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Alcoholic Republic/Temperate Empire: Temperance and Imperialism in U.S Literature, 1830-1870

Sarah Elise Franzen Young

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ALCOHOLIC REPUBLIC/TEMPERATE EMPIRE:
TEMPERANCE AND IMPERIALISM IN U.S. LITERATURE, 1830-1870

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Sarah Elise Franzen Young

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Sarah Elise Franzen Young

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Todd N. Thompson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English, Advisor

Veronica Watson, Ph.D.
Professor of English

Tanya Heflin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English

ACCEPTED

Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Alcoholic Republic/Temperate Empire: Temperance and Imperialism in U.S Literature, 1830-1870

Author: Sarah Elise Franzen Young

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Todd N. Thompson

Committee Members: Dr. Veronica Watson
Dr. Tanya Heflin

This project draws on hemispheric American studies, new historicism, and feminist scholarship to explore connections between the antebellum temperance movement and U.S. imperialism. Employing Amy Kaplan's concept of "manifest domesticity," I argue that white female authors used meanings ascribed to male frontier drunkards to argue for their own importance to the imperial enterprise. In Western texts by white women, the white female character becomes a necessary controlling and civilizing force on the frontier. More radically, temperance tropes within these texts also facilitate the creation of a new imagined position for frontier white women beyond the domestic sphere. Throughout, Edward Watts's application of settler postcolonialism to eighteenth and nineteenth-century U.S. literature informs the analysis, as does work by scholars in hemispheric American studies interested in the contact zones and perpetually shifting borders of the pre-Civil War U.S. The first chapter historicizes the nineteenth century temperance movement. It also defines the theoretical approaches used, including Kaplan's manifest domesticity and Watts's settler postcolonialist reading strategy. Chapter two examines William Apess's autobiography *A Son of the Forest* alongside Walt Whitman's *Franklin Evans or The Inebriate; A Tale of the Times* and argues that even in the apparently "settled" urban east, anxiety about intemperance was fueled by a concomitant anxiety about how completely U.S. whites possessed the land. Chapter three

assesses how white women's temperance stories set on the frontier responded to male-authored frontier narratives, ending with an extended reading of Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow* as a settler text. Chapter four takes up *The Kansas Emigrants* by Lydia Child and *Western Border Life: Or What Fanny Hunter Saw and Heard in Kansas and Missouri* to discuss how temperance, women's rights, and U.S. empire intersected in discussions of the "Bleeding Kansas" conflict. The conclusion argues that western temperance tropes were used to create a "usable past" for late nineteenth century white temperance women.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Somewhere in the midst of writing this dissertation I found myself teaching American Literature II, a survey with the helpful official course description “covers American literature, 1890 to present.” I felt singularly unqualified to “cover” any such thing, so after much pre-semester handwringing, I chose a text from each decade, crossed my fingers, and hoped for the best. Despite my shortcomings, the class turned out to be a good one. The students did the reading, discussed willingly, and, in the course of fifty minutes, usually made good progress without much prodding from me. We had moved without disaster all the way from *The Country of the Pointed Firs* to Phil Klay’s *Redeployment*, a 2014 short story collection about the Iraq war.

One afternoon in late November we were discussing Klay’s text. I was tired and mostly letting the students guide the discussion. Someone mentioned profanity as a cover for the scars of war. *Good*. I nodded encouragingly. A second student picked up the thread and immediately ran somewhere bizarre. She noted that soldiers in war zones were taught to color-code their levels of awareness. “Red” was the highest level and “white” the lowest, for danger-free occasions. Once home, soldiers, at least according to Klay’s text, had trouble re-accessing the “white” level. “It makes sense,” my student said. “Because white is, like, typically Western or, you know, American, where they’d be safe.” Now the others were nodding. I looked around the circle and had the lurching sensation that things had gotten away from me. *What on earth were they talking about?* And then, just as quickly, I got it. Right. White skin. White equals the West, which equals America, which equals the U.S., and so on. It was a subtler replay of a discussion from

earlier in the semester in a different class, during which students surmised, based on a single line about a female character's "dark hair," that she perhaps wasn't "American, or, you know what I mean. White." On the surface, these two incidents seemed about as far from my project exploring the temperance movement and nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism as the calculus class droning across the hallway. But as I turned them over in my mind, I began to suspect they were related. In the two discussions, the lack, or loss, of whiteness, explained, in the students' way of thinking, the female character's promiscuity and drug use and the soldiers' descent, once home, into substance abuse and despair. They spoke about these things in a code that came so naturally they weren't aware they were using it. I am not, of course, suggesting that nineteenth-century temperance is in some way the cause of twenty-first century casual racism. But I do think that exploring the codes embedded within and beneath the language of temperance, empire, and race that dominated the nineteenth century could serve a useful pedagogical purpose, providing a way to reflect on, and perhaps interrogate, the languages students and teachers sometimes speak without realizing they do.

One of those rarely-interrogated habits of language is the assumption, implied by my course's title "American Literature II" and seamlessly adopted by my students, that the terms "America" and "the United States" are synonymous. Hemispheric American Studies, the theoretical framework that guided my initial inquiry, argues instead that "the 'invention' of a seemingly autonomous and exceptionalist U.S. nationality developed in relation to the more expansive geographies and longer histories of the Americas" (Levander and Levine 4). Part of the goal of a hemispheric approach is to see what happens if the "'fixed' borders of a nation are recognized not only as historically

produced political constructs that can be ignored, imaginatively reconfigured, and variously contested but also as component parts of a deeper, more multilayered series of national and indigenous histories” (7). In other words, the approach seeks both to unravel the assumptions that circulated in the subtext of my classroom — among them that “the U.S.” is a transhistorical synonym for America and whiteness — and also to see what those assumptions have buried, forgotten, or erased.

During the period I examine (from roughly the late 1820s until just after the Civil War) the borders of the U.S. nation were almost entirely unfixed. The vast swath of land acquired via the Louisiana Purchase in 1802 had only been loosely organized into territories. Until 1848, Mexico and Spain still possessed most of the Southwest. French fur trappers and traders, Mexicans, Comanche, Sioux, and Lakota inhabited the western prairies along with Cherokee and other tribes driven from the Southeast by Indian Removal policies. What is now the continental U.S. was not entirely under U.S. control until 1853. Only eight years later, the nation was abruptly split in two by civil war. This context makes it clear that nineteenth-century U.S. Americans’ belief in manifest destiny and their own exceptional status was a work of impressive imaginative proportions that also required the suppression of layers upon layers of “national and indigenous histories.”

Eric Sundquist has argued that U.S. literature of all types did much to propagate this imaginative endeavor. As I discuss in more detail in chapter three, Sundquist notes that the travel narratives, journals, and histories of western explorers “established the psychological and political boundaries of the nation” for the reading public back east (13). Meanwhile, even regions that seemed incontrovertibly part of the United States sensed the tremors of “national and indigenous histories” buried by conquest, slavery,

and removal. These tremors were the “presence of the other in the nation [which] ‘is concealed and kept out of sight’ but always felt as a haunting history that must be excavated” (Alemán 79). “America,” in other words, came to mean “the U.S.” and “you know what I mean. White” through a combination of violence and linguistic repetition that continues today.

As I spent the better part of two years examining images of drinking and drunkenness on the nineteenth-century United States’ various frontiers and within its apparently uncontested borders, I began to see temperance rhetoric both as a tool of U.S. expansion and as a gauge by which to measure the rumblings of other nations and other histories that were “concealed” but “always felt.” In the project that follows, I examine how the figure of the intemperate was part of the formation of the U.S. “as a conceptual category” and how literature by white women responded to those intersections, connecting temperance tropes and advocacy for their own political rights with the goal of national expansion (Levander and Levine 4). I begin with a discussion of the temperance rhetoric of William Apess and Walt Whitman and what it reveals about the connection between temperance literature of the more urbanized east and U.S. nationalism. I then discuss how white women’s texts set on the western frontier use the meanings popularly ascribed to drunken frontiersmen to argue for white women’s importance to the project of national expansion. Finally, I examine two novels set during the “Bleeding Kansas” conflict of the 1850s. I use those texts first to discuss how temperance rhetoric allowed white women to create new, and often problematic, imagined positions for themselves on the frontier, and second how they reflect anxiety about the U.S.’s position in the western hemisphere. I conclude with a reflection of how antebellum temperance writing about the

frontier may have provided the raw material out of which white, middle-class temperance women crafted for themselves a usable past to justify both their activism and, more troublingly, their sense of racial superiority.

The journey through those texts, to be entirely understood, requires an explanation of the immense scope of the nineteenth century temperance movement and the work of the scholars whose theoretical perspectives showed me how to see what was there and gave me the language to explain it. These latter include most notably Edward Watts's application of settler postcolonialism to the early United States and Amy Kaplan's work on what she terms the "anarchy" of U.S. empire building, particularly the role of white, female domesticity in the process. Throughout, I also draw on historians who have studied the temperance movement, including William J. Rorbaugh and Ian Tyrell, and literary critics who examine temperance's manifestations in various nineteenth century texts. The most broadly influential of these is David S. Reynolds. However, Carol Mattingly's analyses of temperance literature's feminist elements have also been useful, as has the work of scholars, like Gretchen Murphy, who analyze the convergence of temperance discourse and race.

THE ANTEBELLUM U.S. TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT AND NINETEENTH CENTURY U.S. LITERATURE

Temperance can hardly be said, any more, to be an under-examined field. Historians, literary critics, and social scientists alike have all studied the enormous effect the movement had on the U.S. from the early nineteenth century through the Progressive Era. However, when I mention "temperance" in conversation, ordinary people look at me oddly. I say, "You know, like prohibition?" and then they nod and mention something

about failed policy or Al Capone. There is some irony in this transformation of temperance reform into an esoteric, scholarly topic. More broadly popular than either antislavery or women's rights, it was quite possibly the largest reform movement of the "reform era," filtering into every imaginable nook and cranny of mass culture, from stage plays, to sermons, to sensational dime novels.

As David S. Shields notes in "The Demonization of the Tavern," the stage was set for North American temperance reform in the early eighteenth century, when colonial authorities began to view taverns as sites of potential political protest and social disorder. By the 1720s, Benjamin Franklin and others were authoring essays valorizing temperance as a virtue necessary for financial success (Shields 17-18). In the same period, the Puritan minister Cotton Mather, who "affirmed his father's teaching" that rum was a gift of God, nonetheless saw drunkenness as a growing threat (Rorbaugh 30). This increasing uneasiness about alcohol, which had never before been thought dangerous, almost certainly had something to do with the unprecedented amounts of liquor U.S. Americans were consuming. The plummeting cost of distilled spirits meant that in the eighteenth century, for the first time, the "common laborer could afford to get drunk every day" (Rorbaugh 29). The trend intensified in the early nineteenth century. In his influential history *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition*, William J. Rorbaugh calculates that between 1800 and 1830, the average annual per capita consumption of distilled spirits in the U.S. was more than five gallons (187). For comparison's sake, in 2011 the National Institutes of Health estimated the rate to be around 2.28 gallons (LaVallee, LeMay, and Yi).

By 1772, the Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush suggested that alcohol had negative health effects, observations that would lead him to a lifelong “antiliquor crusade” (Rorbaugh 40). However, Rush’s efforts had the most effect on upper class, literate citizens who might eschew drinking themselves but continued to believe that employees “would not work without distilled spirits” (Rorbaugh 47). This, coupled with the fact that liquor distilling was a lucrative business, meant that the effect of early anti-alcohol efforts was limited. They revolved mostly around levying excise taxes on whiskey, which led rather unfortunately, to the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania in 1794.¹ It was not until the nineteenth century that antiliquor activism really took hold. Ian Tyrell’s *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* offers a useful general framework for understanding the movement’s development.²

The first organization strictly focused on decreasing liquor consumption, the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (MSSI), was formed in 1813. The Society, Tyrell argues, was driven by concern over the rise in poverty levels after the war of 1812. The Massachusetts organizers believed that intemperance and poverty went hand in hand and attempted to curtail the whiskey-as-wages arrangements common in the hiring of day laborers. They also tried to eliminate “dram shops” that sold drinks by the glass and to pass laws ensuring that only citizens deemed morally upright were granted liquor licenses. These early reformers, in Tyrell’s estimation, were overly cautious, not terribly committed, and poorly organized (44-46). In 1990, James R. Roher called for a “reinterpretation” of Tyrell’s analysis, particularly its focus on the ineffectuality of the upper-class MSSI, noting that, in the 1810s, “many abstainers were themselves men of

modest means” who saw temperance and, indeed, total abstinence, as key in “the preservation of the covenant, the salvation of their families, and the spread of God’s kingdom” (229). In any case, though, it seems clear that temperance sentiment was gaining traction, especially in the northeast, throughout the early part of the nineteenth century.

Organized reform, however, did not come until 1826 with the formation of the American Temperance Society (ATS). ATS officers were often New England clergymen. Lyman Beecher, the powerful Presbyterian minister and ATS co-founder, at this time delivered *Six Sermons on the Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils, and Remedy of Intemperance*, which would become “one of the major statements of the temperance movement” (Hirrell 120). Ministers like Beecher brought to the crusade an evangelistic fervor drawn from the contemporaneous Second Great Awakening. They also provided superior organizational capabilities. The ATS strategically allied itself with the American Tract Society, which annually distributed thousands of religious tracts and circulars, many focused on the merits of temperance. According to Tyrell, “paid full-time organizers, a network of voluntary organizations, systematic financing, and the printed word as the basis of temperance propaganda” underlay the ATS’s considerable success (67). By 1833, it boasted more than a million members, nineteen state societies, and 2000 local organizations (Tyrell 87).

The ATS and other temperance advocates marketed abstinence as a path to self-improvement. Its religious supporters believed that intemperance caused an inability to “keep the animal instincts under control” and thus led to sin and “eternal damnation” (Tyrell 70). Eventually this perspective was adopted and adapted by businessmen and

other professionals who believed that temperance was also a prerequisite for upward mobility (Tyrell 115). Thus the argument for temperance morphed from a purely religious to a partially economic one. As Hirrel notes, intemperance became a way of explaining “most of the crimes and social ills in the United States” (123). Observing the comorbidity of alcoholism, poverty, and mental illness, reformers came to the conclusion that the problems could be “attributed to the influence of alcohol, not to the social conditions of the poor” (Hirrel 123).

By the mid-1830s, temperance advocates had begun calling for teetotalism instead of mere avoidance of distilled spirits. The change had to do with the movement’s expanded goals. It now desired not just to maintain temperance among the already sober, but also to reform drunkards, whose habit was plunging them into poverty. Since any alcohol was a temptation to the recovering alcoholic, the reasoning went, all should abstain in order to set a good example (Tyrell 139). The clergymen and upper-class religious who ran the ATS often had neither recovered from alcoholism themselves nor interacted extensively with the alcoholics they were attempting to reach. Their ham-handed efforts at least partially accounted for the rise of working-class Washingtonian societies in the 1840s. These groups, populated by at least some reformed drunkards, pioneered the “experience meeting” during which purportedly ex-alcoholics told lurid tales of their trials with the bottle. Washingtonian meetings also included entertainment, such as minstrel shows, to draw audiences (Tyrell 195). Established temperance reformers viewed Washingtonian meetings as vulgar and also wanted legal prohibitions on liquor. Many Washingtonians were leery of legislative solutions because of their previous experiences with the penal system. Eventually these differences caused a schism

between the two groups, and the Washingtonians, with their emphasis on moral suasion, faded from the reform scene.

Upper-class temperance advocates then moved to support legal prohibition at the state level, a strategy with roots in earlier efforts to deny granting liquor licenses entirely. In 1851, they passed the “Maine Law,” which both banned the sale of liquor in the state and allowed for its seizure and destruction by government officials. By 1855, similar laws had been passed in twelve other states and territories, and it appeared that prohibition was poised to become a national crusade (Tyrell 252). However, “winning prohibition was much easier than maintaining it,” and the movement’s failure to convert the working class, along with the newly-founded Republican Party’s desire not to alienate pro-liquor voters, caused the steady decline of prohibition until the issue was revived in the early part of the twentieth century (Tyrell 322-3).

As I implied above with my reference to the Tract Society, temperance reformers produced a significant amount of literature. Daniel Dorchester, a late nineteenth-century historian of the movement, estimates that by 1851 the American Tract Society had circulated around five million temperance tracts and 156,000 “temperance volumes” (281). In *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, David S. Reynolds examines the effect the ubiquitous temperance message had on the development of wider U.S. literature. Reynolds points out that “conventional” reform texts advocated “self-improvement through hard work and moral discipline” and “avoided excessive sensationalism” (44). Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) in which the idealized heroine eschews wine (along with anything else that could conceivably be construed as vice), is a good example of this type. However,

another, very different type of reform rhetoric had a significant effect on U.S. literature as well.

Reynolds argues that when “major” authors (by which he means those like Emerson, Melville, and Hawthorne now associated with the “American Renaissance”) subverted conventional narratives, they were not, as previous critics had held, deviating from their cultural milieu, but rather were drawing on and adapting a rich tradition of “dark” or “immoral” reform literature (45). “Immoral reform” texts claimed to advocate moral behavior (temperance, sexual purity, etc.) but did so by exploring the “grisly, sometimes perverse results of vice, such as shattered homes, sadomasochistic violence, eroticism, nightmare visions, and the disillusioning collapse of romantic ideals” (45). What Reynolds terms “dark temperance” literature emerged in the early 1840s along with the Washingtonians’ experience meetings. Dark temperance stories explored the degradation and depravity of alcoholism with vivid accounts of murderous drunkards, beaten wives and children, and the psychotic visions of delirium tremens. These images, Reynolds claims, provided the raw material for explorations of the darker side of the human psyche, such as Poe’s murderous narrator in “The Cask of Amontillado,” or *Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s* sadistic slave owner, Simon Legree.

The influence of temperance on nineteenth-century U.S. literature has since become a rich topic for scholarly research. Critics have explored temperance themes in such diverse texts as William Wells’ Brown’s *Clotel* (Crowley), Hawthorne’s *The Blithedale Romance* (Stitch), and the poetry of Emily Dickinson (Mitchell) As Reynolds observes in a more recent essay about temperance and Poe, “no other single reform

[movement] had so widespread an impact upon American literature [...] largely because of its extraordinary cultural prominence” (“Black Cats” 13).

INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND TEMPERANCE IN ANTEBELLUM
LITERATURE AND SETTLER-POSTCOLONIALISM AS AN INTERPRETIVE
STRATEGY

Temperance literature, omnipresent as it was, interacted in problematic and contradictory ways with issues of race, and in so doing reflected the equally contradictory and problematic process of U.S. territorial expansion. These inconsistencies can be observed in numerous nineteenth-century texts. They can be at least partially understood, as I explain below, through a settler postcolonialist reading modeled on Edward Watts’s application of the theory to early U.S. literature and influenced by the insights of other hemispheric Americanists. In Alemán’s analysis, mentioned above, the felt “presence of the other” reveals itself in several gothic histories of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, which disclose contemporary fears about Indian removal and about Mexican territory becoming “a conquered nation of racialized subjects [incorporated] into the empire” (Alemán 82). In *The Anarchy of Empire*, Amy Kaplan notes a similar fear in women’s domestic manuals of “children and servants [...] who bring uncivilized wilderness and undomesticated foreignness into the home” (34). Both scholars are discussing a different facet of the same phenomenon — that as U.S. whites conquered more and more of the North American continent, their desire for empire was moderated by the fear of subsumption by the racialized other at the borders of “civilization.” In describing this process of subsumption, authors turned again and again to the metaphor of intemperance.

Much of the scholarly work on temperance literature (that is, texts written to discourage alcoholism rather than those simply featuring scenes of drinking) comments on the depiction of liquor as a degrading force. The drunkard often loses his job, his family, his sanity, and so on. Gretchen Murphy, Robert S. Levine, Gail Bederman, and Christopher Castiglia and Glen Hendler have all noted that these losses are predicated upon a more fundamental forfeiture: the self-control considered necessary for successful white masculinity. The white alcoholic's body, as in Whitman's *Franklin Evans*, is frequently portrayed as "taking on an unnatural redness or still darker tones" as a result of alcoholism (Castiglia and Hendler lvi). One of the dangers of intemperance, then, is a loss of whiteness itself. This assumption that liquor and racial degeneration were linked may have influenced the frequency with which alcoholics were described as being "enslaved" to the bottle and alcoholism compared to the institution of chattel slavery. In fact, as Rorbaugh points out, "early reformers considered temperance [rather than antislavery] to be the more crucial reform" since "a slave had only lost control of his body, a drunkard lost mastery of his soul" (215).

