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Аннотация: Статья посвящена анализу личных взаимоотношений между писателем-трансценденталистом Генри Дэвидом Торо и писателем-романтиком Натаниэлем Готорном, которые одно время были соседями в Конкорде. Утверждается, что, хотя эстетические позиции обоих писателей существенно различались, сами эти различия оказались важными и продуктивными для творчества каждого из них. Готорн уважал ученость Торо, его познания в природе и истории, а также глубинную целостность его творчества, но одновременно с этим находил ортодоксальность его манеры письма скучной и расходился с ним в политических взглядах. Тем не менее он продолжал размышлять о Торо по мере того, как сам продвигался на литературном поприще, и даже собирался написать эссе о его жизни, в приложении к своему последнему незавершенному роману «Семптимус Фелтон». Со своей стороны Торо оставил в дневнике ряд записей, которые проливают свет на то, как он понимал природу собственного труда, художественной деятельности и жизни. В этих записях он неявно обращается к творчеству Готорна («Черная вуаль священника») и его жизни (консульство в Ливерпуле в 1850-е гг.), причем эти отсылки становятся центральными для его собственных литературных и трансценденталистских практик. Чтобы проиллюстрировать данный тезис и его нюансы, мы обратимся к письмам Готорна и фрагментам его опубликованных произведений, а также к дневнику Торо.

Ключевые слова: авторство, коммерциализм, Конкорд, Н. Готорн, трансцендентализм, Г.Д. Торо, ценность.

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“WHITE SLEEP”: HAWTHORNE’S THOREAU, THOREAU’S HAWTHORNE

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Abstract: This essay discusses the relationship between the Transcendentalist author and naturalist, Henry David Thoreau, and his sometime Concord neighbor and author of tales and romances, Nathaniel Hawthorne. It argues that while Thoreau and Hawthorne differed on many points, they found these differences useful and productive defining their own work. For his part, Hawthorne respected Thoreau’s scholarship, knowledge of nature and history, and deep integrity but found his intransigent manner boorish and disagreed with his politics. However, as his career went on he continued to dwell on Thoreau and thought to append a sketch of his life to his last, uncompleted romance, Septimius Felton. For his part, Thoreau recorded in his Journal a series of entries that are central to his understanding of the nature of his own labor, artistic activity, and life. In these passages he subtly addresses Hawthorne’s work (“The Minister’s Black Veil”) and career (Hawthorne’s consulship to Liverpool in the 1850s) in ways that become utterly central to his own natural, literary and Transcendentalist praxis. To demonstrate this thesis and its subtleties, the essay makes use of letters and passages from Hawthorne’s published writings and Thoreau’s Journal.

Keywords: Authorship, Commercialism, Concord, Hawthorne, Transcendentalism, Thoreau, Value.

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I

No one knows “what argument,” Ralph Waldo Emerson asserts in the poem “Each and All,” “thy life to thy neighbor’s creed has lent” [2]. This sense of the individual unbeknownst to him or herself caught up in a matrix of nature, social observation and judgment characterizes both an image of village life and a typically Transcendentalist principle through which beliefs and tenets are extracted/abstracted from personal experience, freighting all actions or appearances with the weight of potentially informing someone else’s creed, and the shaping of one’s world. “Transcendentalism was ... important as an incentive for literature and the arts,” as Lawrence Buell has explained, “for social reform, for a new conception and valuation of the human self” [1, p. xxi]. Typically, the thrust of Buell’s observation is expressed in abstract terms, a transformation of literature as a whole, a movement, a school; a transformation of the liberal, universal human self, not particular selves or particular humans. However, we might also view the transformations of the literary, social, and the human that emerge in the everyday, in the interactions and processes through which our lives lend arguments to our neighbor’s belief systems.

