

The Legible Landscape: Sources for the Sepulchral Setting of “Roger Malvin’s Burial”

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Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. —Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

“See now, the Sachem’s grave lies like the common people, defaced by an ignoble race. Thy mother doth complain, and implores thy aid against this thievish people, who have newly intruded on our land.”
—Ghost vision of Passonagessit Sachem (qtd. by Washington Irving, “Traits of Indian Character”)

What is history but the obituary of nations?
—Richard H. Wilde (U.S. Congressman), 1830

Much has been made of the hieroglyphic metaphor which swept into the literature of the American Renaissance following Jean-Francois Champollion’s decipherment via the Rosetta Stone of ancient Egyptian in the 1820’s. Upon the metaphysical fields of amateur Egyptologists Edward Everett and Sampson Reed the Egyptian revival took root, and upon their leaves Ralph Waldo Emerson ruminated (Irwin 3–11). But even if Emerson was, as F. O. Matthiessen suggests, the intellectual milk cow of the American Renaissance (xii), Nathaniel Hawthorne’s familiarity with hieroglyphics as a transcendental trope may have been drawn from a source he would later accuse of peddling feminist tripe. It was probably Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (Hawthorne’s activist sister-in-law) who wrote the translation of G. Oegger’s *Le Vrais Messie* (*The True Messiah*) that Emerson read and which nursed his thought while he was writing *Nature*. Among the Swedenborgian arguments recognizable to Emerson scholars are the beliefs that man’s material being “is but a detailed hieroglyphic” of his moral body (nature is “seal,” the soul “print”), and “man is the true hieroglyphic of the Divinity” (man is “the immortal pupil,” a “god in runs”) (qtd. in Cameron 2:

83–99). In his hallmark study *American Hieroglyphics*, John T. Irwin follows the metaphor to the conceptual moment of Emerson’s texts: his essays are “simply the decipherment of a hieroglyphic,” ideographs which reveal “a basic understanding of the nature of the universe” (13). This reduction to code is inevitable, given the Concord divine’s belief that each word is a kind of “fossil poetry,” that “the world is a temple, whose walls are covered with emblems” (Emerson 3: 13, 10).

Whether fossil or hieroglyphic, the durability of textual artifacts wrought or turned into stone was for Hawthorne, however, more than a theoretical fancy or transcendental trope. And while he was possibly influenced by the Egyptian revival, his awareness of rock-as-text was initially developed not as an adult, but as a child who lived beside an immense tablatore of Native American inscription—years before America took note of Champollion’s labors. During his boyhood residence in Raymond, Maine, near Lake Sebago, Hawthorne found a favorite retreat: a cave set within cliffs emblazoned with native petroglyphs, known as “The Images” in nineteenth-century Raymond (Pickard 9–10, 49–50; Manning Hawthorne 10). The rock drawings presented a sizable canvas of Native American culture through numerous representations of the aborigines and wildlife. Among the life-size figures shown in separate scenes are an Indian paddling a canoe, another one fishing, and two others with bow and arrow.¹ The precise identification or intent of the Sebago Lake rock drawings as ornament or “true hieroglyphs” (whatever that distinction might entail) is moot, as scholars argued over what even in the Egyptian texts were merely “analglyphs” (symbolic pictures) and “true” hieroglyphic writing (Irwin 9–10). The significance of the Indian petroglyphs lay in their attestation of prior occupation of the land by Native Americans, an occupation that symbolically continued in their pictorial self-representations. The petroglyphs’ mere presence was an argument against the myth that these were lands uninhabited: actively inscribing and transforming the landscape, the Indians of Sebago Lake (probably Abenaki) left an enduring reminder and an indictment against those who took possession. D. H. Lawrence argued in *Studies of Classic American Literature* that “the unappeased ghosts of the dead Indians act within the unconscious or under-conscious soul of the white American” (51); how much more powerfully, then, would this “Spirit of Place” reveal itself when the very landscape was thronged with actual figures.² No wonder that many of the artists in Hawthorne’s fiction find themselves involved in a palingenic process—the attempt to “revive a seemingly dead past” through its physical remains (Cody 23–26). For a young boy who liked to wander alone