As Gretchen Murphy notes, though, the nineteenth century U.S. was also very much invested in the belief that a white male body was, by its very nature, un-enslavable. Thus, in temperance literature, the white drunkard's soul is often saved, and his slavery to the bottle proven not to be inherent to his body in the way that savagery and servility were considered inherent to a nonwhite one (Murphy, "Enslaved Bodies" 111). Temperance literature, then, raised questions about the impermeability of whiteness and explored the possibility of absorption by "racialized others," while simultaneously

attempting to foreclose those possibilities through happy endings about alcoholics' reform.

Many of the western exploration narratives examined by Sundquist that “borrowed the imperial rhetoric of expansionism” are equally ambivalent in their portrayals of frontier drinking (Sundquist 13). In some cases, depictions of alcohol use mark racial and class differences, as in Washington Irving’s *Astoria*, where the half French, half Sioux interpreter Pierre Dondin’s alcoholism works as an example of Duran’s observation that in the “colonial discourse” of Indian drinking, “alcohol unleashed the basic savage nature of the natives” (116). However, in that same text, the ability to drink with a Russian fur trader marks expedition leader Mr. Hunt as manlier than the “greenhorn” temperate naval officer who came before him (Irving 302). This second example is evidence that the “male drinking cult [that] pervaded all social and occupational groups” between 1800 and 1830 was still in full force at the time that Irving was writing, despite the rise of the temperance movement in the East (Rorbaugh 14). The drinking man in early nineteenth century U.S. exploration narratives then embodied both the appetite for expansion — the desire to conquer all that he encountered — and the fear of that he would be conquered instead. At some points, he contains the “masculine power necessary to open and command the American wilderness” (Sundquist 25). At others, he presents the simultaneously terrifying and exhilarating possibility that white men might incorporate “uncivilized wilderness” into their very bodies.

These tropes of racial degradation and alcohol use were also deployed in discussions of Indian-white relations. The manliness of the white explorer, the “savagery” of the Indian intemperate, and the danger of alcohol-induced racial

indeterminacy are underlain by “‘firewater myths’ that Indians inordinately crave alcohol and, when drunk, exhibit various deviant behaviors that are racially explicable” (Ishii xx). These myths were frequently used to explain and condone Indians’ “vanishing” before an advancing white civilization. In this complicated formulation, alcohol is a product of “civilized” white culture that reveals the “savagery” of nonwhites. It also, by turns, emphasizes the civilized self-control of white men when they can hold their liquor and threatens to unman and de-civilize them when they cannot.

That something as obviously temporary and easily explicable as drunkenness summoned these fears points to a more fundamental concern U.S. whites had about their place on the continent and in the hemisphere. The nature of this concern can be explained by examining the U.S.’s position as what postcolonial scholars often term a “settler community.” Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* count the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in this category. They argue that white European settlers in these colonies, and eventually, nations, faced a number of dilemmas that played out in their literatures. One of these was the desire to establish through language their own indigeneity: “The relation between the people and the land is new, as is that between the imported language and the land. But the language itself already carries many association of European experience and so can never be ‘innocent’ in practice” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 134). In attempting to establish an indigenous identity for themselves, settler communities initially used aboriginal peoples as a subject for literary writing. As I discuss in chapter two, the obsession with Indian themes in early nineteenth-century U.S. literature seems to be an example of this practice. Another move of settler writers is to

“incorporate or utilize a pre-existing aesthetic dimension identified with the indigenous occupants of the country” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 141). In the U.S., this tendency manifested itself in the rather bizarre but persistent custom of Indian impersonation by whites that is examined in detail by Philip J. Deloria in *Playing Indian* and discussed more fully in chapter two.

Edward Watts, drawing on the work of postcolonialist critic Allen Lawson, examines the above phenomena in eighteenth and nineteenth-century U.S. literature. Specifically, Watts argues that U.S. whites were a part of what is termed the “second world” — that is, they lacked the indigeneity of North American Indians who might be considered part of the “third” world and lacked the power afforded members of the British Empire who occupied the “first.” Second world writers, Watts argues, “Exist in a precarious balance [...] between being the victimizer and being the victim” (*Writing and Postcolonialism* 17). Or, as he puts it in another context, second world

writing responds both to the external burden of the imperial archive and to internal declarations of detachment from that tradition — resisting both colonial cringing and jingoistic self-enunciation — to reflect on how parallel patterns of continued colonization or implicit imperialism might be disguised as nationalism. The “work” of this literary ambivalence would be the engendering of sympathy for those marginalized in or by the creation of the nation [and] the development of a skepticism concerning the culture whose apparatus both articulated and imposed that marginality (“Settler Postcolonialism” 452).

Watts makes it clear that not all texts of the period “reflect second world qualities” and suggests the construct simply as a useful way to understand some of them (*Writing and Postcolonialism* 26). Early nineteenth century writing about alcohol, I believe, invited a settler or second-world stance because of the contradictions inherent in temperance ideology. Temperance rhetoric, on its surface, proclaimed the self-control of the ideal white, U.S. body and attributed the success of U.S. Americans’ colonization efforts to their inherent temperance and to the “natural” intemperance of people of color. At the same time, though, the fact that the liquor trade was a product of white, European culture pointed to the “implicit imperialism” encoded in nationalistic temperance declarations. The existence of the white intemperate suggested that the line between whiteness and other races was neither as clear nor natural as the rhetoric of temperance and nationalism declared. And the settler concern with claiming indigeneity meant that some absorption of “nativeness” or “Indianness” was, in fact, desirable, implying that U.S. whites might at times use blurred racial boundaries strategically. It is to these contradictions I refer when I argue, above, that nineteenth century U.S. writing about alcohol can be read both as a tool of imperialism and a way to understand resistance to it.

There is critical precedent for viewing the U.S. as part of the settler postcolonial tradition. And, as I explain above and throughout, I find the construct useful for understanding how images of alcohol use and abuse function within the primary texts I examine. However, it is equally important to note that many scholars find applying the term “postcolonial” to the white United States both self-contradictory and offensive, not least because of the U.S.’s present position as an empire. Canadian postcolonial scholars, for example, are equally as concerned with that country’s current domination by the U.S.

as they are earlier subservience to Britain and France (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 140). Chandan Reddy, in a spirited response to Watts, argues that a settler-postcolonialist reading of “American” literature

aestheticizes material history and the discursive strategies by which it is socially experienced. More importantly, this aesthetic universality once again addresses racialized and nonwestern students in the literature classroom as the American liberal (now liberal-multicultural) citizen-subject. This time the subject’s foundational moral ambiguity and contradictory ambivalence paradoxically become the basis once again for reproducing a distinctly American capitalist ideology of “choice,” based now on an aestheticized recognition of racial violence, silencing, and erasure as the subject’s conditions of possibility” (465).

I might protest that an engagement with textual ambiguity around issues of racial identity, nationalism, and empire does not necessarily constitute “aestheticizing material history.” However, that risks ignoring how easily my own students adopted the “discursive strategies” by which that often oppressive national history is “socially experienced,” specifically in the literature classroom.

I also find Watts curiously insistent on the need to rehabilitate the reputations of authors whose “whiteness and maleness [...] are problems” despite the fact that the authors he uses as examples (Cooper and Irving) do not seem to have suffered any serious reputational decline (“Settler Postcolonialism” 451). Thus I sense the need to be extraordinarily careful in how I apply a reading strategy that could perhaps replicate the patterns of oppression I am attempting to understand. In what follows, I do so by

suggesting that observing examples of settler postcolonialist thinking in nineteenth-century texts about alcohol is a worthwhile, but necessarily limited, exercise. When dealing with texts by those whose “whiteness” or “maleness” could prove problematic, it *is* useful to understand the authors’ ambivalence about their own position and to observe how they were “complicit in colonialism’s territorial appropriation of land, and voice, and agency [...] even at those moments when they have promulgated their most strident and spectacular figures of colonial resistance” (Slemon, qtd. in Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 17). However, ultimately, unlike Watts, I find that the usefulness of such a reading strategy in the classroom is not so much to “engender sympathy for those marginalized in or by the creation of the nation” — “sympathy,” with all of its condescending connotations, is often not what is lacking (“Settler Postcolonialism 452). Rather, it is to provide some students a way to see that no matter how “spectacular” the resistances settlers offered, imperialist power was a primary goal even of the nascent United States and to observe how texts, often despite their authors’ seemingly anticolonial intentions, bent themselves towards that goal. Ideally, some might see that their own apparently good intentions are similarly shaped by an underlying discourse of U.S. exceptionalism and racial hierarchies that can turn something as apparently innocuous as a comment on military awareness codes into a loaded statement about the assumed whiteness of U.S. citizenship.

I deal with the connections between nineteenth century temperance literature and U.S. imperialism most fully in chapters three and four in which I discuss how white women’s efforts to use frontier temperance as an apology for increased political rights often slipped into an argument about white superiority and territorial expansion. Before

delving into the specific ways women's rights and temperance goals intersected, it is important to note that locating the birth of U.S. imperialism prior to the Spanish American War in 1898, which resulted in the annexation of Puerto Rico and the Philippines, is a relatively new position in literary studies. While, as Claire Fox explains, "hemispheric and Latin Americanist paradigms have vied for precedence in the U.S. academy from the nineteenth century until the present," most notably in "fields such as political science and international relations" (639), these paradigms made less of an impact on literary study (639). As late as 1998, Amy Kaplan described wrestling first with an exceptionalist version of U.S. history in which 1898 was an "aberration, as the only time the U.S. became — inadvertently — a proper imperial power" and then with revisions of that history that focused on a "central geographic bifurcation between continental expansion and overseas empire" and viewed the annexation of Puerto Rico as a "watershed or turning point" from "the domestic continental frontier to sites overseas" (17).

For Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism*, as for other scholars, this distinction between continental and extra-continental domination are critical in the definition of imperialism. He, for example, explores the United States' imperial ascendancy in the twentieth century but largely excludes it from his discussion of nineteenth century imperialism because the U.S., like Russia, "acquired its imperial territories almost exclusively by adjacence," and thus did not produce the "structures of feeling" which "the sheer distance of attractive territories summoned" (10). The supposed difference between the two types of expansion assumes a difference of intent. Continental colonization, the argument goes, was based on a desire for land while "extracontinental

expansion [is] aimed at foreign military, economic, and political domination without the necessary intent of creating permanent settlements” (Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings* 19).

Murphy, who disagrees with this distinction summarizes historian John Rowe’s observation that “from its inception, trade routes and markets were goals of U.S. expansion,” before noting that the U.S.’s ability to

perceive an 1898 breaking point required a crucial process of forgetting — forgetting Indian removal, forgetting the Mexican-American War, forgetting the uncertainty that haunted the opening of Japan. In order to imagine that westward expansion across the North American continent was exceptional and part of an American tradition of anticolonial difference, USAmericans needed to ignore such conquests and the racism that sustained them (Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings* 22)

Kaplan, in *The Anarchy of Empire*, explores how this process of strategic ignoring and forgetting played out even in the early nineteenth century when, according to the dominant national narrative, imperialism was contrary to the U.S.’s identity as a Republic.

WHITE WOMEN, TEMPERANCE, AND EMPIRE

As I mention above, much of my project involves an examination of how white women writers discussed issues of national expansion through temperance themes. Here I rely extensively on Kaplan’s critiques of nineteenth century domesticity and feminist scholars’ examinations of the more radical elements of women’s temperance fiction. Foundational to my argument is, first, an understanding of how temperance functioned as

a powerful but limited tool women used to advocate for increased political rights and, second, an examination of how domestic ideology, which often included temperance messages, worked to support the United States' military conquests of western land.

As I discuss in chapter three, a significant portion of early nineteenth-century temperance literature was about women, often by women themselves. The drunkard's wife, either as abused object of pity or rescuing angel, was a frequent protagonist. Some feminist critics maintain that the exclusion of these temperance stories from serious study is, like the marginalization of domestic texts, connected to the canonization of literature by "a very small, culturally, geographically, racially, and sexually restricted elite" (Tompkins 200). Additionally, the pervasive view that twentieth-century prohibition was a wrong-headed attempt to limit freedom has colored the interpretation of earlier temperance reform, which is often seen as a conservative effort to enforce middle-class values and gender norms. More recently, those who have analyzed temperance fiction and the temperance movement take a more nuanced view of its relationship to women's rights arguments. Tyrell, looking at women's temperance activism, points out that "while recognizing the growing self-assertiveness exerted by women in temperance reform, it is equally important to understand that women's temperance emerged in a movement that was led by and for men" and that "women's struggle for independence within the temperance movement was defined by male power" ("Women and Temperance" 129). Reynolds and Rosenthal acknowledge how, "in its emphasis on mastery of the self, the temperance movement appeared traditional and conservative when compared to the liberal and society-changing ambitions of the drive to enfranchise women and blacks" (5). However, they nonetheless acknowledge the power of "the image of the oppressed

wife, brutalized by an intemperate husband from whom she could not escape because of the legal difficulty of procuring a divorce” (5). Carol Mattingly argues that these elements reveal a covert vein of radicalism within women’s temperance literature. In *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric*, she makes the case that temperance afforded “women a popular cultural medium for discussing and exploring women's issues” that were otherwise taboo (124).

There is significant overlap between the ideals of domesticity and those of temperance. In *Home Fronts: Domesticity and its Critics in the Antebellum United States* Lora Romero defines domesticity as an attempt to “redefine woman’s value in terms of internal qualities” rather than on those things that made “her satisfying to the male gaze.” This redefinition of female value is a key feature of many temperance texts (21). However, as I discuss in much more detail in chapters three and four, antebellum domesticity was also a tool of U.S. imperialism. Romero notes the connection between the two discourses, as does Kaplan, who points out the relationship between female domesticity and the idea of the “domestic” and “foreign” in discussions of national policy. Kaplan’s *The Anarchy of Empire* spends significant time examining how the discourse of domesticity drafted middle class U.S. white women into the project of territorial expansion in a process Kaplan defines as “manifest domesticity.” White women’s symbolic association with the idea of “civilization” meant that their presence in the West transformed militarily-conquered foreign lands into domestic ground. Meanwhile, the emphasis in domestic literature on purging “traces of foreignness” from the home became part of the rhetoric of colonization, which argued that Africa could be

domesticated (and as a result brought under U.S. control) by the deportation of ex-slaves who had been influenced by those same white women.

My analysis of temperance fiction by white women is shaped by these observations about the imperialist undertones of domesticity and, at significant moments, departs from them. I draw on them when I argue that the intemperate frontiersman in popular texts provided a basis for white female authors to assert that white women could control or “temper” the dangerous wildness of frontier men. As Nina Baym notes in *Women Writers of the American West: 1833-1927*, the intemperate husband was a common feature of western novels by women (43). I contend that, often, this character is a threat to his family and to the entire frontier community in which he resides. His descent into savagery puts the project of U.S. national expansion at risk; white female influence is necessary to contain it so that the project can continue.

Such a reading, while useful for understanding how temperance rhetoric supported the imperializing tendencies of domestic discourse, ignores the fact that temperance fiction often also encouraged wives to leave the domestic sphere, ascend the lectern, assume control of the family business, and occasionally, take up a hatchet. Temperance rhetoric in fiction by white women set on the frontier makes it possible for authors and readers alike to imagine a type of white female heroism fundamentally different from the power to restrict and control afforded by domesticity. This imaginative upending of gender roles and norms coincided with, and perhaps pointed to, the nation’s inexorable progress towards civil war.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

I begin, in chapter two, by examining Walt Whitman's 1842 temperance novel, *Franklin Evans or The Inebriate: A Tale of the Times*, alongside William Apess's 1829 autobiography, *A Son of the Forest*. Both texts, I argue, recall a pure period before the introduction of alcohol to North America. In *Franklin Evans*, the white man alone is able to resist the barbarizing effects of liquor. As a result, he inherits the aboriginal identity of vanished, intemperate Indians. In *A Son of the Forest*, the still-very-present Indians are portrayed as the only ones who can access the continent's temperate past and thus become models for the U.S.'s future. A comparison of the two works reveals that even in the urban East, temperance rhetoric was not just about defining masculinity, protecting families, or even sensationalizing vice. It was also about who had a legitimate claim to the land.

In chapter three I draw on Kaplan's work to discuss how white women authors used temperance rhetoric to argue for their own importance to U.S. territorial expansion. I examine a number of temperance tales written by white women and set on the western frontier. I argue that these tales generally follow two basic plots, that of western redemption or western degradation. Both plots, in their own way, help to establish the white male drunkard as a threat to the nation's future. In so doing, these stories also establish white women's importance to the imperial enterprise. I close the chapter with an extended reading of Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow* which argues that the text's settler-postcolonialist and temperance elements interrogate and partially undo the symbolic association between white women and civilization that undergirded the arguments of manifest domesticity.

In the related fourth chapter, I discuss two texts set on the Kansas/Missouri border during the “Bleeding Kansas” conflict of the 1850s. In both, the alcoholism of the Missouri “Border Ruffians” plays a significant role. The first is Lydia Maria Child’s work of free-state propaganda, a serialized novella called *The Kansas Emigrants* (1856). The second is the free-state leaning *Western Border Life: Or, What Fanny Hunter Saw and Heard in Kansas and Missouri* (1856), an anonymous novel probably written by Mrs. W.H. Corning. *The Kansas Emigrants*, I argue, melds the temperance trope of the racially other western alcoholic with allusions to grisly scenes from Indian captivity narratives to justify white, female violence. At the same time, it also paints Southerners as part of an Old World empire. That empire oppresses the free-state settlers, who are described in flattering, stereotyped “Indian” terms, including those of temperance. *Fanny Hunter*, a sentimentalized adventure story about a New England nanny on a Missouri plantation, draws even more heavily on the captivity genre, combining elements of the western redemption tale with that of the captivity narrative in order to question the possibility of averting civil war.

In my conclusion, I argue that antebellum temperance tropes provided a “usable past” for white female U.S. temperance activists of the late nineteenth century. As an example, I examine Frances Dana Gage’s 1867 *Elsie Magoon or the Old Still House in the Hollow: A Tale of the Past*, which creates a version of U.S. history in which white women ensured nation’s continued growth by fighting for temperance. Their ability to do so, Gage implies, was dependent upon their whiteness and their class status, a position often taken by late nineteenth century white temperance women.

CHAPTER TWO

FIREWATER

They came to my cabin when heaven was black:
I heard not their coming, I knew not their track,
But I saw by the light of their blazing fusees
They were people engendered beyond the big seas:
My wife and my children, — O spare me the tale! —
For who is there left that is kin to GEEHALE!
--“Geehale. An Indian Lament”

Look now abroad – another race has filled
These populous borders – wide the wood recedes,
And towns shoot up, and fertile realms are tilled.
--“The Western World,” William Cullen Bryant

“Geehale” and “The Western World” are just two of the more than a dozen “vanishing Indian” poems Walt Whitman would have encountered flipping through his 1841 copy of *The American Common-Place Book of Poetry, with Occasional Notes*. In some of the poems, like “Geehale,” the white author speaks as a doomed Indian warrior. In others, like “The Western World,” an observer (also white) marks Indians’ disappearance in tones somewhere between rueful acceptance and outright triumphalism. In all, Indians have vanished from North America, their departure a lamentable but necessary sacrifice to the march of progress. In 1842, Whitman, it seems, was mining the

Common-Place Book for material to use in his new temperance novel, *Franklin Evans or The Inebriate: A Tale of the Times*. Eventually twelve of the book's twenty-five chapters would have epigraphs from *Common-Place* poems.³ The amount of Indian-themed content in the collection, which might raise eyebrows today, would likely not have surprised the young author. Rather, he would have found the poems' admixture of identification and guilt capped with an assurance of white ascendancy typical of Jacksonian attitudes toward Native Americans. As Lucy Maddox puts it, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the "question of whether [and how] Indians and whites could inhabit the same territory, physical or metaphysical" was ubiquitous, manifesting itself in "art, popular literature, political policies, and activist causes" (Maddox 6). This question may have resonated so strongly because U.S. Americans were uncertain about their claim to the continent and anxious to distance themselves from their British colonial past. As I explain below, they believed the absorption of certain "Indian" qualities would help them to form a uniquely U.S. American identity; they simultaneously wished for Indians themselves to disappear. Whitman was not immune to his culture's preoccupations and included at the beginning of his temperance novel an apparently unrelated "vanishing Indian" tale introduced by lines from Bryant's poem.