One of the abiding attractions of the biographical and literary history of the social and artistic hothouse that was Concord, Massachusetts in the 1840s is the way its idealism, its determination to reconceive and reevaluate humanity, put tremendous pressure on virtually any and all social interactions, and this can be seen in the interactions of its major figures. Perry Miller felt that the Transcendentalists were “overheated” on the subject of friendship, in the sense that the intensity and length at which Emerson and Henry David Thoreau in

particular, waxed on about it, seemed to indicate a psychosexual repression of a Victorian kind. "Let such pure hate," Thoreau wrote in a poem that takes its title from this line, "still underprop/Our love, that we may be/Each other's conscience" [11]. Transcendentalist friendships, indeed, Transcendentalist acquaintanceships, were frequently fraught, critical, and friable. "Even as they pressed the gospel of the infinitude of the individual person," Buell observes, "Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists recognized the need to distinguish between a person's workaday self and the part of one's identity that justified the claim: between self with a small s and what Emerson called the 'aboriginal Self' with a capital S" [1, p. xxiv]. But whatever distinctions might be made and preserved in literary composition, the behavior of the workaday self, must on some level bolster or impugn the aboriginal Self. The investment in the potential of transcendent selfhood must be lived out in terms of the non-transcendent; and this goes some way to explaining the shifts of enthusiasm and condemnation that frequently mark the writings and friendships of Transcendentalisms principle players.

This essay explores one axis of this question of social connection, between Transcendentalism's chief acolyte Henry David Thoreau and perhaps its shrewdest, contemporary "outside" observer, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Thoreau and Hawthorne were not friends but they knew each other well and were aware of each other with a wariness that goes beyond mere cognizance. During a span of twenty years, from the summer of 1842 when the newlywed Hawthorne and his wife Sophia moved into the Old Manse (1842–1845) and received Thoreau's nuptial gift of an heirloom garden, through the Hawthorne's return to Concord and purchase of the Wayside residence (1852) and various European sojourns (England, Italy), up to Thoreau's death in 1862 and Hawthorne's demise two years hence, these two literary figures took the measure of one another. In a kind of mysterious mutual regard, they not only evaluated each other's literary and cultural positions, but in surprising ways attempted to inhabit each other's literary topoi. As it happens, Hawthorne is well known for his criticisms of Transcendentalism in "The Celestial Railroad" and the Brook Farm commune in *The Blithedale Romance*. It is perhaps more surprising to find the ways in which Thoreau took up Hawthornian themes, but I will argue that they each attempted to perform a kind of cultural work upon the other; they both sought to use the other's projects as a test of their own cultural operations; most saliently, for Thoreau transforming the quintessential black veil of Hawthorne's minister into the "white sleep" of midmorning; and for

Hawthorne, appending the life of Thoreau on to his late, never-to-be-completed “Elixir of Life” romances. For both authors, these ventures into each others territory became questions of authorship, politics, and the value of human activity in abstract and concrete terms. That these projects were of necessity fragmentary or abortive has made them less visible to literary history, and therefore, of interest to those who seek a fuller picture of these interactions.

Transcendentalism and Romanticism (certainly of the Hawthornian variety) are commonly thought of as movements that were on the wane by the 1860s. The shift of Emerson from “his celebration of the freestanding individual,” in Buell’s words, to a platform of cooperation in the antislavery and abolitionist movements; the shift of Margaret Fuller from editor of *The Dial* and communitarian at Brook Farm to journalist for the *New York Tribune*; and the shift in Thoreau’s writing from the spiritually-centered template of Emerson’s *Nature* to an increasingly empirical and systematic observation of natural phenomena; all of these reflected a trend toward the practical, realizable, and collective over and against the ideal and individual [1, p. xxvii]. Romanticism is also typically understood to have its aesthetic and cultural influence decline with the rise of realism and the coming of the U.S. Civil War. Literary and cultural histories of the era frequently point to the social idealism of the 1840s giving way to the practical and bloody trials of 1860s; the pitched, emotional, and essential subjectivities of the romantic era giving way to the regionalist studies and third-person quotidian of the realist era. But in the quasi-private history of the interrelations of Thoreau and Hawthorne, competing social and aesthetic visions were always in a state of contestation and challenge.

II

To begin with: a few snapshots of Thoreau from Hawthorne’s correspondence. The first is from Hawthorne to Evert A. Duykinck from July 1, 1845, three days prior to Thoreau’s moving into his house at Walden Pond, about the possibility of Thoreau contributing to a series of American Books.

