"Peter Rugg, a Personage of My Bosom"
Kazunori YOKOTA (Kinjo Gakuin University)

When was it? Almost ten years ago, at some reading circle, I suppose, I met Peter Rugg, the missing man. According to Harry Levin (The Power of Blackness 4), Peter Rugg seems so uniquely American because Rugg, having left his home behind, keeps looking homeward, and because he exists in a state of suspense between wanderlust and nostalgia. I saw myself in eternally wandering Peter Rugg. Without realizing what I am, and with a sense of incompatibility and unbelongingness, I have been going round and round in a vicious circle like Rugg. Temporary arrogance might be the source of the wandering.

The Peter Rugg tales are as follows:
- William Austin, “Peter Rugg, the Missing Man” (1824).
- William Austin, “Further Account of Peter Rugg” (1826–27).
- The story of “Peter Rugg” is carried on by an unknown writer, signing himself “Platt,” in three numbers of the Norfolk Republican (Roxbury) of September 1827, the first number appearing September 8.
- Louise Imogen Guiney, “Peter Rugg, the Bostonian” (1891).
- Amy Lowell, “Before the Storm, the Legend of Peter Rugg [Polyphonic Prose]” (1917.)

These tales are included in the following books:

“Peter Rugg, the Missing Man” was published in the New England Galaxy for Sept. 10, 1824. The scene is laid in 1820, and the story is that of a man who, driving toward Boston with his little daughter Jenny, fifty years before, with a storm threatening, had sworn he would reach home that night or never see home again. This is his fatal oath. All the intervening years he had been seeking home in vain, and his old-fashioned chaise drawn by a galloping bay-footed black horse Lighthoot, always heralding a storm, had
become a frequent sight on the roads (Dictionary of American Biography 441).

Rugg always repeats “I must reach home tonight” and “How far it is to Boston.” He is “a man in comfortable circumstances, had a wife and one daughter, and was generally esteemed for his sober life and manners. But unhappily, his temper, at times, was altogether ungovernable, and then his language was terrible” (Everyman’s Library 10-11). These fits of passion illustrate Rugg’s human fallibility, the root cause of his wandering. So does the oath he utters in anger at the tempest. Several significant words for me are “I [one of characters] have heard it asserted that Heaven sometimes sets a mark on a man, either for judgment or a trial. Under which Peter Rugg now labours, I cannot say . . .” (5) and “. . . he [Rugg] looks like time broken off from eternity, and anxious to gain a resting-place” (5). Rugg reminds us of a puppet-like human existence, stemming from fallibility or original sin, in the course of which every human being must suffer through the arbitrary will of Heaven.

The author of Peter Rugg is William Austin (1778–1841) who is scarcely remembered in any other connection, but Austin might be a precursor of Nathaniel Hawthorne regarding to the method of art (Thomas W. Higginson in the Independent, Mar. 29, 1888). Hawthorne depicts, in “A Virtuoso’s Collection” (1842), subsequently included in Mosses from an Old Manse (1846), Peter Rugg as a doorkeeper of the museum. Rugg asks in a cracked and melancholy tone that this is the town of Boston. Both the virtuoso and Rugg are given their immortality.

Peter Rugg has lived and is of significance in the history of American fiction. As a testimony of this, we have Louise Imogen Guiney, “Peter Rugg, the Bostonian” (1891) and Amy Lowell, “Before the Storm, the Legend of Peter Rugg [Polyphonic Prose]” (1917).

The foundations of this essay are laid in the research I did in the course of producing the following works in English:

• "Who is Peter Rugg?——William Austin, a Precursor of Hawthorne" at the 19th Annual Conference of the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society of Japan: May 19, 2000.
• "Reading Hawthorne's 'A Virtuoso's Collection'" at the Regular Study Meeting of Nagoya Salon of Nathaniel Hawthorne Society of Japan: November 25, 2000.
· "Celebration of Earthly Immortality: On Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'A Virtuoso's Collection'," Kinjo Gakuin Daigaku Ronshu, 199: 44 (March 20, 2003): 349–72/72. [Louise Imogen Guiney's "Peter Rugg, the Bostonian" (1891) is translated into Japanese in this article.]
· "SASURAI [Wandering]." Nagoya: Kamiyama, 2003. [Some of the above articles are included in this book.]

Still other topics to explore are in my mind: · A further reading of a riddle of who the virtuoso is · A re-peruse of "Peter Rugg tales" listing geographical places and characters · Drawing up a reconstruction map of places such as Boston in the consciousness of Peter Rugg · A re-peruse of two books: *Walter Austin [grandson], William Austin: the Creator of Peter Rugg; *James Walker Austin [son], Literary Papers of William Austin · A peruse of other stories of William Austin · A consideration on the influence of William Austin to many other novels and tales of Hawthorne · A consideration on the relationship between William Austin and other authors · A re-peruse of related literary works mentioned in Harry Levin's *The Power of Blackness.*

I Dwell in Possibility, a Fairer House Than Politics
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Dear Judith,

Please forgive me for writing this private letter openly. I would like to dwell on the future of American literary scholarship in Japan as well as in the States by remembering the seasons of my youth.

One day back there in the good old days when I was writing my master's thesis on the plays of Tennessee Williams and life was full of summertime