But "vanishing Indian" and temperance rhetoric often intersected. Stories about Indian extinction frequently posited Native Americans' supposedly innate tendency towards alcoholism as a cause. The trope spurred Indian temperance movements that also advocated total separation from white culture and raised troubling questions for whites. When William Apess, a Methodist minister and Pequot, wrote what is perhaps the first American Indian autobiography, *A Son of the Forest* (1831), he spent pages explaining

his own alcoholism as a product of white oppression rather than racial weakness.⁴ For whites, liquor's introduction to the continent by Europeans was a source of guilt that cast doubts about the superiority of their culture. Further, popular temperance stories often described white alcoholics as racially degraded — turned “red” or “darkened” — by their excessive drinking.⁵ In these depictions, which are discussed in greater detail in chapters three and four, alcoholism, which was often used to represent unbridled greed and predatory viciousness, became also a destructive method of absorbing “Indianness” that threatened U.S. whites with the same fate as “vanishing” indigenous groups. Thus when nineteenth century authors wrote about liquor they were sometimes also writing about the continent, about who had a right to it, and about who would control it in the future.

In this chapter, I examine the temperance themes in *A Son of the Forest* and the Indian ones in *Franklin Evans* (1842) as examples of this phenomenon. Specifically, in *A Son of the Forest*, Apess describes his journey out of alcoholism as the result of a newfound connection with his Indian “brethren.” These brethren, in turn, have a special connection to a perfectly ordered, godly civilization that is paradoxically represented by the North American wilderness. Apess thus presents himself, “a son of the forest,” as capable of living out the ideals of temperate U.S. citizenship more completely than his white counterparts can. His argument hinges on those contradictions inherent in nineteenth-century rhetoric about Indians, vanishing, and liquor. First, the truism that white culture was the cause of Native alcoholism cast doubt on white Christianity's claim to be a civilizing force and complicated the argument that alcoholism was a mark of non-white racial inferiority. Second, U.S. whites urge to claim indigeneity by appropriating Indianness suggested a lack within their own culture. An examination of the often-

ignored vanishing Indian tale that begins *Franklin Evans* reveals Whitman's novel responding to these same contradictions. In *Franklin Evans*, Mr. Lee, who tells the tale and reappears at significant moments throughout the text, is the white answer to Apees's temperate "son of the forest." In Lee, Whitman combines certain "Indian" attributes into the ideal Jacksonian self-made man to create a temperate hero who has both an indigenous claim to the land and the self-control to conquer it.

FIREWATER, VANISHING, AND PLAYING INDIAN

The idea that Indians were destined for extinction had been common since the 1700s, but the popularity of "vanishing Indian" mythology spiked in the early nineteenth century, in part due to policies enacted during Andrew Jackson's presidency. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized Jackson to negotiate land trades with southeastern tribes — their land east of the Mississippi for government land west of it. Jackson argued that the law was actually a kindness to Native people who would otherwise inevitably be annihilated by advancing white "civilization" (Maddox 25). Others "considered removal a waste of money and effort" because they believed that total extinction was inevitable "whether [Indians] were moved west or not" (Maddox 26). Even reform-minded whites who decried removal's injustice simultaneously contributed to the myth, often through apparently sympathetic stories and poems. "Geehale" and the other vanishing Indian poems in *The Common-Place Book* were by no means the only literary examples. From James Wallace Eastburn and Robert Charles' Sand's epic poem *Yamoyden* to Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok*, noble but doomed Native men and women wandered off the page into forests of oblivion, unable to sustain themselves in the face of white civilization. As Laura E. Mielke puts it, "in numerous texts — from ethnographic

literature to historical romances — sentimental language and situations encouraged Euro-American readers to sympathize with Native Americans but also underscored an absolute physical and cultural difference” (248). These images wove themselves into U.S popular culture and consciousness, allowing whites to ignore the continued presence of Native people in the Northeast and to accept removal efforts in the South.

The concurrent U.S. preoccupation with temperance added an additional layer to vanishing Indian mythology. Since the eighteenth century, what Bonnie Duran terms a “colonial discourse” of alcohol use defined Indians as “the savage man” who provided “the ideological foundation for the Christian civilizing mission” (113). The stereotype of “the Drunken Indian — violent, lawless, impetuous” was key in supporting the “civilizing” efforts of European conquerors (Duran 113). During the removal era, “‘firewater myths’ that Indians inordinately crave alcohol, and when drunk, exhibit various behaviors that are racially explicable” were also used to create a less frightening and more pathetic stereotype of a people doomed by their addictive passions (Ishii xx).

Alcohol abuse became almost shorthand for Indian disappearance. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story “A Rill from the Town Pump,” which mentions off-handedly that “the Indian sagamores drank of [water from the town spring], from time immemorial, till the fatal deluge of the fire-water burst upon the red men, and swept their whole race away from the cold fountains” is a good example of how liquor was used to conjure North America’s indigenous past and dismiss it almost in the same breath (173). The same strategy is employed in numerous western adventure narratives, discussed in the next chapter, that link alcoholism to Indian vanishing. In *The Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism*, Andy Doolen argues that “the forced dispossession of

American Indians” was a key part of the “process of imperial domination that bridged the British Empire and the new United States” (xv). As discourses about alcohol abuse became wrapped up in vanishing Indian mythology, temperance, like so many apparently domestic issues, became part of that “process of imperial domination.”

However, some found the suggestion that the U.S. was merely a new version of the British Empire rankling. After the revolutionary war, the U.S. became what postcolonial scholars term a “Second World” nation. Edward Watts explains that in the late eighteenth century, British policy changes effectively meant “the North American colonies had been expelled from the first world by the emergence of a new empire. Yet, of course, they were by no means indigenes living on aboriginal land and so could not be part of a ‘Third’” (9). This sense of being neither colonizing conqueror nor colonized subject created the desire to “win ‘national identity’ as a way of escaping the margin of the British Empire” (Watts 9). U.S. Americans obsessed about creating a distinct national literature and debated whether Indian themes degraded otherwise civilized literary efforts, or if they were, on the contrary, just the thing to set U.S. texts apart from their British forbears (Maddox 32-49).

The latter position not only drove the popularity of Indian tales, but, as I mention above, also led some citizens to attempt to claim a sort of Indian identity at the same time that they were exterminating Indian people through war and removal. *Playing Indian*, Philip J. Deloria’s study on the history of Indian impersonation in the U.S., explains that by the 1840s, ethnographic and literary societies were attempting to recapture Indian identity in order to put themselves in a “position for creating a literature rooted in America’s landscape and nature” (Deloria 78). In New York, these young men formed a

fraternal order called the New Confederacy and penned a fanciful history of the Americas in which they themselves were the rightful descendants of the “vanished” Iroquois nation. They dressed in Indian garb, gave themselves Indian names, and talked about writing a new, indigenous literature. What they actually created, Deloria argues, is the field of anthropology. Impersonators became obsessed with “historical accuracy,” driven by the belief that Indian culture was vanishing, and that they were morally bound to preserve its relics and to perpetuate its customs through their own improvised ceremonies. To that end, they went about learning Indian languages, gathering artifacts, and interviewing actual New York Seneca about their customs and rituals (Deloria 84). The idea behind this elaborate role play seemed to be that through the fusion of “superior” European attributes with atavistic “Indianness,” U.S. Americans would finally be able to achieve a stable and independent national identity.

NATIVE RESPONSES TO FIREWATER MYTHS

Faced with a genocidal threat justified through stereotypes of Indian drunkenness and bizarrely appropriative nostalgia, Native leaders were forced to respond. According to Duran, “alcohol has been a predominant theme in most Native collective action since its arrival among the Natives of North America” (118). Frequently, leaders linked intemperance to the European conquerors, reversing the association of civilization with whiteness and savagery with non-whiteness. Neolin, a late eighteenth-century Delaware leader “distributed a pictographic chart to his followers that presented white people in the form of a black box that stood between earth-bound Indians and the heavenly realm: the box symbolized the white man’s evil gifts: drink, avarice, and over-hunting” (Hoxie 3). Handsome Lake (1735-1813), a Seneca leader and recovering alcoholic, expanded on

Neolin's doctrine. In *The Code of Handsome Lake*, compiled in 1913 by the anthropologist Arthur C. Parker, rum is one of the five gifts given to a white explorer by "the evil one" (Parker 18).⁶ He instructs the young man to take the gifts to the people "across the ocean" and tells him, "Then you shall be rich and powerful" (Parker 17). Liquor, in this retelling of the story of Columbus, is the instrument of the devil to make Indians, who are naturally "virtuous," more like the whites — that is, more degraded and dishonest (Parker 17). Tenskwatawa (Shawnee, 1768-1836) similarly encouraged tribal members to eschew alcohol since it "was associated with assimilation and, like other white cultural artifacts, such as food and clothing, was [...] a threat to Native identity" (Duran 123). For each of these leaders, alcohol was yet another pernicious example of the white world that should be avoided, and temperance became part of a larger call for separatism. The construction of alcohol as a peculiarly white scourge was also politically useful for resisting white encroachment onto Native land. The Cherokee Nation, for example, attempted to limit alcohol consumption in the early nineteenth century to "cultivate an image of the Cherokees as a sober, industrious, 'civilized' people" and combat removal efforts (Ishii 45). Thus if temperance sometimes served whites' imperial ambitions, it was used just as often by Native activists to resist white domination.

In 1833, for example, William Apess visited the Mashpee Indians of Massachusetts and found them distinctly dissatisfied with their white minister and state-appointed overseers. Apess helped the tribe draft a Declaration of Independence, and he and a few Mashpee men prevented whites from gathering firewood on Mashpee land. In 1834, the Massachusetts legislature, after much panic-stricken deliberation, granted the Mashpee rights of self-government (O'Connell xxxvii). One of the first things Apess did

while with the Mashpee was to help establish a temperance society with himself as president (“Indian Nullification”). In a document explaining the revolt and almost certainly authored by Apess, he wrote, “The Rev. William Apes [sic], setting forth the evils of intemperance and its awful effects in wasting our race, like the early dew before the morning sun,” proposed “to attack this mighty champion, and set a seal upon him, that he shall deceive our nation no more” (“Indian Nullification” 203-204). *A Son of the Forest*, written just a few years earlier, is a record of Apess’s struggle with and eventual triumph over the deception that he, like Handsome Lake, linked to whites under sway of the “evil one.”

TEMPERANCE IN *A SON OF THE FOREST*

On its surface, *A Son of the Forest* is an earnest Christian conversion narrative. It follows Apess’s life from an abusive childhood in New York, to a stint in the army during the War of 1812, to his call to ministry in the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC). Throughout, Apess’s struggles with alcohol are a key part of his conversion story. *A Son of the Forest*’s temperance themes are usually read as indicating Apess’s Methodist devotion. However, given the frequent use of temperance rhetoric in Native separatist arguments, they could just as easily be part of his “risky social criticism of U.S. imperial culture” (Doolen 159). Apess’s text employs some of the same strategies as Neolin and Handsome Lake used. However, as I argue towards the end of this section, he also does something radically different. The temperance themes in *A Son of the Forest* exploit U.S. whites’ anxieties about their Second World status in order to argue that Indians are not only indigenous North Americans but also the ideal model for U.S. citizenship.

Apess's Christianity has led some scholars, most notably Arnold Krupat, to deny that Apess was a "Native" leader at all. For Krupat, Apess's Christian conversion and use of evangelical rhetoric negate his Indian identity. "If there is [...] a Pequot dimension to Apes [*sic*]," writes Krupat, "it is not apparent to me" (147).⁷ More recent critical work has countered this simplistic view of Native, or indeed, any identity, arguing that "Apess's subjectivity is comprised of a variety of dimensions — religious, racial, national class, gender, etc. — which are not closed, fixed, distinct, or even perpetually in competition with each other" (Haynes 26). More recently, *A Son of the Forest* has been examined as an anti-imperialist response to Indian removal policies (Doolen); as a counter to "vanishing Indian" myths, asserting Indians' continued presence in the northeast (O'Connell); and the work of a "moralist" and "visionary" who "condemned [the whites] in their own tongue" of religion and patriotism (Hoxie 6).

Despite *A Son of the Forest's* repeated references to alcoholism, the imbrication of temperance rhetoric with U.S. territorial expansion, and the Native tradition (well-established by the 1830s) of responding to "colonial discourses" of alcohol use, relatively little has been written about *A Son of the Forest's* temperance elements.⁸ Doolen, who mentions temperance briefly as part of a larger discussion of Apess's work, reads the author's repeated descents into alcoholism as representing the white domination of people of color that must be overcome in order for "U.S. imperialism" to give way to "an inclusive democracy" (154). Mark J. Miller, in one of the only longer treatments of temperance in the narrative, argues that Apess is working within a Methodist reform culture that defined intemperance not merely as drunkenness, but more broadly as the "sinful fulfillment of bodily drives shaped by the social world" (243). These uncontrolled

drives were often “projected onto nonwhite characters” in evangelical temperance tracts and popular literature (Miller 238). Apess used his autobiography to reverse traditional temperance “narratives’ metaphors of rape, disorder, and dispossession to construct an Indian history of U.S. imperial expansion” (Miller 243). Doolen’s and Miller’s interpretations are amply supported by the text. For example, when Apess was a child, his drunken grandmother beat him severely, breaking his arm in three places (Apess 6). Yet Apess is quick to exonerate her, arguing, “this cruel and unnatural conduct was the effect of some cause. I attribute it in a great measure to the whites, inasmuch as they introduced among my countrymen that bane of comfort and happiness, ardent spirits” (7). Later, it is a white friend who first teaches him to drink rum (23), white soldiers who get him drunk and trick him into joining the army at age fifteen (25), and white drunkards who encourage him “to steal for a living” (35).

Apess’s strategy, as interpreted by Doolen and Miller, is thus far very similar to that of Neolin, Tenskwatawa, and Handsome Lake. He blames whites for Indian alcoholism, points out that whites are just as susceptible to the vice as any other race, and posits himself as an example of a “sober, industrious, ‘civilized’” Native man who should be respected and left alone by white society. However, when Apess describes his eventual path out of alcoholism and the results of his newfound temperance, he employs a strategy more complex than the inversion of “drunken Indian” stereotypes described above. Instead of entirely contradicting his white readers’ notions about Indians, he tells them a version of the stories they were telling themselves, this time carried to their logical conclusions. In his extensive introduction to Apess’s writings, Barry O’Connell notes that the term “a son of the forest” is “patronizing in [its] association with a

primitive, natural, and childlike state” and frets that there is no “assurance” that Apess’s use of this and other condescending European appellations are necessarily “deliberately ironic” (lvi). Rather, the title *A Son of the Forest* reveals that Apess “can only express himself and his experience in the media of the dominant culture through its representational codes” (O’Connell vi). I would argue, though, that Apess’s use of the term is actually central to his argument about temperance and, in turn, to his argument about the type of man best equipped to guide the United States. The temperance arc in Apess’s text is structured around two separate moments in which the “son of the forest” ventures into the forest itself. The first of these marks his alienation from Native culture and resultant debilitating alcoholism. In the second, he finds that the romanticized Indians of white “vanishing” tales have not vanished at all. They are alive and well in the Canadian woods, where they have founded a society beyond the reach of white whiskey sellers. Apess’s brief stay with them and his subsequent emergence as a model of temperate Christianity suggests that the “son of the forest” and native to the land is best equipped to embody the ideals of the new republic. This suggestion becomes reality when, after a third wilderness experience that cements his position both as a “son of the forest” and a child of God, Apess becomes a civilizing influence on a degraded white culture.

The first example of Apess entering the forest comes when he is a young boy indentured to the Furmans, a white family. Apess, out berry picking in the woods near the Furman’s home, sees a party of dark-skinned white women. He panics, runs home, and begs Mr. Furman to save him from the “Indians” in the forest. Apess’s fear reveals alienation from his Native identity, and the forest setting emphasizes that alienation.

What self-proclaimed “son of the forest” is afraid in the woods? The scene could be dismissed as a bit of pathetically comic irony except for Apess’s adult reflection that

the great fear I entertained of my brethren was occasioned by the many stories I had heard of their cruelty toward the whites – how they were in the habit of killing and scalping men, women and children. The whites did not tell me that they were in a great majority of instances the aggressors — that they had imbrued their hands in the lifeblood of my brethren, driven them from their peaceful and happy homes — that they introduced among them the fatal and exterminating diseases of civilized life (11).

Given this explanation, since the “Indian” women in the woods were actually white, the young Apess was quite right to be terrified. White presence in the Native forest is dangerous, potentially “fatal.” That danger, moreover, is linked to the “diseases of civilized life,” a common phrase in vanishing Indian rhetoric that most often refers to smallpox and other communicable diseases, mechanized warfare, and alcohol. Since *A Son of the Forest* does not much discuss the effects of disease and war, it seems likely that Apess had liquor in mind here. Thus, the anecdote is actually the story of an alienated Indian boy who runs away from the forest and towards his dangerous white benefactors and their supposed civilization. The moment marks the beginning of a series of object lessons in white character, which lead directly to Apess’s slide into intemperance.

Just after his experience in the woods, a boy encourages Apess to steal and lie about it, earning Apess a flogging (11). Later, a white servant girl lies about Apess threatening her, and he is flogged again (12). He becomes ill, and his white master

decides to “frighten the disease out of” him through another beating (13). He attempts to run away and is sold (15). He runs away from the new master and is sold again (16). At his third and final home, another white servant tells lies to get Apess beaten (22). Finally, Apess takes the bad advice of a fellow (white) indentured servant and runs away for good. It is a rainy, cold night, so the boys buy a bottle of rum and drink “heartily” (23). From that moment, bouts of drunkenness become a steady feature in Apess’s life. Though his story never ceases to be a Methodist narrative, and much of his persecution at the hands of various white characters results from his insistence on attending Methodist meetings, it is difficult to ignore the fact that his experience after mis-recognizing the white women in the woods almost directly follows the trajectory he describes for his Native forbears. He is “driven from his peaceful and happy home” by conniving whites and eventually introduced to one of the “diseases of civilized life” which will plague him for years to come.

Throughout *A Son of the Forest*, liquor and the predatory behavior of whites go insistently together. However, the fact that this strategy was common in Indian separatist arguments might have been lost on Apess’s white readership, neutralized by other discourses about Indians with which they were more familiar. Religious white readers, for example, would have seen his alcoholism as representing the unredeemed state of his soul. White readers in general would have recognized the familiar gestures of “vanishing” rhetoric. Just as Native leaders used the association of alcohol with European culture to argue for separatism, whites acknowledged it by including a measure of guilt in their descriptions of Native people undone by whiskey. For instance, George Catlin, the white artist and author who spent much of his career trying to preserve the Indian culture

he believed was fast disappearing, wrote in his 1842 *Letters and Notes on the North American Indians*, “twelve million [...] have fallen victim to whiskey, the smallpox, and the bayonet” (4). Later in the book he indicts white “sellers of whiskey” whose extortionate prices bankrupt the Indians, who “look to the white men as wiser than themselves” (257). The dying culture that Catlin and many others were attempting to preserve was, as he puts it, full of “silent and stoic [...] lords of the wilderness (2). These “lords” represented “Man in the simplicity and loftiness of his nature, unrestrained and unfettered by the disguises of art” (Catlin 2). Despite their investment in their own preeminence, U.S. whites also imagined that before Europeans came to North America, the indigenous people had been noble, heroic and brave. Of course, so the convenient and racist myth went, they were also naïve *children* of the forest who had been duped by some unfortunately dishonest whites and corrupted. As a result, they would vanish, either through death or cultural assimilation. The ritual hand wringing about white complicity in Indian alcoholism was the first part of a formula in which, according to this version of the continent’s history, “superior” whites replaced Indians in the lineage of North American nobility.