As for Thoreau, there is one chance in a thousand that he might write an excellent and readable book; but I should be sorry to take the responsibility, either towards you or him, of stirring him up to write anything for the series. He is the most

unmalleable fellow alive – the most tedious, tiresome, and intolerable – the narrowest and most notional – and yet, true as all this is, he has great qualities of intellect and character. The only way, however, in which he could ever approach the popular mind, would be by writing a book of simple observation of nature... [4, p. 116].

The second dates from November 1854 from Hawthorne to Richard Monckton Milnes, a London literary figure and host, who had been impressed by Thoreau's Walden.

I have known Thoreau a good many years; but it would be quite impossible to comprise him within this little sheet of notepaper. He is an excellent scholar, and a man of most various capacity; insomuch that he could make his part good in any way of life, from the most barbarous to the most civilized. But there is more of the Indian in him, I think, than of any other kind of man. He despises the world, and all that it has to offer, and like other humorists, is an intolerable bore.... I ought not to forbear saying that he is an upright, conscientious, and courageous man, of whom it is impossible to conceive anything but the highest integrity. Still he is not an agreeable person; and in his presence one feels ashamed of having any money, or a house to live in, or so much as two coats to wear, or having written a book that the public will read – his own mode of life being so unsparing a criticism on all other modes, such as the world approves. I wish anything could be done to make his books known to the English public; for certainly they deserve it, being the work of a true man and full of true thought [4, p. 186–187].

The third letter is from October 1863 – after Thoreau's death – from Hawthorne to James T. Fields regarding his plans for the never completed "Elixir of Life" romances ("Septimius Felton" and "The Dolliver Romance") set at the Wayside, Hawthorne's second Concord home.

I want to prefix a little sketch of Thoreau to it, because, from a tradition which he told me about this house of mine, I got the idea of a deathless man, which is now taking a shape very different from the original one. It seems the duty of a live literary man to perpetuate the memory of a dead one, when there is such a fair opportunity as in this case; – but how Thoreau would scorn me for thinking that I could perpetuate him. And I don't think so [4, p. 196].

As is evident from the mixture of annoyance, admiration, and candid assessment in these excerpts, Hawthorne was not Thoreau's intimate friend; he was his neighbor. Or, as he remarked to Monckton Milnes, "You must not think that he is particular friend of mine. I do not speak with quite this freedom of my friends. We have never been intimate; though my home is near his residence" [4, p. 188]. Hawthorne viewed Thoreau as both courteous and uncouth, admirable and rustic, incorruptible and unmalleable (he told Longfellow of his "iron-pokerishness"); his Transcendentalism most tolerable in its practicality, his writing most readable in its simple observations of nature [4, p. 129]. Hawthorne wished to maintain the sense of his own home as distinct from his townsman's residence, as if he could not quite imagine Thoreau on an equal footing claiming a home near his home. And yet at the end of his life and career, Hawthorne attempted to forge a romance out of the lore that Thoreau had given him, imagining Thoreau as the subject of his preface into the portal of that romance, and despairing at the prospect, and the appropriateness of taking on the role of perpetuating Thoreau's memory.

In *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*, Michael T. Gilmore observed that, "Toward the end of his life, as his productivity waned and his antipathy toward the public intensified, Hawthorne found himself strongly drawn to the figure of Henry D. Thoreau" [3, p. 146]. For Gilmore, "Thoreau represented a different course for the American writer, one that must have seemed prescient to the Hawthorne of the 1860s. The author of *Walden* put little trust in either democracy or the marketplace" [3, p. 146–147]. Gilmore suggests that it is ultimately the literary marketplace and Hawthorne's friction with it that makes Thoreau attractive to him. The irony of this turn (which was not lost on Gilmore) is made plain by the letters quoted above. The very qualities that Hawthorne frequently railed against in Thoreau and explicitly condemned in his 1845 letter to Duykinck — his utter resistance to and lack of concern for being marketable — would have, in the end, become attractive to him. Also, we might extrapolate from Gilmore's insight toward a broader constellation of shared concerns between Hawthorne and Thoreau. Michael Pringle has argued that Hawthorne's "deepest explorations of the boundaries of society and the powers of individualism," found in his portrayal of Hester Prynne's resistance to Puritan authorities should be read in dialogue with Thoreau's celebrated 1849 essay, "Resistance to Civil Government" (or "Civil Disobedience") [7, p. 34]. For Pringle, the kind of defiance we find in Hester is related to the kind of defiance we find in Thoreau.

