

Graham Thompson, The "Plain Facts" of Fine Paper in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids"

Why, ever since Adam, who has got to the meaning of his great allegory—the world? Then we pigmies must be content to have our paper allegories but ill comprehended.

— Letter from Herman Melville to Nathaniel Hawthorne, 17 November 1851

As the content of magazines was delivered in new and changing formats during the 1850s so the look and feel of magazines began to attract the attention of cultural commentators. In its roundup of the quality monthlies published in April 1855, the New York Times reported: "We like the April number of the Knickerbocker perhaps most of all because the 'Editor's Table' is not only capital—as it always is—but also is presented in clean type, of good Christian size."¹ After relating the details of an eye infection regularly induced in one of the magazine's readers by an earlier, less satisfactory, typeface, only five lines are given over to noting the titles of the magazine's articles. Of the features in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, it is the illustrated pieces to which the reader's attention is first drawn while subordinated to the second tier of non-illustrated material are "Other papers of interest." Missing altogether from the listing for Harper's, however, was an anonymously

published short story in the April issue which seemed to link the material form of the print medium and the cohort of writers the New York Times considered responsible for the articles in the April issue of Putnam's Monthly Magazine: "[m]ost of these one would judge to be written by gentlemen of taste and leisure—dreamy men, who go out occasionally to see life, not who are daily in contact with life's hard realities." The missing story was Herman Melville's "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids."

The starting point for this essay is not to emphasize the failure of the New York Times to make the connection between the paper making described in Melville's story, the "dreamy men" writing for Putnam's, and the gentlemen who inhabit "the quiet cloisters ... of the dreamy Paradise of Bachelors."² Rather, it is to note that making such a connection would rely on conjoining two material economies the New York Times saw no reason for conjoining: the economy of paper and the economy of print. If Melville's literary career has come to be understood as an index of the state of authorship in an industrializing and professionalizing literary marketplace, one reason for this is that these two economies have been continually mistaken for one another.

This essay peels apart paper and print and proceeds with two key arguments in mind. First of all, and in order to deal with the contingencies of his place as a writer in an economy of paper, it shows that Melville displays a much more specific

and sophisticated knowledge of paper and its manufacture than has so far been recognized. Second, it argues that Melville's fullest treatment of paper, in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," short-circuits both the internal and external correspondences—respectively, the doubling that takes place between the two parts of the diptych and the story's symbolic and allegorical figurations—of which critics have made so much in order to establish Melville's place in the context of print culture. The short-circuiting is achieved through the figure of the narrator, who rewards much closer attention than he is often given, and also through a series of distinctions made in the story between the abstract force that drives the paper-making machinery and the purposes to which that paper will be put. While it may find its way back into the hands of those "dreamy men" who write on it for Putnam's—but on which, as I show below, Putnam's is not printed—the paper will also end up in the hands of those people who use it, like the seedsman narrator, for business and other purposes beyond the literary marketplace. Moments considered to serve a symbolic function in this story, then, are actually deeply embedded in an understanding of the manufacture and the non-literary uses of paper. These facts collectively shape the interplay between the story's imaginative and material domains to the extent that paper becomes the story's subject.

That discussions about authorship and the market in the antebellum period have tended to make much of Melville is to

be expected. A trajectory of early fame and later rejection following Moby-Dick (1851) and Pierre (1852), his reliance on magazine publication between 1853 and 1856, and the effective ending of his career as a professional writer when he became a customs officer in New York in 1866, show a full cycle of authorial experience. Work in this mode certainly enhances our understanding of the state of authorship in an emerging mass culture where paper surfaces as a topic in a story like "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," as Kevin McLaughlin argues, because "the literary text as a self-contained work is itself shaken by the distracting force of a mass mediacy to which it is inextricably linked."³ It is important to note, however, that in its coverage of the monthly magazines the New York Times is dealing with the materiality of objects during a circuit of publication and exchange, while the paper manufactured in the New England mill of Melville's story has yet to assume its position in the exchange system. And while the monthly magazines belong to an economy of print with all its attendant processes, Melville's story embeds the reader in an economy of paper, which is not equivalent to the production, publication, and circulation of books and magazines. The paper in Melville's story is a raw material that will never be made into the kinds of objects on which the New York Times is passing comment. For Melville, as for Jacques Derrida, "[p]aper is in the world that is not a book."⁴

Treating the economies of print and paper as interchangeable in order to understand the relationship between authorship and the marketplace also often leads to readings of Melville's magazine fiction, and particularly "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," which suffer from two problems: first, they are driven by a proleptic reading of the past which treats the outcome of mass culture and professionalized authorship as inevitable when to the historical participants it was not so certain; second, and more importantly for this essay, they abstract the material conditions of the labor of Melville's writing and authorship for the purpose of broader cultural diagnosis before attending to the material practicalities of writing which existed for Melville before the cycle of publication, distribution, and circulation—and even writing itself—was set in train.

While these approaches contribute to a much better knowledge of the print culture environment of the mid-nineteenth century, what remains less well understood is how a writer's imaginative labor initially requires a relationship with the materials of their trade. Often the same materials that are used for many other purposes and by many other professions, only at some future point in the abstracted form of books and magazines will they pass into a culture of exchange.⁵ In "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," while Melville gestures towards a generalized circuit of literary exchange in the first part of the diptych, he is

most preoccupied with the specific manufacturing process and laboring environment which sees paper entering the world.⁶

Melville had, of course, faced the formal problem of trying to manage the generalized alongside the specific—or the philosophical alongside the practical—in Moby-Dick. At one point he has Ishmael claim that, “So ignorant are most landsmen of some of the plainest and most palpable wonders of the world, that without some hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the fishery, they might scout at Moby Dick as a monstrous fable, or still worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory.”⁷ This essay scouts at Melville’s later story by affording the “plain facts” of paper and paper making the same significance as Melville affords cetology and whaling in Moby-Dick. It intervenes in conversations about mid-nineteenth-century authorship and print culture by following the direction of Melville’s narrative in “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” away from the social network of the bachelors’ “dreamy” culture of exchange and towards the manufacture of the raw material upon which print exchange relies. Instead of treating paper as a metonym of literary market exchange, it examines Melville’s experience and imagining of this raw material—literally *avant la lettre*—as a way of better understanding the economy of a substance whose manufactured sizes (folio, octavo and duodecimo) he had already used to undertake the classification of whales in

Moby-Dick and on which his recalcitrant copyist, Bartleby, refuses to write.

Melville, like any other author trying to earn money from their writing, may never be entirely outside an exchange economy, since one's reputation—or at least what was left of it for Melville by the mid 1850s—commodifies the possibilities of one's future publishability. The aim here is to show how "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" enacts a dialogue with the materials of its own production. Even the most sophisticated of recent attempts to reassess nineteenth-century models of authorship, such as Leon Jackson's excavation of very different embedded "authorial economies" with their own exchange practices, rules, and protocols, concentrate on the period after exchange has commenced. This essay looks to extend the remit of Jackson's "authorial economies" to include the period before exchange begins since it is this period which "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" imagines most dramatically.