in the vast forest and for a romancer equally apt to lose himself in reverie of the past, the rock drawings at Sebago offered Hawthorne a portal to temporal and cultural displacement, a denial of solitude in a land of spirits. As Milton's archangel Michael offered Adam a panorama of things to come—"A World devote to universal rack"—so the Sebago Lake petroglyphs offered Hawthorne (would-be New World Adam) a vision of things and people presumed to be past. Both offered unsettling knowledge, but where the archangel finally heartened Adam from his post-lapsarian depression with the wisdom that all would be redeemed through the blood of the Lamb, the aboriginal spirits reminded Hawthorne that his was the generation of Cain, that he wandered not upon a *tabula rasa* but upon a palimpsest written in blood.³ In the Hawthorne corpus, one of the most accomplished tales that address the burden of this memory is "Roger Malvin's Burial," first published in 1832. A brief synopsis of the tale follows.

In retreat from a failed expedition in Maine to hunt down Indians for scalp bounty, two wounded men, the young Reuben Bourne and the middle-aged Roger Malvin, stop by a massive granite rock to rest. Realizing that his wounds are mortal and that death is imminent, Malvin convinces Bourne to save himself and continue on alone back to their frontier settlement without him. If Bourne is unable to send rescue in time (a conditional that both men tacitly assume inevitable), Malvin asks only that he return after his wounds are healed to lay Malvin's "bones in the grave." With Malvin's blessing for Reuben to marry Dorcas, Malvin's daughter, Reuben abandons his future father-in-law. He makes it back to the settlements, but his guilt prevents him from telling Dorcas and others in the community the truth about his abandoning the then still-alive Malvin (they assume he had already died), and enables their own needed closure by allowing them the comfort (and himself the gratitude) of the fiction that he had provided Malvin a proper burial. Years go by, and Reuben and Dorcas find themselves blessed with a son, Cyrus, yet utterly ruined as farmers because Reuben was a "neglectful husbandman." The family pulls up stakes and sets off for a fresh new life in the wilderness. In the course of their journey, Reuben finds himself "called" by a "supernatural power" to the site where he abandoned Malvin some 18 years before and—obsessed with his "sin"—accidentally shoots his son in a hunting accident.

Some of the tropes within this dark story rely upon particular historical sources that Hawthorne was familiar with from his own frontier experience, sources which have been previously unrecognized by scholars. Among these is not only the native

hieroglyphic trope but also a native burial setting. When we discuss the hieroglyphic in Hawthorne's writing, then, we should look not to the Nile but to the Saco, and we must not be bound by a too-narrow conception of it. In his fiction Hawthorne uses the term to indicate natural phenomena as well as cultural productions, the latter often of a departed race whose artifacts and very existence becomes naturalized as part of the landscape. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, for example, the absent hieroglyphs (Indian land deed) effectively become the landscape: to possess the one is to have title to the other.

Sebago Lake offered Hawthorne more than the cultural remnants of Native America, for on its banks was buried the Abenaki chief Polan, "an inveterate enemy of the settlers" who had "resolutely determined never to make a lasting peace with the English, till what he claimed as a right should be restored" (Williamson 2: 322). In 1756 Polan stood firm against the continuing encroachments of English colonists and paid for it with his life. Here was a rich, untapped vein for an American romancer to mine —perhaps the source for Hawthorne's belief that the ridges about Sebago Lake were Indian graves. Not quite the mother lode that King Philip became to historians and storytellers since his epic demise in 1677, Polan yet offered a subject, locale, and historical moments that were fresh, though not entirely free from the overworked and hackneyed constraints of writing upon famous Indian persons that Hawthorne found so encumbering. It was not Hawthorne who was to dig up this literary treasure, however, but John Greenleaf Whittier. Induced by his one-time love interest Elizabeth Lloyd to write a poem that she could turn into a picture, "some cherished spot of New England scenery yet unsung — something grand—bold—and characteristic" (qtd. in Woodwell 127), Whittier responded with "Funeral Tree of the Sokokis." The value of Whittier's poem lies not only in identifying the kind of lore that Hawthorne found literally beneath his feet but chose to (or rather *tried to*) ignore, but also in its unearthing a possible historic source for the nature-as-sepulcher motif in "Roger Malvin's Burial." This is not to say that Whittier's poem itself was an influence on Hawthorne's tale. First published in the *Knickerbocker* in 1841 it postdates "Roger Malvin's Burial" by 10 years, but it does establish that the tale of Polan was extant in the folklore surrounding Lake Sebago in the early 19th century and offers a convenient synopsis of it.