Other scholars have found parallels between Hawthorne's interest in social experimentation at Brook Farm and Thoreau's sojourn at Walden Pond [7, p. 17]. Parallels have long been drawn between the two author's personalities. Thoreau "was as shy and ungregarious as Hawthorne," Henry James opined in his early biography [6, p. 97]. Indeed, recent Hawthorne biographers Brenda Wineapple, following James Mellow — have argued that Thoreau appealed to Hawthorne as an accomplice for his social discomfiture with Concord society [14, p. 164]. Whatever attraction there was between these two men, it came from a shared sense of alienation from their community, though alienated in very different ways.

But we might also suggest — and this what I propose in this essay — that the connections between Hawthorne and Thoreau extend beyond a shared antipathy for the literary market and Concordian social life and what tied them together was not always a commonalty. Indeed, as evidenced by Hawthorne's comments in his letters, a degree of rivalry and tension pervades his relationship with Thoreau and he was bound to him as much by what divided them. After all, while both authors were skeptical of the market, Hawthorne's skepticism was not nearly as a priori as Thoreau's (hence Hawthorne's remark to Monckton Milnes about feeling ashamed at "having written a book that the public will read"). And while Hawthorne and Thoreau both craved solitude and prized separation from their townspeople, they did so in very different ways and for very different motives. Hawthorne cherished private spaces for composition or domestic quietude; Thoreau sought solitude for extradomestic purposes. Hawthorne the gentleman family man, inhabiting many houses, the man who saw himself in conventional terms and was relatively accepting of societies conventions, especially with respect to slavery, stands in opposition to Thoreau who would have a none of these things and made Hawthorne feel ashamed (defiantly so) for having been so conventional. Indeed, rivalry over these positions may have played as crucial a role in their relationship and while Thoreau did not leave a trail of candid correspondence about Hawthorne, his journals provide some clues to the ways in which he engaged in this relationship as he entered into Hawthorne's fictional terrain. Hawthorne's fictional imagination was the most relentlessly domiciled of all the American romantics, transforming nearly all of his residences into spaces of romance and as he struggled to perform the romantic operations upon his final home, the Wayside, as he had done with the "Old Manse," "The House of Seven Gables," and Brook Farm, Thoreau would now serve as a conduit, a custom house,

as it were, through which the Wayside might be imaginatively reterritorialized. Hawthorne's desire to produce a sketch of Thoreau and his failure to produce it may in the end be symptomatic of this relationship.

The divide in Thoreau and Hawthorne's relationship turned on questions of civility and civilization. Thoreau's disagreeableness, his incivility, is abundantly on display in Hawthorne's letters and journals, although just what it is that bothers him is never directly articulated. This was even expressed, although obliquely, in one of Thoreau's earliest exchanges with the Hawthornes. In 1842, they loaned to Thoreau a music box, and Sophia Hawthorne, writing to her mother, indicated that she and Nathaniel had "lent him 'our domestic harmony' [her term for the music box] to comfort him" [13, p. 174]. Even in a jocular mode, Thoreau was immediately perceived as a disruptor of social harmony within the Hawthorne household. As for civilization, Hawthorne generally expressed this through his sense of Thoreau's "Indianness." Even in an October 1842 letter (the first and last time Hawthorne referred to Thoreau as a gentleman), when had known him a comparatively short while, Hawthorne describes Thoreau as "a wild, irregular, Indian-like sort of fellow, who can find no occupation in life that suits him" [4, p. 108]. As Hawthorne makes plain in his letter to Monckton Milnes, this has as much to do with Thoreau's orientation toward civilization as it does his lifestyle and his uncanny ability to find arrowheads or paddle a canoe. "But there is more of the Indian in him, I think, than of any other kind of man. He despises the world, and all that it has to offer." This division as well was marked by Thoreau's early transactions with the Hawthorne. In 1842, Thoreau sold to Hawthorne for \$7.00 the *Musketaquid*, the boat that he and his brother John had used to navigate the Concord and Merrimack rivers. *Musketaquid* is the native word for the Concord River — meaning meadow flowing river. Hawthorne upon purchasing the boat rechristened it *Pond Lily*, signaling his intent to use the boat to harvest water lilies for Sophia. But it also signals a replacement of the Thoreauvian id with the Hawthornian superego, a desire to reclaim Thoreau's "Indianness" for civilization. No tribal vessel would carry Hawthorne. "It would be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization," Thoreau wrote in *Walden* and this more than anything else was an affront to Hawthorne.