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The tendency of critics to move outwards from Melville's fiction toward broader cultural conditions is driven in the case of "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" partly by the perceived allegorical nature of this story itself. While the stark contrast and unevenness between the two parts of the diptych was seen by an earlier generation of critics as a structural flaw in the story's composition,⁸ the

distinctly gendered nature of the different worlds of leisure and work in the story are now well-served by readings noting a subtext which denies in biological and artistic terms "the idea of female originating power"⁹ or envisions a nightmare "division of labor so pervasive that it would divide the sexes and sterilize mankind."¹⁰ Sexual difference is seen to impact on industrial labor and the authorial labor from which, Michael Newbury argues, it "is not separate," but upon which it "has already intruded ... as a trope."¹¹ But if this work helps extend the relevance of "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" to an antebellum context in which writing, reading and authorship were becoming subject to gendered market conditions, the critical labor expended to locate the story in this context remains paradoxical. On the one hand it is convincing and sophisticated; on the other, it is too easily led by a story, which appears to do so much of the critical work itself.

Unlike in "Bartleby, the Scrivener" or "Benito Cereno," which are remarkable for their poetics of concealment, the themes of "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" appear to be, as E. H. Eby early saw, only "thinly veiled by symbolism and implication."¹² The veil is thin indeed. Andrew Delbanco passes over the story dismissively in his biography by commenting that Melville "was writing commentaries in the form of fiction,"¹³ while the story's sexual imagery is particularly blatant: from the anal imagery

of the "cool, deep glen, shady among harboring hills ... and soiled with the mud of Fleet Street" (316) that marks the entrance to the Paradise of Bachelors; to Blood River and the ravine of Black Notch "sunk among many Plutonian, shaggy-wooded mountains" (326) which Robyn Wiegman describes as "a dark hellish entrance into the vagina";¹⁴ to the phallic rising and falling piston which stamps the paper; and to the spermatic "white, wet, woolly-looking stuff, not unlike the albuminous part of an egg, soft boiled" (331) which is turned in to paper.

Ultimately, however, the effort to show how these symbolic elements interact ideologically to reveal the social and intellectual currents and formations of the 1850s seems hampered not by the ingenuity and imaginativeness of the critical engagement but by the nature of the symbols at the critics' disposal. One wonders, given the static representations of men and women offered by the story, how one could disagree with Sylvia Jenkins Cook that it is Melville's "outside story that embodies his most extreme sense of the otherness that existed for him in both women and poor people."¹⁵ The effort to read these static figures also leads to interpretations which overreach the material at hand. David Dowling's claim, for instance, that "the women factory workers are significantly both book producers and victims of capitalism" is driven more by his need to fashion an argument about the entrepreneurship of authors faced with market

conditions than it is by the story itself.¹⁶ In abstracting paper production to book production Dowling misrepresents the fact that the paper made in the mill is for several named purposes—"sermons, lawyers' briefs, physicians' prescriptions, love-letters, marriage certificates, bills of divorce, registers of births, death-warrants" (333)—but not for books.

The impulse to read Melville's symbols as coherently connected is taken one stage further by Cindy Weinstein. Rather than seeing "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids", like Delbanco, as a failure of the literary imagination, she reads it as an allegory and part of a more pervasive and self-conscious attempt by American writers to contest the ideology that labor and the work ethic were capable of delivering personal progress and fulfillment, especially when jobs were increasingly becoming mechanized and monotonous. By revealing its artifice, Weinstein argues, not only is Melville's literary labor entwined with the labor of the factory girls, but the self-evident artifice of allegory and the flatness of the story's characters "is itself allegorical ... of cultural anxieties about changing relations between labor and agency."¹⁷

Read as an allegory full of symbols, then, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" has produced a criticism which, although predominantly historicist in intention, makes use of Melville's symbols of sex and gender, labor and leisure, for the purpose of allegorizing in the

broadest possible fashion the story's representations of hierarchies of gender difference and of market conditions for writers. Casting the internal contents of a story as an allegory and then making claims about the external allegorical function of these contents, however, is a particularly gratuitous separation of a text from its conditions of production. It is a method over-reliant on an unbroken chain of correspondences which are both internal—between the symbols and imagery of the two parts of the story—and external—between the story's imagery and symbols and the historical conditions of labor, gender, industrialization and commercialized authorship. But how different does the story become if the “plain facts” of paper are brought to the fore?

While the source for the first part of the story was a series of dinners Melville attended in December 1849 during a trip to London, the second part draws on his visit to a paper mill in Dalton in late January 1851 after he had moved from New York City the previous year to Pittsfield in Berkshire County.¹⁸ The only knowledge we have of Melville's visit to the mill comes from two letters: one sent by Melville to Evert Duyckinck on 12 February 1851; the other from Melville's sister Augusta to one of his other sisters, Helen, which identifies Melville's companions on his trip to be his wife, his mother-in-law and another of his sisters, Frances. Melville's letter to Duyckinck is stamped with the paper-maker's mark—“Carson's Dalton MA”—beside which Melville has

annotated the words “—about 5 miles from here, North East. I went there & got a sleigh-load of this paper. A great neighborhood for authors, you see, is Pittsfield.”¹⁹ The paper Melville returned with on his sleigh was the paper on which he finished writing Moby-Dick later in 1851 and on which he wrote various letters through 1851 and 1852.²⁰

Even though it was a relatively small town, Dalton was home to five paper mills when Melville visited, all of which were powered by water from the Housatonic River, which went on to flow past Melville’s home in Pittsfield. Berkshire County more generally was an important paper-producing area of the country and in 1857 housed forty-three mills. Lee, a town in the south of the county, produced more paper than any other town in the US in 1840.²¹ It was to Lee, according to an earlier letter from Augusta to Helen dated 21 December 1850, that the “expedition ... to get a supply of paper at the manufactory” was originally planned.²² As well as no doubt trying to puncture Duyckinck’s metropolitan sense of superiority, it is the existence of this paper-making industry rather than the network of writers in Berkshire County—who, in addition to Hawthorne, included William Cullen Bryant, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Fanny Kemble, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Catharine Maria Sedgwick—to which Melville seems to be referring when he writes of it being a “great neighborhood for authors.”²³

Exactly which mill Melville visited in Dalton has been the source of some confusion. Harrison Elliott first pointed to the Defiance Mill as the location of Melville's visit,²⁴ but although David Carson did build this mill with Joseph Chamberlin in 1823, sole ownership passed to Henry Chamberlin in 1840.²⁵ Following Jay Leyda, Marvin Fisher and Philip Young, and later Hershel Parker, identify the Old Red Mill as the location of Melville's visit.²⁶ Once again, although Carson was connected with this mill from its origins in 1809, he quickly sold his interest to Zenas Crane who became sole owner of the mill in 1826. By the time Melville visited in 1851, the Old Red Mill was owned and run by Crane's sons. The only mill in Dalton with which Carson was connected by 1851 was the Old Berkshire Mill which had passed into the hands of his sons following his retirement in 1849.²⁷ From the descriptions of the paper made at the mill in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," paper historian A.J. Valente concludes that "the most likely possibility would be the Berkshire Mill in Dalton."²⁸ By the time Melville wrote the story, Carson had moved to Pittsfield where he became president of Pittsfield Bank when it was chartered in 1853, a position he maintained until his death in 1858.

