

“Taken Possession of”: The Reprinting and Reauthorship of Hawthorne's “Celestial Railroad” in the Antebellum Religious Press

Ryan Cordell <rcordell_at_gmail_dot_com>, Northeastern University

Abstract

In this article, Cordell demonstrates the transformative possibilities of large-scale digital archives for literary history and bibliography. Focusing on the recently-uncovered reprinting history of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, “The Celestial Railroad”, in the nineteenth-century press, the article demonstrates the central, shaping influence of religious readers and editors on Hawthorne's early career. Cordell shows how the best traditional bibliography of Hawthorne's works could be dramatically altered after only a few weeks' work in digital archives of newspapers, magazines, and books, and using relatively simple search tools. Such tools not only expanded the number of known witnesses of the text, but also uncovered numerous paratexts: introductions to the story, articles reviewing or referring to the story, sermons derived from the story, etc. This “social text” of “The Celestial Railroad,” Cordell argues, lay buried amidst millions of pages that accumulated in the nineteenth century and required modern tools to be uncovered. The article also discusses how digital interpretive tools can help make better sense of such enlarged bibliographies. By comparing multiple printings of “The Celestial Railroad” using the Juxta Collation tool from NINES, Cordell argues that textual fluidity can tell modern readers much about how texts were understood by their original publishers and readers. The many changes to and discussions of “The Celestial Railroad,” for instance, indicate that the tale was popular for its perceived anti-denominational message, but nonetheless deployed as a weapon in denominational debates.

Introduction

In 1847, editor Rufus Griswold published an extensive anthology of American prose, *The Prose Writers of America*, a follow-up to his popular 1842 anthology of American poetry, *The Poets and Poetry of America*. In both of these works, Griswold collects and introduces the works of more than seventy authors he believes will define “a National Literature that shall fulfil (sic) our [the United States'] promise to mankind” [Griswold 1847, 52]. In *Prose Writers* Griswold calls Nathaniel Hawthorne's writing “superior to all else of a similar description in the English language,” while in a shorter preface to Hawthorne's contributions Griswold ranks him “among the first of the first order of our writers...not excelled in the literature of the present day or of the English language” [Griswold 1847, 33, 471]. Given the ambitious aims of his anthology, this is high praise indeed. However, Meredith McGill calls Griswold's praise of Hawthorne “striking” because “Griswold's selections are all what we would consider minor fiction” [McGill 2003, 327—328, n19]. Griswold ignores the stories that modern readers favor, such as “Young Goodman Brown” [Hawthorne 1835], “The Minister's Black Veil” [Hawthorne 1836], or “Rappaccini's Daughter” [Hawthorne 1844b]. Though these stories were available to him, Griswold instead reprints four Hawthorne stories that modern literary critics, teachers, and anthology editors mostly ignore: “A Rill from the Town Pump,” “David Swan — A Fantasy,” “Spring,” and “The Celestial Railroad.”

The mystery of Griswold's selections, however, can now be at least partially explained due to the extensive record of texts and paratexts available in digital archives of nineteenth-century newspapers, periodicals, and books. Working with such archives — either through basic search or more complex text-mining techniques — can enable scholars to assemble textual histories more quickly and comprehensively than traditional archival research allows. More importantly, these textual histories can differ in character from traditional bibliographies by including primary literary

texts, reprints, and also the paratexts that introduced, extended, amended, or critiqued them. In search results from digital archives, paratexts cluster with their parent texts, foregrounding the cultural conversations that shaped how readers encountered and interpreted literary works.^[1] In his work on twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction, Ed Finn calls these conversations “the social lives of books.” Finn mines online reviews and recommendations of David Foster Wallace from sites such as Amazon to find “traces of popular reading choices” which can “constitute a fresh perspective on elusive audience reactions to literature, one that reveals distinct networks of conversation that are transforming the relationships between writers and their readers” [Finn 2011, 1–2]. Digital archives of nineteenth-century texts expose similar “literary networks”^[2] around short stories, poems, essays, and books, foregrounding questions of reception and cultural impact that traditional bibliographies can obscure.

Digging for one of Griswold's *Prose Writers* selections, Hawthorne's “The Celestial Railroad,” in a range of digital archives,^[3] I have uncovered an extensive network of reprinting, reauthorship, and reference that can help explain Griswold's selection of “The Celestial Railroad” for *Prose Writers* in 1847 and illuminates the importance of digital methodologies for literary study. By the time of Griswold's publication, “The Celestial Railroad” had appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country and made Hawthorne's reputation for many readers. Griswold's was only one in a series of reprintings that began days after the tale first appeared in the May 1843 issue of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*. “The Celestial Railroad” was not a minor work, but rather a central text in the nineteenth-century evangelical canon, popular for its doctrinal orthodoxy and pithy moral instruction — both characteristics modern scholars rarely associate with Hawthorne, but which were central to his early reception in contemporary religious circles.^[4] Indeed, the religious editors and readers — a particular social literary network — that embraced and shared Hawthorne's early work helped shape readers' reception of his later novels.

“The Celestial Railroad” is a satirical re-imagination of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in light of technological and theological “progress.” The tale satirizes the easy, modern Christianity of the nineteenth century. Modern critics have mostly ignored this allegory as a quirky story unrepresentative of Hawthorne's oeuvre. However, the larger cultural history of “The Celestial Railroad” — the social life of the tale — has been obscured to scholars until recently. The most thorough Hawthorne bibliography, C. E. Frazer Clark's *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Descriptive Bibliography*, lists 22 reprintings of the story in pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers through the nineteenth century [Clark 1978]. Referencing Clark, Meredith McGill notes that “a comprehensive list of the reprinting of Hawthorne's tales,” would require “a bibliographic feat which is as yet impossible due to the inadequately indexed state of nineteenth-century periodicals” [McGill 2003, 327, n18]. While a *complete* bibliography of any story remains out of reach for the reason McGill names, recent projects to digitize nineteenth-century periodicals provide scholars with tools unavailable when Clark compiled his work.

By mining a range of digital archives and non-digitized newspapers that digital editions referenced, I've uncovered more than 47 reprints of “The Celestial Railroad” during the nineteenth century, and several in the early decades of the twentieth — more than double the printings Clark lists in his bibliography.^[5] I've also found several books and stories inspired by “The Celestial Railroad” and nearly 100 direct references to the characters, settings, and themes of Hawthorne's tale in contemporary articles and books. These paratexts have proved particularly valuable, revealing a number of new insights about Hawthorne's early career and his relationship to the popular press. In particular, this research has pointed toward a new understanding of Hawthorne's reception by contemporary religious readers.

In this article I will examine the editorial changes, introductions, and glosses that recast the message of “The Celestial Railroad” for different denominational audiences. I will argue that the religious press valued the story for its antisectionarian moral and, simultaneously, as a shot across the bow of competing sects. Finally, by examining “The Celestial Railroad's” history of reprinting and revision in the religious press, I hope to briefly suggest a new reading of Hawthorne's famous frustration with “the pamphlet and piratical system” that he worried, in a letter to Horatio Bridge, forced him “to work hard for small gains” as a short story writer [Hawthorne 1987, 27]. I hope to show that his feeling of being “taken possession of so unceremoniously,” as his wife Sophia claimed in a letter to Louisa Hawthorne [Hawthorne 1987, 28, n4], may have been grounded in disaffection with the sectarian squabbling that both motivated and sustained the tale's life in the religious print market. Indeed, this disaffection may have prompted the one substantial edit Hawthorne made to the

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story between its initial magazine publication (1843) and its appearance in Hawthorne's short-story collection, *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846).

Implications of “The Celestial Railroad” for Digital Literary Scholarship

Alongside my arguments locating Hawthorne in the evangelical canon, I will discuss how digital archives of nineteenth-century texts enabled my discoveries about “The Celestial Railroad” and how digital interpretive tools helped me make better sense of the story's enlarged bibliography. I hope by this discussion to suggest how these new technologies can inform future work in bibliography, periodical studies, and American literary history. As more of our cultural legacy is digitized, through thematic research collections and larger archives such as Google Books or HathiTrust, newly apparent historical and textual narratives promise to multiply exponentially. Not only will new witnesses of stories, poems, and essays surface, but so to will literary networks of reference, critique, and allusion that previously could have only been discovered through chance encounter or laborious scrutiny. The rewards of intensive, traditional bibliographic research may have seemed distant and speculative — a minute return for much labor. Mass digitization promises to reduce the time required for such research while allowing scholars to move between different scales of analysis, weighing the conclusions suggested by individual texts against those drawn through quantitative analysis of larger collections and archives — and, conversely, weighing conclusions drawn through distant analysis of archives against the telling details of individual texts. Rather than “close” or “distant” reading, we might call this “zoomable reading,” in which one moves between levels of perspective to build a robust argument.^[6] Zoomable reading is particularly suited for uncovering and making sense of the social textual networks that “The Celestial Railroad” exemplifies — both the nodes of individual texts (close) and the edges of intertextual conversations (distant).

Of course, claims of “more, better, faster” are unlikely to convince entrenched traditional literary scholars to experiment with digital modes of scholarship, which is why I devote the majority of this article to the humanistic payoffs of my digital research. The discoveries I enumerate here are theoretically quite traditional. Were I to remove references to my methodologies, this essay would outline a new historical account of Hawthorne's early career drawn from a range of primary sources: contemporary books and periodicals. The witnesses and paratexts I have accumulated *could* have been amassed through trips to archives and interlibrary loan. In practice, however, this study emphasizes the great benefits of working in a digital scholarly mode. To build a bibliography like mine for “The Celestial Railroad” without digital book and periodical archives would require what McGann deems “unacceptable expenditures of time and labor” [McGann 2001, 55]. Finding such a range of sources — including many obscure regional or denominational periodicals and many reprints uncited in any other publication — would have been the work of years rather than months.

Of course, the greater expansiveness of digital archives should not be confused with completeness. If anything, the paratexts one can uncover digitally can emphasize the partialness of enumerative bibliographies. As Susan Belasco points out, “anyone who thinks that most historical periodicals are available online would be surprised to learn how many periodicals — especially newspapers — have not been recovered in electronic papers” [Belasco 2011, 50]. I'm certain that many more reprintings of “The Celestial Railroad” exist. Antebellum southern periodicals, for instance, are less thoroughly represented in online archives than northern and midwestern papers. Consequently, I've been unable to substantiate Moncure D. Conway's 1882 claim that “‘The Celestial Railway’ (sic) was the first piece by Hawthorne that penetrated our Southern Region” when it was “copied in the newspapers of that region, and much enjoyed as a satire upon the rationalistic tendencies of the North” [Conway 1882, 260]. Conway specifies elsewhere that “[i]n 1848 the Richmond *Examiner* brought into our house ‘The Celestial Railroad,’ by Nathaniel Hawthorne” — a claim I've been unable to verify due to sparse library holdings, digital or otherwise, of that newspaper for the 1840s [Conway 1902].^[7] I've so far confirmed only one southern reprinting, in Louisville, Kentucky's *Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer*, who printed the tale in two parts on October 19 and 26, 1843 [Hawthorne 1843i].^[8]

Moreover, the digital archival resources we have are far from perfect. I could point, for instance, to Geoffrey Nunberg's concerns about Google Books; to answer scholarly questions, Nunberg argues, scholars “need reliable metadata about dates and categories,” but Google's “metadata are a train wreck: a mish-mash wrapped in a muddle wrapped in a mess” [Nunberg 2009]. Metadata isn't the only problem. The quality of OCR across the range of nineteenth-century textual

archives is uneven, resulting in widely variable search results. “Dirty” OCR forces more creative search techniques from scholars mining archives for specific treasure, and scholars must be content knowing their results will be incomplete. Finally, scholars worry that so much of our cultural heritage sits restricted behind pay-walls, as are many of the most thorough archives of nineteenth-century periodicals [Belasco 2011, 50].