III

While it becomes increasingly evident that Thoreau influenced Hawthorne by a mixture of sympathetic and frictional forces, we might ask where do we locate Hawthorne's influence on Thoreau? Some have pointed to the reference in the "Sounds" chapter of *Walden* which makes reference to a "celestial train" of steam that offers a skyward parallel to the iron horse running along the tracks, comparing it to Hawthorne's satirical allegory "The Celestial Railroad."

For me, the essential text is a lengthy, intricate and rather important journal entry of Thoreau's from July 21, 1851. (Some of the central ideas in it find their way into his posthumous essay, "Walking.") Indeed, the entry begins with an extended meditation on walking, especially on the kind of unencumbered walking Thoreau wants and needs to be doing.

I must be fancy-free; I must feel that, wet or dry, high or low, it is the genuine surface of the planet and not a little chip-dirt or a compost-heap, or made land or redeemed. Where I can sit by the wallside and not be peered at by any old ladies going a-shopping, not have to bow to one whom I may have seen in my youth, — at least, not more than once... I thought to walk this forenoon instead of this afternoon, for I have not been in the fields and woods much of late except when surveying, but the least affair of that kind is as if your had [a] black veil drawn over your face which shut out nature, as that eccentric and melancholy minister whom I have heard of. It may be the fairest day in all the year and you shall not know it [10, p. 226].

As the note to the Bradford Torrey edition of the *Journals* points out, Thoreau has in mind the same anecdote of Joseph "Handkerchief" Moody of York, Maine, that inspired Hawthorne's Reverend Hooper in "The Minister's Black Veil." F.O. Matthiessen asserts that Thoreau's journals never mention Hawthorne's work, this seems to be one instance in which Thoreau veers directly into Hawthornian territory [8, p. 196–197]. Thoreau was undoubtedly aware of Hawthorne's tale, and while he is certainly capable of direct quotation — he quotes Mirabeau later in the same entry — it is typical of him to approach Hawthorne's terrain indirectly, using the shared source of New England lore toward different ends. For Thoreau we are immediately in the realm of rivalry, not in the realm of indebtedness. His first operation is to metaphorize the veil as his surveying instrument. It becomes the black veil, occluding and restricting his vision. To look

through the surveyor's glass, to look through the lens of surveying, is to destroy the kind of observation Thoreau wants to do in nature — in this sense to perform ordinary labor for profit is to draw a veil around his self. It becomes a defense of his own so-called leisure activities and his experience of the natural world. We don't even have an adequate word for the activity Thoreau describes as being veiled because labor and leisure become so loaded in his analysis. Walking or sauntering would become the words adequate to Thoreau's experience. In "The Minister's Black Veil," Hawthorne transforms Moody's specific personal sense of guilt into Hooper's universal marker of furtiveness and sin. In Thoreau, the black veil of surveying — commercial labor — becomes an occlusion by which he misses his day — and he needs his days.

The chief concern that precipitates Thoreau's discussion of black veil has to do with heading out in the morning or forenoon, as he calls it, instead of the afternoon, as was generally his custom. He writes,

Day is, in fact, about as still as night. Draw the veil of night over this landscape, and these sounds would not disturb nor be inconsistent for their loudness with the night. It is a difference of white and black. Nature is in a white sleep... [10, p. 226].