It is unclear whether Melville had any financial dealings with Carson, but the decision to go to Dalton for his paper, rather than to Lee, is interesting not because of what it tells us about Melville himself but what it indicates about

the world of paper of which Melville was part as a writer. What distinguished the Old Berkshire Mill along with the other mills in Dalton was their production of fine, high-quality paper. Although Cupid, who guides the narrator through the factory, makes a distinction between the foolscap being made by the machine at the time of the narrator's visit and the "[c]ream-laid and royal sheets" which represent, he says, their "finer work" (333), it is important to note that the stationery being produced in the mill was still considered fine paper. The mills in Lee, on the other hand, were distinguished by their production of lower-quality paper, often in rolls rather than sheets, which was sold for the purpose of printing books and newspapers, including two of the largest circulating in the 1840s: Horace Greeley's New York Tribune and James Gordon Bennet's New York Herald. The demand for paper of this kind fueled a mill-building boom in Lee in the 1830s and 1840s. The mills in Dalton, whilst also increasingly servicing the New York City market, produced the cut, ruled, and stamped paper for the purposes Melville lists in his story. While both Lee and Dalton benefited from Berkshire County's pure spring water which reduced the likelihood of discoloration of the paper and added to its strength and longevity, Dalton was set beneath a hill of quartz which distilled this water even further and made it particularly suited to the production of high-quality paper.

This distinction between paper-making districts indicates the kind of concentration and specialization one would expect to find in a maturing paper-making industry, but it also demands a reassessment of Melville's interest in and attitude towards the paper economy. Quite why the destination of Melville's family outing changed from Lee to Dalton is not a matter of record. The fact that Melville had a choice, however, and that he opted for the fine paper of Dalton, enmeshes him in the contingencies of the local economies of paper which were facilitating the expansion of print more generally, but of which books, periodicals, and newspapers were only one part. Such contingencies offer a way of revisiting "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" in order to focus attention on the "plain facts" of paper and paper making in the story, especially when, as Christina Lupton writes, "the more simply we think of ourselves returning to the page, the more assuredly we lay the grounds for new theoretical ventures by which to find, in our simplest references to paper, new proof that it was never simply there."²⁹

The means by which paper was "never simply there" were more apparent than ever as increased demand saw the introduction of new technologies at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For McLaughlin, this mechanized production of paper after the eighteenth century created an ideological paradox. While paper was increasingly the means for the

dissemination of knowledge and information, it was simultaneously a medium marked by ephemerality and perishability given the nature of modern manufacturing where chemical additives hastened its decomposition. Losing, literally, its material support or substance, in these conditions the paper of mass mediacy, he argues, "exceed[s] the limits of the classic concept of the work as self-contained substance."³⁰ "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" offers a way of modifying this argument about mass mediacy in an American context, however, since what differentiated the paper Melville bought in Dalton was precisely its comparative substantiveness and longevity.

While the first part of the story, by way of contrast, and the second part more directly, offer a vision of industrial mechanization, the vision offered needs to be balanced against the propensity of fine paper makers to be notably discriminating in their adoption of new technology. They were certainly quick to take up the paper-making machine—the "great machine, which cost us twelve thousand dollars only last autumn," which Cupid shows Melville's narrator (331) and which Melville would have seen in action in Dalton—since, once initial teething problems had been modified, it was the one piece of technology guaranteed to dramatically increase production without unduly compromising paper quality.³¹ Rolled out before him "like some long Eastern manuscript," the narrator says, "lay stretched one continuous length of iron

frame-work—multitudinous and mystical, with all sorts of rollers, wheels, and cylinders, in slowly-measured and unceasing motion" (331). That the machine itself reminds him of a paper manuscript, and an ancient one that has withstood the test of time, suggests that the narrator is watching not a flimsy or perishable product forming before him. When he asks his guide, Cupid, if the "thin cobweb" of pulp ever breaks, Cupid replies that "[i]t never is known to tear a hair's point" (333).³²

The strength and durability of their paper was paramount to Dalton paper makers. The customers for Crane & Co.'s bank note paper, for instance, "repeatedly specified Fourdrinier paper"³³ and the quality of this paper, together with the innovation in 1844 of silk threads to prevent counterfeiting and denomination alteration, meant that Crane's was soon supplying banks in Boston and New York and, by 1879, was the sole supplier of the paper used for official US government currency. But Dalton paper makers were much more reluctant to utilize the kinds of chemicals or new technologies which might affect the quality of the paper they produced. When Melville's narrator stops briefly in the mill's rag room, for example, he observes girls standing before rag-cutting blades which are "immovably fixed," sharpened by hand, and across which "the girls forever dragged long strips of rags, washed white, picked from baskets at one side; thus ripping asunder every seam, and converting the tatters almost to lint" (329). While

the narrator makes much of the way that the blades are turned outward from the girls and their similarity to condemned state-prisoners being led to their doom by an officer whose sword would also face in that same direction, it is the hand-cutting process and the washed rather than bleached rags the girls are shredding which indicates the fine paper mill in which the narrator finds himself. Mechanical rag cutters could not open seams as deftly as hand cutters and neither could they remove the buttons that the narrator notices "are all dropped off" from the old shirts and which he imagines may have come from the Paradise of Bachelors (330). The vision of industrial labor shaping the story at this point is one which is drawing on residual paper-making techniques which survive the advent of faster, machine processes which David Carson himself questioned when asking of another mill owner "whether the machine cleans as well as formerly when dressed by girls."³⁴

Fine paper makers also continued to use wooden rather than iron stock beaters and were cautious about introducing mechanical dryers and bleach boilers. They were also conscious of running their machines at the right speeds to maintain paper quality. While Aaron Winter is only the latest critic to note that the nine-minute cycle of the pulp machine in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" suggests the nine-month period of the human gestation cycle,³⁵ such a reading would privilege the symbolic unity of the story over

its sensitivity to the paper-making process. When he is standing before the machine with Cupid, the narrator watches the pulp pour onto a "wide, sloping board" and listens and watches as Cupid takes him through the stages of the process by which the pulp is turned from a "thin and quivering" state into something resembling first "mere dragon-fly wing" (331) and then, after passing over and between various cylinders, something that looks like paper. That Melville's narrator uses "stuff" as the collective noun for the "white, wet, woolly-looking" pulp signals a more general familiarity with paper-making vocabulary, since pulp was stored in a "stuff-chest" before it entered the head box of the paper-making machine, but he seems much less familiar with the details of the fine paper-making process on a machine. The narrator is "amazed at the elongation, interminable convolutions, and deliberate slowness of the machine" (332) although Cupid reveals that the process only takes nine minutes, a fact he goes on to demonstrate.