The first half of Apess’s narrative follows the formula perfectly. Conversion to Christianity and subsequent cultural assimilation was considered as effective a form of “vanishing” as physical disappearance. During the removal era, there was a “universally shared assumption that there were only two options for Indians: to become *civilized*, or to become *extinct*” (Maddox 24). The process of “civilization” involved the acquisition of private property, Christian conversion, and English literacy (Maddox 23-24). However, as Jeffery Steele explains in a discussion of the “wild west” shows that would become

popular later in the century, “the image of assimilated Indians with 160-acre farms” was less appealing to the white imagination than noble warriors falling in battle (46). Thus, “rather than acknowledging a continuity between their world and that of American Indians, such shows fixed the image of the Indian in time ‘as if the only Indian were a past one’” (46). For U.S. whites, “civilized” Indians disappeared *as Indians* as surely as those who had fallen in battle or died on the trek to Oklahoma. Apess’s eventual conversion, signaled throughout the book by his devotional language, promised his readers that he was not a “true” (that is, anachronistic) Indian, but an assimilated and converted one whose Indian identity had been subsumed by white Christianity. That his drinking was caused and encouraged by whites would probably have seemed to his white, Christian readers less significant than the fact that white Christianity eventually rescued him. Those readers would have read the story according to the formula described above — the noble but drunken Indian who is eventually, like all of his brethren, subsumed by white society and white religion. In other words, despite Apess’s best efforts, in the first half of his book, it is possible that white readers would not have seen in his descriptions of Indian alcoholism an indictment of white culture but further evidence that, as the *Democratic Review* put it when writing about the phenomenon of Indian vanishing in 1844, “Christianity was superior to paganism; industry to idleness; agriculture to hunting; letters to hieroglyphics; truth to error” (qtd. in Maddox 30).

In the second half of the book, however, Apess’s temperance rhetoric complicates this reading. First, he very clearly links his freedom from alcoholism to his reconnection to his own Indian identity, which occurs in two literal returns to “the forest.” Second, he uses that experience not to argue for separatism but to make the case that Indian culture

holds the key to temperate, republican citizenship. After Apess leaves the army, he spends a year wandering through the northern U.S. and Canada. He is drunk most of the time. In one incident that will become important later, he works for “a merchant” until he becomes “negligent and careless, in consequence of his [the merchant] giving me a pint of rum every day, which was the allowance he made for each person in his employment” (32). Shortly thereafter, Apess spends a brief but significant period among a group of Indians (probably Mohawks or Mississauga) on the Bay of Quinte in Ontario (O’Connell 26n). While there, Apess once again describes seeing a group of Natives in the woods. His reaction to contact with Indians as an adult is quite different from his response as a boy. He writes:

On the very top of a high mountain in the neighborhood there was a large pond of water, to which there was no visible outlet — this pond was unfathomable. It was very surprising to me that so great a body of water should be found so far above the common level of the earth. There was also in the neighborhood a rock that had the appearance of being hollowed out by the hand of a skillful artificer; through this rock wound a stream of water: It had a most beautiful and romantic appearance and I could not but admire the wisdom of God in the order, regularity and beauty of creation; I then turned my eyes to the forest, and it seemed alive with its sons and daughters. There appeared to be the utmost order and regularity in their encampment (33).

In this incident, Apess looks into the forest, sees Native people and recognizes them as his “brethren.” It is an exact inversion of his encounter with the berry-picking white

women: the Natives are, truly, Natives, and Apess, having now been thoroughly educated in the deceitfulness of white culture, recognizes them as his people. Through the experience he gains “some positive sense of himself as an Indian” (O’Connell xxxiii). The romantic terminology, though, at first appears to be another example of what O’Connell terms Apess’s “peculiarly self-conscious claim to Indianness” and his not-always-demonstrably-ironic use of patronizing white phrases (li).

However, a careful examination of Apess’s language and that of one of his apparent sources for *A Son of the Forest* reveals that he is, in fact, using the paternalistic assumptions of popular “firewater myths” to present Indian civilization as the ultimate source of “order and regularity.” Apess concludes his description of his time in the forest with a lament: “Oh, what a pity that this state of things should change. How much better would it be if the whites would act like a civilized people and, instead of giving my brethren of the woods ‘rum!’ in exchange for their furs, gave them food and clothing for themselves and their children” (33). The coda makes it clear, if it wasn’t already, that the idyllic situation he has witnessed is due to the absence of Europeans and their alcohol. Apess strategically ignores the fact that the Native communities on the Bay of Quinte were already “especially plagued with alcoholism” by 1815 (O’Connell xxxiii). That allows him to present a paradisiacal Indian community that would have been familiar and appealing to white readers steeped in the romanticized descriptions of the era’s popular literature

One obvious difference between those descriptions and Apess’s is that the community on the Bay of Quinte is neither gone nor disappearing. There are other, more subtle revisions of popular stereotype as well. If we follow the long second sentence

through its colon and semicolon, we see the “order” and “regularity” of nature linked to both the Christian God and Native society: Apess first admires the “order, regularity, and beauty” of God’s creation in the hollowed rock, then shifts his focus to the “sons and daughters” of the forest whose encampment also exudes “order and regularity.” The repetition suggests an ironic inversion of popular opinion. European conquest was in part justified by the argument that it would bring order to the wilderness. Bryant’s poem, “The Western World,” quoted above, expresses the idea succinctly: As “the wood recedes/And towns shoot up,” “The free spirit of mankind, at length,/Throws its last fetters off” (53-54). Towns and farms were, according to white mythology, evidence of order, civilization, and the march of progress. Forests and the disorderly, wild life they represented had to recede. In Apess’s description, Christian order is inherent in forest life. His passage also questions popular opinion that Indians who chose “civilization” over “extinction” would necessarily abandon hunting for agriculture and private land ownership. Apess suggests that no such transition is necessary. The only threat to the already naturally “orderly” and “regular” hunting society is the white traders who insist on providing “rum” instead “food and clothing” in exchange for furs. At the Bay of Quinte, perhaps more than anywhere else in the narrative, Apess makes a clear case for the superiority of Native culture – God, order, peace, and temperance were (and, significantly, are) found in the forest. Godlessness, disorder, strife, and intemperance lie outside of it, on the path Apess traveled from the moment he ran out of the woods as a frightened child. While on that path, bouts of drunkenness marked his distance from God in a way that would have been unmistakable to his temperance-loving Methodist readership. As Miller has argued, for nineteenth century Methodist reformers,

intemperance was synonymous with a sinful lack of self-control (239). They could, however, have found many reasons to dismiss the connections of that vice to white culture. In Apess's description of his time at Quinte, that connection and its logical corollary, that Native culture held the key to temperance, become more difficult to discount.

The Quinte episode takes place in the sixth chapter. At the end of it, Apess seems to pull back from his boldest assertions about Indians' natural temperance and their alliance with God that required neither white intervention nor mediation by declaring that many "natives [...] have been reclaimed from the most abandoned and degrading habits" by "*pious missionaries*" whose "doctrine" does not contradict their "conduct" (33). However, in the opening three paragraphs of chapter seven, he argues first that "the forests of Canada and the West are vocal with the praises of God," second that Methodists have sped this process only because they relied on Christ and not their own abilities, and finally that American Indians are, perhaps, more prepared for conversion than whites because they are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. This belief was used by a number of activists to counter ideas of Indian savagery, and Apess embraced it whole-heartedly.⁹ The cumulative effect of these paragraphs is to reiterate Apess's original point – Indians are already civilized offspring of the fathers of the faith. The only thing retarding their progress is white vice. Through a number of references to intemperance, chapter seven also makes it clear that Apess has emerged from the forest a changed man. After a brief time with a "bad company [of] drunkards," he lives with a man and his alcoholic wife:

She was very intemperate, and here I saw the evils of ardent spirits. They soon after broke up housekeeping, and I of course lost my place. I had not refrained from my evil practices, and some of my wicked companions advised me to steal for a living, but as I had no inclination to rob anyone, I had prudence and firmness to resist the temptation. Those who advised me to do so were not my brethren but whites. My eyes were now opened to see my pretended friends in their true light. (35)

As I argue above, Apess's intemperance began with a moment of misrecognition in the woods – a confusion of Indianness with danger and whiteness with safety. Here, after a single experience of seeing the forest clearly, he can also “see” the evil of intemperance and the true nature of the “friends” who are not his brethren. The process begun while berry picking outside his white master's house appears to be reversing itself. That reversal is completed in the text's final mention of the forest.

Everything following the Quinte incident involves Apess's journey back to New England and his subsequent call to preach. While establishing himself Connecticut's Methodist community, he decides to visit his father in the neighboring town of Colrain. He takes a wrong turn in the dark and ends up in a swamp. After poking at the undergrowth with a stick he realizes he is lost: “What to do I knew not; shut out from the light of heaven – surrounded by appalling darkness – standing on uncertain ground [...] This was the hour of peril – I could not call for assistance on my fellow creatures; there was no mortal ear to listen to my cry” (42). Eventually, he prays and miraculously finds a path out. He and his father, who has become a Baptist, spend “a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” (43).

For O'Connell, Apess losing his way in the forest mocks stereotypes about Indians' "natural" woodsmanship and offers a "commentary on all that happened to actual Native Americans in the East who were lost from the sight of the dominant culture, lost from cultural consciousness, and also lost, in terms of much of their ancestral heritage" (lii). He further notes that "Apess represents himself as lost on his way to his father's house, the father who is part white and part Indian, and who chooses, at least for a time, to live far away from any Native American community" (liii). This interesting reading is complicated by two important facts. First, Apess is *not ultimately lost*. The entire point of the story is that he finds his way. Second, his journey actually restores him to his estranged father, who has finally become one of his (Christian) "brethren." The anecdote is not about an alienated Pequot tragically lost in the woods but an Indian man whose ultimate sign of commendation from God originates in the forest. The incident puts Apess in company with a multitude of biblical characters, from Jacob, to Moses, to David, to Christ, who experienced miracles in the wilderness. His language even mimics that of the fortieth psalm. Apess first describes the swamp as a "deeper [...] mire" then writes, "I raised my heart in humble prayer and supplication to the father of mercies, and behold he stretched forth his hand and delivered me from the place of danger [...] I found a small piece of solid earth, and then another, so that after much difficulty I succeeded in once more placing my feet upon dry ground" (42). The psalm, ascribed to David, reads, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (*King James Bible*, Psalm 40:1-2). As in Canada, the forest provides access to God. This time, though, Apess is not a mere observer, but a

direct recipient of divine guidance. Read in this way, the incident further cements the connection, established in Quinte, between “the forest” and Christian revelation. It also shows that a mature, Christian Apess fully inhabits the position of “son of the forest,” who, like David and the rest of Apess’s supposed Israelite forebears, is guided by the “father of mercies” (42).

The three significant references to forests in the nine-chapter book occur in chapters one, six, and eight, effectively dividing the narrative into thirds. After the first incident, Apess becomes intemperate. The second allows him to finally “see” intemperance as an evil perpetrated by whites. After the third, he becomes an advocate for temperance in the white community. In the final chapters of the book, Apess presents himself as a temperate family man preparing to follow a call to the ministry. At this point, in order to make money to support family, he takes a job with a man named Hail, who supplies his workers a daily liquor ration. Apess refuses in favor of water and molasses and extra money (Apess 47). As a result, he and Hail become such good friends the Hail family is “loath to part with him,” and Apess “held a prayer meeting with them” before he departs (47).

Mark J. Miller argues, persuasively, that Apess’s anecdote about his time with Hail so closely mirrors an article titled “An Address to Modern Mechanics, To Whom It May Concern” from the Methodist periodical *The Friendly Visitor* as to “suggest direct influence” (247). According to Miller, “An address” is aimed at “the master, crediting the farmer with requiring temperate labor” (247). In *A Son of the Forest*, Apess proposes the scheme to Mr. Hail. By rewriting a paternalistic temperance narrative, Miller argues, Apess adjusts Methodism to “address the needs of Methodists of color, who were less

able to become masters or tradesmen” and extends “Apess’s spiritual labor by teaching employers and employees alike to support traditional standards of public morality” (248).

All of this is no doubt true. However, if we accept Miller’s argument that “An Address” bears “substantial” similarity to the Hail account in *A Son of the Forest*, and that Apess was probably familiar with the article, it is worth noting that language in “An Address” also contains significant similarities to language in Apess’s previous forest episodes. Towards the end of “An Address,” the author praises two employers who keep temperate workforces. The first, “Pierson” a “Nail Factorer at Smith’s Clove,” has “as many hands employed as in any other establishment in the State of New-York, and [...] amongst such a number of all ranks of people there will hardly be found more *order*, *regularity*, [emphasis added] *sobriety*, industry nor harmony in the state” (“Address” 165). The second man “likewise employs a number of men, all over and industrious men, and quite likely maintains *peace* [emphasis added] and harmony amongst them” (“Address” 165). If we recall, Apess repeated the phrase “order and regularity” twice in a single sentence to emphasize the godliness of the Quinte settlement and also, I argued, to subvert the popular view that Indian wilderness was the antithesis of white, “civilized” order (Apess 33). Further, his commentary about the berry-picking incident condemned whites for driving Indians “from their once peaceful and happy homes” through the introduction of liquor. In “An Address,” temperance and the “order,” “regularity,” and “peace” that accompany it are imposed on laborers by elite whites. Apess’s text locates the source of those things in an Indian civilization undefiled by white influence. His rewriting of “An Address” occurs just after his experience in the swamp where, I have argued, his twin position as a “son of the forest” and a “son of God” were confirmed. He

is now prepared to serve as a sort of missionary to intemperate white culture, imposing on it an “order” and “regularity” now redefined as peculiarly Indian.

Two other connections between the Quinte and Hail episodes work to support this redefinition that makes people of color the exemplars of ordered civilization and, in fact, appropriate models for whites to emulate. First, just as the experience in the Canadian woods is an inversion of Apess’s berry-picking adventure, the experience with Mr. Hail inverts Apess’s earlier work for the trader who doled out pints of rum. In that position, which he held just before arriving at Quinte, Apess, pledged “to serve the merchant faithfully,” but soon became “negligent and careless in consequence of his giving me a pint of rum every day, which was the allowance he made for each person in his employment” (32). The Apess who “determined that *touch not, taste not, handle not* should be my motto” while on Hail’s farm is a changed man indeed. The repetition of what is, essentially, the same story with two different endings emphasizes that change. It also highlights the fact that, unlike in “An Address,” white authority figures are not temperate exemplars but the source of intemperate disorder. Second, at the end of his sojourn in Quinte, Apess complained that whites should “act like a civilized people and, instead of giving my brethren of the woods ‘rum!’ in exchange for their furs, [give] them food and clothing for themselves and their children.” Refusing Hail’s liquor enables him to earn “a sum sufficient to buy my poor, dear children some clothes” (Apess 47). By demanding that Hail provide him with money for “food and clothing” instead of “rum!” Apess is, quite literally, teaching him to behave like a civilized person. Apess emphasizes Native temperance and white response is not to advocate separatism, as did Neolin, Tenskwatawa, Handsome Lake. Instead, Apess suggests that indigenous civilization is

the model for godly, temperate citizenship. If whites wanted to resist alcohol, they ought to look to the “order and civilization” of the wilderness.

By constructing temperance as a peculiarly Native quality Apess capitalizes on a contradiction in drunken Indian myths that explained white conquest as inevitable. That is, for the story of a “deluge of firewater” sweeping away Indian societies to make any sense, alcohol had to be a product of white civilization and indigenous civilizations had to be naturally purer and less corrupt than white ones. In a reform culture that made temperance synonymous with whiteness, civilization, and self-control, this logical extension of “firewater” logic was acceptable if Indian disappearance was assured. In other words, temperance rhetoric could condemn white settlers for plying the natives with firewater so long as the natives’ original, temperate society was safely in the past and presented its white audience no uncomfortable comparisons. Even so, the existence of white alcoholics both contradicted dogma and raised the possibility that U.S. whites were just as likely to be “swept away” as the Indians — perhaps more so. After all, whites lacked any real connection to the temperate, noble Indian past romanticized in novels and poems, and they knew it. Their pretend-Indian societies, role-playing, and obsessive return to Indian themes in literature exposed their uncertainty about their national identity and their nagging suspicion that Indians had been more authentically “American” than they were.

Indians communities at the Bay of Quinte were, as I mentioned above, suffering an epidemic of alcoholism when Apess visited. His description of his idyll there is, if not pure fantasy, at least heavily edited. But true or not, it serves the purpose of bringing past, temperate Indian societies of white imagination into present white reality. *The Indian son*

of the forest has been abused by liquor, he tells his readers at the Furmans, and they nod – they have heard this story before. *Indian culture is purer, more noble, more orderly, and more temperate than your own*, he tells them at Quinte, and they recognize in the description their own fantasies about the ancient past. When he walks out of the forest the third time, he is the decidedly not-vanished Indian who carries with him an authentic connection to that past merged with the Christianity they recognized as the mark of civilization. From there, he could turn the story of the temperate employer entirely on its head, and intimate that the path to temperate citizenship — to civilization itself — lay in following Indian example.

INDIANS AND TEMPERANCE IN *FRANKLIN EVANS*

The effectiveness of Apess's argument, of course, depended upon his actual readers being more astute than the ones I've imagined above, or else it could be subsumed by the other, more familiar discourses of vanishing and firewater that he was modifying. The critical tradition that has judged *A Son of the Forest* merely as a conversion narrative by an assimilated Indian suggests that his argument, however nuanced, was indeed lost to history. However, there is other evidence that the threat underlying rhetoric linking intemperance to vanishing and liquor to white culture was more obvious to early nineteenth century readers than it would be to their future counterparts. As I argue in chapters three and four, this fear was especially prevalent on the Western frontier where control of the territory was still in doubt. However, the depth of this anxiety is evident in the fact that its residue can be discerned in a decidedly eastern, urban temperance narrative, Whitman's *Franklin Evans*. That text's use of Indian themes within a conventional temperance novel acknowledges temperance as the

inheritance of North American natives by making it an integral part of the man who has successfully absorbed Indianness into his white identity.

Franklin Evans is a sometimes didactic, often sensational piece of reform literature, borne out of Whitman's early admiration of the working-class Washingtonian temperance movement. The plot, which occasionally verges on incoherence, begins when the eponymous narrator moves to New York from the countryside and is quickly seduced by drink. He then engages in an almost picaresque series of wandering adventures, oscillating all the while between sobriety and drunkenness. His backsliding is eventually checked by the surprising reappearance of a wealthy patron, and he becomes at last an upstanding citizen and the moralizing narrator of a temperance novel. Obviously, there are similarities between Evans's trajectory and Apess's. Indeed, Miller argues that Apess's autobiography "prefigured the artisanal Washingtonian temperance movement's use of confessional narrative," of which *Franklin Evans* is clearly an example (245).

However, Whitman wrote *Franklin Evans* in 1842, a full fourteen years after the first edition of *A Son of the Forest* was published, and there is no evidence that he had read Apess's work. Further, while the two men may have been in New York City at the same time briefly in 1836, it is unlikely their paths crossed. Whitman was working as a printer; Apess had slid into anonymity and was drawing near to his sudden 1839 death in a New York boarding house (Warrior 2-3). Thus I am not suggesting that the Whitman drew on Apess. Rather, I am arguing that they were responding, albeit in very different ways and for very different purposes, to the same cultural concerns — concerns that have, at least in the case of these two texts, been largely disregarded by scholars.

In the case of *Franklin Evans*, this disregard was in part due to Whitman's own disavowal of the novel in his later years. To the venerated author basking "in the worldwide fame that [came] to him in his old age," *Franklin Evans* was a distant and embarrassing memory (Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America* 5). Whitman called the book "damned rot — rot of the worst sort — not insincere, perhaps, but rot, nevertheless" and claimed its composition was motivated by money and helped along by "a bottle of port" (Whitman, qtd. in Allen 57). Modern critics have noted that Whitman was probably more enamored of the temperance movement as a young man than he was willing to credit as an old one. *Franklin Evans*, after all, was but one of several of his temperance stories.¹⁰ But they variously chalk his foray into reform fiction up to his more general interest in working-class politics, his father's alcoholism (Folsom and Price), and the beginnings of an emerging "sexual expressivism" (Warner).¹¹ Treating *Franklin Evans* as an at least sincere if not particularly well-crafted example of Whitman's work, scholars have mined the text for the poet's early views on race, slavery, and industrial capitalism with interesting results.