Taking to task "The brutal and unchristian spirit of the early settlers of New England toward the red man," Whittier establishes the necessary historical background in his head note to the poem:

Polan, a chief of the Sokokis Indians, the original inhabitants of the country lying between Agamenticus and Casco Bay, was killed in a skirmish at Windham, on Sebago lake, in the spring of 1756. He claimed lands on both sides of the Presumpscot river to its mouth at Casco, as his own. He was shrewd, subtle, and brave. After the white men had retired, *the surviving Indians “swayed” or bent down a young tree until its roots were turned up*, placed the body of their chief beneath them, and *then released the tree to spring back to its former position.* (192 emphasis added)⁴

The wounded Reuben Bourne in “Roger Malvin’s Burial” has hardly the strength that Polan’s comrades had to fully uproot even a young tree, but he does bend down an oak sapling and sets his fallen comrade to rest among “the dense undergrowth of the forest.” While these actions do not constitute sufficient obsequies (indeed, their absence provides Hawthorne’s ironic title) they do bear striking resemblance to the burial of Polan. It is from behind “the earthy roots of an uptorn tree,” moreover, that Bourne takes last sight of Malvin (a spot to which he will later return), having first attached to the sapling’s uppermost branch the bloody handkerchief that has been serving as a bandage on his arm. This transfer from human to tree via equivalent anatomy effects a symbolic identification between the two; in Latin (which Hawthorne knew well) both arm and branch are *bracchium*. Eighteen years later, when Bourne returns to this spot during his journey away from financial ruin, the once “vigorous” sapling will have become blighted in this branch—“withered, sapless, and utterly dead” (10: 357). In Polan’s burial, the withered “branch” was his own arm—a squeamish bit of business that Whittier saw fit to overlook, along with the native’s Christianity.⁵ Before setting their chief in the ground that had been violated by colonizing trespassers, Polan’s men first took off one of his arms, determining to deposit it “in some holy catholic burying-ground” (Williamson 2: 322). This internment may have protected Polan from desecration but it could not confine the poetic power of his death.

To further understand the possible resource that Polan offered Hawthorne, we should note the spatial proximity of Polan’s and Roger Malvin’s demise. Though Malvin is a fictional character, the battle in which he sustained his fatal wounds was very real and only 28 miles from Raymond. This battle, known as Lovewell’s Fight, was a standard in the repertoire of New England’s folklore, and in John Farmer and Jacob Bailey Moore’s *Collections* (1822–24) Hawthorne read several accounts of the engagement that clearly served as source material.⁶ In one of these, Joseph Bancroft Hill’s “Indian Troubles at Dunstable,” we are told the story of how Eleazer Davis

reluctantly leaves the fatally wounded Lieutenant Josiah Farwell behind, first tying Farwell's handkerchief "to the top of a bush that it might afford a mark by which his remains could the more easily be found" (306). While this account probably provided Hawthorne the detail for marking Malvin's remains, it does not provide the root-encrusted setting that Polan's gravesite did, and Hawthorne found the image of roots and the "uptorn tree" significant enough to emphasize through frequent repetition. This is not to say that every detail must be accounted for by way of literary or biographic precedent: the transformation of the bush into a tree, for example, can easily be read as a matter of poetic insight in a writer searching for majestic symbols in a land he continually decried as empty.⁷ But the case of Hawthorne's early life at Sebago as a source for "Roger Malvin's Burial" is strengthened by the other monument that marks Malvin's resting place: the massive granite rock, which "was not unlike a gigantic grave-stone, upon which the veins seemed to form an inscription in forgotten characters." Hawthorne twice identifies this monolith as a tabature that "seemed" to be composed of "forgotten characters" (10: 338, 356). In a story fueled by the haunted mind of Reuben Bourne, the operative word may indeed be "seemed." William J. Scheick locates this rock as the "central symbol" of the mystery that pervades the tale and argues that the human mind projects meaning when there may in fact be none: "Nature, like the synecdochic rock in the tale, only *seems* to convey some message in a forgotten language" (72–73 original emphasis). Nonetheless, while it is unlikely that Hawthorne intends for his audience to read this metaphor as fact, to perceive the rock as the actual hieroglyphic remnant of a previous, aboriginal culture, we should not overlook why Hawthorne would have chosen this particular image. As Malvin's root-filled resting place and Bourne's turning down the oak harken to a tree that stood upon the very banks along which Hawthorne roamed as a child, so the enduring cryptic monolith above Malvin echoes the inscribed cliffs that also loomed above Hawthorne at Sebago. Building upon Ely Stock's biblical interpretation of the tale (286–96) and John Samson's identification of the oak tree as the Charter Oak (457–61), Michael J. Colacurcio presents a compelling argument on behalf of the "glaring historicity" of these two symbols: "Together, the rock and the oak tell virtually the whole story of the National Covenant" (124–28). We should add that they reveal not only the national but also the personal, the biographical significance of what was essentially a covenant founded upon territorial theft, of how manifest the implications of American's perceived destiny was to Hawthorne. How powerfully the annals of Salem's past impressed