These are all concerns that digital humanities scholars must continue to voice. As Wesley Raabe contends, however, “an attitude of suspicion toward digital resources” can be as harmful as an attitude of blithe advocacy: “[a] digital text prepared by OCR means, which is inadequate for many purposes, is uniquely able to complement other methods of text acquisition” [Raabe 2011, 78]. In the case of “The Celestial Railroad,” OCR texts of widely variant quality have yielded significant treasure, especially when complemented by discoveries made through traditional archival research. It is worth noting, for instance, that I discovered those two Conway references to southern reprintings of “The Celestial Railroad” in Google Books. In other words, I wouldn’t know to be frustrated at the limited holdings of southern texts within digital archives had a digital archive not alerted me to the likelihood of southern printings of “The Celestial Railroad.” That limited digital resources helped uncover such a rich story of our literary history should lead us to advocate for increased digitization of newspapers and magazines. As Belasco argues of Whitman, engaging with periodicals “provides fresh ways of understanding” antebellum authors’ “publication practices and enhances our understanding of nineteenth-century practices of reading and writing more generally” [Belasco 2011, 44].

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It is especially fitting that digital technologies help uncover the life of a text in the mass media of the nineteenth century. As John A. Walsh points out in his contribution to *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, the nineteenth century “holds a special attraction for digital literary scholarship” because its technical revolutions immediately generated our own, while the effects of those revolutions paralleled the effects of the digital age on society today. “Many features of the nineteenth century,” he claims, “increased literacy rates, the beginnings of mass media, the decreasing costs of publishing — led to ever-increasing volumes of information and the need for ever more sophisticated and flexible technologies for representing and managing that information” [Walsh 2008]. Indeed, the life of “The Celestial Railroad” in the antebellum press, as it was passed from publication to publication across the country, closely resembles the lives of modern texts that move freely among traditional periodicals, blogs, tweets, and Facebook posts.

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The Re-authorship of Hawthorne’s “The Celestial Railroad”

In *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, Meredith McGill argues that the antebellum American experience of texts was shaped by the widespread, normative practice of reprinting stories and poems, without authorial permission, in newspapers, literary magazines, and other media. “Reprinting,” she argues, “is a form of textual production that is inseparable from distribution and reception...reprinted texts call attention to the repeated acts of articulation by which culture and its audiences are constituted” [McGill 2003, 5]. “The Celestial Railroad” exemplifies the culture McGill describes. The tale was explicitly rearticulated by editors, who often prefaced their reprintings with laudatory introductions that contextualized Hawthorne’s story for their readers. Not unlike a popular link on the internet, the impact of Hawthorne’s story on culture can largely be judged by how often the work was reappropriated and recontextualized.

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In the United States before the Civil War, a significant proportion of any author’s audience was deeply religious. It is this religious audience that Candy Gunther Brown locates in *The Word in the World*, where she argues that American “evangelicals viewed participation in a textual community defined by an informal canon of texts...using the Word and their own words to influence the world’s redemption” [Brown 2004, 1]. “The Celestial Railroad” did appear in secular papers like the *Salem Gazette* [Hawthorne 1843k], *Republican Compiler* [Hawthorne 1843l], and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* [Hawthorne 1843m] but the story moved quickly to the religious press. The Freewill Baptist’s *Morning Star* reprinted the story first, less than a month after its *Democratic Review* debut, and the *Star*’s editors noted it “is from the *Democratic Review*” while claiming it “is worth the price of the *Star* for a year” [Hawthorne 1843b]. Denominational periodicals reprinted the tale first and most frequently, including the Adventists’ *Midnight Cry!* [Hawthorne 1843e] and *Signs of the Times* [Hawthorne 1843c];^[9] the Methodists’ *Christian Advocate and Journal* [Hawthorne 1843f]; the Baptists’ *Christian Watchman* [Hawthorne 1843g] and *Christian Secretary* [Hawthorne 1843h]; and the *Episcopal Recorder* [Hawthorne 1843j]. Between 1843 and the release of *Mosses* in 1846, the story was reprinted in many more

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religious than secular newspapers.

Religious newspapers were widespread and influential in the 1840s. David Paul Nord identifies early nineteenth-century publishers of tracts and religious newspapers as producers of America's first mass medium [Nord 2004]. "By the end of the 1840s," Brown tells us, "most religious denominations endorsed at least one periodical per state, many of them privately owned but issued in the name of the editor's denomination." Brown provides useful figures for the larger periodicals market at well: "there were perhaps 5,000–6,000 periodicals founded during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, 4,000–5,000 in the second quarter, 2,500 from 1850 to 1865, and 4,300 in the 1870s, with a total circulation of 10.5 million, or enough to reach one in three Americans" [Brown 2004, 145, 154].

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In the 1840s and 50s those religious readers encountered "The Celestial Railroad" in their denomination's newspapers, magazines, and tracts, and Hawthorne's fame grew in the religious press even as Hawthorne complained about his stories' obscurity. McGill argues that "the presumption of Hawthorne's rejection by the public has enabled critics to regard his early fiction through a highly selective lens," a claim the *Church Review and Ecclesiastical Register* echoed directly in an 1851 review of *The Scarlet Letter*. Noting Hawthorne's own public complaints about his popularity, the *Review* claims, "We think far more highly of Hawthorne than he does of himself, judging by the reflection which we find in his own mirror...you know that Hawthorne's books are fairly thumbed to pieces by the readers of all circulating libraries" [Anonymous 1851].^[10] Indeed, for readers of the *Review* Hawthorne's fame was built not on *The Scarlet Letter*, but on "The Celestial Railroad". The *Review* notes, "we were ignorant of the existence of so clever a writer, until we came across his 'Celestial Railroad,' in the columns of a newspaper" and deems "The Celestial Railroad" "the most natural production of our author's genius, which his books contain...It is one of the cleverest, most sustained, and most ingenious specimens of quiet satire to be found in our language." This tale brought Hawthorne's name into the consciousnesses of readers — evangelical, pious, geographically dispersed — who otherwise might not have known or cared to know it, so that in April of 1850 the *Christian Secretary*, while listing contributors to *Graham's Magazine*, would refer to "Hawthorne, of Celestial Railroad memory" [Anonymous 1850].

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The digital record of this story's reprinting includes many similar plaudits, which are difficult to reconcile with most modern assessments of Hawthorne. Alfred Kazin speaks for many scholars when he claims that Hawthorne should be read purely as a religious outsider, for whom "[n]o orthodoxy, ever, permits the irony, skepticism, personal despair — above all else the sense of contradiction and unreality in human affairs that makes up the true storyteller" [Kazin 1997, 38]. Religious readers of "The Celestial Railroad," however, valued Hawthorne's story in large part because of its satirical bite. Writing about the American Sunday School Union's (ASSU) popular tract version of "The Celestial Railroad" in 1874,^[11] the Rev. George P. Fisher calls it "a curious fact that the Sunday-School Society should be the publisher of Hawthorne. But," he continues, "whoever has read 'the Celestial Railroad' will admit that this exquisite satire is well entitled to its place on the catalogue of books relating to religion, to be disseminated broadcast over the land" [Fisher 1874, 1]. In other words, while religious readers did note with some curiousness their admiration for "The Celestial Railroad," they nonetheless defended its religious value. Its irony was not seen as antithetical to orthodoxy, but even instructional.

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Denominational papers lauded the story's "rich stores of instruction" [Midnight Cry 1843], "the *moral* it teaches" [Signs of the Times 1843], and its "admirable commentary" [Visit to the Celestial City 1843], while being "repeatedly solicited to republish it" by their readers [Christian Secretary 1848]. It was "a startling, impressive little work, worthy to be a sequel to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*" [New York Evangelist 1852] and a "remarkable satire on worldly religion" [Christian Advocate 1869]. In 1847 the evangelical *New Englander* journal wrote that "Mr. Hawthorne has a very pleasant and good natured, yet successful and effective way of hitting off, or satirizing the faults and foibles and errors of individuals and cliques, of schools, and communities, and ages" [D. 1847, 61]. For the *New Englander*, "The Celestial Railroad" was "that which, in this respect, surpasses all his other writings, and we were about to say the writings of all but John Bunyan" [D. 1847, 61], while in 1869 the *Freewill Baptist Quarterly* grouped "The Celestial Railroad" with *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun* as the three works of Hawthorne that were "sure of long life." [Anonymous 1869, 1]. In fact, "The Celestial Railroad" seems to have joined "the informal, open-ended 'canon' of texts" that Brown claims shaped "an evangelical textual community" in the nineteenth century [Brown 2004, 7, 10]. It was frequently reprinted in

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denominational newspapers and anthologized in books for Sunday Schools and pastoral training. Perhaps more tellingly, its scenes and characters became so familiar for readers that writers frequently referred to them without providing any explanatory context; religious writers in the nineteenth century assumed that their readers knew “The Celestial Railroad.”

This popular history disappeared, however, into the mass of textual information that accumulated throughout the nineteenth century, “when the amount of recorded information produced...becomes overwhelming and nearly impossible to process through traditional means, such as reading” [Walsh 2008]. Searchable digital archives allowed me to recover the social text of “The Celestial Railroad,” while textual analysis software helped me make sense of its fluidity. John Bryant writes that “[d]igital scholarship offers alternatives that can raise the consciousness of readers about the inherent fluidity of texts and the modes of revision that cause textual fluidity” [Bryant 2011, 46]. Bryant’s notion of “fluidity” refers primarily to authorial or authorized editorial revisions of literary texts; readers should “witness the different sequential versions of a work together as a representation of the invisible process of writing” [Bryant 2011, 167]. However, Bryant’s insights can be extended also to texts like “The Celestial Railroad,” which were revised by both authorized and unauthorized editors. Witnessing the “different sequential versions” of “The Celestial Railroad” offers insight into “the invisible process” of editing undertaken by nineteenth-century newspaper and magazine editors.

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When Hawthorne’s original text didn’t exactly fit the purposes of a given publication, it was freely emended, and even in rare cases expanded, to better fit the mission or message it was intended to convey. Leslee Thorne-Murphy calls this phenomenon “reauthorship: a combination of successive individuals writing, editing, and rewriting in a way that shapes anew the image of a single author” [Thorne-Murphy 2010, 84]. For Thorne-Murphy reauthorship is “a type of editing that appropriates and refashions a text — a hybrid notion of authorship, one in which both editors and authors are creative and original rewriters” [Thorne-Murphy 2010, 83]. Hawthorne’s “The Celestial Railroad” was frequently reauthored as it spread across the United States in the 1840s and 50s. Such editions of the story demonstrate not only Hawthorne’s influence on evangelical culture in 1843, but also the influence of contemporary evangelical culture on Hawthorne’s burgeoning national reputation, and perhaps its influence on Hawthorne himself.