No one, though, has generated a satisfactory answer to the question of why the novel begins with an apparently unrelated tale about an Indian blood feud. On its surface, "The Tale of Wind-Foot," which takes up the bulk of *Franklin Evans's* second chapter, and which Whitman published later as a stand-alone story, is a fairly unremarkable example of the vanishing Indian trope. It begins with an unnamed visitor arriving at the home of the Indian warrior, the Unrelenting, and his son, Wind-Foot. That night, after the visitor has apparently gone to sleep, the Unrelenting tells Wind-Foot that he once killed an enemy's entire family, leaving a single child alive to tell the tale. Predictably, the

mysterious visitor is that child, and, equally predictably, he is not really asleep. The next day, the visiting warrior kidnaps Wind-Foot and murders him before the Unrelenting kills him with an arrow from his bow.

In 1955, Whitman's biographer Gay Wilson Allen dismissed the tale as one of a number of examples of the poet padding "his manuscript by inserting several stories that he had on hand," and most scholars since have (more or less) left it at that (57). David S. Reynolds asserts that the Indian story has "nothing to do with temperance reform" and is instead an early, "tawdry" attempt to appeal to a working-class taste for sensationalism (*Walt Whitman's America* 97). Martin Klammer, Gretchen Murphy, Katherine Henry, Debra J. Rosenthal, Carl Ostrowski, Amina Gautier, and Michael Warner, who have all written fairly extensively on *Franklin Evans*, either do not deal with the tale at all or reference it only briefly. Those scholars who do attempt to make sense of it do so by appealing to the two related cultural myths of drunken Indians and vanishing ones. Ed Folsom reads the Native characters' fatal inability to overcome their intemperate desire for revenge as a warning to whites who fail to overcome alcohol addiction (74). Castiglia and Hendler argue the opposite. The Unrelenting's vengefulness, they say, illustrates Indians' "intemperance of affect," which separates them from whites, who are constitutionally equipped for self-control. Neither interpretation sees the story as having any particular bearing on the rest of the novel.

Scholars interested in issues of race in *Franklin Evans* primarily focus instead on a segment of the novel set on a Southern plantation, arguing that it discloses the anxiety that the young republic would be corrupted by the non-white elements within it. Evans, having narrowly escaped prosecution for his part in a drunken robbery gone wrong,

briefly regains his footing in a “respectable, lucrative, and easy business” (77). This business calls him to Virginia, where he falls in with a Southern planter. While on the plantation, he marries and then abandons an enslaved woman named Margaret. She eventually strangles Evans’s new white lover, a widow named Conway, whom Margaret has purposefully infected with the malaria-like illness that is sweeping the plantation. Eventually, Margaret hangs herself in prison. Katherine Henry argues that “the suicide of the slave, Margaret, restores Franklin to a productive citizenship” that is pointedly imagined “as white” (35). Rosenthal claims that Whitman “deliberately [...] link[s] his dark and sensational Washingtonian message to dark and sensational miscegenation” that threatens the nation (53). Amina Gautier concurs, adding, that temperance advocates often intimated that “intemperance [would] cause the fall of the American empire [...] by crippling its citizens and ‘enslaving’ them to alcohol consumption” (33). Gautier argues that in *Franklin Evans*, both alcoholism and the “savagery” of non-whites are depicted as “contagions” that can infect the white male body through imbibing or miscegenation and thus grow into a “pestilent epidemic capable of dismantling a nation” (42).

When you add to the Southern episode some details from earlier in the novel (a “dark and swarthy” Southerner who arrives with ominous news, a debauched “musical drinking house” whose proprietor is “not [...] American,”) it is clear that in *Franklin Evans*, alcoholism is a physical manifestation of the existential fear that U.S. whites were in danger of becoming more like swarthy Southerners, un-American barkeeps, and seductive slaves, and thus less able to hold their nation together. As Amy Kaplan has shown, the early U.S. empire was as much concerned with turning conquered land into purified domestic space as it was conquering that land in the first place. She argues that

the “convulsive expansion” the U.S experienced between 1830 and 1850 resulted in the incorporation of non-whites, including African Americans, Mexicans, and Indians, into the physical boundaries of the nation. This in turn raised “serious questions about the conceptual border between the domestic and the foreign” (27). In essence, each of the arguments above is an analysis of how the miscegenation plot in *Franklin Evans*, enhanced as it is by the popular association between drunkenness and racial degeneration, reflects worry about the porous nature of that border.

However, as I discuss above, not all U.S. empiric anxiety involved the obsessive policing of uncontaminated domestic strongholds. There was also the worry that U.S. whites lacked a legitimate claim on land to which they were not indigenous. The tale of Wind-Foot and the subsequent role its teller, Stephen Lee, respond to that concern in such a way as to neutralize firewater myths’ implication that white culture was inherently corrupt. Instead, Whitman bifurcates Indianness into romanticized, honorable elements on one side and savage ones (represented by intemperate drinking and violence) on the other. In Lee, Whitman presents the truly “temperate” American man as one who has absorbed the noble aspects of Indianness while eschewing its savagery. Apess’s insistence on Indians’ continued presence in the northeast and idealized images of his “brethren’s” encampment allowed him to present himself as a model American Christian whose temperance resulted from his hereditary connection to indigenous culture. Whitman, assuming Indians’ disappearance, uses Apess’s model but embodies it in a white man. Stephen Lee is, in other words, the white version of William Apess.

The move is perhaps not surprising given Whitman’s intense personal interest in Indian history. The author was thoroughly engaged in the effort to preserve Indian culture

and enamored of the idea that U.S. Americans had some sort of natural kinship with the continent's Indian past. In his biography of Whitman, David S. Reynolds notes the poet's friendship with George Catlin. On May 22, 1841, *The New World*, for which Whitman was then working as a compositor, announced that Catlin's book of Indian prints was about to be published in London ("From Our Foreign Correspondent" 352). In 1846, Whitman urged the government to buy Catlin's paintings because "we shall never again have the opportunity of restoring to our country these paintings and memorials, so emphatically American, and of such decided importance to Art and to our national history" (qtd. in Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America* 289). In *Walt Whitman's Native Representations*, Ed Folsom catalogues Whitman's career-long desire to absorb what he saw as North America's vanishing indigenous past into the U.S. present. Folsom argues that the section of *Song of Myself* that describes the marriage of a fur trapper to an Indian woman suggests "that America cannot achieve fulfillment without absorbing the native it displaces" (72). Folsom further documents the poet's passion for Indian place names and Whitman's belief that "by absorbing the Indian nomenclature, the native names for [the] land, he could "realign the English tongue, tune it American" (81). Whitman, Folsom argues, was preoccupied with the emergence of a (white) "Native American." He believed that the "words, legends, rituals, and stories that evolved out of [Indians'] long contact with this land were therefore vital for Euro-Americans to absorb, to learn, if they were to make the land their own" (Folsom 84-85). Mr. Lee in *Franklin Evans* is, I argue, an early example of Whitman's developing belief in the national necessity of appropriative absorption.

Lee is one of the first characters Evans meets, the first person to offer him a job, and the man who finally saves him from alcoholism. Evans listens to Lee's Indian tale in the novel's opening pages, and the novel closes with Evans telling Lee's own life story. One might make the case that Lee is the single unifying element in an otherwise loosely-structured episodic plot. In their discussion of the Southern episode, Castiglia and Hendler argue that "persistent mixings in the plot of *Franklin Evans* demonstrate [that] purity is hard to maintain, the efforts necessary to defend the borders of the pure body exhausting, if not futile" (lvii). Mr. Lee's repeated appearances throughout the novel, as I explain in detail below, emphasize his similarity to the Unrelenting and establish him as the warrior's spiritual heir. Both Lee and the Unrelenting are proud patriarchs, both struggle with fierce tempers, and both lose sons to intemperance of one form or another. But only one, Lee, is able to pass his land on to a new generation. Ultimately, these incidents show that in the temperate man, the breaching of borders results not in a descent into savagery but in the successful absorption of indigenous qualities into what Whitman saw as a superior version of white civilization. Temperance becomes a metaphor for the effective adoption of Native identity in the same way that intemperance represents, at other points in the book, the danger of degeneration.

Lee first appears as a passenger on the market wagon Evans takes to New York at the beginning of the novel. Whitman takes pains to differentiate Lee not only from a drunken tavern keeper and the "red nosed" wagon driver, but also from Evans's newfound friend, Colby, who is not obviously an alcoholic. Lee, unlike these other men, possesses a "species of dignity [...] which forbade too near an approach of familiarity" (9). He has boarded the wagon because he has just returned from "an obscure village [...]"

where he had been for sporting purposes” (8). Thus he is neither a farmer nor merely a merchant. He is both hunter and a businessman who has melded what Whitman imagined to be traditional Native practices with the mercantile success of the self-made man.

As the journey continues, Lee talks with the other men about his interest in Indian legends. He has, he explains, “a fondness for prying into the olden history of this, his native island; a sort of antiquarian taste for the stories and incidents connected with the early settlers, and with the several tribes of Indians who lived in it before the whites came” (9-10). The term “prying” is interesting here, as is the term “native.” To “pry” is to open by force — to exert your will on an unwilling object. “Olden history,” it seems, yields up to Mr. Lee, who pries it wide and lays claim to it. The term “native” is juxtaposed with “early settlers” and “the several tribes who lived here.” Mr. Lee’s nativeness asserts his permanence in contrast to the transitory nature of the Indian tribes. Even when Lee expounds on the evils of “those who, after dispossessing them of land and home, now occupied their territory and were still crowding them from the face of their old hunting grounds” (10), the lament is underlain by the fact that those hunting grounds, which surround the “obscure villages” of the young republic, have become Lee’s. Taking the Indians’ place in the hunting grounds is part of Lee’s process of fashioning himself into a peculiarly indigenous version of the U.S. American white man. In this, too, he seems not a little like Whitman’s idol, Catlin.

This self-fashioning is further accomplished by Lee’s study of Indian language. As the party passes by a lake, Lee points it out using “a long and unpronounceable name which he said was the Indian word for it” (10). Evans cannot verify that Lee is correct. He can only tell us that Lee “says” it is. The moment in the novel is reminiscent of a later

moment in Whitman's own life. In 1887 he published the poem "Yonnonido," which he claimed was an Iroquois word meaning, roughly, "Lament for the aborigines" (qtd. in Folsom 78). When scholars of the Iroquois language protested that the term was in fact a term for a colonial governor, Whitman wrote, "No doubt there's considerable to warrant their argument, but ... I had already committed myself to my own meaning — written the poem: so here it stands, for right or wrong" (qtd. in Folsom 78). Folsom interprets this moment as a "sign of the unbridgeable differences between the cultures, of the essential mystery of Indians to white men" (78). But there is also in Whitman's statement, as in Lee's earlier claim to knowledge, that Indian language, emptied of its original meaning, exists now as a tool through which U.S. whites can create a uniquely American identity.

These observations about Lee's early appearance in the novel support the idea that Whitman was at least playing with the possibility of an ideal white man who was at once fully (U.S) American and fully indigenous. However, it is not yet clear that Lee had anything to do with concern about national expansion or maintaining control of land U.S. whites had already conquered. To do that, it is necessary to look a bit more deeply at the context in which Whitman was writing and at the vignette that directly precedes Lee's appearance in the novel.

By the time Whitman was born in 1819, "all the major battles between whites and Indians east of the Mississippi had been fought" (Folsom 56). This made the romanticized Indian impersonation of literary societies all the more possible. However, while removal was nearly complete in the northeast, it was not progressing especially smoothly on the borders. Andrew Jackson's invasion of Spanish Florida in 1816 resulted in the acquisition of a disgruntled population of Seminole Indians unwilling to submit to

removal and a fairly large and equally resentful group of escaped slaves who had sought sanctuary in the territory (Doolen 146). In 1841, just before Whitman penned *Franklin Evans*, the aftershocks of that conquest were still being felt. In February, *The New World* reported anxiously that Arkansas had requested additional federal troops “to keep in check the numerous hostile tribes that it has concentrated on the Western border of that state” (“More Indian Troubles” 144). In May, the paper reported twice on continuing skirmishes with the Seminoles in Florida, observing dryly that while the Secretary of War “expresses the opinion that this war may be considered as virtually ended [...] recent events in Florida prove such an opinion to be unfounded” (“Mr. Poinsett’s Report” 318). And on June 26, 1841, a short notice announced the capture of “the notorious Indian, Coacoochee, alias Wildcat” in St. Augustine, Florida, along with “fifteen warriors and three negroes” (“Florida” 430). Closer to home, and a little less than a decade before, William Apess had led the Mashpee Indians in their revolt. Though the dispute was ultimately settled with little violence, white New England’s reaction to the events was “hysterical” — at one point the governor threatened to call out the army. According to O’Connell, the response indicated “how unaccustomed white New Englanders were to Indians asserting their rights (xxxvii). Thus in the eastern U.S press, as, one imagines, in the eastern U.S. consciousness, the desire to preserve and (more importantly) to absorb the “vanishing” indigenous past bumped up against the knowledge that the U.S. was involved in a imperial conflict with hostile Indian nations, and the fear that the war could still tilt the other way.

In the first chapter of *Franklin Evans*, a similar juxtaposition of ancient, vanished, and fundamentally appealing Indians with lost white land occurs. Just before Lee enters

the novel, Evans shares a story about very different type of white man, the owner of the tavern where he is waiting for the market wagon to arrive. The barkeep was once a prosperous farmer but is now a drunkard. Evans describes him as “flushed with unnatural redness [...] his entire appearance that of a man enfeebled by disease” (6). Alcoholism eventually forced him to narrow “down the operations of his farm and open his dwelling in a country inn” (7). Many critics who focus on how *Franklin Evans* reveals Whitman’s working-class politics note the language of commerce used to describe the man’s familial decline — intemperance is like a “gloom spreading around every department of the business of the family [that] debars them from any chance of rising in the world” (7). But it is equally important to attend to the diminution of the man’s territory. As a result of intemperance, his farm — that is, his hold on the land — “narrows.” His hearth, Whitman writes, is “like an altar whose gods and emblems were cast down and forgotten,” and now “the fumes of tobacco, and the strong smell of brandy and gin, defiled its atmosphere” (7). The language here is more reminiscent of a fallen nation than a poverty-stricken family. Whitman returns to the tavern keeper at the end of the novel, explaining that he “dragged out a life of intemperance” and finally drank himself to death (109).

The two successive accounts (first the tavern keeper, then the Indians) of intemperate behavior robbing men of their land are important on several levels. First, they seem to support Folsom’s argument that the tale is a straightforward warning to whites about the dangers of intemperance.¹² Second, they reconcile the novel’s opening scenes on the market wagon with the critical consensus about the Southern episode — that alcohol and racial mixing are twin contagions that threaten white ascendancy. Finally, and most importantly for my purposes, they suggest that this dangerous contagion

threatens not just individual prosperity or even (as in the Southern episode) the purity of the nation, but also whites' physical control of the land. Just a few pages before Mr. Lee arrives with his tale of vanished Indians, Evans reflects upon how a white man turned unnaturally red can lose his land, his "altars, his "gods," and his "emblems" (Whitman 6). It is as if the very present danger of Indian aggression and "savage" takeover at the nation's borders manifests itself in the northeast as the fear that whites were not far enough removed from savagery themselves to maintain control of the land they had already conquered. The message, then, seems to be that whites should eschew alcohol, and in so doing avoid descending into savagery and losing their tenuous control of the continent. At the same time, though, Lee's apparent affinity for Indian language and cultural practices suggests that perhaps "Indian" in *Franklin Evans* is not simply the negative of "white." Rather, the ability to absorb an imagined "Indianness" into a temperate white body is presented as a way to navigate the internal and external threats to the U.S. nation.

This reading is supported by an examination of Lee's interactions with Evans over the course of the novel. First, as we have already seen, Lee, the paragon of temperate responsibility, is set apart from his intemperate fellows by his affinity for Indian lore and culture, indicating that Indian qualities are not necessarily automatically associated with intemperance. Second, as we will see, in the tale of Wind-Foot, the Unrelenting is described as having many of the qualities (hospitality, pride, rage) that Lee will display over the course of the novel. Finally, a comparison of the language used to describe Wind-Foot and Evans himself suggests that if Lee is the modern American version of the Unrelenting, Evans is his surrogate son. Unlike the Unrelenting, Lee is (finally) able to

save his child from the ravages of intemperance and thus, as I explain below, can successfully bequeath the land to Evans in a way that neither the Unrelenting, nor the drunken tavern keeper, nor still the other temperate whites who attempt to rescue Evans over the course of the novel are able to do.

Lee's similarities to the Unrelenting disclose themselves over the course of the novel. In the opening tale, the Unrelenting is both hospitable and stiffly formal. When the Kansi warrior first comes to request a place to stay for the night, the Unrelenting accepts because "such a petition was never slighted by the red man [...] no duties were considered more honorable than the household comforts of a guest" (11). During Evans's first encounter with Lee in New York, Lee practices this same quality of unquestioning hospitality to strangers. When Evans asks Lee for a job, Lee willingly complies with contacts and a letter of recommendation, but not before decrying the inhospitality of the rich men who denied him assistance when he was himself a young man and new to the city: "Although I had money, I received, God knows, but little friendliness from those who might have shown at least some kindness to me" (26). Here, once again, Lee is differentiated from his fellow white men: the inhospitable and, as it turns out, ethically corrupt, greedy captains of New York industry. His willingness to help Evans is thus framed as a fundamentally different kindness from that of the men who surround him. As when he introduced Lee in the market wagon, Whitman here is especially careful to separate Lee from other white men, marking him as the temperance novel's moral exemplar. Once again, that exemplar is imbued with traces of "Indian" qualities that Lee had already praised.

The Unrelenting's and Lee's senses of honor translate themselves into a fierce, even violent concern for their reputations. The Unrelenting's reason for murdering the Kansai family is a "mortal wrong" done to the Unrelenting's people several generations before. As he recalls the event, his "speech trembled with agitation" and he "gradually wrought himself up to a pitch of loudness and rage" (13). It is on this evidence that Castiglia and Hendler argue that the Tale of Windfoot is about Indians' inherent "intemperance of affect." Thus, they contend, the tale is intended to emphasize Indians' and whites' fundamental and irrevocable differences. However, later in the novel, Lee exhibits a remarkably similar propensity towards volatile anger in defense of his reputation. The "dark and swarthy" stranger I mentioned above is a southern planter who visits Lee's store where Evans is employed. He brings news that Lee's speculations in the South have gone poorly and that Lee must pay his debts sooner rather than later. Lee, who says he would prefer to pay twice the requisite amount "than have his reputation and fair name as a merchant put in danger," enjoins Evans to carry his reply to the planter's hotel (41). Evans gets drunk and forgets. When he learns of Evans's failure, Lee responds with sudden, explosive fury before firing him on the spot. Evans describes it as follows: "But great as was my fault, I was hardly prepared for his storm of anger. I did not know how much he worshipped his good name among the mercantile world, or I might have been better prepared for it. He had jealously guarded his professional honor, as the apple of his eye, and now there was no escape" (43).

Lee's anger is just as volatile and frightening as the Unrelenting's. It is a "storm" for which Evans cannot prepare and from which he cannot escape. It is also born of a desire to maintain Lee's integrity as a merchant, just as the Unrelenting's rage at the

Kansi came from a desire to protect his family's honor. More significantly, Lee's and the Unrelenting's fury are juxtaposed with the uncontrolled anger of intemperance. These comparisons between righteous, patriarchal wrath and intemperate rage further emphasize the similarities between the two men. As the Unrelenting tells Wind-Foot about murdering the Kansi warrior many years before, that warrior's son, now grown and being treated as a guest, listens while pretending to sleep. When he reaches the climax of the story, the Unrelenting's voice "tremble[s] with agitation" (13). The Kansi warrior, on the other hand, undergoes a much more significant metamorphosis:

The strange Indian was sitting up on his couch; his ghastly features glaring forward to the unconscious inmates in front, with a look like that of Satan to his antagonist angel. His lips were parted and his teeth clenched; his neck stretched forward — every vein of his forehead and temples bulged out as if he was suffocating — and his eyes fiery with a look of demoniac hate. (13)

Later, when he murders Wind-Foot, the Kansi's eyes become "glassy," as "hate and measureless revenge" consume him. The Unrelenting is never, even when he kills the Kansi as a young man, so consumed by his anger as to lose control. Similarly, when Lee chastises Evans, the young man is so overcome by the "irritability, which is one of the results of intemperate habits" that he makes excuses for himself and then becomes "insolent" (43). He leaves shouting that he will never return. The scene also follows just a few pages after Evans's former employer, Andrews, conspired with a cabal of other dishonest businessmen to manufacture and benefit from an economic bubble that burst and bankrupted "all classes, all ranks, all occupations" (37). Lee's anger and the

Unrelenting's anger, intense as they are, are what differentiate them from the corrupt and intemperate forces that surround them. Ultimately, Lee proves himself to be a superior class of white man by exhibiting the righteous but controlled anger that he admired in the Unrelenting.

