person becomes one with the elements, as though they are rejoining their family.

Changes:

- Expanded on the point the difference between “to be” and “to become,” and moved this point to the beginning of the essay.
- Removed references to external sources as they distract from the analysis of the poem.
- Expanded on my analysis of Bryant’s use of the word “brother”
- Added a paragraph on the representation of the earth as a higher power.
- Restructured the essay by moving the second paragraph to the ending.

Free Soil

The last paragraph of Harriet Jacobs’ narration of her experiences traveling towards the north in Chapter 30 of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* describes her relief as she approaches the shore and spots freedom within reach, however the marked influence of hindsight often sneaks into her description of her emotions at that moment.

Her descriptions of the ship (specifically in relation to her descriptions of her movements around the ship) bears a striking resemblance to both the Mayflower and the middle passage. While Jacobs recollection of the first glimpse of a land that promises freedom is reminiscent of the religious and social freedom that called to European settlers. Her ability to be “on deck” as well as the fact that the crew transporting her to freedom is led by a white man serves as a reversal of the middle passage, where so many were transported towards the horrors of enslavement (while she was being offered a way to escape).

Jacobs’ vivid use of imagery in describes what it was like to “see the sun rise, for the first time in [their] lives, on free soil.” The descriptions provoke a deep sense of triumph as nature begins to create beauty and aids in portraying the two women’s hope. Jacobs describes the “great orb com[ing] up slowly out of the water” as the “waves began to sparkle. And every thing caught the beautiful glow.” The image of a new dawn reflects the new beginnings and opportunities that this new land offers to her and Fanny. The description of a new sunrise also implies that Jacobs is now free to do as she pleases as her movements are no longer confined. However, the use of the word “reddening” also leaves behind an image of bloodshed and violence as the color red is typically used to signify emotions such as rage. Her use of phrases such as “as it seems” also suggests that the description is not quite as beautiful as Jacobs makes it seem (perhaps since she has been disillusioned by the north and its promises of freedom).

Prior to this paragraph, Jacobs’ narration states that her trust in the captain is reluctantly given, as she observes that because they (she and Fanny) “were so completely in their power [...] if they were bad men, [their] situation would be dreadful.” Just as her experiences set her apart from the sailors on board the ship, so too do they influence her relationship with Fanny, and it quickly becomes clear that each of them is made lonely by this difference in experience as they will

never be able to fully comprehend the struggles of the other. When Jacobs recollects telling Fanny that they “have the same sorrows,” she recalls Fanny’s reply that “[she is] going to see [her] children soon, and there is no hope that [Fanny] shall ever hear from [hers],” thus emphasizing their different experiences and their relationship with hope in the context of their escape. Where Jacobs is free to enjoy absolute hope, Fanny will always be haunted by her children’s fate which prevents her from experiencing all of her hopes for freedom.

Her reluctance to hope and constant apprehension is carried into the last paragraph along with the suggestion that she might be justified in her disbelief. She writes that she “*then* believed [northern soil]” was “free soil,” thereby suggesting that although she had reached a land that promised freedom, she had not yet attained absolute freedom. Jacobs further explains that “[they] supposed [themselves] to be safe from the hunters,” which implies that the mental and physical ties from their enslavement continues to scar their experiences in a land that is supposed to be free. Later in the text, Jacobs explores the legal mechanisms that prevent her from working and gaining independence as she cannot begin work without a reference from a previous employer (which she is unable to obtain as her enslavers would not give her this reference) which emphasizes on the reasons behind Jacobs’ distaste for the north.

Changes:

- Expanded on the dark side of Jacobs’ description.
- Elaborated on the difference between Jacobs’ experiences and Fanny’s.

- Emphasized on the loneliness created by the differences in experience between the two women and between Jacobs and the crew of the ship.