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To discover these moments of reauthorship, I compared reprintings of “The Celestial Railroad” using the Juxta collation tool (juxtaoftware.org),^[12] which allows scholars to visualize textual variation between witnesses of a text.

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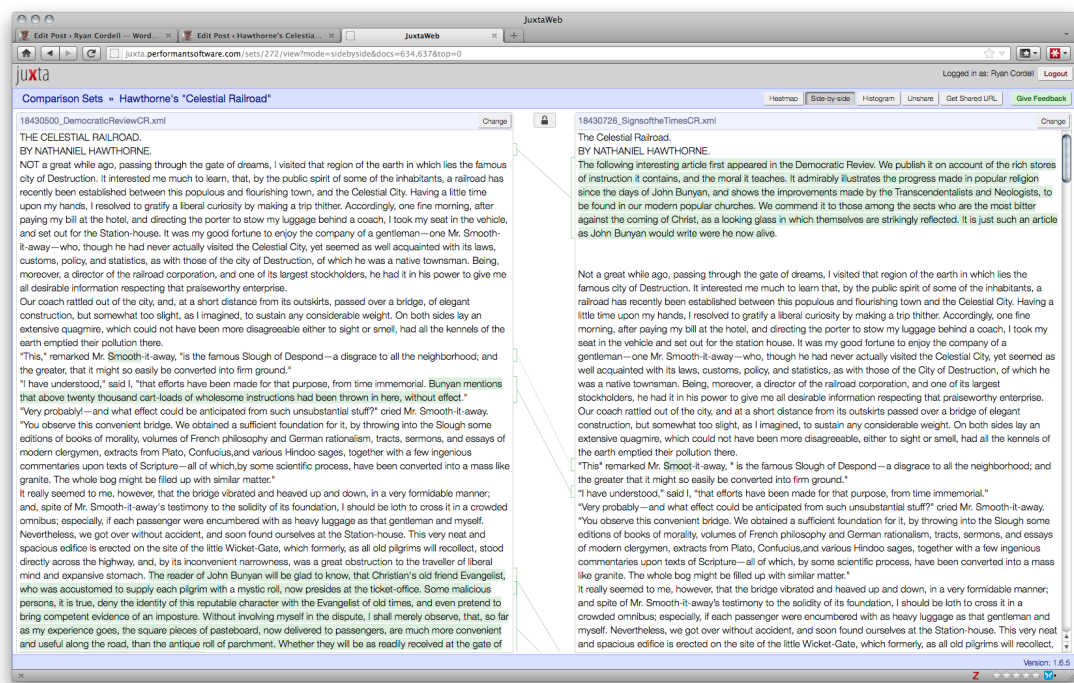


Figure 1. A comparison set between the original *Democratic Review* text and that of the *Signs of the Times*. The apparent errors in the *Signs* version come from the original and are encoded using the TEI <sic> element.

By comparing transcriptions of different “Celestial Railroad” witnesses in Juxta, I was able to easily discover the changes that editors made to Hawthorne’s tale. Juxta was particularly useful in highlighting comparatively minor changes: those likely to slip my unmediated notice. I found that nearly every periodical reprinting of “The Celestial Railroad” modifies Hawthorne’s text somehow, though it is often difficult to gauge the intent behind particular changes. Some cuts seem space-saving, others aesthetic: many publications, for instance, edited Hawthorne’s purposefully archaic “burthens” to “burdens.” The ASSU’s *Visit to the Celestial City* anglicized the spellings of words, excised all references to body parts (“stomach” and “belly”, in various places, became “front”), and cut Prince Beelzebub’s appearance during the narrator’s stay in Vanity.^[13] The ASSU sought to combat spiritual ignorance by building libraries of religious instruction for children [Nord 2004, 81], and so we might speculate that these latter changes to “The Celestial Railroad” were designed to protect those children from tantalizing or frightening images. The two most frequently cut passages come from the narrator’s journey thorough Vanity Fair’s marketplace. Approximately one third of the witnesses excised the narrator’s description of “a very pretty girl” who “bartered a heart as clear as crystal” for a “worn and defaced...jewel of the same kind,” as well as a passage detailing how “a member of Congress recruited his pocket by the sale of his constituents.”

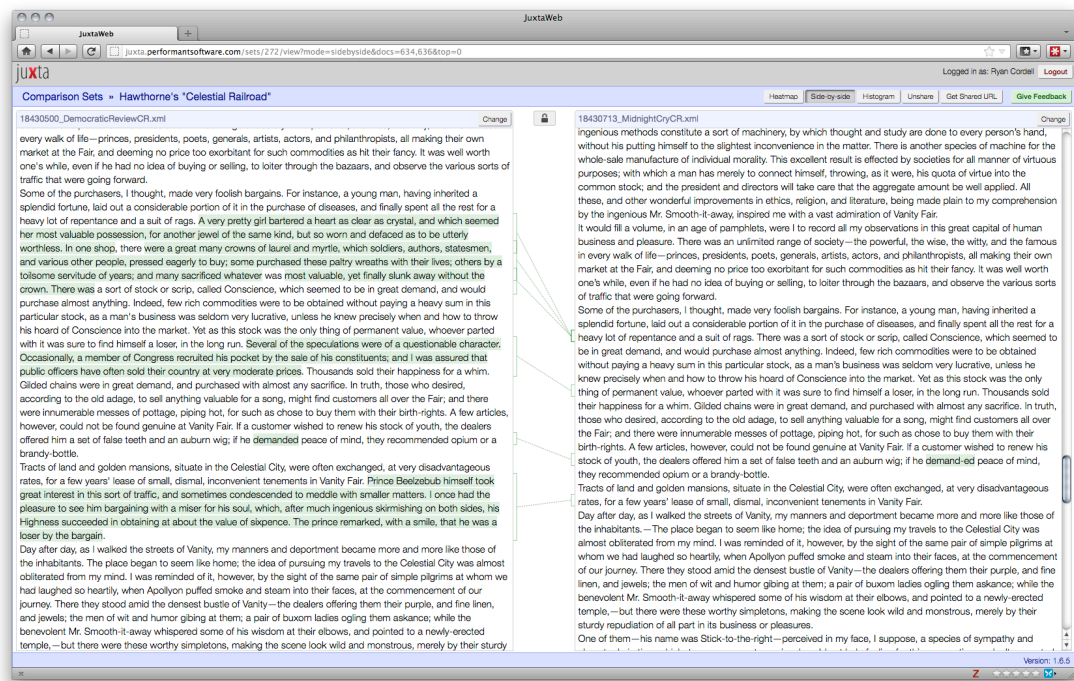


Figure 2. The original change highlighted from the *Midnight Cry's* reprinting.

It is possible that later witnesses copied the story, with the cut scenes, from earlier publications. After comparing in Juxta all of the witnesses that omit these scenes, the original edit seems to have been made by the *Midnight Cry!* and passed on as the story was recopied.^[14] Perhaps for the apocalyptic *Cry*, love and politics seemed less urgent than the more spiritual descriptions it retained about Vanity Fair. Because reprints circulated through complex textual networks, however, editorial decisions made by one editor rippled into other publications that did not necessarily share the priorities that drove the initial decision. Textual analysis tools such as Juxta draw particular attention to these editorial artifacts, which illuminate not, strictly, the text itself, but its social life within its culture.

The Moral of “The Celestial Railroad”

That Hawthorne himself revised Bunyan likely contributed to the story’s success with contemporary religious readers. Brown argues that, while evangelicals “generally respected Bunyan’s original as one of the best books of all time,” they also “felt no qualms about altering the book to suit” specific ecclesiastical or political needs [Brown 2004, 108]. Children’s versions were prepared for Sunday Schools, and several authors rewrote the tale with more pointed goals, such as William R. Weeks’s reformist *Pilgrim’s Progress in the Nineteenth Century* [Weeks 1826, 1849] and Sophia Louisa Little’s abolitionist *Pilgrim’s Progress in the Last Days* [Little 1843].^[15] Hawthorne entered a market, then, that welcomed innovations from its established texts, and especially loved *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

In the story, Hawthorne’s narrator relates a dream in which he visits Bunyan’s City of Destruction to find that a railroad had been constructed to the Celestial City. Proponents of the railroad tout its leisure, the way it clears difficulties — quite literally, as the railroad company tunneled through the Hill Difficulty that pilgrims once struggled over — from pilgrims’ paths. Like Bunyan’s Christian, Hawthorne’s narrator encounters other travelers along his route, not all of them pilgrims, including Mr. Smooth-it-away, who serves as his guide and the conductor of the new railroad. Like Christian, he encounters monsters, such as the Giant Transcendentalist, who has replaced the Giants Pagan and Pope, and shouts at passing travelers “in so strange a phraseology, that we knew not what he meant” [Hawthorne 1843a, 520]. Waypoints along the route, which the narrator searches out in “Mr. Bunyan’s road-book” [Hawthorne 1843a, 518], are seen from the train window as the engine rushes by: the one exception being the city of Vanity Fair, where the train makes a long stop.

Hawthorne's narrator naively believes that the world progresses steadily through technology and social improvement.

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[16] He is impressed to learn of the demon Apollyon's new employment as the train's engine driver. He thrills at "the liberality of the age" in which "all musty prejudices are in a fair way to be obliterated" [Hawthorne 1843a, 517]. He likewise rhapsodizes over the ease of train travel over the harsh experiences of "past pilgrims," and is enthralled by Vanity Fair's "societies for all manner of virtuous purposes," into which "a man has merely to connect himself, throwing...his quota of virtue into the common stock" from which "the president and directors will take care that the aggregate amount be well applied" [Hawthorne 1843a, 517, 520]. The narrator's faith in progress is so complete that even after he encounters two "worthy simpletons" making their pilgrimage by foot and whose "sturdy repudiation of all part in [Vanity Fair's] business or pleasures" convince him to leave, he still claims, "I was not simple enough to give up my original plan of gliding along easily and commodiously by rail-road" [Hawthorne 1843a, 521–522]. In fact, the narrator and his fellow passengers marvel at the "preposterous obstinacy" of these "two dusty foot-travellers in the old pilgrim guise" who keep "their intolerable burthens on their backs" and refuse "to take advantage of modern improvements." The modern pilgrims mock them, while Apollyon blows smoke and steam into their faces for the amusement of his passengers [Hawthorne 1843a, 517].

The old-fashioned pilgrims follow a parallel path to the narrator's throughout the story. They appear alongside the train several times, and then again as prophets in Vanity Fair, warning Hawthorne's narrator that the railroad "concern is a bubble," and "a miserable delusion" [Hawthorne 1843a, 521–522]. The story ends within sight of the Celestial City, where Mr. Stick-to-the-right and Mr. Go-the-old-way are seen entering the city's gates amid "an exulting strain...of music, with height, and depth, and sweetness...at once tender and triumphant" [Hawthorne 1843a, 523]. Hawthorne's old-fashioned pilgrims endure the trials the narrator avoids — Hill Difficulty, the Slough of Despond — and in the end these evils, described by the narrator in thoroughly modern terms as "inconveniences," are reconciled by their triumphant entrance into eternity.