The word "deliberate" is meaningful here in both of its primary connotations. While the "interminable" process may appear to the narrator to be a sign of carefulness, the "slowness" may also be intentional. Fine paper makers, like those in Dalton, according to Judith McGaw, "exhibited conservatism by running their machines more slowly" than news paper and other lower-quality paper mills and they did so to ensure the strength and quality of the paper they were

producing.³⁶ By 1887, paper machines were capable of running at two hundred and fifty feet per minute.³⁷ Even given the fact that Melville visited the mill in Dalton over thirty years earlier when speeds might have only been half this figure, or less, the nine minutes it takes for Cupid's name to pass from pulp to cut foolscap is indeed a long time, as the narrator points out. Cupid, however, understands this to be the cycle required for fine paper making and the "patronizing air" (332) the narrator senses in his guide suggests the importance of a knowledge about specialized machinery, carefully tuned to the production of fine paper, in this sector of the paper industry which constantly had to balance the demands of quality against scale and speed of output. It was a sector which understood the importance of managed, rather than indiscriminate, innovation in the production process. As well as the slowness of the machine, the stamping and ruling machines deployed in fine paper mills producing stationery, and which the narrator describes in the story, are indicators of this. It is through the incorporation of these kinds of details during the narrator's tour of the mill that his experience is located alongside the "plain facts" of fine paper making.

As the observer of this process, the seedsman also repays further attention. At one level, he completes the circle of sex and gender in the story and the material he uses to distribute his seed duly takes on a prophylactic role in the context of the machine room which the narrator describes as

being "stifling with a strange, blood-like, abdominal heat, as if here, true enough, were finally being developed the germinous particles lately seen" (331). Yet privileging the symbolic function of the seedsman and his envelopes in the story works to relegate the primary purpose for his visiting the mill, which is to purchase paper from the manufacturer and thus eliminate the costs of the wholesale supplier now that his business stretches "through all the Eastern and Northern areas, and even fell into the far soil of Missouri and the Carolinas" (324) and means that he is using envelopes at the rate of "several hundreds of thousands in a year" (325). He explains that once folded, filled with seed, stamped and "superscribed with the nature of the seeds contained," these envelopes "assume not a little the appearance of business-letters ready for the mail" (325). The scale, reach, and manner of the seedsman's business locate him at the heart of a paper network facilitated by a series of changes not only to the manufacture of paper in the mid-nineteenth century but also to changes in postal legislation which in turn provided impetus for the growth of a culture of letters outside business and demand for ever increasing quantities of paper.

A slew of postal Acts in the late 1840s and early 1850s completely altered the postal terrain. The number of post offices and designated postal roads increased rapidly; flat rates brought down the prohibitive cost of sending a letter, which was often higher than for sending newspapers and

commercial items; and the principle of prepayment was introduced, in the form of postage stamps or prepaid envelopes, although this was not mandatory until 1855.³⁸ Once envelopes were not charged as an extra piece of paper, their manufacture increased and was mechanized. An envelope folding machine was first patented in the US in 1849.³⁹ If the prophylactic symbolism of the envelope is reinforced by the reliability of fine paper which "never is known to tear a hair's point," then such fine paper is also vital for the protection of a business interest of such importance and value and whose expansion and profitability is enhanced by the coordination of paper and postal technologies.

David Henkin has estimated that after money and photographs, "the next most popular enclosures in mid-century letters may have been agricultural samples—typically in the form of seeds" and that this was not just because of businessmen like the seedsman but because individuals exchanged seeds once postage rates came down.⁴⁰ Increasingly the post became a place where the words of individuals and of businesses came into contact and circulated alongside one another. This has important consequences for thinking about the relationship between writing and the market since it reverses an understanding of a pre-existing culture of writing being altered by the increasing influence of the market; in the case of letters, it is the existing business market which is being intruded upon by individuals. Correspondents were, as

Henkin suggests, "entering a terrain stamped by the culture of the market."⁴¹ And Melville was certainly already conscious of the connections between paper and the post. Ishmael claims that the classification of whales in terms of paper sizes in Moby-Dick is "a ponderous task" to which "no ordinary letter-sorter in the Post-Office is equal."⁴²

This relationship between paper and the post in the US is historically even more entwined, since the postal routes which developed in the first half of the nineteenth century often duplicated the rag routes by which paper manufacturers transported old rags to their mills. Alvin Wolcott, one of the early post riders in Berkshire County who delivered mail as well as newspapers, advertized his services in the Berkshire Chronicle in 1788 and 1789 and made clear that "he will take in linen rags in pay for the newspapers at the store of his brother" and that "linen rags will be taken in lieu of cash."⁴³ A depot was eventually established in what doubled as the post office of West Stockbridge early in the nineteenth century; it became the centre for rag collecting activity after "bins went up in stores and taverns around every small village and hamlet" and "every fortnight a designated teamster traveled the county stopping in turn at each collecting site."⁴⁴ So developed did this Berkshire County network become that the routes were divided into franchises.

Owners of paper mills also followed the tradition set by Benjamin Franklin and combined their paper interests with

postal administration. While Franklin's training as a printer and his newspaper editing are well known, he also established the first rag warehouse in Philadelphia, helped establish or supply many more paper mills, and co-owned with Anthony Newhouse the Trout Creek paper mill on whose paper he printed the 1748 edition of Poor Richard's Almanac, complete with his personalized watermark. In 1793 he published a pamphlet on the skills of Chinese paper makers and in both Melville's treatment of the binding and cover of The Red Rover in his 1850 review and his classification of whales by paper size there is the echo of a poem attributed to Franklin which classifies men and women by paper quality. While the fop, according to Franklin, is gilt paper, poets are "the mere waste-paper of mankind." And if "Mechanics, servants, farmers, and so forth/Are copy paper of inferior worth," then the maiden is "innocently sweet/She's fair white-paper, an unsullied sheet."⁴⁵ Franklin also took full advantage of his position as postmaster for Philadelphia to help the circulation of his own newspaper. As Wayne Fuller points out, "editor-postmasters could, by special arrangements, send their newspapers with their mail carriers and at the same time prevent their competitors from doing so."⁴⁶ While paper making, newspaper editing and the post had become specialist and more discrete enterprises in the nineteenth century, there were still several instances of mill owners becoming local postmasters in Berkshire County: Thomas Hurlbut was appointed

as postmaster for South Lee in October 1826; Samuel Sturges, who owned the Greenwater Mill, was made postmaster in East Lee in September 1848; and Thomas G. Carson, son of David Carson, became postmaster in Dalton in 1857.⁴⁷

As the mill-building boom exhausted the local supply of rags, the sourcing of rags also became a major problem for paper makers and this was as true in Europe as it was the United States. Melville is alert to this in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" when Cupid tells the narrator that, of the rags in the mill, some come "from the country round about; some from far over sea—Leghorn and London" (330). Making the connection to the bachelors he knew in London, the seedsman speculates that the rags may be the shirts of those same bachelors. While this moment serves as a handy pivot to link the two parts of the story and draws the maids into the orbit of the bachelors such that the gendered discussion of sexuality and sterility is given further impetus, it is another example of how following the allegorical reading of "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" sidesteps the economy of paper making. Leghorn provides not just an alliterative connection to London, but a very practical connection to the paper making taking place in the mill.