the romancer is a critical *donné*; we should regard his life in and the history of the Maine frontier with equal scrutiny.

The imminent threat of Indians precipitates the emotional angst that Bourne suffers for having failed to bury Malvin (in fear his corpse would be desecrated), but Native America lurked in Hawthorne's memory as well as in his fiction. Set in the Maine wilderness, "Roger Malvin's Burial" was one tale that Hawthorne could readily turn to his own frontier experience for, and authorial self-representation may be offered in the figure Cyrus Bourne. Cyrus, the fifteen-year-old son of Reuben and Dorcas, becomes a sacrificial lamb whose accidental death at the hands of this father serves as expiation and/or catharsis (albeit problematic theologically, critically) for Reuben Bourne's guilt.⁸ Hawthorne, too, was 15 when the wilderness of Maine served once again (as it had in his earlier youth) as his backyard, was 15 when he was "sacrificed" by his surrogate father figure, Uncle Robert, and sent back to Salem to receive proper schooling.⁹ Hawthorne himself registered this removal as a kind of death when he moaned that "the happiest days of my life are gone" (15: 117). Like Hawthorne, Cyrus excelled in "the wild accomplishments of frontier life," and it is easy to relate Hawthorne's self-perception of his "savagizing" days to Cyrus' skill as a hunter and his promise as an Indian fighter (10: 351). As young Hawthorne loved to lose himself in the ancient woodlands, so in his tale of the Maine frontier the setting is an "untrodden" and "trackless forest," a domain empty of human presence or activity. Reuben Bourne calls it a "howling wilderness," and the narrator observes that the Bournes in their journey through it would drink from "some unpolluted forest-brook, which . . . murmured . . . like a maiden, at love's first kiss." Yet Hawthorne knew that the lands across which Reuben and family wandered were not "virgin lands" or *vacuum domicilium*: they wandered in "a region, of which savage beasts and savage men were as yet the sole possessors" (10: 353 emphasis added).¹⁰ In an editorial footnote to Thomas Symmes' "Lovewell's Fight" (the first account of the battle, originally published as *Historical Memoirs of the Late Fight at Piggwacket*, 1725) Farmer and Moore explain how land can be both inhabited and uninhabited: "At the time this battle was fought, there was not a white inhabitant within fifty miles of the scene of action. Saco was the nearest settlement of white people, and the whole of this now civilized country was then an extensive wilderness" (1: 31). Edwin Fussell has noted that the Bournes' expedition was an "incursion into the heart of their own savagery" (75), Frederick Crews that "the forest is of course his [Reuben's] own mind" (464–65). Valid as such metaphorical readings are, we should

not, however, read their journey (and Malvin and Bourne's original journey as part of the Lovewell party) only as a psychological or spiritual allegory, for it overlooks the historical reality behind their crossing into forbidden terrain and their physical engagement with the land, transforming the landscape in such a way as to preclude more native modes of production. Prior to their "removal of the household gods," Reuben and Cyrus cleared a tract of land by "felling and burning timber" that lay within "the virgin bosom of the wilderness" (10: 351) — a protocol that drove away the woodland's "savage beasts" and the "savage men" that hunted them. When the family sets up camp for the night, Hawthorne anthropomorphizes the aged trees (a trope which may further indicate the presence of Polan):