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The narrator's story, by contrast, ends at the terminus of the railroad line, as its passengers are shuttled out of the cars and into "[a] steam ferry boat, the last improvement on this important route." Mr. Smooth-it-away declines to cross with them, "a twinkle of livid flame" springing "out of either eye, proving indubitably" his fiendish nature, heretofore hidden to the modern pilgrims. As Mr. Smooth-it-away promises the narrator "We shall meet again," he implies that the boat is headed not to the Celestial City at all, but to Hell [Hawthorne 1843a, 523]. The narrator's allegorical Christian life is revealed as a series of failures to encounter spiritual trials or to make difficult, or even uncomfortable, spiritual decisions. Instead he glides along the tracks to damnation, passing by and interpreting the signs of his times badly.

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Contemporary religious readers read Hawthorne's train as a symbol of the compromises required to be both Christian and thoroughly modern. The paratexts that constitute the textual network of "The Celestial Railroad" — e.g. introductions to the story, articles using the story as illustration, sermons based on the story — often read Hawthorne's narrator as representative of a false faith in progress for progress's sake. The Giant Transcendentalist, the misguided divines of Vanity Fair, and the other figures of the tale were seen as the debased products of such compromises. What consistently changed, however, as the story passed between newspapers, magazines, and anthologies, were the real-world antecedents to Hawthorne's allegorical figures: the people or groups that each paper identified as dangerous religious innovators.

29

For the Adventist readers of the *Signs of the Times*, deeply invested in a vision of Jesus Christ's imminent Second Coming, Hawthorne's story "admirably illustrates the progress made in *popular* religion since the days of John Bunyan, and shows the improvements made by the Transcendentalists and Neologists, to be found in our modern popular churches. We commend it to those among the sects who are the most bitter against the coming of Christ, as a looking glass in which themselves are strikingly reflected" [Hawthorne 1843c, 161]. The *Signs* implies that those "who are the most bitter against the coming of Christ" — in other words, those who are most critical of the Adventists' central doctrine — are the improvers of religion Hawthorne satirizes — the Directors or passengers of the Celestial Railroad. By contrast, the *Signs* implies that Adventist believers, anxiously watching the signs of the times, are the "dusty foot travelers," Mr. Stick-to-the-right and Mr. Go-the-old-way, evangelizing to their misguided brethren.

30

However, ten days later a neighboring publication would suggest an opposite interpretation of the story. The *Cambridge*

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Palladium introduces their reprinting similarly to that of *Signs*, noting that “THAT RAILROAD — shown up on our first page...admirably sets off some of the religious features of the present day” [Anonymous 1843b, 2]. Both papers use “admirably” to assess the story’s depiction of failures in contemporary religious practice. The *Palladium* next refers to the *Signs*’s publication of the story, noting that “[t]he article was originally published in the Democratic Review, and has since been copied by brother Himes” (the editor of *Signs*). This arch, familiar “brother Himes” hints at the paragraph’s ultimate turn, as the *Palladium* wonders “if this last-mentioned brother, if he should look carefully, could not see his own face reflected in the looking-glass somewhere” [Anonymous 1843b, 2]. In other words, the *Palladium* asserts that “The Celestial Railroad,” which Himes confidently printed as an indictment of non-Adventist Christians, instead indicts Adventists — implying that Adventism is not a return to authentic, biblical Christianity, but a neologism to be condemned.

Such vehement sectarian rhetoric was, in the 1840s, a relatively new phenomenon in the United States. We can track its rise using Google’s recently released Ngram Viewer,^[17] which allows scholars to track the frequency of words and phrases across Google’s corpora of texts. In *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, Franco Moretti points out “what a minimal fraction of the literary field we all work on” in literary studies, drawing claims about literature and culture after reading “less than one per cent of the novels that were actually published” [Moretti 2005, 3–4]. The Ngram Viewer exemplifies Moretti’s solution to this problem, “distant reading,” by allowing scholars to track trends in language across millions of books rather than selecting evidence from a few representative works. The Ngram Viewer can offer broad insights into the concerns of an historical period and generate the kinds of questions that drive close analysis. In this case, we can correlate the sectarian strife evidenced in the history of this one text with a much broader concern about sectarianism in contemporaneous literature.

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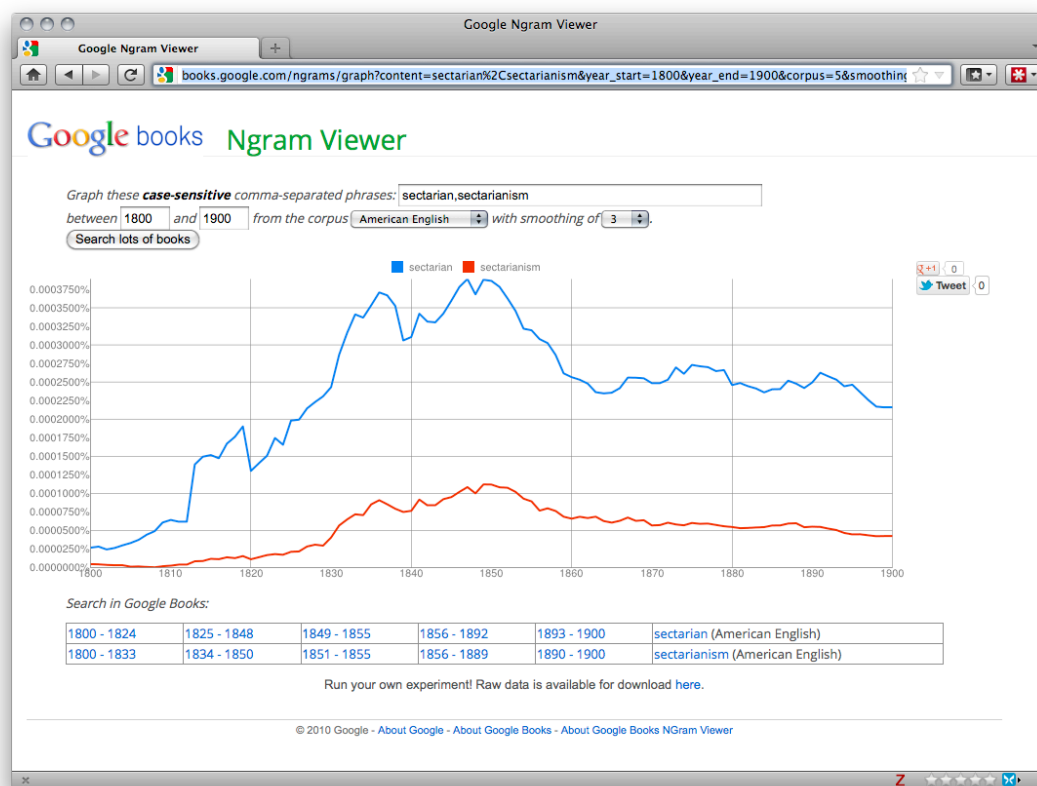


Figure 3. Ngram graph for the words “sectarian” and “sectarianism” between 1800–1900

Looking at the American English corpus between 1800 and 1900, for instance, we can see that use of the word “sectarian” spiked in use during the decades just before the Civil War. “Sectarian” appears in approximately 0.000025% of the books and periodicals in the corpora that were published in the United States in 1800. Over the next decades,

33

however, use of “sectarian” steadily increases. By 1850, “sectarian” appears in 0.000375% of the books in the corpora published in the U.S. In other words, books and periodicals in 1850 used “sectarian” more than ten times more frequently than books in 1800: an increase of an order of magnitude.^[18]

To make sense of this data, of course, we must “abandon the quantitative universe” and situate the use of “sectarian” within literary and historical contexts [Moretti 2005, 24]. We must zoom in. In this case, the dramatic increase in use of “sectarian” comes during a period of rapid denominational schism in the United States. By the 1840s and 50s, the nation’s largest denominations — Methodist, Baptist, etc. — comprised a quickly-multiplying host of sub-groups, sects within sects, each insisting on the sanctity of particular social, political, or theological distinctions. Perhaps most importantly, in 1845 — two years after the initial printing of “The Celestial Railroad,” and in the middle of its run through the evangelical press — the Baptist and Methodist denominations in the United States both split into northern and southern conventions over slavery. This rapid denominational centrifugation bred anxiety about how thoroughly churches could disagree and disperse while remaining members of one mystical body.

34

Brown sees this tension as latent in the mission and purpose of the antebellum religious press. On the one hand, the religious press fostered the “informal canon” of evangelical texts to which “The Celestial Railroad” belonged. This set of documents, both secular and sacred, and shared across many sects, fortified a sense of “an invisible...pilgrim community” of believers united by their common evangelical Christianity [Brown 2004, 9]. But such ecumenical efforts were often undermined by zealous denominational editors and publishers, who “saw themselves countering the errors of the secular press and rival religious denominations by proclaiming pure gospel truth” [Brown 2004, 52]. A crowded religious periodicals market necessitated that publications distinguish themselves in order to attract and retain subscribers. Searching nineteenth-century newspaper archives for key theological terms bears this argument out. One finds vehement articles defending large and small gradations of doctrine and practice: articles for and against infant baptism, predestination, the reality or unreality of hell, and even the morality or immorality of children’s Sunday Schools.

35

Distinctly denominational critiques are hard to identify in Hawthorne’s original text of “The Celestial Railroad”. There are the Giant Transcendentalist and Pope, but the divines of Vanity Fair are never identified precisely. Looking at the wide social textual network this study has unearthed, we can see that whomever Hawthorne meant to parody, his readers redirected the story’s satire toward their own targets. For antebellum believers, “The Celestial Railroad” resonated because it spoke to the general problem of denominationalism — satirizing the religious “neologists” who have innovated the Christian message until unrecognizable — while simultaneously provoking print wars that entrenched denominational battle lines. While the satire of “The Celestial Railroad” was read as an attack on sectarianism, the history of its reprinting paradoxically reinforced denominational disagreements. “Rail roads to ‘the Celestial City,’ ” the *Wisconsin Argus* complained in 1845, “cross each other in every direction” [Anonymous 1845, 2].