The anglicized name for Livorno, Leghorn was a Tuscan port city which in the nineteenth century became a major exporter of linen rags. Fine paper manufacturers like those in Dalton

preferred linen because, despite being more expensive than cotton, its fibers were thicker and stronger. The paper produced from linen had a "hardness, or 'rattle,'" which "gave it that most enduring quality."⁴⁸ Italy was a good source for these manufacturers because linen was still the preferred fabric in the making of traditional clothing. As the 1850s saw an increasingly competitive international market for rags many countries began to impose export restrictions. In 1855, in response to complaints from British paper manufacturers that the US was buying up foreign rags, the British parliament increased the tax on rag exports to reduce the number of British rags going overseas. The same had happened in the Netherlands the year before and in 1857 France banned all rag exports. Spain and the German states also took steps to protect their domestic supplies. The papal states banned exports in 1857 but other states continued to export until 1865. In contrast, Leghorn opened a new port to replace the old Medici port in 1854 as a way of coping with increased trade with the US.

The accretion of these details is an important part of Melville's engagement with the material economy of paper. In the contemplation of his subject, Melville's emphasis upon fine paper shows an imagination which does not do what Derrida claims is often the problem with reductive treatments of paper, that is, to "reduce paper to the function or topos of an inert surface laid out beneath some markings, a substratum

meant for sustaining them, for ensuring their survival or existence."⁴⁹ To think of paper in this way would be to see it only as the material support for printed products whose workings and exchanges take precedence over what lies beneath the appearance of a surface. Rather, according to Derrida, paper is "a labyrinth whose walls return the echoes of the voice or song it carries itself" such that paper "is utilized in an experience involving the body, beginning with hands, eyes, voice, ears" and in whose "richness and multiplicity of these resources, this multimedia has always proclaimed its inadequacy and its finitude."⁵⁰

In watching the paper being made on the machine, the seedsman narrator of Melville's story is brought into contact with the economy of paper in which the paradoxes of its labyrinthine qualities, its "inadequacy" and yet its "finitude," are made evident to him. The production of this material is given a life before it enters the economy of print and the process of exchange and the narrator's contemplation of this time of production dominates the second part of the diptych. If one important strand of the treatment of this part of the story is to see it as an allegory of the dangers of mechanization, such treatments rely unquestioningly on linking mechanization, the mechanization of paper making and the marketization of writing and authorship. It is this chain of correspondences which I want to unpick and which, I want to argue, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids"

itself, through the figure of the seedsman narrator, can be seen to break apart. One way in which to start thinking about this is to make a distinction between the machine-produced paper and the more abstract concept of continual movement which emerges in Melville's treatment of paper-making, since it is the latter that is the cause of the "awe" that affects the narrator and which he says is "so specially terrible to me" in his observation of the machine. While "machinery of this ponderous, elaborate sort," he says, "strikes, in some moods strange dread into the human heart," it is the machine itself which is subject to some more dramatic "metallic necessity," or an "unbudging fatality which governed it" (333).

The narrator reveals himself here to be quite familiar with seeing machinery in operation. The fact that it is only in "some moods" that machinery can have this effect suggests experience of machinery in other moods against which such a reaction may be compared. The first half of the story too easily creates an image of the narrator as a somewhat dreamy character, rather than the experienced and successful businessman he is in the second part. Someone who distributes hundreds of thousands of letters is no stranger to the objects of mass production or the demands of a mass market. From all the evidence, the narrator is certainly not represented as an innocent coming into contact with machinery for the first time. So to distinguish between the mechanical apparatus of

paper making and the mysterious force which seems to control it is not just to raise questions about mechanization itself, but to question the reliability of a correspondence between abstract process (the invisible force) and literal instantiation (the machine). Or, one might say, between "hideous and intolerable allegory" and "plain facts." It is in assuming the viability of correspondences of this kind, between the representation of mechanized paper making in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" and the reality of marketized authorship of mid-nineteenth-century America, that readings of the story too often rely.

It is also necessary to understand the position of fine paper in this process. In contrast to the "autocrat cunning of the machine" (333) which sends the narrator giddy and makes him see the pallid faces of the maids in the "pallid incipience of the pulp" (334), the cut paper that drops off the end of the machine sets the narrator thinking in different ways. In Melville's words it sets him wondering rather than wandering. As the narrator watches the paper "dropping, dropping, dropping" off the machine he says that his "mind ran on in wonderings of those strange uses to which those thousand sheets would eventually be put" (333); while considering the abstract force driving the machine he stands "spell-bound and wandering in my soul" (333-34) as he watches the forming paper go past him. So it is at the end of the paper-making process, when the paper is subdivided into the raw material of cultural

usage, in all its myriad dimensions—the “sermons, lawyers’ briefs, physicians’ prescriptions, love-letters, marriage certificates, bills of divorce, registers of births, death-warrants” (333)—that the paper stops being a part of that “unbudging fatality” that one might argue is at the root of the correspondences note above. It is at this end point that any correspondence between mechanically produced product and abstract process is broken because, as the narrator says, “[a]ll sorts of writings would be writ on those now vacant things” and, as if to substantiate this, at the end of his list of examples he concludes, “and so on, without end” (333).

There is no correspondence, then, between the mass-produced paper sheets and the uses to which they will be put. While the narrator thinks of John Locke when he sees the blank sheets of paper, when he contemplates the “autocratic cunning of the machine” he sees in the pulp the faces of the factory girls. In the first instance there is an associative thinking which delegates the metaphor of blank mind and blank paper to Locke; in the second there is a kind of mesmerized thinking which sees the maids literally embodied on the paper. The loose connection of the first is juxtaposed against the strict correspondence of the second. The very lack of connection as the paper drops off the machine between paper, process, and end use would also seem to undermine a reading of the story that would want to make a virtue of allegorical equivalence between story and cultural condition. The narrator’s

"wonderings" at this point are suggestive and imply multiplicity and unknowability in the "strange" uses that might be made of the paper, whereas his "wandering" is, paradoxically, not at all mobile and all too fixed like the "unbudging fatality" driving the machine. He is, as he says, "spell-bound."

The chronological sequencing of the story, which draws to a conclusion through the narrator's linking of the maids and the pulp, might appear to give this moment diegetic privilege. But it does so only because of the way in which it appears to ratify the story's internal correspondences between the bachelors, the maids, and the paper-making process, the seeds of which the narrator has been planting all the way through the second part of the story. So, when he first sees the maids he notes that "At rows of blank-looking counters sat rows of blank-looking girls with blank, white folders in their blank hands, all blankly folding blank paper" (328). Of the two maids responsible for ruling the paper, the one handling the blank paper has a brow that is "young and fair," while the one handling the ruled paper at the other end of the process has a brow that is "ruled and wrinkled" (328). Seeing the maids embossed on the pulp ratifies the narrator's earlier belief that the girls "did not so much seem accessory wheels to the general machinery as mere cogs to the wheel" (328).