The dark and gloomy pines looked down upon them, and, as the wind swept through their tops, a pitying sound was heard in the forest; or did those old trees groan, in fear that men were come to lay the axe to their roots at last? (10: 354)

Given Reuben's history of agricultural failure, Hawthorne may be positioning Reuben ironically as one both doomed and dooming: like Cooper's Leatherstocking, he escapes into nature and freedom, yet carries the seeds of civilization (and in Reuben's case, its corollary of colonial conquest and guilt) that will eventually destroy the wilderness and force him to retreat even further. Try as he might, he cannot escape himself, and morally burdened and disoriented he finds the necessary catharsis by falling unintentionally into the darkest of sins. On a deeper level, however, the filicide is a kind of *felix culpa*, for the murder of his son ends (for the Bournes, at least) the cycle of violence between native and colonist that Reuben found himself inextricably caught up in. Reuben Bourne saw in Cyrus "his own nature . . . transferred" (10: 351), and elemental to this nature was father and son's skill as Indian fighters. To kill this projected self (or, in Waggoner's phrase, "the symbolic extension of himself" [97]) is to slay the racial hatred that precipitated Malvin's death: "His sin was expiated, the curse was gone from him" (10: 360). Given Hawthorne's historical introduction, in which he confesses the need to cast "certain circumstances [scalp hunting] judiciously into the shade," and the destructive result of Reuben's guilt for similarly choosing to keep others in the dark, Hawthorne may be providing us with an ironic frame that forces us to confront the horrors of the relentless Native American genocide, which was continually being "cast into the shade." Along with this unsettling meta-historical/meta-fictional similarity,

Hawthorne may have named his father and son characters ironically. As Thomas Hutchinson indicates in his *History of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay* (1764–67), a work with which Hawthorne was familiar, "Bourne" was a name associated not with the slaughter of Indians but with their conversion. A "most zealous and indefatigable promoter of the gospel among the Indians," Bourne is distinguished above conventional (i.e., military) heroes, "whose chief merit," Hutchinson notes, "is the overthrow of cities, provinces and empires" (2: 412 note).¹¹

For an Anglo-American writer in the early nineteenth-century, the overthrow of empires and the perceived westward progress of culture and civilization brought more pride than fear. The sun may not yet have set on the British Empire, but the American star was rising and it took little imagination to imagine an American empire yet to come. With this rise, however, would come the eventuality of decline, and Hawthorne entertains this prospect in a tale that provides a useful optic in reading "Roger Malvin's Burial" and in understanding how the romancer saw his own frontier experience: "The New Adam and Eve." In this post-apocalyptic piece, Hawthorne reverses history by wiping out "the whole race of men" and setting down into the middle of "a modern city" (Boston) a newly created young couple. Nature's simple children, they are "fashioned in the full development of mind and heart, but with no knowledge of their predecessors" (10: 247–48). In "primal simplicity" they wend their way through the streets and buildings, the "two pilgrims" puzzled at every turn by a culture completely alien to them, by all that is not natural — which is to say, all of nineteenth-century American civilization. Its cultural remnants are "riddles...left unsolved," and the signs that throng the city's streets are "unintelligible hieroglyphics" (10: 253, 249). On the inscriptions scratched upon prison walls, the narrator observes: "There is not a living eye that could now decipher these memorials" (10: 254). While Hawthorne's agenda is to critique "the perversions and sophistries," the "deformity" of "the world's artificial system," he does so by employing the very language and methodology that ethnology used in describing Native America: a departed, degenerate race died off to make way for a new race, for "new inheritors." Might we not see in Adam and Eve's wanderings and wonderings Hawthorne's own boyhood experience at Sebago and Anglo-America's early confrontations with Native American culture? The language that Hawthorne employs invites such comparison: the new Adam and Eve have come "to inherit and repeople this waste and deserted earth" (10: 247–48), a configuration that echoes Puritan America's justification for seizing lands decimated by plague. And when Adam