In his use of forenoon, we sense Thoreau's interest dividing late morning from early afternoon, nights and days, dark and light and by comparing the environment as he finds it in the morning with that of afternoon or the night, he discloses a veil in nature. Morning has a quietude comparable to that found at night — a white sleep concealed by night and disclosed by day to the eye that is — like Thoreau's — not veiled by commercial vision. The visual metaphor of the surveying instrument as veil is overtaken by a concept of natural veiling. As he would insist in the final words of Walden, that "the sun is but a morning star," in this passage he concludes that night is simply a form of veiled morning. Noon, the dividing point of the work day, focalizes the discourse away from the lunch hour that timework discipline has constructed and toward a conceptual kind of "day labor." The social context is now naturalized. By interposing a veil in nature itself, the veil that had been their separating man from nature is now a veil that he can see within nature.

The third operation returns to the first form of veiling, only in a more general, epigrammatic way.

There is no glory so bright but the veil of business can hide it effectually. With most men life is postponed to some trivial business, and so therefore is heaven. Men think that they may abuse and misspend life as they please and when they get to heaven turn over a new leaf... [10, p. 226].

The surveyor's instrument and presumably the activities of that instrument have now been generalized into the category of business. Moneymaking enterprise can always obstruct, conceal, or veil the glories of the natural world.

Just as Hawthorne's Hooper experienced the wearing of his veil as an act and sign of permanent social rupture, Thoreau contemplates a series of social ruptures through an ironic reversal the processes of veiling and unveiling.

Men are very generally spoiled by being so civil and well-disposed. You can have no profitable conversation with them, they are so conciliatory and disposed to agree with you. They exhibit such long-suffering and kindness in a short interview. I would meet with some provoking strangeness, so that we may be guest and host and refresh one another. It is possible for a man to wholly disappear and be merged in his manners. The thousand and one gentlemen whom I meet, I meet despairingly and but to part from them, for I am not cheered by the hope of any rudeness from them. A cross man, a coarse man, an eccentric man, a silent, a man who does not drill well — of him, there is some hope [10, p. 226].

Thoreau's critique of civility seems to be directed at Hawthorne himself and it functions as a defense of his own characteristic rudeness. As Hawthorne remarked to Monckton Milnes, Thoreau was "not an agreeable person." But for Thoreau, civility and commerce function as veils. For Hawthorne the concealment of sin makes civility possible; its constant and direct revelation as in Hooper's veil makes it impossible. For Thoreau, civility becomes the veil itself, sapping energy.

Indeed, for Thoreau, once the veil of business is removed and the white sleep of day is revealed it becomes nothing short a metaphor for Thoreauvian social reform and regeneration. "Let us not have a rabid virtue that will be revenged on society, — that falls on it, not like the morning dew, but like the fervid noon day sun, to whither it" [10, p. 226].

IV

When one compares Hawthorne's death with Thoreau's, one sees the relative fragility of Hawthorne and the strength of Thoreau. Thoreau carefully constructed an ark to house the life work of his journals; Hawthorne's incomplete manuscript of what would become the Dolliver Romance (Fragments of a Romance) rested atop his coffin at the funeral. Small wonder that Hawthorne depreciated his ability to perpetuate Thoreau. When one reviews the assemblage of manuscripts that comprise the last projects that Hawthorne attempted to write — "the elixir of life" of "Septimius Felton" or "Septimius Norton" or the story of Dr. Dolliver or the sketch of Thoreau that was to serve as its preface — it is hard to fathom what Hawthorne's investment was in Thoreau as source of a story that he was as bound to transform in much the same way that Thoreau reworked the black veil that we so deeply associate with Hawthorne. These late manuscripts bear traces of extreme vacillation. Hawthorne can scarcely decide what names to use, whether a character will be a love interest or a halfsister. Of "Septimius Felton," Hawthorne interjected, "Our story is an internal one, dealing as little as possible with outward events, and taking hold of those only where it can not be helped, in order by them to delineate the history of a mind bewildered in certain errors." But it seems that external events continually intruded up the telling. The Civil War impinges on Hawthorne's description of the Revolutionary War. One gets the sense of Hawthorne performing a kind of cultural critique of the Wayside that he had created in prior works.