Review 1

Hi Brayden! I enjoyed reading your analysis of the daguerreotype of Southworth and the ways in which daguerreotypes such as this one could have inspired Hawthorne. I liked that you linked your analysis to the text by quoting the text in the first paragraph. The analysis of the daguerreotype was also quite detailed which helped communicate your perspective of how the daguerreotype may have been affected by time (I especially liked your description of the role of light and shadow in the creation of depth). I would love to know a little more about what is seen and unseen in Hawthorne's novel, as I feel like you began discussing that in the first paragraph but then focused mainly on the description of the daguerreotype and how that may have interested Hawthorne in the second and third paragraphs. One more thing I would like to suggest is that you avoid phrases like "I personally" as the word "I" already implies that the idea is personal. I would also probably say the same for phrases such as "this is purely speculation" (in the 3rd paragraph) as I think it may distract the reader from your analysis (this might just be personal preference though). Lastly, I was wondering which daguerreotype of Southworth you were referring to as there seemed to be several on the site. Overall, I think you did a great job, and I would love to read more of your work.

Review 2

Hi Alicia, I enjoyed reading your piece on a group of camp counselors participating in a three-legged race that ends somewhat ominously. I liked the clarity with which the narrative voice was created as well as the background that was provided about the main character's relationship with Zoe and Laini. Your choice of a campsite as the setting was also fun to read since it made the story seem more realistic. Moving forward, if you decided to expand this piece or use it as one of your edited pieces I would definitely consider adding more to the suspense in the story (maybe a few hints about what is to come—maybe something strange could be noted about one of the counselors' behavior?). Some descriptions of the setting may also help create suspense in the scene is it quiet other than the screams? Are there trees? Is it dark? These might help build the element of horror in the story. Overall, you did a good job for this week's writing (especially in establishing the connections between the characters) and I look forward to reading more of your work!

Review 3

Hi Brayden! I loved reading your work for this week's writing. The story of two employees with very similar names and opposing characteristics which ends with one of them essentially breaking character was quite fun to read. I especially liked the humor thrown into the workplace environment (Phil and Phill, the "stupid hat"). I think what really carried this piece was the irritability of its main character. It emphasized how much more amiable (or perhaps in this case helpful might be a better word) Phill is in comparison which helped surprise both the reader and Phil when he eventually refuses Phil's request. I think if you wanted to expand this piece, you could consider describing a few more interactions between the two characters as the space between the two sections of the text seems a little empty (especially because the days of both interactions are given). Although I think that beginning them both with the clicking of the keys

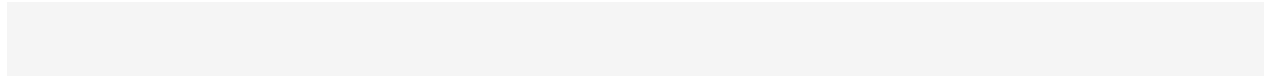
on the computer/laptop was a good idea as it sort of conveyed the consistency of life at the office, the sections seemed a little disjointed from each other (maybe you could consider having Phil walk in to link it to the end of the first section where he walks away?). Overall, I think you did a great job and would love to read more of your work.

Review 4

Hi Jess, I liked reading your essay on Chapter 30 of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. I think your analysis of Linda's relationship with Fanny as well as her relationship with the captain of the ship (specifically the lack of connection caused in the vast disparity in their experiences) was well phrased when you wrote that "Linda is escaping with the hope of saving her children and reuniting her family, but Fanny's painful story highlights the fact that, for many slaves, escape means losing the possibility of seeing one's family again," and that "Moments like this demonstrate that even with 'respectful and friendly' white people, open and equal relationships are impossible under the social conditions of slavery." I think you could consider dedicating a larger portion of the essay to Linda's experience traveling towards freedom (by shortening the first paragraph and splitting the second into multiple paragraphs—like her relationship with Fanny, and her interactions with the rest of the crew), as the first paragraph focusses quite a bit on the events leading up to this moment (which steals a bit of the focus of the essay). I was also curious to know what you thought about how Linda's freedom (or her hopes for freedom) manifest in this section of the text. Overall, I think you did a great job in analyzing this part of the novel, and I look forward to reading more of your work!