The issue here is whether to grant precedence to the ending of the narrative or the ending of the paper-making

process and whether the strategic organization of correspondences in the narrator's account outweigh the one moment when correspondence is most clearly destabilized. The fact that Melville visited the paper mill in Dalton and the pointedness with which he drew attention in his letter to Duyckinck to the paper-maker's stamp, the paper-making industry of Berkshire County, and his identification as a writer amongst other writers in the area are decisive factors here and help identify Melville's own understanding of his place within an economy and a culture of paper. The annotations might be seen simply as adding some biographical interest to the letter were it not for the fact that the purpose of the rest of the letter, apart from some thoughts on Hawthorne, is to refuse Duyckinck's request that Melville submit a contribution and a daguerreotype of himself for Holden's Dollar Magazine which Duyckinck was due to begin editing with his brother George in April 1851.

Telling Duyckinck "I am not in the humor to write the kind of thing you need," Melville rejects the invitation for the daguerreotype not only on the grounds that he does not possess one but because, since "almost everybody is having his 'mug' engraved nowadays ... to see one's 'mug' in a magazine, is presumptive evidence that he's a nobody.... I respectfully decline being oblivionated by a Daguerretype."⁵¹ In the context of this refusal to participate in magazine culture, the purpose to which paper is put becomes all the more

significant. Against the paper as it exists in the mill, ready for "[a]ll sorts of writing ... without end," stands the paper of the pages of Holden's Dollar Magazine which Melville refuses to fill with the "unbudging fatality" not only of an equivalence of his image but also the kind of written piece for which Duyckinck was asking, a "'dash of salt spray,'"⁵² or the very kind of popular sea piece which Melville had become known for in the early part of his writing career but from which, at that very moment in his writing of Moby-Dick, and on fine paper he had bought in Dalton, he was trying to distance himself. It is the pointedness with which Melville differentiates between the paper that marks a "great neighborhood for authors" and the printed culture of magazines he thinks will bring about his oblivion that evidences the sharp distinctions between the economy of paper and the economy of print.

The figure of the narrator in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" also becomes all the more intriguing if, as I am suggesting, the end of the paper-making process rather than the end of the narrative should take interpretative precedence. What exactly are we to make of the story's emphasis upon those correspondences that have given the story its symbolic and allegorical leverage and produced such creative critical accounts of gender and biology and labor and authorship? Given the propensity of the narrators in Melville's short fiction, particularly in "Bartleby, the

Scrivener" and "Benito Cereno," to offer a version of events which is subtly convincing and yet as interrogative of the narrators themselves and their subject position as it is of the events narrated, it is important not to simply trust a narrator who continually reaches for symbolic correspondence when faced with the "plain facts" of paper making.

As the framing voice, one could argue that the symbols belong to the narrator rather than to Melville. It is the clumsy groping for connection which Melville's narrative questions as much as it ratifies. One can almost hear the seedsman's mind spinning when he picks up the reference to London in Cupid's response to his question about the sourcing of the rags in order to make the link with the bachelors. And Cupid's misunderstanding of the narrator's question about bachelor's buttons, taking him to mean the flowers rather than the buttons from the shirts of bachelors, only emphasizes the idiosyncrasy of the narrator's perspective and the effort required on his part to produce correspondences which are not obvious to Cupid. Establishing that the factory manager is a bachelor with another question, it is the narrator who appears to be the one creating rather than merely identifying the connections. It is he who describes the "white, wet, wooly-looking stuff" as "not unlike the albuminous part of an egg" and he who immediately then describes the machine room's "abdominal heat" in which "were being finally developed the germinous particles" (331); he who, more generally, constructs

his experience in the second half of the diptych in the light of the first half. That the first part of the story has attracted much less critical attention than the second part is primarily because its role in the text is ancillary; it is the pretext upon which the second part of the story is stamped in relief. As I alluded to above, the seedsman is not just a businessman whose profession locates him as a cipher of coition, fertilized or obstructed; he is also a seedsman in his role as narrator, planting the literary images and scenes which can be tended and harvested in the second part of his story.

If this form has been read by some, like Delbanco, as a sign of the weakness of Melville's composition then a different sense emerges if the narrator is compared to the narrators of "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and "Benito Cereno." There we find narrators whose blind spots and misreadings are the object of analysis as much as they are the literary architecture by which that analysis proceeds. In "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," Melville offers up a narrator with a different reading practice, one who proliferates connection and correspondence to such a degree across the two parts of the diptych that it is possible to see him as another of those narrators whose partiality and idiosyncrasies the reader is asked to contemplate. If the connections between bachelors and maids, leisure and work, are delegated to the narrator's voice by Melville the better to

unmoor them from secure surroundings, then it is the very rigidity of the narrator's compulsion for correspondence in the diptych form which has about it that "unbudging fatality" he contemplates as he watches the machine and as Cupid tells him that the machine "must go ... just that very way, and at that very pace you plainly see it go" (333).

Standing in stark juxtaposition is the alternative the narrator touches on but refuses: the "strange uses" to which the paper dropping off the end of the machine might be put "without end." "In 'Bartleby,' it is the retrospective contemplation of his scrivener that serves the purpose of enabling the lawyer's observation of his own identity at a distance safe enough for it not to do too much damage. A similar process occurs for the seedsman." It is facing the machine, as he paces, as if in contemplation, "to and fro along the involved machine, still humming with its play" that the narrator is "struck ... by the inevitability as the evolvment-power in all its motions." This immediately after thinking of Locke and his understanding of the human mind at birth as a sheet of blank paper and as "something destined to be scribbled on, but what sort of characters no soul might tell" (333). The shift here between inevitability and indefiniteness is one which clearly unnerves the seedsman and causes him to stand spell-bound and wandering in his soul.