Now, the other young man, Septimius Felton, dwelt in a small wooden house, then, I suppose, of some score of years' standing, — a twostory house, gabled before, but with only two rooms on a floor, crowded upon by the hill behind, — a house of thick walls, as if the projector had that sturdy feeling of permanence in life which incites people to make strong their earthly habitations, as if deluding themselves with the idea that they could still inhabit them; in short, an ordinary dwelling of a welltold New England farmer, such as his race had been for two or three generations past [5, p. 11].

There is another story that Thoreau knew about the Wayside that did not concern elixirs of eternal life but rather dealt with the revolution and slavery. Thoreau records it in his journal for February 18, 1858. George Minott, a Concord

farmer told him of, “Casey, who was a slave to a man — Whitney — who, lived where Hawthorne owns, the same house, — before the Revolution.” This would be the Concord Minute Men’s muster master, Samuel Whitney. Casey was abused by Whitney and his son, and after an altercation, ran off, hiding himself up to his neck in the river in winter and then in Gowing’s Swamp, a low marshy area back of the Wayside. Casey eventually gained his freedom as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. Thoreau further notes that he was about 20 years old “when stolen from Africa” leaving behind a wife and child. “Used to say that he went home to Africa in the night and came back again in the morning; i.e. he dreamed of home” [10, p. 1253].

It may be this narrative — the Wayside as a home of slaveowners — that Hawthorne sought to allegorize in his nevertobecompleted Romance, but it is certainly part of Thoreau’s attempt to work through the problem of Hawthorne’s tolerance of slavery. In an entry for August 30, 1856, Thoreau remarked in his Journal:

Better for me, says my genius, to go cranberrying this afternoon for the Vaccinium Oxycoccus in Gowing’s Swamp, to get but a pocketful and learn its peculiar flavor, aye, and the flavor of Gowing’s Swamp and of life in New England, than to go consul to Liverpool and get I don’t know how many thousand dollars for it, with no such flavor. Many of our days should be spent, not in vain expectations and lying on our oars, but in carrying out deliberately and faithfully the hundred little purposes which every man’s genius must have suggested to him. Let not your life be wholly without an object, though it be only to ascertain the flavor of a cranberry, for it will not be only the quality of an insignificant berry that you will have tasted, but the flavor of your life to that extent, and it will be such a sauce as no wealth can buy [10, p. 1061].

Thoreau was out in search of a smaller, rarer European variety of cranberry that he might harvest for a sauce to put on the table at Thanksgiving, but he had the weight of the whole country on his mind. The wildness of these berries, their delicate obscurity growing like a rhizome along tendrils in cold sphagnum bogs, that only he knew existed, and their sheer paucity and difficulty in the harvest, suggested to Thoreau something precious and uncompromised by commercial exploitation. “For only absorbing employment prevails, succeeds, takes up space,

occupies territory, determines the future of individuals and states, drives Kansas out of your head, and actually and permanently occupies the only desirable and free Kansas against all border ruffians” [10, p. 1061]. The challenging harvest of a rare cranberry appeared to Thoreau as a bulwark against the strife of “bleeding Kansas” going on in 1856 in which the antislavery forces waged violent struggle with the proslavery “border ruffians.” In this passage, the concerns about wealth and labor, always at work in his Journal are squarely directed at Hawthorne, who had been named consul at Liverpool by his proslavery Bowdoin classmate, President Franklin Pierce. Thoreau is poking around in the swamp behind Hawthorne’s Wayside, the very site where Casey, the African slave had hidden out before the revolution. Thoreau’s rebuttal to Hawthorne’s political and aesthetic ambitions came down a radical reevaluation of labor and purpose: a pocketful of swamp cranberries and the indelible particularity of their local, New England flavor. I suggest that it was this clarity that marked Thoreau’s creed and was perhaps the elixir of confusion that Hawthorne tried to articulate in his incomplete romance.

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