Review 5

Hi Grace, I enjoyed reading your writing for this week. The story of one friend trying to usher the other (drunk) friend back home was hilarious (and quite relatable). I think the humor of the scene really came through in your writing. Especially in the end (I read stain and thought she had been hurt or something and then it cut to the next line, which provided comic relief). However, you could consider adding more suspense to the scene (perhaps through the descriptions) while the narrator is chasing her friend near the mouth of the woods. I would also suggest that you avoid using phrases like “far too overconfidently,” as the triple superlative can sometimes feel redundant. Another point that needed clarification was the mention of the Millers at the beginning of the scene as it was a little confusing as to what their part in the story was (are they the hosts of the party, or the narrator’s friend’s parents? Or both). Overall, you did a good job and I look forward to reading more of your work!



Reflection on Poetry Recitation

Because I could not stop for Death—

He kindly stopped for me—

The Carriage held but just Ourselves—

And Immortality.

We slowly drove—He knew no haste

And I had put away

My labor and my leisure too,

For His Civility—

We passed the School, where Children strove

At Recess—in the Ring—

We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain—

We passed the Setting Sun—

Or rather—He passed us—

The Dews drew quivering and chill—

For only Gossamer, my Gown—

My Tippet—only Tulle—

We paused before a House that seemed

A Swelling of the Ground—

The Roof was scarcely visible—

The Cornice—in the Ground—

Since then—'tis Centuries—and yet

Feels shorter than the Day

I first surmised the Horses' Heads

Were toward Eternity—

I was immediately struck by the representation of death in this poem when I first read it in my English 200 class during my second semester of Freshman year. The quiet, unassuming, and strangely welcoming figure reminded me of the narrator of the Book Thief.

My process of memorizing the poem began with reading it multiple times to note the rhythm in the poem. The more times I read it, I found myself experimenting with Dickinson's use of em dashes to guide any pauses I might take for breath during my recitation of the poem. This helped guide me with regards to how my understanding of how the poem flows.

The next stage in the process began with the practice of one stanza per day, as this allowed me to establish any portions of the recitation where I tended to get stuck (usually in the fifth stanza, where I often became confused between "of the ground" and "in the ground"). Coaxing my friends and family into listening to practice recitations proved helpful as they were able to provide feedback as they noticed me stumbling over certain words. One moment that struck me was when I recited the poem to a friend, and she turned around with a small frown and asked me whether it was meant to be recited at that speed (which prompted me to begin experimenting with the speed of recitation). My family also helped me experiment with the rhythm of the poem by suggesting places to pause for breath, where I would be able to emphasize on striking moments in the poem by leaving brief silences. I found that pausing for breath in between the third and fourth stanzas allowed me to collect my thoughts and make it seem as though the speaker was pondering before saying "Or rather..."

During my multiple readings of the poem, I began to note how the poem resembled a scene from a story with no concrete ending. The introduction of pauses made it seem as though the speaker is calm by implying that the person in the poem was given time to think and speak. The em dash

at the end of the poem was particularly striking, as that made it seem as though there was more to come (and yet, the lines preceding this seemed like they were drawing the journey to a close).

This resulted in the idea of the poem trailing off with no set ending in sight.

I also noted how the poem sounded quite gentle due to Dickinson's repeated use of softer sounding letters (such as 's' in "We passed the Setting Sun"), as this gave the poem a hushed quality that I tried to emulate during my recitation. The representation of movement is also one that is important to consider as the poem appears to be slowing down in the second half as phrases such as "We paused [...]" and "Or rather—He passed us—" encourage the person reciting to pause (in one case to imply thought, and in the other to imply to act of physically stopping).

Overall, I found the process highly enlightening as my understanding of the text grew with each reading. This assignment helped me understand some of my strengths and weaknesses as a reader, as the repetition showed me where my initial analyses had overlooked parts of the poem. My understanding of the poem and the ways in which emphasizing on different lines could help highlight parts where Dickinson's writing became particularly striking.