Wind-Foot's death at the hands of the Kansi warrior is the indirect result of his father's need for vengeance. The storm of anger that causes Lee to fire Evans forces him into a job as a barkeeper at a "second rate hotel" where he witnesses the brutal death of an alcoholic and abusive mother. From there, after a series of increasingly less believable events, he ends up in jail for murder — the last stop before his previously mentioned disastrous sojourn in the South. When he returns north, he is immediately sent for by Lee, who so regrets that he did not "watch over [Evans] with a more fatherly care" that he bequeaths the young inebriate his entire fortune and promptly dies. In both the Unrelenting's and Lee's cases their enraged response to a threat to their honor puts their sons in danger. In both cases, the sons are portrayed as innocent and in need of fatherly protection. Seen in this light, Evans's story begins to read like a very intentional repetition of "The Tale of Wind-Foot." But for the Unrelenting, paternal failure results in the eventual extinction of his people, while Mr. Lee's "son" is ultimately saved, inheriting both his money and his property. What, then, accounts for this difference and what is its significance?

It could be argued that, for Whitman, Mr. Lee's whiteness allows him, unlike the Unrelenting, to avoid being entirely consumed by his rage. Lee, for example, can bring himself to "make inquiries, from time to time about [Evans]" and keep "track of the course of [his] life" (105). Thus his apparently out-of-proportion fury at Evans's mistake

is rendered as appropriate fatherly discipline. As noted above, Castiglia and Hendler argue that for the Unrelenting, and, by extension, Indians in general, rage is indicative of a broader “intemperance of affect” that results in their extinction. According to Murphy, the rage that Margaret, Evans’s Creole wife, unleashes in her murder of Mrs. Conway is evidence that “underneath her appropriate sentimental gender- and class-coding reveals her true, raced identity as essentially ‘bad’ and therefore culpable and deserving of an unsentimentalized death” (112). Murphy argues that by projecting Evans’s enslavable appetite outside of his own body and onto that of Margaret, Whitman “reconstructs the difference between white and black slaves by externalizing the desire of the drunkard” (113). Lee’s ability to contain his rage and save his adopted “son” might simply assure readers that just as Evans could not really be a slave, Lee, for all the surface similarities to the doomed Indians, could not truly be destroyed either by actual alcohol addiction or by a more general “intemperance of affect” (Castiglia and Hendler liii).

However, a final detail from the novel works against this reading. In his previous life, Lee was just as unable as the Unrelenting to save his son from tragedy. As a young man, Lee married a woman who turned out to be an alcoholic. She, “stupefied by excess of liquor, let her babe fall against some projecting article of furniture,” killing it (106). This story about Lee and a lost child does not precisely parallel the tale of Wind-Foot, but there are, once again, a number of strangely similar resonances. Two fathers have both lost sons, one by the at-first-unrecognized intemperance of his mother and the other by the at-first-unrecognized intemperate rage of an enemy. If Whitman’s purpose in having Evans live and Wind-Foot die was simply to assert the distance between the white and Indian, it seems strange that he would include within the novel two separate retellings of

Wind-Foot's tale, both involving the white man with an affinity for Indian language and lore.

Lee's recovery from the tragedy of his first marriage is described in the following terms:

It was many years before Lee recovered his former tone of character. Naturally cheerful, however, he could not long remain that gloomy being which his misfortunes had for a time made him. He was fond of sporting, and loved the country, which he frequently visited. He loved, too, the old traditions, and reminiscences of the earlier part of our American history, to which he gave up a considerable portion of his leisure. Thus, and in the affairs of his trade, which he still kept on, he had made life pass as evenly and pleasantly as he could. (106-107)

In other words, Lee becomes the successful, but circumspectly wise, temperate exemplar we meet at the beginning of the novel first by unwittingly reliving an Indian tale and then by structuring his life both around "the earlier part of our American history" and "the affairs of his trade." It is this amalgamation of what U.S. whites perceived to be Native knowledge and U.S. American capitalist good sense that allows him, through Evans, to rewrite both the "Tale of Wind-Foot" and the story of his first marriage by successfully transferring his property to the next generation.

The Unrelenting's inability to make this transfer prophesies (at least in the logic of the novel) Indians' eventual extinction. The tavern keeper, who represents the white man who cannot absorb Native qualities but is rather consumed by savagery, loses most of his land to drunkenness. Even that which he still holds cannot be deeded to his sons

since his intemperance has caused “peevishness and quarrels,” and “grievance and [...] dissension” that eventually drive his children from the family home, rendering them “almost as strangers” (7). Evans himself is an orphan whose kind but poverty-stricken uncle is “prevented” from doing “what he felt he ought to do for his brother’s child” (22). Before he meets Lee, Evans’s own “visions of independence and a home of my own, and the station of a man of property” are dashed by a combination of intemperance and bad luck (49). And the various white characters that attempt to assist him in establishing himself are unable to do so. No matter how well meant or kindly the help, Evans always slides backward into drunkenness and loses whatever ground he has gained.

Lee’s claim of Evans as a son marks the first time in the novel that a family line has continued to the next generation. This transfer is completed when Evans, the son, takes it upon himself to tell Lee’s story about his drunkard wife and murdered children “in my own words” (105). The novel opened with Lee telling the story of his imagined, adopted forbear, the Unrelenting. Evans now tells the story of his surrogate father’s tragedy. If Lee shows that the white man can also be a native son of the forest, Evans’s act at the end of the novel shows that a family so connected to the land’s indigenous past is far more likely than others to withstand the “deluge of firewater” (Hawthorne 173).

CONCLUSION

None of this is to say *Franklin Evans* is not about capitalist greed, or Whitman’s admiration for the working class, or the perceived danger of racial mixing. It is rather to suggest that Whitman keyed in on a contradiction in temperance rhetoric and attempted, however clumsily, to resolve it. In the racially charged atmosphere of the early nineteenth century U.S., alcoholism marked a person as lacking self-control, as savage, as

uncivilized. Non-whites who drank confirmed through their addiction their uncivilized natures. More alarmingly, white men who drank became uncivilized and uncontrolled racial others. In the age of removal, when borders were in flux and the republic struggled to incorporate conquered foreign nations, white intemperance made the march westward seem less assured and the “savage” Indians of the frontier seem uncomfortably close to the New York tavern. And yet at the same time, a relentless stream of stories and poems and paintings insisted on Indians’ distance – both temporal and physical. They had either died out long ago or been pushed westward by the tide of “civilization.” Their perceived absence created a melancholic nostalgia for the sons of the forest who had been brave and would have remained so but for white men and their firewater. It was an illusion, but a deeply attractive one. In Whitman’s novel, those two opposing ideas of the alcoholic Indian and the pure Native merge in the white U.S. American man whose “internal Indian” identity not only differentiates him from his British predecessors but also allows him to claim a temperate *and* indigenous identity.

For Apess, the contradiction presented an opportunity. Whites’ anxieties about their own legitimacy, about the stability of whiteness, and about the superiority of their culture were all on display in their schizophrenic views of Indian alcoholism. He exploited their guilt and their belief in the nobility of pre-Columbian Indians to argue that, in the nineteenth century, an Indian missionary connected to a thriving Native community was the best hope for reforming the alcoholic republic. The argument served his greater purpose, which was to establish himself and his “brethren” not only as still present but also as less likely to vanish than the whites who only appeared to have the upper hand. Alcoholism, he told them, was just as much a threat as they thought it was. If

they wished to stay on the land, they would have to follow Indians' example not by taking their place but by learning from them, as Hail did from Apess, and as Lee did from his studies and stories, how to act like civilized people.

Thus a comparison of these texts reveals that even in the urban East, temperance rhetoric was not only about defining masculinity, protecting families, or even sensationalizing vice. It was also about who has a valid claim to the land. While Apess and Whitman were engaged in this rhetorical struggle, physical battles on the actual frontier were still raging. There, too, alcohol functioned as a powerful metaphor. On the one hand, it marked the inherent "savagery" of racial others, Indians and Mexicans, especially. On the other, it represented to the white settler both the freedom from the civilized restraints of the urban east and the danger of being subsumed into the wilderness and "rendered savage." As is explained in the next chapter, white women steeped in the temperance rhetoric of the urban east, were, like Apess, able to exploit contradictions in this formula to make their own, albeit problematic, case for legitimacy.

CHAPTER THREE

WESTERN WHISKEY

In 1833, when William Apess was organizing the Mashpees, Lydia Hunt Sigourney published an oft-reprinted short story titled “The Intemperate and The Reformed; Showing the Awful Consequences of Intemperance and the Blessed Effects of Temperance Reform.” The narrative opens on a young family “retreating from some species of adversity, to one of those imaginary El Dorado’s of the West, where it is fabled that the evils of mortality have no place” (33). The “adversity” is the husband’s alcoholism, and by the end of the brief tale, it is clear he has carried the “evils of mortality” with him. He mistreats his chronically ill son until the boy dies, then he himself drowns when he stumbles, drunk, onto a damaged bridge in the midst of a thunderstorm. The wife returns to the East to educate her surviving daughter in “industry, and that contentment which virtue teaches” and lives out her own life in perpetual sorrow for her “erring husband, and the miseries of unreclaimed intemperance” (45).

A few facts about this story are worth noting. It is set on the Western frontier, which is depicted as a place to escape the corruption of the East. The wife and daughter survive while the husband and son do not. The frontier community, which welcomes and is nourished by the wife’s piety and gentleness, shuns the inebriate husband until he is, finally, expunged from the nascent U.S. outpost at the border. In those three observations are the seeds of an argument about how women authors, particularly white, middle-class women authors, used temperance themes to argue for their own place on the Western frontier and for their own role in the nation’s continued expansion.

In this chapter, I examine a number of temperance tales written by white women and set on the western frontier. These stories participate in Kaplan's process of "manifest domesticity," in which white, female domestic ideals were portrayed as an integral part of the process of western settlement. However, because in temperance rhetoric and male frontier narratives the combined forces of alcohol and the wilderness have the potential to "degrade" white men into "savages," western temperance stories offered white, middle-class women a more significant role than simply working alongside their husbands to domesticate conquered land. I contend that these stories make western migration doubly attractive since it serves to purify the nation by expelling the alcoholic and to domesticate previously foreign lands. I then analyze how the tropes common to these tales were used in Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow, Or Glimpses of Western Life* (1839). I show how, in Kirkland's text, the image of the degraded western alcoholic was used to unsettle a number of cultural myths about the frontier. This unsettling, I argue, contributes to the creation of what Edward Watt's calls a "second world" consciousness — a voice that is at once both colonizer and colonized. All of the women I discuss were writing about alcohol and the West. In order to understand the particular significance of the combination of these two topics in their writing it is necessary first to examine how alcohol figured in white, male frontier texts and the unique power white women possessed within the pages of antebellum temperance fiction.

ALCOHOL IN MALE-AUTHORED FRONTIER TEXTS

Eric Sundquist has argued that the "literal mapping of the United States was accomplished by a vast written record that established the psychological and political boundaries of the nation." These texts, which consisted of "diaries, journals, formal

reports, travel narratives, and fiction, composed of trappers, adventurers, scientists, common pioneers, and professional writers” also came to constitute “the new republic’s first national literature” (Sundquist 13). Texts about Western exploration traced out “trade routes to the Southwest, the Northwest, and into the Rocky Mountains, and finally across the Sierra Nevada [that] were the weblike lines of America’s immense expansion, later echoed in roads and railroads” and in so doing created “the nation’s first and most influential nationalistic literature” (Sundquist 20). While borrowing “from the imperial rhetoric of expansionism produced by politicians and journalists,” authors also freely appropriated the same tropes of temperance reform that, as we have already seen, dominated discussions of alcohol abuse in the urban east (Sundquist 13). Concern about alcoholism and all of the many cultural meanings that particular vice had acquired in the east were carried westward with the growing companies of trappers, adventurers, scientists, and, significantly, authors.

As might be predicted, much of what they wrote had to do with Indians and alcohol and vanishing. Edwin James’s *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains* (1823), which served as a source text for James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Prairie*, mentions whiskey almost exclusively in reference to Indians’ abuse of it. Washington Irving’s *Astoria* (1836), a fawning account of John Jacob Astor’s failed attempt to establish a transcontinental network of fur trading posts, follows suit. Irving writes of the party’s Iroquois guides: “These half-civilized Indians retained some of the good, and many of the evil qualities of their original stock [...] but once inflamed with liquor, to which they were madly addicted, all the dormant passions inherent in their nature were prone to break forth, and to hurry them into the most vindictive and bloody

acts of violence” (276). Charles Fenno Hoffman, the onetime editor of both *Knickerbocker Magazine* and the *New-York Mirror*, writes in *A Winter in the West, Volume 1* (1835), “Providence seems to have designed that this mysterious race should not continue upon the earth; and fate has infused a fatal thirst in their bosoms, which is hastening their doom with fearful celerity” (158). A little more than a decade later, twenty-three-year-old Francis Parkman spent his summer traveling from Missouri to Oregon and recorded it in his 1847 book *The Oregon Trail*. In that text, he describes a scene in which a group of white immigrants sell their whiskey to an Indian village: “Instantly the old jealousies and rivalries and smothered feuds [...] broke out into furious quarrels [...] [t]hey seemed like ungoverned children inflamed with the fiercest passions of men” (120). This use of alcohol to foretell vanishing is in keeping with the early, “idealistic belief that the United States would soon be in a position to bring Christianity, republican government, and commercial trade to an enormous part of the globe, after first claiming as wide a territorial base as possible” (Sundquist 33). As had been predicted by the staunchest removal apologists and sympathetic Iroquois impersonators alike, U.S. Americans would march westward, steadily conquering territory as hapless Indian tribes fell victim to the various diseases of civilization or converted to some version of agrarian Christian republicanism. As French-American author J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur had described earlier in *Letters From an American Farmer* (1782), even uncouth white “mountain men” would eventually yield to superior easterners. In the letter titled “What Is An American,” Crèvecoeur depicted a United States that grew increasingly less civilized as one moved westward. Frontiersmen, given to “drunkenness or idleness,” were, he wrote, “no better than carnivorous animals” (59). However, as “respectable”

people came west, these miscreants would “recede still farther; making room for more industrious people who [...] will change in a few years that hitherto barbarous country into a fine fertile, well regulated district” (Crèvecoeur 60).

By the 1830s, though, writers had come to view the West with some trepidation, not as the eventual home of yeoman farmers but as an “intract[able] last wilderness” with “power to render the white man savage before the white man can domesticate it” (Slotkin 122). In a number of accounts of Western expeditions, this danger of being “rendered savage” is represented by depictions of alcoholic excess. The white drunkards portrayed generally do not include the texts’ authors or any of the other “leisure class white men [who] sought in the dangerous frontier setting opportunities to test or discover their manhood in ways not offered in their everyday lives” (Watts, *Remote Country* 95). Rather, the vice of alcoholism and the attendant danger of racial retrogression are displaced onto non-U.S. whites, whose vanishing is predicted with as much certainty as that of the Indians. Irving, for instance, in observing that the Scottish fur traders who had once run the Northwest Company were eventually usurped by superior businessmen, makes the point that the Scotsmen had offered “no stint of generous wine, for it was a hard-drinking period” (192).

French traders, trappers, and boatmen also fill the role of degraded, vanishing, and (not coincidentally) drunk European frontiersmen. Watts notes that, based on the frequency with which they appear in English-language accounts of Western exploration, Frenchmen “seem to have been ubiquitous between Ohio and Oregon” (96). Because they often intermarried with Native women and lived in Indian villages, their “precise racial identity was impossible to ascertain” (Watts, *Remote Country* 96). Irving’s description of

Pierre Dorion, a half Sioux, half French interpreter, illustrates how this was accomplished through the conflation of alcoholism and savagery. Irving writes that Dorion “proved himself faithful and serviceable while sober; but the love of liquor in which he had been nurtured and brought up, would occasionally break out, and with it the savage side of his character” (294). By the implicit logic of this statement, Dorion is an alcoholic because he was “nurtured” into it by his Indian family. That alcoholism, in turn, releases the “savage” behavior that is also a natural part of his Indian “side.” In other words, the Frenchmen who have defected from white civilization, and whose alcoholic sprees seem disconcertingly uncivilized, can be explained away by arguing that that portion of their character is not “truly” white

Thus the Anglo authors of exploration narratives were able to “simply define themselves in opposition to ‘degenerate’ Frenchmen by portraying them [as] white men retrogressed to savagery” (Watts, *In This Remote Country* 96). They then “transferred industrial-era class-based distinctions to the French frontier through their descriptions of the divisions of labor in the camps and on the trails,” where the French often served as interpreters, guides, and servants. Irving explains that the French Canadian *voyageurs* (boatmen) and *coureurs des bois* (woodsmen and independent traders) return to civilization from their sojourns in Indian country only to “lavish, eat, drink, and play all away as long as the goods hold out” (185). As a result of these improvident and intemperate habits they were, he writes, “fast fading away,” along with the Indians to whom numerous “vanishing” texts had applied remarkably similar descriptions (213).

John C. Frémont, the later military governor of California and Republican presidential candidate in 1856, builds on this theme in his *Report of the Exploring*

Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44. He writes that a *coureur des bois* had “no permanent interest” in the region. This phrasing implies acceptance of the “vanishing Frenchmen” argument made by Irving, above. Frémont, continues by pointing out that their awareness of their own ephemerality leads the French woodsman to sell liquor to Native tribes in order to get “what he can, and for what he can, from every Indian he meets, even at the risk of disabling him from doing anything more at hunting” (40). The Frenchmen, who are, by the logic of Anglo exploration narratives, already vanishing drunkards, think nothing of dispensing deadly alcohol to Indians, speeding Native disappearance as well. Though Frémont, holds the French more responsible for their moral failings, ultimately he sees both groups — Indian and French — as locked in a suicidal spiral that will eventually destroy them. Frémont contrasts this attitude with that of the agents of Astor’s American Fur Company, who opposed liquor trade with Natives out of a sense of “obligation to the laws of the country and the welfare of the Indians” as well as a desire to preserve future trading opportunities (40). White men’s tendency towards temperance principles thus indicates both their assumed superior morality and their assured future in the West.

But of course, white Anglo-Americans on the frontier did drink a great deal. Rorbaugh speculates that Western drinking was spurred by a number of factors, including lack of access to clean water and the loneliness of the frontier in the years before “steamboats, canals, and railroads” reconnected it to “the influences of traditional society” (126). When racial explanations could not be used, these upper-class authors emphasized class differences as a way of insulating themselves from the danger of being “rendered savage.” Given that other hard-drinking populations in the U.S. were industrial

workingmen in eastern cities, driven to alcohol both by constant economic uncertainty and “long, regular hours and dull, unvaried work,” it is not surprising that elite eastern men made class-based judgments about drinkers on the frontier (Rorbaugh 131). For example, in an extended commentary on the wagon trains of eastern emigrants seeking homes in the West, Parkman writes, “among them are some of the vilest outcasts in the country” (11). Later, he describes with some amusement a wagon train en route to California that, in an effort to reduce excess baggage, “determined to get rid of their very copious stock of Missouri whisky, by drinking it on the spot” (117). The ensuing scene involves “maudlin squaws stretched on piles of buffalo-ropes; squalid Mexicans, armed with bows and arrows [...] long-haired Canadians and trappers, and American backwoodsmen in brown homespun” all getting drunker and drunker. The structure of the sentence buries the “American backwoodsman in homespun” beneath a litany of racial and national identities, each modified by derogatory adjectives, from “squalid,” to “maudlin” to “long-haired.” That the “American” is described in neutral, rather than negative, terms indicates that his presence in the group is unnatural. The scene itself implies that this “squalid” racial mixing has been facilitated by the Missouri whiskey, which tempts the lower-class Anglo man to degrade himself. A few paragraphs later it is revealed that a number of this unfortunate group wound up as members of the infamous, doomed, and cannibalistic Donner party. If the juxtaposition of the white settlers with the alcoholics of “inferior” races was not enough, their eventual bestial end confirms, at least for Parkman, their fundamental difference from wealthier paragons of manly self-control by whom the West would eventually be settled.