36

In introductions to the story and editorials referencing it, religious editors and readers consistently identified their sectarian rivals with Hawthorne’s Mr. Smooth-it-away, the Rev. Wind-of-Doctrine, or the Giant Transcendentalist. In 1855, the Washington, D.C. newspaper *National Intelligencer* lamented the trend of rewriting *Pilgrim’s Progress*,^[19] noting that “[n]early every interested observer of the religious spirit of the age has thought, spoken, or written his own story of the modern pilgrims. It has become the common courtesy ecclesiastic,” the article continues, “for us to ascribe to each church other than our own some innovation on the old line of travel; the old line being of course *ours* — Bunyan being, like Paul, always the Coryphæus of the creed of the household wherein he is read” [Anonymous 1855].^[20] Writing about “The Celestial Railroad,” the *Intelligencer* claims its “wide popularity” was due to the fact that its “idea corresponded to the prevalent suggestions in many minds,” while “it was so general that it did not take sides for or against any sect; so it could be freely used by every sect against the rest, and was therefore eagerly printed in all church newspapers...and each family read it on Sunday evening in its own weekly, with sly whispers of a Minie rifle-shot into the ranks of ‘some so-called Christians they knew of’ ” [Anonymous 1855]. Readers claimed affinity with the “old-fashioned pilgrims” and contrasted themselves with the This-todays and That-tomorrows of the other churches in town. As the *Intelligencer* points out, this identification was simplified by the broad allegorical strokes of Hawthorne’s original. The reader knows only the Rev. Dr. Wind-of-Doctrine’s name. Hawthorne never specifies precisely which doctrinal winds blow him about: what denomination he represents, where he stands on predestination, or his opinion about the

37

Readers projected themselves into the roles of Mr. Stick-to-the-right and Mr. Go-the-old-way, the two pilgrims who stick to “Mr. Bunyan’s road-book” despite the difficulties of the road. In the first edition of the Sunday School Union’s *Visit to the Celestial City*, Hawthorne’s “two dusty foot-travellers” feature prominently in two of the edition’s four illustrations — once in the foreground, watching the train pass in the distance, and again urging the narrator to repent in the bustle of Vanity Fair [Hawthorne 1843d]. Articles frequently echoed Hawthorne’s language about these two pilgrims. The *Christian Watchman*, published by the Baptist Missionary Society of Massachusetts, published “The Celestial Railroad” in the same issue as an editorial on *Holy Living*. By this phrase, the *Watchman* assures its readers, “We do not mean any newly discovered track that shall lead to such results, but *the old and safe road* that has been travelled by all Christians for the last eighteen hundred years” [Anonymous 1843a, 158] (my emphasis).

Likewise the Congregationalist *Boston Review* used “The Celestial Railroad” to illustrate the differences between “two theologies, the Old and the New,” that were dividing Congregationalism. “The Old theology,” the *Review* claims, “is God-given, apostolic, and ever the same,” while “the New is always changing,” its adherents “carried about by every *wind of doctrine*.” [Anonymous 1861, 98, 111–112] (my emphasis). The Rev. Dr. Wind-of-doctrine is the most prominent divine in Hawthorne’s revision of Vanity Fair. The *Review* echoes his name to describe the debased New theology and that of Mr. Go-the-old-way to describe its own, “God-given” and “apostolic” theology. Moreover, the *Review* notes, “Nobody studies the Catechism now,” because there’s “a railroad” by which “cheerful crowds” head to heaven “by steam, and have a good social time of it, too.” The *Reviews* article abridges “The Celestial Railroad” into three paragraphs, borrowing liberally from Hawthorne’s language without citing him or his original story directly, in order to lampoon the “New” theology ruining Congregationalism [Anonymous 1861, 112].^[21]

The most dramatically edited — or perhaps the most thoroughly re-authored — version of the tale is easier to understand. Editorial tinkering with “The Celestial Railroad” culminated in the Adventist reissue of the story in February 1844, as a tract in the *Bible Examiner* series. According to Juxta, eighty-nine percent of the story’s text is changed between the *Democratic Review* and *Bible Examiner* versions.^[22]

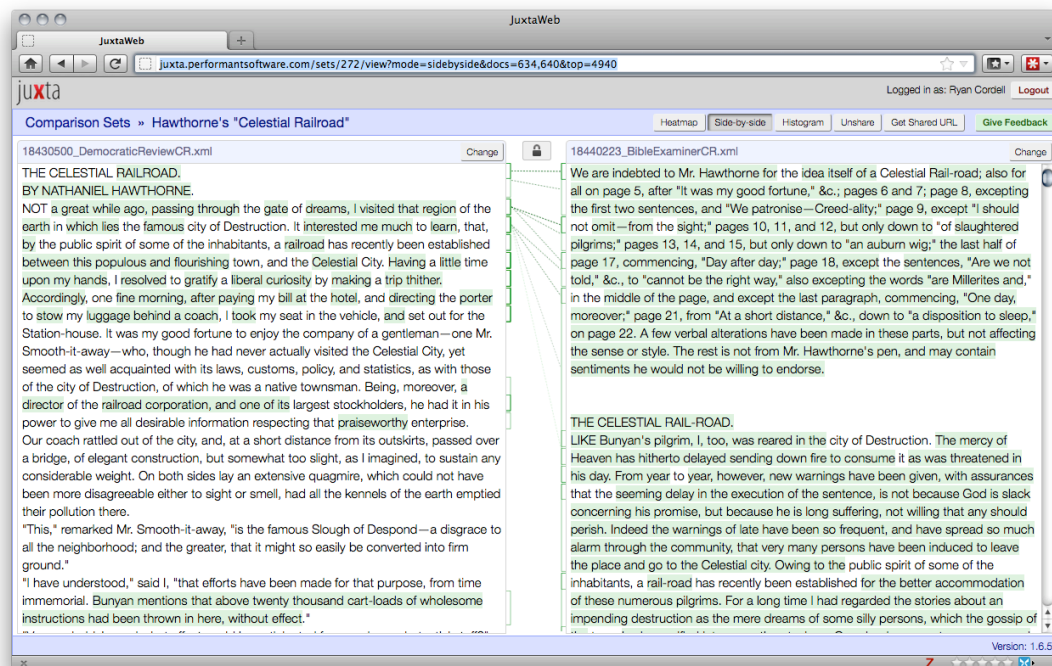


Figure 4. A comparison set between the original *Democratic Review* text and that of the *Bible Examiner*. Note that the majority of the text varies between the two versions, a trend that largely persists throughout the comparison.

The *Bible Examiner* version carries an extended title — *The Celestial Rail-road; or, Modern Pilgrim's Progress: After the Manner of Bunyan, Vividly Representative of the Present-Day Professors of Religion* — and an extended attribution: "From the original, by Nathaniel Hawthorne. With additions and alterations." Several of the minor edits made between the original *Democratic Review* printing of "The Celestial Railroad" and those in the *Midnight Cry!* and *Signs of the Times* are carried over here. It seems likely, then, that the editors and co-authors of this version worked from previous Adventist printings of the story.^[23]

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The anonymous Adventist editor, or co-author, of this version scrupulously details those "additions and alterations" in a paragraph-long introduction:

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We are indebted to Mr. Hawthorne for the idea itself of a Celestial Rail-road; also for all on page 5, after "It was my good fortune," &c.; pages 6 and 7; page 8, excepting the first two sentences, and "We patronise — Creed-ality;" page 9, except "I should not omit — from the sight;" pages 10, 11, and 12, but only down to "of slaughtered pilgrims;" pages 13, 14, and 15, but only down to "an auburn wig;" the last half of page 17, commencing, "Day after day;" page 18, except the sentences, "Are we not told," &c., to "cannot be the right way", also excepting the words "are Millerites and," in the middle of the page, and except the last paragraph, commencing, "One day, moreover;" page 21, from "At a short distance," &c., down to "a disposition to sleep," on page 22. A few verbal alterations have been made in these parts, but not affecting the sense or style. The rest is not from Mr. Hawthorne's pen, and may contain sentiments he would not be willing to endorse. [Hawthorne 1844a, 2]

This writer carefully distinguishes between the *Bible Examiner's* words and Hawthorne's, acknowledging "sentiments he would not be willing to endorse" in the new tale, but still retaining Hawthorne's title,^[24] and, ostensibly, Hawthorne's "sense" and "style." While acknowledging their divergences from Hawthorne's original, in other words, the *Bible Examiner's* editors nonetheless "support a fiction of single authorship" that would have shaped their readers' perceptions of Hawthorne [Thorne-Murphy 2010, 84].

43

The final line of the *Bible Examiner's* extended title, *Vividly Representative of the Present-Day Professors of Religion*, hints strongly at the denominational mission of this rewriting, and the text aims throughout to clarify the points of satire and praise in Hawthorne's original, and to bring an explicitly apocalyptic tenor to the piece.^[25] As such, just after the narrator speaks — in Hawthorne's words — of "the public spirit of some of the inhabitants" who built a railroad to the Celestial City, he notes — in new words — that "for a long time I had regarded the stories about an impending destruction as the mere dreams of some silly persons" [Hawthorne 1844a, 3]. He then encounters the two old-fashioned pilgrims much earlier than did Hawthorne's narrator, describing how they "looked to me exactly like the picture which my fancy had formed of Bunyan's pilgrim." The pair proceed to warn the narrator that they "are fleeing from the wrath to come" because "the Judgment which for a long time has lingered, is just about to be executed, and all these things shall be dissolved" [Hawthorne 1844a, 3].

44

Nearly every page of the *Bible Examiner's* "Celestial Railroad" revises Hawthorne's original. New fellow pilgrims join the narrator in this version of the story: "Messrs. Pliable, Worldly-wise-man, Presumption, Love-lust, By-ends and Hold-to-the-world" as well as "Miss Ornament, Miss Thoughtless, and Miss Novelize" [Hawthorne 1844a, 6]. These passengers point to many distinctly Adventist concerns about their religious contemporaries: that they clung too fiercely to temporal things (Messr. Love-lust, Messr. Hold-to-the-world, Miss Ornament), that they too flippantly dismissed their Adventist brethren (Messr. Worldly-wise-man, Messr. Presumption, Miss Thoughtless), or that they too readily and thoughtlessly modernized faith (Miss Novelize). Accordingly, the *Bible Examiner's* train passes new sites, "the town of Morality, which has grown very much since Bunyan's day" and "the newly settled but thriving towns of Deism, Universalism, and Restoration" [Hawthorne 1844a, 8].^[26] Later in the *Bible Examiner's* version the narrator will add the newly chartered "provinces of Carnality and Formality, in which we observed the flourishing towns of Mormonism, Love-gain, Community, Puseyism, Self-righteousness, and Falsepeace," and "Scoffers-town" [Hawthorne 1844a, 22–23]. These new towns share the map with places from Hawthorne's and Bunyan's originals, such as the City of Destruction, where the narrator's pilgrimage begins, "the town of Shun-repentance," and Vanity. By federating new theologies, such as

45

Mormonism, with such disreputable neighbors, the *Bible Examiner* emphasizes its disdain for them, and clarifies for the reader precisely who they should read as “modern professors of religion” or “neologists.” [27]

The *Bible Examiner* emphasizes this threat in its detailed description of the preachers of Vanity. Hawthorne provides only the names of Vanity’s divines, giving readers leeway to “identify...Rev. Mr. Clog-the-Spirit and Rev. Dr. Wind-of-Doctrine with preachers in each other’s churches,” as Moncure Conway later recounted doing after reading Hawthorne’s tale [Conway 1902, 21]. The *Bible Examiner*, by contrast, links each figure to a specific contemporary doctrine, pinning down the allegorical connection, and stemming potential alternative readings of each figure. In the *Examiner* the Rev. Mr. Bewilderment proves “that the Bible, although truly called a Revelation, is nevertheless an unrevealed revelation to man,” a doctrine opposed to William Miller’s assertion that “the Bible is its own interpreter.” Several more lectures follow, each by divines whose allegorical names point to Adventist disdain for their ideas [Hawthorne 1844a, 15–17].