asks his consort, “Eve, Eve, are we treading in the footsteps of beings that bore a likeness to ourselves?” (10: 257), he hits upon the earliest issue that confronted Europeans when they came to the New World: were the New World’s peoples fully, truly human? were they the descendants of Adam? The answers to these questions would evolve over centuries of contact, but in 1721 Cotton Mather would insist of the Indians that “to *Humanize* these Miserable Animals . . . were a work of no little Difficulty,” and that the “Mortal Contagion” that “swept away such Multitudes” was Providence making “Room for the *European VINE*” (*India* 28–29 original emphases). After another century and more of colonization, Dr. Charles Caldwell, physician and professor of natural history, would more directly declare in 1830 that “Civilization is destined to exterminate them, in common with the animals” (qtd. in Horsman 120). What motivates New Adam’s question are paintings of the land’s former occupants, “men and women, beneath the disguise of a preposterous garb, and with features and expression debased, because inherited through ages of moral and physical decay” (10: 256). Another trope of ethnology, this debasement echoes the belief that Indians had degenerated during their residence in the New World. Late in the eighteenth century it was feared that this was due to the American landscape—an environmentalist argument that would later yield to genetic theory. Either way, Native Americans were seen as debased versions of their Europeans conquerors, and young Hawthorne must have stared upon the petroglyphs at Sebago with as much curiosity as New Adam looked upon the portraiture at Boston. What the hieroglyphs before him meant Hawthorne could only guess. Hieroglyphs by definition present an epistemological problem to the non-initiate, and later Hawthorne would view the aesthetic relationship between artist and spectator in the same terms. In Florence, following his position as American Consul at Liverpool, Hawthorne stood before Michelangelo’s painting of the Three Fates and was struck by the ultimate indecipherability of another mind’s vision:

Each man interprets the hieroglyphic in his own way; and the painter, perhaps, had a meaning which none of them have reached; or possibly he put forth a riddle without himself knowing the solution. (14: 334–35)

As we have seen from the petroglyphs at Sebago Lake, Native Americans did leave evidence of their prior occupation, and so Whittier was wrong when he mourned on behalf of Polan’s “broken race” that “Their green and pleasant dwelling-place, /

Which knew them once, retains no trace.” He was right, however, to observe that the conflicts between red and white were not in some safe, distant past: “The turf’s red stain is yet undried, / Scarce have the death-shot echoes died / Along Sebago’s wooded side” (193). Nor was the ink quite dry on Indian treaties that extorted vast territories for the advancing white population, treaties which through continual violation would become little more than historical curiosities and as meaningless as indecipherable hieroglyphics. For Hawthorne and for other writers eager to celebrate the achievements of a rising American Republic—founded largely as a textual construct—the bloody hieroglyphs of colonization were all too shamefully legible, and “Roger Malvin’s Burial” calls attention to this legacy even as it casts it into the shade.

Endnotes

¹ For this part of Hawthorne’s biography, see my earlier article, “Hawthorne’s Boyhood in Maine.” I am indebted to Roger B. Ray and the Maine Historical Society for providing me with photographs of the Sebago Lake petroglyphs. *Hawthorne’s First Diary* includes a photograph of “The Images” rock face, but the pictographs are hardly visible; see Pickard, between pp. 10–11.

More attention has been paid to the petroglyphs at Clark’s Point on Machias Bay in Maine, which are the largest group of rock carvings known in New England. While this series also reveals “no intrinsic evidence of their age,” the site “was known to traders early in the seventeenth century, and much earlier was visited by Basque fishermen (Mallery 82). For an account and reproduction of these drawings, see Garrick Mallery’s *Picture-Writing of the American Indians* (81–83) — still one of the most comprehensive investigations into Native American petroglyphs since its publication in 1893. On archaeological digs at the environs around Lake Sebago in the early twentieth century, see Moorehead 210–22. A map of the sites can be found between pages 208 and 209.

² For a recent discussion of the Native American ghost motif, see Bergland.

³ For Adam’s vision, see *Paradise Lost* 11: 429–901; for Adam’s preview of Christ, see 12: 310–573. It must be stressed that the mythology of Indians as already all dead and gone was precisely that — a mythology. In the eyes of Euro-America, it was always already too-late to save Native Americans from dispossession and decimation.