But even as the authors attempted to distance themselves from white drunkards, a trace of anxiety about the power of alcohol to transform white men into “savages” drifts in to their descriptions. The deposed leader of the expedition, whom Parkman finds clutching “firmly a brown jug of whisky, which he applied every moment to his lips, forgetting that he had drained the contents long ago,” is no less than William Henry Russell, a former Kentucky state legislator and future Secretary of State under Frémont’s, ill-fated California administration (118). Parkman, who has played the bombastic Russell for laughs throughout the narrative, describes him here as still exercising “the influence of a superior mind” over his recalcitrant emigrants, a tacit admission of Russell’s superior class status (118). In the same party are three “grandsons of Daniel Boone [who] had clearly inherited the adventurous character of that prince of pioneers; but [bore] no signs of the quiet and tranquil spirit that so remarkably distinguished him” (118). The description of an apparently elite white man and the sons of pioneer royalty being so reduced hints at the possibility that neither whiteness nor upper-class status were foolproof protections against the dangers of the freewheeling frontier.

John Kirk Townsend, an ornithologist and naturalist who worked closely with Audubon, addresses this fear directly in his *Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains, to the Columbia River, and a Visit to the Sandwich Islands, Chili, &c* (1839). After describing the drunken revels of the “French-Canadians, half-breed &c., their color nearly as dark and their manners wholly as wild as the Indians with whom they constantly associate,” he explains that it is equally disturbing to witness “the swearing and screaming of our own men, who are scarcely less savage than the rest, being heated by the detestable liquor which circulates freely among them” (75). He goes on to

complain that “it is very much to be regretted that at times like the present, there should be a positive necessity to allow the men as much rum as they can drink, but this course has been sanctioned and practiced by all leaders of parties who have hitherto visited these regions, and reform cannot be thought of now” (75-76). In both the above examples, liquor reduces white men, even apparently respectable white men, to savage behavior, threatening the unimpeded forward march of U.S. conquest.

But as Watts makes clear, one of the appeals of western adventure was to escape the steadily encroaching forces of industrialization in the East and to instead “play Indian, to slum, to reconnect with the more coherent and gratifying characteristics of masculinity and emotion they themselves had relegated to the lower classes and the ‘inferior’ races” (*Remote Country* 95). In western travel narratives, liquor also becomes a vehicle through which that reconnection occurs. Hoffman, for example, describes a scene at a tavern in the sparsely populated Michigan territory, which is worth quoting at length:

"Stranger will you take a cocktail with us?" called out a tall athletic fellow to me as I was making my way through a group of wild-looking characters assembled an hour since around the fire by which I am now writing. There was a long-haired ‘hooshier’ from Indiana, a couple smart-looking ‘suckers’ from the southern part of Illinois, a keen-eyed, leather-belted ‘badger’ from the mines of Ouisconsin, and a study yeoman like fellow, whose white capot, Indian moccasins, and red sash, proclaimed, while he boasted a three-year’s residence, the genuine *wolverine*, or naturalized Michigianian. Could one refuse to drink with such a company? [...]
Could I refuse to drink with such a company? The warm glass is in my

frozen fingers. The most devout temperance man could see no harm in that! It is touched smartly by the rim of the red-horse, — it is brushed by the hooshier, — it rings against the badger, — comes in companionable contact with the wolverine, “My respects to you, gentlemen, and luck to all of us!” [...] Here was a capital commencement with just the sort of salad of society I have long been wishing to meet with. (207-208)

This long description of the motley group of settlers emphasizes the extent to which their manliness is dependent upon their wildness. They have long hair, they wear Indian clothes, and they hold their liquor. The acceptable way for an eastern white man to briefly absorb these “gratifying characteristics of masculinity” is to drink with them. Since *A Winter in the Far West* purports to be a series of letters from Hoffman to a wife or sweetheart, a genteel audience for whom masculine temperance would have been important is assumed. That, coupled with the flippantly dismissed objections of “the most devout temperance man,” indicates that Hoffman’s depiction of the tavern is intended to argue that the type of manliness available in the West is wilder and freer than that in the East and not necessarily dangerous.

In a somewhat similar example in *Astoria*, Irving relates the expedition leader Mr. Hunt’s encounter with a Russian fur trader on the Alaskan coast. The trader is a “hard-drinking old Russian” who forced visiting captains to “join him in his ‘prosiness’ or carousals, and to drink ‘potations pottle deep’” (568). The “temperance captain[s]” who refused to drink were not allowed an audience, and a “greenhorn” young officer is described as growing “tipsy, willy nilly,” insulting the Russian, and then being lashed for his impertinence. Mr. Hunt, a paragon of Anglo-American manliness, is contrasted with

these earlier failures. He gets a deal done by drinking enough to satisfy the old trader, but not too much to unman himself.

These early western texts, then, use alcohol to represent the dangers and opportunities of the frontier itself. At times, alcohol marks the inherent “savagery” of racial others, Indians and Mexicans, especially. At others, it represents to the white settler both the freedom from the civilized restraints of the urban East and the opportunity to prove his manhood in western taverns and at the tables of Russian fur traders. And at others still, it presents the danger of being subsumed into the wilderness and “rendered savage.” It is these last two depictions to which female temperance writers responded, as their heroines ventured out of the sordidness of the alcoholic’s urban tenement and onto the prairies and forests of the Western frontier.

TEMPERANCE FICTION AND WHITE WOMEN’S CULTURAL POWER

While male adventurers were drinking their way across the frontier, back east temperance was increasingly a female concern. This trend continued until the 1870s when the newly formed Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) claimed anti-alcohol activism once and for all as a women's issue. This section provides a brief explanation of how, from the 1830s to 1850s, white, middle-class women used the moral authority afforded them by popular culture to become influential in the temperance movement despite their exclusion from most official positions of power. One of their key tools of influence was temperance fiction, which became steadily more popular in the years leading up to the Civil War. Understanding the often-contradictory impulses of white women’s temperance fiction in general is necessary to understanding the particular

ways that, in western temperance tales, as in domestic fiction, the language of familial and national crisis became enmeshed and intertwined.

According to Carol Mattingly, whose book *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth Century Temperance Rhetoric*, covers a period from the 1830s through the end of the century, “Though some women drank alcohol in large quantities, men drank far more [...] As the [nineteenth] century progressed, women drank even less proportionally because of cultural restrictions on consumption” (*Well-Tempered Women* 14). Women’s perceived abstinence coupled with the strong cultural association between alcoholism and domestic violence meant that drunkenness became, at least in the cultural imagination, a peculiarly male condition that visited its devastating effects upon innocent women and children. Middle-class women for whom industrialization had meant a steady decrease in access to “meaningful economic roles” found in the temperance cause an appealing and appropriate outlet for their energies. They joined temperance societies in droves (Tyrrell, *Sobering Up* 68). The first female temperance association was formed as early as 1805, and by 1848 the Daughters of Temperance claimed thirty thousand members (Murdock 17). Rorbaugh's analysis of temperance society rosters in the 1820s and 1830s shows heavy female participation while Tyrrell estimates that women composed around one-third to one-half of temperance society membership during that period (Rorbaugh 257; Tyrrell, *Sobering Up* 68).

As might be expected given women's limited legal rights, their official roles within male organizations were relatively proscribed. Holly Berkley Fletcher argues that because of the focus on male alcoholism, “the antebellum temperance movement existed primarily as a male province” (16). It focused on developing a middle-class male gender

identity centered on “hard work, clear thought, and competitiveness in the business world” and “virtue, beauty, gentility, and provision for one’s family at home” (Fletcher 16). Consequently women in male temperance organizations were often segregated into auxiliaries, and temperance women in general were barred from common temperance activities like “oratory, publishing, and [...] legislative petitioning” (Fletcher 16). Tyrrell observes that in the case of the American Temperance Society, a large women’s membership did not come “at the expense of clerical authority,” since leadership roles were primarily given to members of the clergy and women “were encouraged [...] only to be followers” (*Sobering Up* 68).

But official organizational positions were not the only seats of power. Especially from the 1830s to 1850s, women within the temperance cause were deemed essential not as organization officers but as wielders of the “enormous moral authority society ascribed to women in antebellum America” (Fletcher 16). Temperance women thus gave the cause “an edge in what was seen as a moral conflict” (Fletcher 16). This “edge” came primarily in the form of moral suasion, a concept Karen Sanchez-Eppler defines as the belief that “the reform of individual sinners would precede and produce the salvific purification of society as a whole” to reform the drunkard (62). Moral suasion was “woman’s work both because it depend[ed] upon women’s presumed skill at nurturing and because it conform[ed] to women’s limited access to political power” (Sanchez-Eppler 62). Even the all-male, working-class Washingtonian organization, which more genteel, middle-class temperance groups viewed as “‘low’ and insufficiently pious,” saw moral suasion both as womanly and as central to their cause (Paddison 400). John

Hawkins, a Washingtonian lecturer wrote, “We love [the drunkard], we nurse him, as a mother does an infant learning to walk” (qtd. in Sanchez-Eppler 62).

Women’s imagined ability to guide men from the bottle found its most concrete articulation in temperance fiction. In 1836 the American Temperance Union voted “to endorse the use of fiction and ‘the products of fancy’ in their campaign against intemperance” (Sanchez-Eppler 85). Many of the resulting stories contrasted “the ruin and loneliness of the drunkard’s family with the bliss and strength of the temperate man’s family,” often dwelling on images of physical and emotional abuse against wives and children (Reynolds and Rosenthal 6). However, both Mattingly and Jerome Nadelhaft argue that stories primarily about domestic abuse and victimization were more often written by men. Women’s temperance fiction tended to focus instead on the power of moral suasion to convert the drunkard husband, brother, or son. According to Nicholas O. Warner, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s temperance fiction focused on alcoholics whose recovery was achieved “by some combination of religion, abstinence, and, usually, a woman’s caring guidance.” This pattern that repeats itself in much of women’s temperance fiction of the period (142).

Warner notes that in Stowe’s “The Drunkard Reclaimed,” the alcoholic’s rescuer is his long-suffering wife. Just as often, the saving woman is a mother or sweetheart. Francis Dana Gage’s “Tales of Truth (No. 1),” published in *The Lily* in 1852, is a woman’s warning to her son about the dangers of intemperance. In Lydia Sigourney’s “Intemperance at Sea,” included in her collection of temperance writing *Water Drops* (1843), a young sailor rescued from a shipwreck caused by a mutinous, inebriated crew

cries out, “Mother! It was you who taught me to avoid whatever would intoxicate. Your lessons have saved my life” (129).

Young women could also influence male suitors by refusing to associate with social drinkers. Louisa May Alcott advocated this course in “Silver Pitchers” (1872), but the suggestion also crops up in earlier works such as the 1851 story “The Broken Promises” attributed to “Mrs. Hughes.” Rescuing women could even be neighbors. *The Eventful Twelve Hours: or the Destitution and Wretchedness of a Drunkard, No. 395*, first published in 1836 by the American Tract Society (ATS), was one of the most popular stories of the period. In 1884, temperance historian Daniel Dorchester identified it as the ATS’s seventeenth bestseller, with 92,000 sales by 1851 (282). The story details the salvation of the alcoholic narrator, James, by two neighbor women, Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Mason, whose kindness is contrasted with a bluntly critical male doctor. “I received his reproofs humbly,” James explains, “and I certainly thought, you have been very kind, but I also thought, you are no Mrs. Mason” (47). Within the pages of temperance fiction, then, white, middle-class women could begin to see themselves as powerful agents of change, instructing and molding not just children, but grown men in a way that was sanctioned by broader U.S. culture. Thus the woman powerful enough to remake the alcoholic in her own domestic image was, if not quite as common a figure as the drunkard’s abused wife, at least a widely recognizable one.

However, both Karen Sanchez-Eppler and Gretchen Murphy note that the ubiquity of apparently powerful women in temperance fiction elicited concomitant anxiety. Sanchez-Eppler explains that “figuring adult women as disciplinary agents” is problematic because “their power within the domestic sphere, however circumscribed,

remains relatively real,” and if fully realized could upend the patriarchal family the temperance movement wished to preserve (70). As a result, the drunkard, who might have been converted by his wife’s tears, is instead frequently redeemed by his child in a scene with disturbingly incestuous undertones. This move, seen in temperance fiction by both men and women, negates the wife’s potential threat to paternal power and ensures the husband’s ascendancy within the family (Sanchez-Eppler 62). Gretchen Murphy sees a similar attempt to preserve the husband’s authority working beneath the surface in Stowe’s temperance fiction, which, as we have seen, is frequently noted for its endorsement of maternal influence. In those stories, the drunkard whose wife attempts to influence him is ultimately saved instead by the fatherly interventions of an older man (“Enslaved Bodies” 103). Murphy and Sanchez-Eppler base their conclusions about temperance fiction’s conservative nature on an examination of the ultimate cause of the alcoholic’s reform. Even Mattingly, who makes, perhaps, the strongest case for women’s temperance fiction’s radical possibilities, concedes that women are usually simply portrayed as “‘innocent victims’ of an unjust legal, social, and economic system,” and that, even in the 1850s and after, when stories about such radical acts as saloon smashing became somewhat common, the “question of whether or not women should leave intemperate husbands was [still] hotly contested” (14).

Thus in the first half of the nineteenth century, temperance literature depicted alcoholism in the East as a destroyer of families, unmanning fathers and husbands. Women, particularly white, middle-class women, played a key role in reforming inebriate men, though this often placed them in a problematic position of authority. At the same time, travel narratives and western adventure stories presented a frontier on which men

could regain their lost masculinity through rough physical exertion and, often, through, rough, manly drinking. The result of their efforts was the conquest of the West and the confident assertion of U.S. national power. Confidence, though, was offset by the worry that, rather than taming the wilderness, the white man might be subsumed by it in a process often represented by scenes of dangerous drunken carousals. So steeped was western alcoholism in firewater myths and “vanishing” rhetoric that the image of the degraded white settler necessarily conjured images of the doomed Indian or Frenchman, and, by extension, raised questions about the inevitability of U.S. continental possession. When the rescuing white wife of the temperance story is transplanted to the Western frontier, her role – and the anxieties that attend it – takes on a national significance.

TEMPERANCE FICTION, WHITE WOMEN, AND THE WEST

I am writing specifically about a particular subset of Western temperance stories often written by women that feature a white wife, mother, or daughter in a heroic role. In these tales, an inebriate husband is forced to migrate westward in order to escape angry creditors, the temptation of the saloon, or both. In one plot, which I call the tale of western redemption, the move has restorative effects, and the man regains his position as head of the household. In the second, the tale of western degradation, the husband’s continued alcoholism eventually results in the tragic death of one or more members of the family, often including himself.

That female temperance authors were engaging with western themes is not, in itself, surprising. Kaplan has contributed significantly to the understanding of how the nineteenth century’s cult of domesticity participated in the national obsession with western conquest. As mentioned in the introduction, in *The Anarchy of Empire*, Kaplan

examines early nineteenth-century housekeeping manuals to argue that, as the nation expanded westward, the civilizing power of women was invoked as part of the process by which “middle class domesticity redefine[d] the meaning of habitation, to make Euro Americans feel at home in the place where *they* are initially the foreign ones” (34). These manuals, particularly those of Sarah Josepha Hale, imagined the West as a terrain on which “mobilized and mobilizing” cadres of white women “transformed conquered foreign lands into the domestic sphere of the family and nation” (Kaplan 25). In Kaplan’s description, domesticity works in concert with imperialism in three ways. First, women on the Western frontier are charged, through texts like Catherine Beecher’s *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1842), with partitioning “the home in a way that distinguishes it from an external wilderness,” thus ensuring that white children born on the frontier and foreign servants in white homes do not become wild (33). Second, white women in the East are to be dedicated to christianizing and domesticating enslaved people for a return to Africa that will “Americanize that continent through domesticity.” This charge, according to Kaplan, is evidenced by the colonization plots in Hale’s *Liberia* and Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (38-39). Finally, domestic novels such as Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* and Maria Cummings’ *The Lamplighter* encouraged women “to find traces of foreignness” within themselves “that must be domesticated or expunged” (43).

Kaplan’s thesis about the imperial undertones of apparently apolitical domestic fiction has since been developed by a number of scholars (43). In *Home Fronts: Domesticity and its Critics in the Antebellum United States*, Lora Romero acknowledges that despite its antipatriarchal tendencies, antebellum domesticity can be legitimately critiqued for its complicity in U.S. imperialism. Gretchen Murphy in *Hemispheric Imaginings: The*

Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire expands Kaplan's argument to include early nineteenth century U.S. political texts, which she posits "rely on the rhetoric of the home to separate the United States from the Old World and grant it domestic authority over subordinates" (47). It seems clear that images of white women making homes in the West and guarding those homes and themselves against "foreignness" and "wildness" were as much a part of the national preoccupation with conquest as the more obviously militaristic visions of Indian battles and war with Mexico.

It would, then, be relatively easy to simply subordinate western-themed temperance fiction under the umbrella of domestic fiction. Certainly there is a fair degree of overlap between the domestic texts these scholars have analyzed and the temperance fiction I discuss here. As I mention briefly in the introduction, Romero's definition of the domestic tradition as an attempt to "redefine woman's value in terms of internal qualities" rather than on those things that made "her satisfying to the male gaze" describes the heroines of many temperance tales (21). They are praised for eschewing "society" life (dancing and parties with young men who may be drunkards) in favor of sober industriousness at home. The internal strength they develop allows them to then (depending on the text) avoid marrying an alcoholic, steer him back to sobriety, or take control of family life after the drunkard husband, father, or brother disqualifies himself. A number of critics have also noted the temperance elements in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Wide, Wide World*, and writers like Stowe, Sigourney, and Hale, and Louisa May Alcott all extolled temperance as a domestic virtue.

However, collapsing women's western temperance fiction into the discourse of domesticity ignores how these tales were also a response to various arguments about

alcohol use and abuse circulating in the male frontier texts that “map[ped] the psychological and political boundaries of the nation” (Sundquist 13). It also does not address one of the key features of temperance fiction. That is, that the white man is something less than a conquering hero and his wife something other than the protected domesticator of conquered ground. The temperance fiction alcoholic is, typically, degraded, his family vulnerable, and his wife forced out of her accustomed, domestic role. It would thus seem a formula poorly suited to expansionist fantasy. And yet, again and again, white female authors chose to meld the popular tale of the drunken patriarch with the equally popular story of the heroic western emigrant. What was the psychological appeal of such a seemingly incongruous mixing? And how did this particular iteration of domestic discourse interact with what Kaplan has termed the “anarchic” process of American empire building?

On one level, western temperance tales functioned as a proto-feminist response to the male-centered frontier narratives I describe above. They reworked well-known images of westward migration in order to “map” for their white, female audience the psychological boundaries of a frontier on which they themselves were indispensable actors. Western redemption stories redefine the “masculine freedom” of the frontier as being inextricably linked with marriage and fatherhood, where in typical western stories it was presented as an avenue of male escape. More radically, tales of western degradation depict the Anglo U.S. white man (instead of Indians, French trappers, or Irish or German immigrants) as the existential threat facing new western communities. White women, these texts argue, are immune to the savage degradation that overtakes and

destroys their husbands and become necessary not merely as bearers of culture but as founding members of the new West.

On another level, these tales can be read as a reaction to the “convulsive expansion” the U.S. experienced in the early nineteenth century and the anxieties that attended it (Kaplan 22). Specifically, they respond to the growing sense that, as national boundaries were extended and the conflict over slavery became more intense, the “domestic” had become “an ambiguous liminal realm between the national and the foreign, as it placed the foreign inside the geographic boundaries of the nation” (Kaplan 26). As we have seen, the racialized language used to depict the nineteenth-century alcoholic reflected worries (including those about the “racial identity of citizenship”) that accompanied the sudden, “ambiguous” liminality of a concept that had seemed stable and self-evident (Kaplan 27) The white, alcoholic husband and father’s presence in the family served as a metaphor for the foreign element inside the nation’s borders. His degradation, meanwhile, was a reminder of the disconcerting permeability of whiteness. In Western temperance tales the frontier becomes a mechanism for ridding the two domestic spheres – the national and the familial – of that threat.