46

In its final passages, the *Bible Examiner*’s reinterpretation of Hawthorne veers well off the original story’s track. The narrator begins to see outside his window prophetic natural signs: “the stars falling from heaven,” “an angel...flying through heaven,” “blood and fire and pillars of smoke” seen “in the heavens and in the earth.” The passengers pass one man “expound[ing] the Book of Daniel,” warning them to “Consider the vision, consider the vision!” and another expounding Revelation, warning, “Behold, I come quickly” [Hawthorne 1844a, 22–23]. Finally, the *Bible Examiner*’s version ends not within sight of the Celestial City, or with the steam ferry boat of Hawthorne’s original, but with the narrator’s realization that the train has circled fully around, “back almost to the City of Destruction.” There waits Evangelist, who continues to warn the erstwhile pilgrims of the impending apocalypse.

47

The *Bible Examiner* rewrites the ending of “The Celestial Railroad” into an explicitly apocalyptic message — a warning that the end of time is near. The final paragraph warns readers who might “consider the forgoing a ‘dream’ ” — as Hawthorne ended his “Celestial Railroad” — that “I will assure them it is a most perfect *reality*, saving merely the *anticipation* of the second personal coming of Christ, which there is reason to believe is just at hand” [Hawthorne 1844a, 54]. The *Bible Examiner* then hopes that “the brief, cutting, but truly faithful description here given of the journey to the heavenly city by this most deceitful route,” which the story has identified with specific contemporary theologies and eschatologies, “prove the saving of the soul to some who are about to take their seats in the car of *Popular Profession*.” Instead, the final lines urge, they should choose “the good old path” which, again, this revision has explicitly identified with the “Millerites” castigated by Mr. Smooth-it-away in Vanity Fair [Hawthorne 1844a, 24].

48

This most drastic revision of “The Celestial Railroad” exemplifies the antebellum religious press’s relationship with Hawthorne’s text. The Adventist pamphlet certainly ran “counter to the avowed intentions” of Hawthorne — as evidenced by his expressed distaste for the “pamphlet and piratical system” — and “makes publication distinctly legible as an independently signifying act,” calling “attention to the repeated acts of articulation by which culture and audiences are constituted” [McGill 2003, 5]. The *Bible Examiner* tract re-authored Hawthorne’s tale, writing a particular denominational interpretation into the text.[28]

49

Reading Hawthorne’s Reaction

When, at the end of its introduction to the story, the *Bible Examiner* notes, “The rest is not from Mr. Hawthorne’s pen, and may contain sentiments he would not be willing to endorse,” it points Hawthorne’s response to his tale’s life in the religious press [Hawthorne 1844a, 2]. Garvey notes that “[b]eing reprinted was sometimes welcomed as a sign of an author’s popularity; at other times authors resented their work being taken without pay or saw it as an even more hostile act” [Garvey 2006, 160]. The latter describes Hawthorne, who famously complained in an April 1844 letter to Horatio Bridge, “I continue to scribble tales, with good success so far as regards empty praise...But the pamphlet and piratical system has so broken up regular literature, that I am forced to work hard for small gains” [Hawthorne 1987, 27]. Scholars of Hawthorne tend to suppose that this complaint alludes “to pamphlet forms of ‘The Celestial Rail-road’ that sprang up ‘after its appearance in the *Democratic Review*’ ” [Hawthorne 1987, 28, n4]. These known “pamphlet forms” include the ASSU’s *Visit to the Celestial City* and other pamphlet versions that were printed as close to Hawthorne as Boston and far away as London.

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In an October 1843 letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne's sister, his wife Sophia notes that the Sunday School Union had "no authority from the power that is for publishing the 'Celestial Railroad,' " and that her husband "was quite surprised to be taken possession of so unceremoniously" [Hawthorne 1987, 28, n4]. Those three words, "taken possession of," can be read as legal or textual, though it may not have occurred to editors within the antebellum climate of reprinting to worry about Hawthorne's pecuniary or legal interests. The *Bible Examiner's* caveat to its reprinting highlights different anxieties. Garvey argues that "The phenomenon of reprinting allowed different meanings to become attached" to a work [Garvey 2006, 161]. When the *Bible Examiner* admits that Hawthorne's "sentiments" may not align with the revised story or that he would not "endorse" its message, it admits that the *meaning* of Hawthorne's story had been "taken possession of" as much as the words themselves.

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If Hawthorne was aware of pamphlet versions of "The Celestial Railroad" published in Boston and Philadelphia, it seems likely that he was aware of some of the many newspaper, magazine, and tract reprintings, several of which were published close to him in Salem, Boston, and Cambridgeport. It seems not unlikely that he worried over both the material repossession of his words — the unauthorized and unpaid reprintings of "The Celestial Railroad" — and the metaphorical repossession of his name and of his story's meaning and message. "The Celestial Railroad," as we've seen, was co-opted by such ideologically and theologically distinct groups as Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Adventists, Quakers, Perfectionists, Abolitionists, and others, and said each time to speak for them against all comers. Though Hawthorne certainly wanted legal protection and monetary compensation for his work, his frustration at being "taken possession of" was likely more than simply pecuniary. In 1843 Hawthorne was still largely unknown. If "the tradition that grows around a work's authorship can have an intense effect on how the work is read and understood" [Garvey 2006, 159], then denominational re-authorizations of "The Celestial Railroad" threatened to brand Hawthorne in ways he may have found distasteful.

52

There is some textual evidence — small, but telling — that argues this more nuanced understanding of Hawthorne's reaction to "The Celestial Railroad" in the religious press. Hawthorne made few important changes between the story's original *Democratic Review* printing and the version that appeared three years later in *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Most of the changes Juxta highlights between the two versions are minor. However, when Hawthorne's narrator meets the two-old fashioned pilgrims in Vanity Fair, they introduce themselves in *Mosses* as Mr. Stick-to-the-right and Mr. *Foot-it-to-heaven* [Hawthorne 1846, 188] (my emphasis).^[29] Mr. Go-the-old-way, whose name was echoed in so many paratexts that drew from "The Celestial Railroad," is no more.

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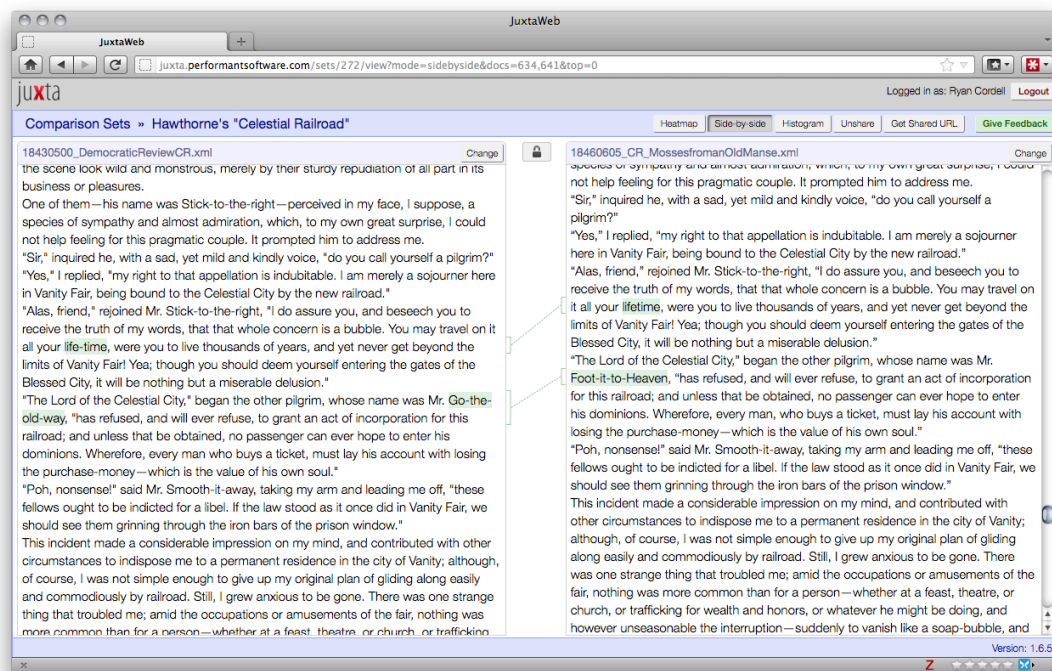


Figure 5. Here we can see the subtle, but important, change that Hawthorne made to the tale as he edited it for *Mosses from an Old Manse* in 1846. Note that Mr. Go-the-old-way has been replaced in this variant with Mr. Foot-it-to-heaven.

Mr. Foot-it-to-heaven's name contrasts sharply with his predecessor's: it's lighter, almost jocular, and not as distinct from the ironical names of Mr. Smooth-it-away or Mr. Bewilderment.

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That is, the one significant editorial change Hawthorne made to "The Celestial Railroad" between 1843 and 1846 unwrote the focal point of denominational readings of his story. This changed name perhaps signals Hawthorne's unease with his tale's career in the religious press. Whatever Hawthorne's own religious opinions, they couldn't possibly have aligned with all those who claimed "The Celestial Railroad" for themselves. After the publication of *Mosses*, Mr. Foot-it-to-heaven journeys through the pages of secular reprintings, in papers such as *Littell's Living Age* [Hawthorne 1860]. Significantly, however, Mr. Go-the-old-way remains in many subsequent religious reprintings, in papers like the *Christian Secretary* (3 Mar. 1848) [Hawthorne 1843h], *Vermont Christian Messenger* [Hawthorne 1850], and in reprintings of the Sunday School Union's *Visit to the Celestial City* through at least 1897 [Hawthorne 1843d]. In fact, the majority of "Celestial Railroad" witnesses from the nineteenth century, including those published after *Mosses*, feature *Mr. Go-the-old-way* rather than his replacement.

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Few scholars have mentioned or commented on this name change. As part of a large comparison set in Juxta, however, "Mr. Foot-it-to-heaven" stands out not as an incidental change between Hawthorne's two versions of the story, but as an anomaly among the twenty-four witnesses between Hawthorne's versions.^[30] To truly signify, however, the name change needed to be considered alongside the many editorial introductions and references to the story, the paratexts that constituted the textual network of "The Celestial Railroad". Many of these supplemental texts echo the language of "going the old way," showing the attachment that religious reprinters and commenters had to the religious conservatism of Hawthorne's message in "The Celestial Railroad". The more robust textual history provided by online archives recontextualizes Hawthorne's change from "Mr. Go-the-old-way" to "Mr. Foot-it-to-Heaven," foregrounding the cultural and social motivations that may have guided his editorial pen.