What I am suggesting the narrator sees when he watches the paper dropping off the end of the machine, and what Melville

is asking the reader to see in the narrator, is something which confounds trust in correspondence and inevitability. The machine illustrates for the narrator in physical form the rigidity of his own mental need for control, harmonization, and correspondence and yet, despite being driven by the inevitable force of continual motion, the machine still produces blank paper which, at this stage before it reaches the maids the narrator encounters in the folding room, is literally and philosophically unruly. It is not, then, the force driving the machine that confounds the narrator so much as the failure of this force to replicate itself in the object produced, that fine, high-quality paper of substance which is for uses "without end." In this reading, the story becomes almost a paean to the possibilities of paper before it enters an economy of print. It is in paper as material form, whose manufacture and social embeddedness the story so subtly and meticulously details, that Melville is interested. Rather than as merely a topos to support the markings of print culture, paper in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" becomes the location of the narrator's discomfort and his recognition that writing, or scribbling, will only "disavow an absolute referent and gesture to a world of correspondences over which the writer has no control."⁵³

Correspondence, of course, can signify both a sense of relation or agreement as well as communication by letter. This double meaning is not insignificant for thinking about

Melville's imagination of paper and the post in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids." The narrator's discomfort follows almost immediately upon his writing Cupid's name on a scrap piece of paper and dropping it into the pulp to test the speed of the machine. As the piece of paper containing yet another form of correspondence—of name to person—drops off the machine, "with my 'Cupid' half faded out of it, and still moist and warm," the narrator says "[m]y travels were at an end, for here was the end of the machine" (332). Christina Lupton suggests "the more closely we look at ink on paper, the more the meaning of the characters recedes from us; the more we think about paper and print, the more cause we have to suspect that they fall beyond the reach of intellection."⁵⁴ In "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," the narrator is pitched into a crisis of certainty after just such an observation of the marks he has cast on paper. Against all attempts at regulation—intricate machinery, workers, the working schedule, the speed of the machine which takes exactly nine minutes to turn pulp into paper, the foolscap size of the uniformly blank paper, the narrative voice which seeks balance through symbol and correspondence—stand all those kinds of writing which will unpredictably and inadequately be scribbled upon the paper which predictably drops off the end of the machine. The narrator's solution is to hurry his exit and retreat to an "inscrutable nature" which can be trusted not to pass judgment on his final efforts at

harmonization when he exclaims, in an ending which echoes the final words of the lawyer in "Bartleby" and ties the two parts of the diptych together, "Oh Paradise of Bachelors! and oh! Tartarus of Maids!" (335).



Melville's visit to the Old Berkshire Mill in Dalton in the winter of 1851 and his imagining of what he saw there in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" actually say very little about the economy of printing and publishing which had become the leading industry in New York by 1860.⁵⁵ Instead, these events situate Melville in rural west Massachusetts, in a county dominated by the production of paper, and as a purchaser with a specialized knowledge about the material on which his writing career flowered and wilted. His letter to Duyckinck shows that paper was as important to Melville's understanding of himself as a writer as was the antebellum book market or the commercial understanding of authorship David Dowling suggests generated so many anxieties about "the craft" of writing.⁵⁶ Traveling to a paper mill by sleigh and buying one's own store of fine paper is just as likely to have ratified Melville's sense of himself as a craftsman as it was to make him feel anxious about it. And the fact that he completed Moby-Dick on this paper refutes Michael Newbury's claim that in "The Tartarus of Maids" Melville "suggests that meaningfully legible texts and acts of writing simply do not

or cannot emerge though mechanical production on an industrial scale."⁵⁷

Legibility is a problem not because of mechanization for Melville but because of the status of paper as a medium of communication. When in "Bartleby" the story draws to a close with the rumor that the copyist once worked at the Dead Letter Office, the lawyer asks himself that perennially confusing question: "Dead letters! Does it not sound like dead men?"⁵⁸ The obvious answer is "no," but by confounding the possibility of any redemptive correspondence between even the sound of letters and men it provides an apt addition to a story where the relationship between the lawyer and Bartleby is negotiated through the reading and writing (or not) of marks on paper.⁵⁹ The prospect of correspondence either at the internal level of textual harmony or the external level of social allegory is just as profoundly questioned in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids." Once again it is the material form of paper that Melville locates at the heart of this quandary. For Derrida paper "has a history that is brief but complex" and from which we may now be retreating.⁶⁰ Any accounting of its archive would benefit from turning to the writing of Melville the better to understand the "plain facts" which exist before paper's journey through the cycle of publication, distribution, and circulation in a print economy.

Notes

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¹ "Monthlies," New York Times, 3 April 1855, 4. All further quotations are from this page of the newspaper.

² Herman Melville, The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces, 1839-1860, vol. 9 of The Writings of Herman Melville, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1987), 316. Further references to "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

³ Kevin McLaughlin, Paperwork: Fiction and Mass Mediacy in the Paper Age (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 116. The following all contain discussion of Melville in this context: Nicholas Bromell, By the Sweat of the Brow: Literature and Labor in Antebellum America (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1993); Cindy Weinstein, The Literature of Labor and the Labors of Literature: Allegory in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995); Sheila Post-Lauria, Correspondent Colorings: Melville in the Marketplace (Amherst and Boston: Univ. of Massachusetts Press,

1996); Michael Newbury, Figuring Authorship in Antebellum America (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997); Leon Jackson, The Business of Letters: Authorial Economies in Antebellum America (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008); David Dowling, Capital Letters: Authorship in the Antebellum Literary Market (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2009); and John Evelev, Tolerable Entertainment: Herman Melville and Professionalism in Antebellum New York (Amherst and Boston: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2009).

⁴ Jacques Derrida, Paper Machine, trans. Rachel Bowlby, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2005), 65.

⁵ It is noticeable that the detailed understanding of the place of writers in the antebellum literary market is not matched by an understanding of the practicalities of writers writing. Other than the biographies, there are two exceptions in Melville's case. See Elizabeth Renker, Strike through the Mask: Herman Melville and the Scene of Writing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996) and Michael Kearns, Writing for the Street, Writing in the Garret: Melville, Dickinson, and Private Publication (Columbus: The Ohio State Univ. Press, 2010), 84-119.

⁶ This is not to say that Melville was not interested in a print economy or the materiality of the manufactured object and its exchange in a market. In his review of a new edition of James Fenimore Cooper's The Red Rover for the Literary

World in March 1850, Melville ignored the content and commented primarily on the book's binding and the horseshoe embossed on the cover. See Melville, The Piazza Tales, 237-38.

⁷ Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, or, The Whale, vol. 6 of The Writings of Herman Melville, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and the Newberry Library, 1988), 205.

⁸ C. G Hoffman, for instance, argued that "the two sections are too distinct for the contrast to be effective" ("Shorter Fiction of Herman Melville," South Atlantic Quarterly, 52 [July 1953], 424). Richard Chase described "The Paradise of Bachelors" as an undistinguished sketch "remaining a piece of hearty, jocose, rather clumsy wallowing in luxurious foods, drinks, and literary allusions which Melville liked to write from time to time" (Herman Melville: A Critical Study [New York: Macmillan, 1949], 159).

⁹ Newbury, Figuring Authorship, 63.

¹⁰ Dowling, Capital Letters, 143.

¹¹ Newbury, Figuring Authorship, 76.

¹² E. H. Eby, "Herman Melville's 'Tartarus of Maids,'" Modern Language Quarterly, 1 (March 1940), 100.

¹³ Andrew Delbanco, Melville: His World and Work (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 225.

¹⁴ Robyn Wiegman, "Melville's Geography of Gender," American Literary History, 1 (winter 1989), 742.

¹⁵ Sylvia Jenkins Cook, Working Women, Literary Ladies: The Industrial Revolution and Female Aspiration (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), 131.

¹⁶ Dowling, Capital Letters, 143.

¹⁷ Cindy Weinstein, The Literature of Labor and the Labors of Literature: Allegory in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 6.

¹⁸ Melville altered the location of the mill to give it a more mountainous setting than he would have encountered in Dalton.