⁴ I refer here to the original publication of this poem, rather than to its appearance in the Riverside edition of Whittier’s collected works (1892) because the magazine version has a slightly fuller head note. Whittier’s identification of Polan as Sokoki was in keeping with nineteenth-century ethnography, but was in error (Daly 148).

⁵ Whittier's deletion of the gruesome amputation is understandable when we remember that his poem was originally written to be turned into a picture by a proper young lady. His erasure of the Indians' Christianity was not a personal but a social imperative deriving from the need to justify Anglo-American colonization.

⁶ On the goldmine that Farmer and Moore's *Collections* offered Hawthorne on Lovewell's Fight, see Orians and Lovejoy. On the historical incident itself, one of the best treatments is by Eckstorm. Eckstorm convincingly argues that Symmes (the battle's first historian, writing immediately following the debacle in 1725) deliberately concealed the fact that the "brave, pious and admirable" young chaplain, Jonathan Frye, "went scalp-hunting for money on the Sabbath" to raise a nuptial grubstake for a girl "not yet fourteen" (381–82).

⁷ Birdsall has suggested that Hawthorne's image of the young oak tree is a moral symbol for Bourne's failed attempt to escape his conscience and time itself. Bourne goes into the seemingly eternal wilderness, but the tree bears witness in its own growth and decay that timelessness and moral freedom is an illusion (181–85). Stock offers that an elm tree mentioned in a centennial account of Lovewell's Fight in *The Columbian Centinel* "may well have been the prototype for Hawthorne's oak tree image" (282). Stock further suggests as a source Cotton Mather's *Edulcorator* (289), whose thesis is that "WHATEVER we find Bitter to us in our Travel thro' the Wilderness of this world; there is a TREE, the Application whereof will take away all the Bitterness" (Mather 3). There is no evidence that Hawthorne ever read this work, which is concerned neither with Lovewell's Fight nor with the death of Jonathan Frye (as Stock implies) but with a battle on Green Island in 1724. Mather simply added the names of Lovewell and Frye in an addendum to his text to make it more topical upon publication in 1725 — the year of Lovewell's Fight.

A more politically insightful reading of the oak tree is offered by John Samson, who posits the Charter Oak in Hartford, Connecticut as model. In 1687 the colony's charter was secreted in a tree to keep it from falling into the hands of the royal governor, Sir Edmund Andros, who dissolved the colonial government. The Charter Oak is described in the same volume of Farmer and Moore's *Collections* (2: 356–57) that provided Hawthorne with other material on Lovewell's Fight. Samson further notes that Hawthorne's reference is ironic: Lovewell's Fight was part of Governor Dummer's War, a military campaign in which Massachusetts played the tyrant to Connecticut and New Hampshire. As in the usurpations of Governor Andros, at issue in intercolonial strife was land title (457–61).

⁸ See Waggoner 90–98, Crews, Erlich, and Colacurcio 107–30. Crews lays out "the terrible logic" of the tale thus: "The blood of a 'father' rests on the 'son,' who disburdens himself of it by becoming a father and slaying his son" (461). Erlich, tying together Reuben's abandonment of Malvin, neglectful husbandry, and slaying of his son, offers that Reuben's guilt is a "complex mixture of *obligation* and *resentment*": Reuben wanted to get back at Malvin, who, craving posterity, "wiled" Reuben into the sin of abandonment (380–82 original emphasis). Colacurcio states that Reuben's filicide "seems psychotic rather than symbolic," "a grotesque and elemental parody of the Old Testament's paradigm of Covenantal faith" (126).

⁹ Perhaps this disruption haunted Hawthorne. In "The Snow Image," Hawthorne presents a father figure's removal of a "child" from her wanted environment as manslaughter. Erlich explicates another analogy between Hawthorne's relationship with his Uncle Robert and "Roger Malvin's Burial." Upon Robert's death in 1842, Hawthorne decided not to come to the funeral — a failure of obsequies to a patriarchal figure not unlike Bourne's (112–16).

¹⁰ The problematic virgin trope and the even more problematic equation of native peoples and animals were common throughout colonial discourse and in artistic conceptions of the Americas. In positioning Hawthorne within this discourse, it perhaps best to use the term "racialist." See Horsman.

¹¹ See Daly 104–05.

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The Legible Landscape: Sources for the Sepulchral Setting of “Roger Malvin’s Burial”

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