56

The reprinting history of "The Celestial Railroad" demonstrates a complex relationship between Hawthorne and contemporary print and religious cultures. The enthusiastic reception of this story by religious readers inducted Hawthorne, perhaps unwillingly, into the canon of texts that defined religious communities in the nineteenth century. The "keen satire" of "The Celestial Railroad" was not anathema to the religious press or religious readers: quite the opposite,

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in fact, as Hawthorne's satire against the "modern" and "easy" Christianity is precisely what drew religious readers to the text. Hawthorne's early reputation, at least with certain readers, seems to have been founded on a work that modern readers often overlook. Moreover, the history of this short story helps clarify our understanding of the antebellum religious press as a tool of both ecumenical outreach and fervent denominational debate. "The Celestial Railroad" was popular for its perceived anti-denominational message, but also for its usefulness in denominational debates. The essentially undefined antecedents for Hawthorne's allegorical figures permitted a breadth of interpretation across the spectrum of belief, allowing readers, editors, and preachers to create sectarian readings with relative ease, and to deploy the story against those doctrinal innovators they saw as dangerous to their own, "authentic" Christian faith.

Conclusion

Ironies abound in this history of Hawthorne's "Celestial Railroad." The tale satirized theological and technological triumphalism, yet it circulated via a thoroughly modern mass media. Editors affirmed the eternal and universal moral of "The Celestial Railroad" even as they reauthored the story to serve their particular readers. Though the tale's central, ironized symbol of uncritical modernization is the railroad, the story's social textual network likely expanded through the railroad network.^[31]

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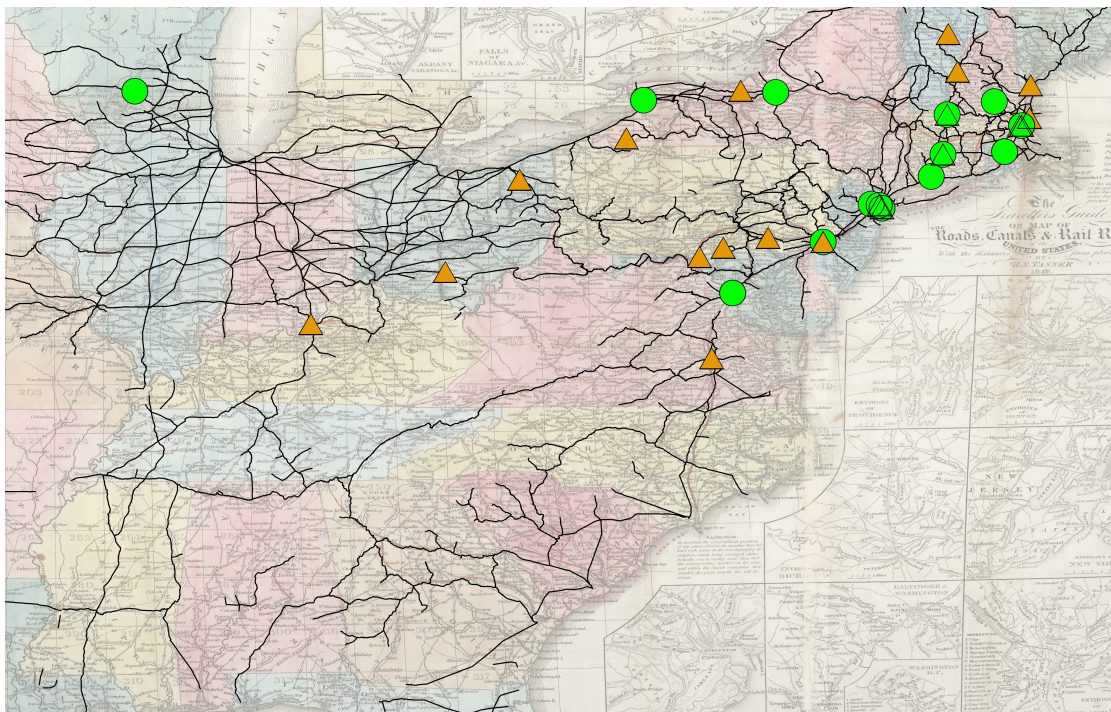


Figure 6. Tanner's 1846 map has been overlaid here with railroad data from William G. Thomas' *Railroads and the Making of Modern America* project [Thomas 2011]. The orange triangles represent reprintings of "The Celestial Railroad" between 1843 and 1861. The yellow circles represent paratexts from the same period. Icons overlap in places with multiple witnesses or paratexts.

In other words, nineteenth-century technologies enabled this satire of nineteenth-century technology to reach its audiences, even as twentieth- and twenty-first century technologies allow modern scholars to rediscover its history of reprinting and reauthorship.

59

The history of "The Celestial Railroad," not unlike the history of the digital humanities, is a tale both of technological innovation and resistance. Julia Flanders notes similar tensions at the heart of digital humanities work:

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If the rhetoric at the heart of the "digital" side of "digital humanities" is strongly informed by a narrative of technological progress, the "humanities" side has equally strong roots in a humanities sensibility which both resists a cumulative idea of progress (one new thing building on another) and yearns for a progressive agenda (doing better all the time). The theoretical and methodological

shifts that constitute disciplinary change in the humanities, when viewed in retrospect, do not appear clearly progressive in the way that sequences of scientific discoveries do, though they do appear developmental: they are an ongoing attempt to understand human culture, from the changing perspective of the culture itself. [Flanders 2009, 8]

Modern scholarly readers of “The Celestial Railroad” perhaps share its original readers’ ambivalence. We note the irony of digitizing a work that satirizes progressivism while recognizing that digitization allows us to recover and share a lost narrative of American literary culture.

When “storage is cheaper than decision making,” Flanders argues, “the rare, the lesser-known, the overlooked, the neglected, and the downright excluded are now likely to make their way into digital library collections, even if only by accident” [Flanders 2009, 5]. Hawthorne is, of course, a hypercanonical writer, but “The Celestial Railroad” has been for a century one of his least read and least studied works. Through digital archives and textual analysis tools, we have learned that “The Celestial Railroad” should be understood as a central text of Hawthorne’s early career. These new tools also shift our understanding of Hawthorne’s religious readers, who were far more open to his satirical edge than scholars have imagined. If digital scholarship can shift our view of Hawthorne, his readers, and the values those readers associated with his stories, more discoveries no doubt await scholars of other authors, both canonical and non-canonical. As we continue to dig into digital archives in search of bibliographic treasure, exciting revisions to our literary history promise to multiply — an outcome that should thrill digital humanists and traditional literary scholars alike.

Appendix

Below is my current bibliography of “Celestial Railroad” reprintings during the nineteenth century. My next task will be a bibliography of references to the story, which will be a considerably longer list. Items prefaced with an asterisk (*) are new to Hawthorne studies, found mostly through searchable online newspaper, magazine, and book repositories, including (in alphabetical order) the Access Newspapers Archive (<http://access.newspaperarchive.com>); Accessible Archives (<http://www.accessible.com/accessible/preLog>); America’s Historical Newspapers (<http://www.newsbank.com/readex/?content=96>); the American Periodicals Series Online (<http://www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/aps.shtml>); the Library of Congress’s American Memory Collection (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/amhome.html>) and Chronicling America Collection (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>); the Making of America Projects at Cornell University (<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/>) and the University of Michigan (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moajrnl/>); the Gale Group’s Nineteenth Century U. S. Newspapers (<http://gdc.gale.com/products/19th-century-u.s.-newspapers/>); and Google Books (books.google.com).

Newspaper and magazine reprintings of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Celestial Railroad”:

- “The Celestial Railroad”. *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 12 (May 1843): 515–523.
- * *Morning Star* (New York) 18:5 (24 May 1843): 20.
- * *Midnight Cry!* (New York) 4:20–21 (13 Jul. 1843): 156–159.
- *Signs of the Times and Expositor of Prophecy* (Boston) 5:21 (26 Jul. 1843): 161–164.
- *Cambridge Palladium* (Cambridgeport, MA) 1:31 (5 Aug. 1843): 1–2.
- *Christian Advocate and Journal* (New York) 17:52 (9 Aug. 1843): 205–206.
- * *Christian Secretary* (Hartford, CT) 22:29 (29 Sep. 1843): 1, 4.
- * *Christian Watchman* (Boston) 24:39 and 40 (29 Sep. and 6 Oct. 1843): 153, 157.
- * *Jamestown Journal* (Jamestown, NY) 18:902 (12 Oct. 1843).
- * *Scioto Gazette* (Chillicothe, OH) 44:2249 (18 Oct. 1843): 1–2.
- * *Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer* (Louisville, KY) 10:42–43 (19 and 26 Oct. 1843).
- *Salem Gazette* 42:84 (20 Oct. 1843): 1.
- *Salem Mercury* 4:43 (25 Oct. 1843): 1.
- * *Vermont Chronicle* (Windsor) 18:44–45 (1 and 8 Nov. 1843): 173–174, 177.
- *Gazette and Courier* (Greenfield, MA) 52:2700 (14 Nov. 1843): 1–2.
- * *Episcopal Recorder* (Philadelphia) 21:40–41 (23 and 30 Dec. 1843): 160, 164.

- * *Republican Compiler* (Gettysburg, PA) 26:14 (25 Dec. 1843): 1–2.
- *Baptist Magazine for 1844* (London) 36:7 (Jan., Feb. 1844): 9–12, 71–76
- * Excerpt. *Liberator* (Boston) 14:11 (15 Mar. 1844): 44.
- * *Hagers-town Torch Light & Public Advertiser* (Hagers-town, MD) 30:21 (21 Mar. 1844): 1.
- * *Clyde Eagle* (Clyde, NY) 1:22 (4 Jan. 1845): 1.
- *Voices of the True-Hearted* (Philadelphia) (Nov. 1844–Apr. 1846): 119–125.
- * Excerpt. *Ohio Observer* (Hudson, OH) 21:8 (24 Feb. 1847): 1.
- * *Non-slaveholder* (Philadelphia) 2:10 (Oct. 1847): 228–236.
- *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (New York) 8:24 (11 Nov. 1847): 96.
- *The Friend, A Monthly Journal* (London) 6:61 (Jan. 1848): 4–8.
- * *Christian Secretary* (Hartford, CT) 26:52 (3 Mar. 1848): 1–4.
- *Vermont Christian Messenger* (Montpelier) 4:23 (5 Jun. 1850): 1–2.
- * *Circular* (Brooklyn, NY) 2:44 (16 Apr. 1853): 175–176.
- * *Lancaster Intelligencer* (Lancaster, PA) 60:3 (1 Feb. 1859): 1.
- * *Littell's Living Age* (Boston) 851 (22 Sep. 1860): 740–747.
- * *Friends' Intelligencer* 17:39–41 (8, 15, and 22 Dec. 1860): 620–623, 637–639, 652–655.
- * *Jefferson County Journal* (Adams, NY) (9 Jan. 1878): 2.