¹⁹ Herman Melville to Evert Duyckinck, 12 February 1851, Correspondence, vol. 14 of The Writings of Herman Melville, ed. Lynn Horth, Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1993), 179.

²⁰ See Melville to Evert A. Duyckinck, 26 March 1851, Correspondence, 182-83; 7 November 1851, Correspondence, 208-10; Melville to Rufus W. Griswold, 19 December 1851, Correspondence, 215-17; Melville to the Editors of Literary World, 14 February 1852, Correspondence, 222-23; Melville to Nathaniel Hawthorne, 25 October 1852, Correspondence, 239-40. Melville was still using paper with the Carson stamp during the period when he was sending installments of Israel Potter to Putnam's. Herman Melville to G.P. Putnam; 9 November 1854; George Palmer Putnam Collection, Box 5 Folder 76; Department

of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

²¹ Judith A. McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine: Mechanization and Social Change in Berkshire Paper-Making, 1801-1885 (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), 10.

²² Quoted in Hershel Parker, Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1, 1819-1851 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996), 801.

²³ Two letters sent by Catherine Maria Sedgwick to Harper Brothers, on 8 and 25 September 1856, bear the same "Carson's Dalton" stamp as that on Melville's letter to Duyckinck. See Misc American Harper; Record ID 137550; Pierpont Morgan Library Dept. of Literary and Historical Manuscripts.

²⁴ Harrison Elliott, "A Century Ago: An Eminent Author Looked upon Paper and Papermaking," Paper Maker, 21 (1952), 55-58.

²⁵ McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine, 384.

²⁶ See Jay Leyda, The Melville Log, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), I, 403; Marvin Fisher, "Melville's 'Tartarus': The Deflowering of New England," American Quarterly, 23 (spring 1971), 79; Philip Young, "The Machine in Tartarus: Melville's Inferno," American Literature, 63 (June 1991), 214; Parker, Herman Melville, 810.

²⁷ McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine, 383.

²⁸ A. J. Valente, Rag Paper Manufacture in the United States, 1801-1900: A History, with Directories of Mills and Owners (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2010), 35.

²⁹ Christina Lupton, "The Theory of Paper: Skepticism, Common Sense, Poststructuralism," Modern Language Quarterly, 71 (December 2010), 427.

³⁰ McLaughlin, Paperwork, 27.

³¹ There were two kinds of paper machine in operation during this period: the Fourdrinier machine and the cylinder machine. A.J. Valente claims that Melville would have seen a cylinder machine in the Old Berkshire Mill as a machine of this sort was installed in 1832 (Rag Paper Manufacture, 35, 201). Daniel Pidgeon gave 1831 as the date of the arrival of a cylinder machine at the mill, "to be followed, twenty years later, by the Fourdrinier apparatus" (*Old-World Questions and New-World Answers* [London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1884], 107). This would put the arrival of the Fourdrinier very close to the date of Melville's visit. Given that the machine in Melville's story has only recently been installed and taking into account McGaw's argument that fine paper makers switched from cylinder machines to Fourdriniers during the 1840s and 50s because they made superior quality paper (Most Wonderful Machine, 160-62) it is very possible that Melville saw a Fourdrinier in action. The cost of the machine in the story also suggests a Fourdrinier; they were generally more expensive than cylinder

machines. For differences in the machines, see McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine, 96-103. The authoritative guide to paper-making machines is R. H. Clapperton, The Paper-Making Machine: Its Invention, Evolution and Development (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1967). If Melville did visit the Old Red Mill, he would certainly have seen a Fourdrinier in operation since Zenas Crane and Sons installed the first Fourdrinier in Berkshire County in this mill in 1843 (McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine, 161). Given the proximity of the mills in Dalton, it is not inconceivable that Melville visited more than one mill.

³² The principle change that industrial technology facilitated was the production of paper in a continuous sheet. One could only produce sheets when making paper by hand. Ten months after visiting the mill in Dalton, Melville imagined in a letter to Hawthorne a fantasy whereby "I should have a paper-mill established at one end of the house, and so have an endless riband of foolscap rolling in upon my desk; and upon that endless riband I should write a thousand—a million—billion thoughts" (Melville, Correspondence, 213). A riband of foolscap is, of course, a contradiction in terms since foolscap is a size of paper. A "riband of foolscap" rather than a "riband of paper," however, better conveys the point Melville is making: that foolscap, produced either by hand or through the cutting of machine-made paper, is paper on which one writes not on which one is published. The fantasy is of

continuous thought and writing unburdened by the breaks that sheets of paper necessitate.

³³ McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine, 183.

³⁴ Ibid., 182. "Cleaned" and "dressed" in this context mean prepared for the vat where rags were turned to pulp.

³⁵ Aaron Winter, "Seeds of Discontent: The Expanding Satiric Range of Melville's Transatlantic Diptychs," Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies, 8 (June 2006), 29.

³⁶ McGaw, Most Wonderful Machine, 182.

³⁷ Avi J. Cohen, "Technological Change as Historical Process: The Case of the U.S. Pulp and Paper Industry, 1915 -1940," The Journal of Economic History, 44 (September 1984), 787.

³⁸ See Wayne E. Fuller, The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972).

³⁹ Maynard H. Benjamin, The History of Envelopes, (Alexandria, VA: Envelope Manufactures Association, 2002), 29.

⁴⁰ David M. Henkin, The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communication in Nineteenth-Century America (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 60.

⁴¹ Ibid., 95.

⁴² Melville, Moby-Dick, 136.

⁴³ Leo L. Lincoln and Lee C. Drickamer, Postal History of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, 1790-1981 (Williamstown, MA: Lee C. Drickamer, 1982), 1.

⁴⁴ Valente, Rag Paper Manufacture, 9.

- ⁴⁵ Benjamin Franklin, "Paper; a Poem," in Dard Hunter, Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft (1947; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 239-40.
- ⁴⁶ Wayne E. Fuller, The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972), 25.
- ⁴⁷ Lincoln and Drickamer, Postal History, 54-55, 23.
- ⁴⁸ Valente, Rag Paper Manufacture, 12.
- ⁴⁹ Derrida, Paper Machine, 42.
- ⁵⁰ Derrida, Paper Machine, 44.
- ⁵¹ Herman Melville to Evert Duyckinck, February 12 1851, Correspondence, 180.
- ⁵² Ibid., 179.
- ⁵³ Lupton, "The Theory of Paper," 407.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 408.
- ⁵⁵ Dowling, Capital Letters, 18.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 19.
- ⁵⁷ Newbury, Figuring Authorship in Antebellum America, 65.
- ⁵⁸ Melville, The Piazza Tales, 45.
- ⁵⁹ See Graham Thompson, "'Dead Letters!...Dead Men?': The Rhetoric of the Office in Melville's 'Bartleby, the Scrivener,'" Journal of American Studies 34 (December 2000), 395-411.
- ⁶⁰ Derrida, Paper Machine, 43.