Other notable reprintings:

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- Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Celestial Rail-road* (unauthorized pamphlet). Boston: James F. Fish, 1843.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Celestial Rail-road* (unauthorized pamphlet). Boston: Wilder & Co., 1843.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne (unattributed). *A Visit to the Celestial City*. Revised by the Committee of Publication of the American Sunday-School Union. Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1843.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne and Anonymous. *The Celestial Rail-road; or, Modern Pilgrim's Progress: After the Manner of Bunyan. Vividly Representative of the Present-Day Professors of Religion*. *Bible Examiner* 12 (February 23, 1844).
- Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Celestial Railroad". *Mosses from an Old Manse*. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Celestial Railroad". *Prose Writers of America, with a Survey of the History, Conditions, and Prospects of American Literature* ed. Rufus Wilmot Griswold. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1847.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Celestial Rail-road* (unauthorized pamphlet). Lowell, MA: D. Skinner, 1847.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne and Salomon Neitz (trans.). *Ein Besuch auf der Eisenbahn nach der Himmlischen Stadt*. Philadelphia: T. K. and P. G. Collins, 1853.
- * Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Celestial Railroad". *The Power of Grace; or, Incidents and Narratives of Wonderful Conversions in Answer to Prayer*. New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker, & Co., 1859.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne and Anonymous. *The Celestial Rail-road; or, Modern Pilgrim's Progress: After the Manner of Bunyan. Vividly Representative of the Present-Day Professors of Religion*. Boston: J. V. Himes, 1860.
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- Nathaniel Hawthorne. "A Walk Through Vanity Fair," *Hawthorne* (excerpt). *Roses and Holly: A Gift-Book for All the Year*. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1867.
- * Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Celestial Railroad". *A History of the Church of God, from the Creation to A. D. 1885; Including Especially the History of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association* ed. Elder Sylvester Hassell. Middletown, NY: Gilbert Beebe's Sons, 1886.
- * Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Celestial Railroad". *The Feast of Fat Things*. Middletown, NY: Gilbert Beebe's Sons, 1890.
- * Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Celestial Railroad". *Capital Stories by American Authors* ed. Louis Klopsch.

New York: The Christian Herald, 1895.

- * Nathaniel Hawthorne (unattributed). *A Visit to the Celestial City*. Revised by the Committee of Publication of the American Sunday-School Union. Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1897.
- * Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Celestial Railroad*. Philadelphia: Union Press, 1899.

Notes

[1] Simply *finding* paratexts not directly appended to primary texts within print archives can be a matter of luck. Brief references or allusions to other works within the tight columns of a nineteenth-century newspaper are often not apparent to even the well-trained scholarly eye. If those references or allusions include key terms from the original text, however, the digital archive may well surface them, enriching our understanding of both the original text and its cultural history.

[2] Tanya Clement also suggests the term “social text networks” in the *Journal of the Text Encoding Initiative* [Clement 2011]. In this article, I will use “literary networks,” “textual networks,” and “social textual networks” as rough synonyms to name these sets of interconnected texts and paratexts.

[3] For a list of digital archives that have been invaluable to this study, see the Appendix.

[4] While “The Celestial Railroad” was published in non-evangelical religious periodicals, the vast majority of reprintings appeared in newspapers and magazines run by evangelical denominations: e.g. Baptist, Methodist, Adventist. My discussion in this article, then, will focus on evangelical responses to the story, though there will be points of intersection between evangelical print culture, the larger world of religious print culture, and the even larger world of popular print culture that was, in the early nineteenth century, often tacitly evangelical in outlook.

[5] I’m currently working on a digital edition of “The Celestial Railroad” that will allow scholars to compare versions of the text and see the editorial changes I discuss here. My current bibliography for periodical reprintings of “The Celestial Railroad” is available online and in the Appendix. A basic, TEI-encoded version of the original, *Democratic Review* edition of the story can be found online at Juxta Commons. See [Hawthorne 1843a].

[6] Martin Mueller has coined the similar term “scalable reading” for methodologies in which researchers “use methods developed in Natural Language Processing to perform rough mapping operations that are then followed by a targeted examination of selected examples” [Mueller 2012]. While I prefer the ocular metaphor of “zoomable” I am not committed to the terminology so much as the hybrid methodologies both terms represent.

[7] It’s also quite possible that Conway, writing 56 years after the fact, misremembered or misrepresented the specifics of this early encounter with the story.

[8] Louisville’s situation on the Indiana border, combined with Kentucky’s neutrality and then Union allegiance during the Civil War, make this a marginally “southern” reprinting. The *Banner* also makes no claims to the piece’s satirical object being “the North,” as Conway claims the story was interpreted in many southern reprintings.

[9] Commonly known as “Millerites” after the Baptist pastor William Miller, whose predictions of the end of the world organized this diverse group of primarily evangelical Christians — mostly Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. These believers called themselves “Adventists,” “Second Adventists,” or “Believers in Christ’s Kingdom Close at Hand.”

[10] I cannot explore the geography of “The Celestial Railroad” in this article, though I am developing a follow-up article that will do so. Scholars often think of Hawthorne’s early career as regional, but “The Celestial Railroad” was printed as far south as Louisville and Richmond, and referred to as far west as Madison, Wisconsin — at the time a U.S. territory. For more about my current geospatial work, see the paper I delivered at the 2012 Modern Language Association Convention in Seattle [Cordell 2012b].

[11] The Sunday School Union reprinted Hawthorne’s tale under the title *A Visit to the Celestial City*. These tracts are not attributed to Hawthorne; in lieu of a byline, there is a note that the story had been “Revised by the Committee of Publication of the American Sunday School Union.” The tract version was very successful, and was reprinted, essentially unchanged from the original plates, in 1847, 1852, 1871, 1897, and 1928. Most of these versions can be found in the *Google Books* corpus. Though these tracts don’t attribute the story to Hawthorne, Fisher’s remarks here indicate that the provenance of the story was well known to at least some of the Sunday School Union’s readers.

[12] Thanks to the recent release of Juxta Commons, a new web service from NINES that allows online sharing of Juxta-created comparison sets, I can provide links directly to side-by-side comparison sets of the texts I discuss through the rest of this essay. The URLs are rather long,

so I will provide the links in footnotes. The sub-set of text's I have uploaded to Juxta's web service can all be found at <http://juxtacommons.org/shares/P15fA4>.

[13] A side-by-side comparison of the original *Democratic Review* printing and the ASSU's *Visit to the Celestial City* can be found at <http://juxtacommons.org/shares/7fRVkn>.

[14] A side-by-side comparison of the original *Democratic Review* printing and the *Midnight Cry* reprinting can be found at <http://juxtacommons.org/shares/4uKm3R>.

[15] Little's *Pilgrim's Progress in the Last Days* holds particular interest because it was published later in the same year as "The Celestial Railroad". Little's hero Christian, like Hawthorne's unnamed narrator, finds that "a bridge was built" over the Slough of Despond, which appears "of such frail construction" that he refuses to cross it. Little was aware of the similarities between her scene and Hawthorne's. A footnote to her novel, inserted one line below the final paragraph, reads, "NOTE. — 'The Celestial Rail-Road' was not in print at the time this was written. The mention of the Bridge at the Slough of Despond, is an accidental coincidence" [Little 1843, 187]. That Little was aware of "The Celestial Railroad," and assumes her readers will be aware enough of it to spot the similarities between it and her book, again testifies to the story's wide influence in 1843.

[16] He in many ways embodies a perverse version of the religious progressivism best described by Ernest Tuveson in his important study of antebellum American millennialism, *Redeemer Nation* [Tuveson 1968].

[17] The Google Books Ngram Viewer can be found at <http://ngrams.googlelabs.com>. For more on the potential value of this tool to historical and literary research, see Geoffrey Nunberg's recent article, "Counting on Google Books," in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* [Nunberg 2010].

[18] The word "sectarianism" follows a similar trajectory. To see the data for both "sectarian" and "sectarianism," see [Ngram Viewer 2012].

[19] This lament comes from a review of George Wood's very long two-volume novel *Modern Pilgrims*, a distinctly denominationalist work Wood claims "was suggested to me by Hawthorne's inimitable allegory, *The Celestial Railroad*." Wood structures his novel around his pilgrims' visits to a series of towns, houses, institutes, and communes, each meant to satirize a particular denomination or social movement. For example, in place of the Interpreter's House in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* stand three interpreters' houses, the Wesleyan (Methodism), Andover (Congregationalism), and Roger Williams (Baptist) [Wood 1855]. Wood's denominationalist retelling makes explicit what was implicit in most readings of Hawthorne's original among religious readers.

[20] The coryphæus was the leader of a Greek chorus, and can refer to "the chief or leader of a party, sect, school, etc" (OED). The *Intelligencer* means, then, that religious readers all identify Bunyan, and thus the old-fashioned pilgrims of "The Celestial Railroad," as in agreement with their own doctrine and denomination.

[21] This uncited, paraphrasical use seems to indicate that by 1861, when this *Review* article so liberally cribbed from it, "The Celestial Railroad" had become commonplace enough that direct citation was unnecessary; the story was a canonical indictment of spiritually dangerous denominational innovations, from which characters and images could be freely drawn for spiritual illustration.

[22] A side-by-side comparison of the original *Democratic Review* printing and the *Bible Examiner* reauthorship can be found at <http://juxtacommons.org/shares/7Vzym2>.

[23] Scholars, including Clark, have long been aware of this reprinting of "The Celestial Railroad," but no one seems to have investigated it in any detail. Despite the fact that this witness completely overhauls Hawthorne, no note of this appears in any bibliography of the tale. I'm hesitant to list this version of the story as Hawthorne's at all, given how few of the words in the tract are his.

[24] On the first page of the story itself, the title is simply *The Celestial Rail-road*; the extended title is only on the title page.

[25] February 1844 falls during the height of speculation, anxiety, and anticipation surrounding the predictions of Baptist pastor William Miller, who spawned the Adventist or "Millerite" movement by predicting the end of the world first in 1843, and then again in 1844.

[26] The town of "Restoration" might be less obvious to modern readers; it refers to Alexander Campbell's Restoration movement, which attempted to reconcile denominational differences — which makes their pillory here as a denominationalist town more biting — through a millennial vision of a united evangelical Christianity. Ultimately, the Restoration movement spawned several evangelical denominations, such as the Disciples of Christ.

[27] This trope of naming towns after specific denominations is echoed in George Wood's *Modern Pilgrims* [Wood 1855].

[28] The *Bible Examiner* version of "The Celestial Railroad" was popular, and continued in print until at least the 1880s. Clark traces versions of this tract through 1867, and I've found advertisements for it in the back of editions of Mary Baker Eddy's books into the 1880s.

[29] J. Donald Crowley notes this change, but doesn't remark on it, in the Centenary edition of *Mosses* [Crowley 1974].

[30] A side-by-side comparison of the original *Democratic Review* printing and his 1846 edition in *Mosses from an Old Manse* can be found at <http://juxtacommons.org/shares/Jbe2JU>.

[31] When reprintings of "The Celestial Railroad" are plotted onto Henry S. Tanner's 1846 *Traveller's Guide or Map of the Roads, Canals, and Rail Roads of the United States* [Tanner 1846] the vast majority follow Tanner's railroad lines, while few appear in those sections of the country without railroads. I have completed some preliminary geospatial work on "The Celestial Railroad" using ArcGIS to correlate Tanner's map, nineteenth-century county boundaries, and census reports from 1840 and 1850. This GIS work is not ready for publication, but you can read more about these GIS experiments in the paper I delivered at the 2012 Modern Language Association Convention in Seattle [Cordell 2012b].

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