PLOTS OF WESTERN REDEMPTION AND WESTERN DEGRADATION

I will first examine how redemption tales used temperance to insert women into the national narrative of Western conquest. Redemption tales have, arguably, the more conservative of the two plots, since they are invested in restoring the husband and father to a place of authority within the family. As I explain below, they also employ a number of strategies to sidestep the implicit critique of patriarchal authority contained in stories about alcoholic men who had failed in their responsibilities as husbands and fathers. At

the same time, though, these tales recast the “freedom” the West offers the enterprising young man as liberation from temptation, and the masculinity that can be regained on the frontier as the fulfillment of familial responsibilities. In this way, wives and children, who are traditionally what men go west to escape, become the catalyst for and the ultimate goal of manly frontier adventure. In so doing, these tales reconcile the popular image of men heading west to escape domestication with the national imperative of domesticating the frontier.

The earliest redemption tale I have located is titled “Original Western Texts: Woman’s Trials” (1835) by Mrs. P.W. Ball. It was published in *The Cincinnati Mirror and Western Gazette of Literature, Science and the Arts*. Until 1832 the publication had been known as the *Cincinnati Mirror and Ladies’ Parterre*, indicating that the first audience for “Woman’s Trials” was probably middle-class women living on the settled western edge of the frontier. The story consists of two episodes: a typical western redemption tale in which husband and wife migrate to make a fresh start, and a rather more bizarre story of Indian captivity that seems unrelated to the initial narrative.¹³ For the purposes of this discussion, what matters is the opening decision to move west. The husband, an alcoholic named Jack Murdock, is tricked into getting drunk and gambling away most of his money. He tells his wife that he plans to leave her and their child because he “cannot live to be laughed at” by the other men in town and so, “cannot bear to live” (361). His wife, Maria, convinces him that migration will put him in a place where “it is no shame to work [...] and [there is] no temptation to drink” (361). She further assures him that he will be out of reach of the “jests or observations” of his tormenters (361). “Man,” the narrator explains, “thinks of his own shame — woman of

her husband's — her being is identified with his" (361). The West is portrayed as a region on which that shame can be shed. Once they arrive in the "broad, and at that time thinly settled bosom of the Miami Valley," Jack Murdock transforms into a "thriving farmer" within the tight-knit agricultural community (361). What's more, their sickly daughter (also named Maria) recovers and grows to young womanhood. The family's westward journey is made at the behest of his wife to restore Jack to a place of respectability among other men — a theme that would have been familiar to readers acquainted with the travel narratives of Irving and Hoffman. However, the "freedom" of the frontier is not the license of an undomesticated wilderness, but liberation from temptation and shame. Similarly, the masculinity that he regains is based in his ability to provide for his family and protect his daughter. In "Woman's Trials," the call to "go West" that had appealed so strongly to the anti-domestication impulses of men like Hoffman and Irving is uttered in the voice of wife and mother, and the transformation that is accomplished on the frontier is dependent upon her interventions and for her benefit. The effect is to give the white woman an active and necessary part in the western adventure story without jeopardizing her domestic role.

This idea that freedom and manliness are dependent upon fatherhood and marriage and that domesticity is entirely compatible with the frontier appear in a number of other western redemption stories. "Born to Wear a Coronet" (1845) by Emily Chubbuck (Fanny Forester) was published a number of times, the first apparently in *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art, and Fashion*. In the story the narrator, during a sight-seeing trip to the West, happens upon the secluded cottage of a school friend named Rosina. In the course of the visit, Rosina explains that she and her

husband moved to the unlikely spot after he lost everything to alcoholism, and their first child died. When the narrator inquires if the once-vain Rosina misses society life, her friend dismisses the thought. Her husband, she enthuses, is once again “a *man!* — in heart, and soul, and intellect, a man — full of integrity, and courage, and strength, and truth” (61). Another redemption tale, “Laura Goodwin” (1847) by Maria Sheldon, appeared in the *New York Illustrated Magazine of Literature and Art*. It describes the inebriate husband’s western conversion in similar terms: after he “removed to a small western village far away from the scene of disgrace” he becomes a “man once more [...] an indulgent father, a guardian, and protector” (201). Similarly, the novel *Nora: Lost and Redeemed* (1863) by Lydia Folger Fowler includes a brief period of western redemption in which the young bride, Nora Wentworth, is “ready to sacrifice everything if, by so doing, her husband could once more assert his manhood, and become a more noble member of society” (104).

In addition to their habit of allowing the husband to find masculine freedom by becoming more invested in his home and family, these tales often neatly sidestep the uncomfortable specter of patriarchal critique by arguing that the move west had salutary effects on the wife as well. Thus Rosina of “Born to Wear a Coronet” becomes less frivolous and more matronly. In a more extreme example, “Extravagance: Or What Drove One Man to Madness” (1853) by Lizzie Linn involves not one, but two, redemptive removals west. The story opens on the wealthy Mr. and Mrs. Pyper, whose fortunes have improved tremendously since he gave up drinking and moved from New York to Michigan. After a relapse brought about by Mrs. Pyper’s insistence on throwing an over-the-top party replete with an assortment of fine wine ends with the death of their child,

the couple moves again to Iowa, where Mr. Pyper gets steady employment and the formerly spendthrift Mrs. Pyper becomes “a great economist” and “her own housekeeper” (73).

The ideological issues raised by the presence of a too-powerful wife are also occasionally dealt with by leaving the wife at home. L.S. Goodwin’s “Under the Frock: A Tale of Vermont” (1858), also published in *Graham’s*, is a good example. In this tale, the alcoholic David King leaves his family “to seek improved fortune for himself and his family [...] The great West had just sent forth its circulars of invitation; and [he] trusted there might be something there worth securing, even for him” (441). King’s family soon hears reports that he has frozen to death after a drinking bout “in a western town” (442). Several years pass before David reappears in the same tattered clothes and carrying a jug of whiskey. His bedraggled appearance turns out to be merely a ruse to see if his family will welcome him home. Once he has determined they will, he “drew off the slouched hat, rent the old blue frock down the front and flung it also at his feet” (446). Underneath he is “respectably clad [...] with the light of manliness beaming suddenly through every feature” (446). His near-death experience, it seemed, had kindled his remaining “sense of manhood” and encouraged him to make his fortune in the West (446). He returns to his Vermont home with “money” and “lands which will be a noble patrimony to our children and their children’s children” (446). Once again, the West is a place to reclaim masculinity *in order to* become a better husband and father. The freedom of the frontier is a gateway to return to the domestic sphere. A later story, “Not Too Late” (1882) by Mary Frances, appeared in *Arthur’s Home Magazine* and, similarly, involves a man named Horace Knight who, after his family is taken away to the poor house declares, “No! [...]

I'll reform — I'll work — I'll be a man again!" (455). With the help of a kind doctor, he migrates west, makes his fortune, and returns to tell his family in "a manly voice" that it is "never too late, thank God!" (457). The wife's role in this still-more conservative iteration of an already conservative plot is, obviously, less direct. However, the plot's appeal to a white female audience lies in its ability to recast the national fascination with western settlement not as a move away from domestic values but as an embrace of them: that is, whether she stays home or accompanies her husband, she is both the reason for and the goal of western migration.

The second important question to ask about western redemption tales is if (and if so how) their western themes participated in the enmeshment of domesticity and empire that Kaplan and others have identified. In her discussion of the 1847 story "Life on the Rio Grande" Kaplan remarks the studied "absence of the violent political context" of the war between the U.S. and Mexico raging around the Rio Grande that year. Instead, the story and its accompanying illustration depict a "generic picture of pioneer domesticity [that] could appear anywhere from Kentucky to Oregon in that amorphous shifting terrain known as "the frontier." For Kaplan, the disappearance of specific political and geographical markers in domestic frontier literature served to change the scale by which "progress" was measured. The spread of a homogenous, feminized "civilization" took the place of images of military victory. Domesticity becomes in these texts part of the process of "expand[ing] women's sphere beyond the home and nation and simultaneously [contracting] woman's sphere to that of policing domestic boundaries against the threat of foreignness" (Kaplan 28).

The redemption tales I have examined present a similarly blurry image of “the West.” Occasionally, geographic locations are mentioned — Michigan, the Miami valley, etc. — but there are no references to conflicts or political issues specific to any particular region; Indians are almost totally absent. In “Born to Wear a Coronet,” Rosina appears to argue that Indians were never there at all: “I am as *aristocratic* as ever,” she says. “We lord it over the natives of these wilds, the birds and the beasts, as though we were peers of the realm — Nature’s realm” (61). Nora Wentworth does at least sympathize “with the Indian who was driven far away from the soil he loved as his life,” but only by way of explaining how much she regrets the “destruction of the native aboriginal trees,” which remind her of her New England childhood (105). Other texts simply establish that characters have arrived in “the far West” and elaborate no further. The exact time during which these tales are set is as difficult to pin down as their geographic location. They were for the most part written in a period when the term “far west” referred to the Rocky Mountains and Oregon Trail rather than Ohio and Illinois. However, they are set in an ill-defined time in the past when Ohio and Illinois still marked the outer edges of the frontier. The territory described would have existed in readers’ minds as simultaneously settled and unsettled, domestic and foreign — an ambiguous, liminal space to which the drunkard is exiled. These stories, then, bespeak an impulse to discuss the alcoholic in terms of undetermined and unfixed national boundaries. However, at the same time, they foreclose the possibility that this distressing liminality poses any real threat to the nation itself, since readers understand that the “frontier” of the tales is destined for successful settlement.

This observation takes on greater significance when we apply to the stories Kaplan's observation that the term "domestic" necessarily conjures the idea of the "foreign," and that the language of familial domesticity is necessarily intertwined with the language of nationalism. The western drunkard is a foreign body within the domestic circle of his home; the drunkard's family in the settled East is a foreign element within the nation whose susceptibility to alcoholic enslavement calls into question firmly held beliefs about the "difference which separates white and black bodies" (Murphy, "Enslaved Bodies" 102) and the "racial identity of citizenship" (Kaplan 27). Seen in these terms, the drunkard's exile to the frontier is a comforting discursive removal of the foreign from the national body. His eventual restoration is both a purification of the white middle class family and reassurance that the expansion and solidification of national borders is foreordained and inevitable. Thus, women who accompany their drunkard husbands westward or encourage westward migration contribute simultaneously to fitting conquered foreign lands for membership in the national family, and to the never-ending project of removing "traces of foreignness" from the white, middle-class family and from the nation (Kaplan 43).

Stories of western degradation, in which the drunkard or his family come to a catastrophic end, are both more common and, often, more radical in their depictions of women's roles than are redemption tales. These roles are also more obviously involved in discourses of empire. Degradation tales were written by both men and women and appeared in publications targeting both genders from the 1830s until the Civil War. They were particularly popular during the 1850s, when temperance texts in general tended to eschew moral suasion in order to make a stronger argument for the Maine Law and other,

similar prohibitory measures. Henrietta Rose's temperance novel, *Nora Wilmot: A Tale of Temperance and Women's Rights* (1858), for example, consists mostly of speeches in favor of prohibition intermixed with a few chapters of plot. Its several western migration episodes end with the assurance that, even in a new western home, "the [man's] unnatural appetite was not quenched, it was only restrained a little," leaving legal prohibition the only reasonable solution (237). Nina Baym has argued that "a temperance novel must show woman's power as insufficient because its purpose is to get temperance legislation passed" (*Woman's Fiction* 267). However, as Tyrell has made clear in *Sobering Up*, the campaign for prohibition in the 1830s and 40s was an almost entirely northeastern affair that involved eliminating liquor licenses. The tales I discuss below were sometimes written before the 1850s, almost always discuss characters fleeing from a corrupt East rather than seeking to reform it, and generally make no mention of legal prohibition. This indicates that legislative reform was not always their primary goal. And, as I argue below, white women's temperance writing about the West, especially, seems to have a different objective than that of their male counterparts.

At first glance, western redemption tales by men and women take essentially the same shape. In "The Drunkard and His Dying Wife" (1860), a frequently reprinted, anonymous news item which seems to have been first published in *The Springfield Republican*, the correspondent encounters an impoverished family that had migrated to the "wilderness" fifteen years prior. The husband, who became an alcoholic after the death of a child, spends his time carousing while the wife dies of cancer in a dilapidated cabin. The author ends by declaring, "We left her with our hearts strengthened for our cares and trials, which seem hardly worthy of the name, when compared with hers!" (20).

Despite the almost twenty years' difference in publication dates, "The Drunkard" is not substantially different from the equally widely published "Tale of the Bottle" (1839) by J. Alley, in which a traveler to the "thinly settled" regions of Canada witnesses the death of an abused drunkard's wife. The narrator, after watching the husband stagger away from the woman's gravesite, exclaims, "Heaven! Deliver me from the all-devouring and overwhelming fate of a drunkard!" (32).

As noted above, in general, temperance fiction by women tended to focus less on the suffering of female characters and more on women's limited power to alter their circumstances. In tales of western degradation, a similar pattern emerges, which, when considered in the context of various discourses about the frontier, can be read as making a very particular argument about white women's role in settling the West. In Kaplan's formulation, "traveling domesticity" works to transform foreign spaces into domestic ones. Western degradation tales, like their redemptive counterparts, also exalt white women's capacity to do that. But whereas redemption tales neatly sidestep the concern that the wilderness may render white men savage and the nagging problem of what endemic alcoholism meant about the purity of white culture, degradation tales respond to these problems in such a way as to make white women a crucial part of the solution. As in men's narratives, the white, male frontier alcoholic occupies the same space as the vanishing Indian or Frenchman. However, in degradation tales, his eventual disappearance both rids the East of his corrupting presence and creates a space for white women to exercise power. Their role is to mother (rather than father) new family lines that populate a U.S. West that is imagined as a second, purified version of New England.

An examination of two of Lydia Sigourney's temperance stories — “The Emigrant Bride” and “The Intemperate,” both of which were eventually published in her 1848 temperance collection *Water Drops*, makes it clear that western-themed temperance fiction was very much concerned with national expansion and the threat the white, male drunkard posed to it. I begin with Sigourney because she was one of the most prolific and best-known authors of the period and may have influenced other temperance writers working with western themes.¹⁴

“The Emigrant Bride” involves the clandestine marriage of two English youths, Henry Elton and Sybil Mortiner, and their subsequent removal to the doomed colony of Roanoke in 1587. Early Virginia, much like the Ohio Valley in “The Intemperate,” is replete with “flowering trees and shrubs [...] vines, loaded with clusters, enriched field and grove; here forming dense canopies and bowers of shade” (142). Sybil, anxious to make the most of the natural “hospitality of the broad, green West,” sets to work on “the humblest deeds that might render a poor abode comfortable” (143). Henry Elton, for his part, behaves very much like a husband in a typical temperance tale. He stops coming home at night and, when he does stumble in, exhibits “disgusting degradations from stupidity to brutality.” On one of his nights away from home, Sybil is murdered by Indians, and the doomed colony responds by murdering “innocent [Indian] women and babes for the crime of their chieftain” (146).

In her essay “Reinventing Lydia Sigourney,” Nina Baym argues that more than half of Sigourney's publications “in both prose and poetry was historical in content and [...] political — in a fairly conventional sense of the term — in implication” (“Reinventing” 59). Baym makes the case that Sigourney's historical writing (like all

historical writing) “construct[s] a view of the public sphere that extends well beyond women, and aggressively comment[s] on it” (861). According to Baym, Sigourney’s historical writings [particularly those about Indians] are internally fractured because their attempt to affirm the progress of history is continually frustrated by the evident failure of Christian-republican ethics to meet the single most important test of the moral caliber of the American nation — the obligation to preserve the continent’s ‘aborigines’ by Christianizing them and integrating them into American society (61).

The infusion of a temperance message into a text about the early colonies is obviously anachronistic. Both Puritan and Virginian colonists would have seen “rum, gin, and brandy [as] nutritious and healthful,” a fact that nineteenth-century temperance writers often quoted as evidence of the modern era’s superiority to the past (Rorbaugh 25). Thus Sigourney was probably consciously using a revision of U.S. history to comment on a current issue in the public sphere. She was also using that issue to address U.S. Christianity’s vexing failure regarding American Indians. In Sigourney’s story, the demise of the Roanoke settlement becomes not a timeless mystery but an indictment of Anglo-white intemperance, both in terms of alcoholism and bloodlust. The settlement fails and the settlers commit the nation’s original sin of mistreating native inhabitants. Both the failure and the sin are linked directly to intemperance. In the “The Intemperate,” the story with which I opened this chapter, the pattern repeats itself, this time in the new western frontier.

“The Intemperate” is not historical fiction; it is instead a contemporary account of a young family — the Harwoods, including the husband, James, his wife, Jane, and two

children — moving to the new West. Despite Sigourney's apparently ironic description, quoted above, of the frontier as an "imaginary El Dorado," she nonetheless allows one of the Harwoods's new neighbors to provide them with a positively Edenic description of the settlement (33). The "crops of corn and wheat are such as you never saw in New England," the man explains. "Our cattle live in clover, and the cows give us cream instead of milk. There is plenty of game to employ our leisure, and venison and wild turkey do not come amiss now and then on a farmer's table" (36). This image of the frontier as a paradise is typical of Sigourney's work. As Gary Kelly points out, she frequently used "the theme of American western settlement as a test and renewal of the national character" (25) and part of the project of realizing a "republican, agrarian, Christian United States [that was] as close as God would permit fallen humanity to come to creating a heaven on earth" (33).

It is interesting, then, what pains Sigourney takes to establish Harwood's out-of-place-ness within this milieu. The same neighbor who extols the abundance of the settlement sharply chastises Harwood for neglecting his wife, ordering him to "take the baby [...] we do not let our women bear all the burdens, here in Ohio" (35). As if to further emphasize Harwood's alterity, the riches of paradise prove insufficient to satisfy him. After a brief period of sobriety, he begins embarking on out of town excursions to buy liquor, resulting in the increasingly violent abuse of his ailing son. The community, apparently presenting a unified front, censures him for his behavior: "Friends remonstrated with the unfeeling parent [and] hoary-headed men warned him solemnly of his sins" (40). But it is all to no purpose since "intemperance had destroyed his respect

for man, and his fear of God” (40). Alcohol, then, has made him unfit for citizenship in the U.S.-dominated west.

This point is further and more definitively made by Harwood’s eventual drowning. Before she learns of her husband’s death, Jane lies awake listening to the storm and hearing her husband’s “frenzied anger” in the “shriek of the tempest” and the “roar of the hoarse wind through the forest” (43). The personification of the storm initially serves to accentuate Jane’s fear of her husband — she tosses and turns, fretfully imagining that each “roar” and “shriek” is an enraged James returning home to victimize her further. When the actual result of the storm is revealed, it seems rather that the wilderness itself has turned James’s wrath back on himself, violently expelling the diseased member from the community.

If, as Baym argues, Sigourney’s historical writing is a “memorial to the past” that “attempt[s] to influence the present,” then it would seem that “The Intemperate” and “The Emigrant Bride” could be read (as contemporary readers of *Water Drops* would have found them) together (“Reinventing,” 68). The “lofty forests [...] towering in unshorn majesty” that meet the Harwoods are another version the bucolic Virginia colony encountered by the Eltons in “The Emigrant Bride” (Sigourney, “The Inebriate” 32). Both couples have the opportunity to be a part of the Republic’s growth and for both, the risk of failure lies with the intemperate husband. Readers thus seem encouraged, both here and in other degradation tales, to see westward migration in terms of national myths about the early colonists and to see the western frontier as a second New England. The death of Sybil Elton is a cautionary tale about the failures of the original colonies that, in turn, makes James Harwood’s destruction seem necessary — and foreordained — the

sacrifice required for the nation to achieve both its empiric aspirations and lofty moral ideals.

Similar scenes of the drunkard husband's violent expulsion from the frontier occur in a number of tales of western degradation written by women. In Frances Dana Gage's "Tales of Truth (No. 1)" (1852) the inebriate husband falls face-first into a puddle of water, which freezes around him. He dies literally "strangled" by the earth (52). In "The Wilful One; Or Scenes from the Life of Marie Hamilton" (1840) by Miss E.A. Dupuy and published in *Godey's Ladies Book*, the husband dies in an attack of delirium tremens less than a year after his wife leaves him. In "Original Communications: The Girl Who Did Not Belong to Society" (1844) by Lydia Jane, he dies "suddenly in a fit." Even when the husband does not die as a direct result of his alcoholism, his marginalized position is made abundantly clear. In "The Promising Lover: A Tale of Real Life" (1835), an anonymous text published in *The Boston Pearl and Literary Gazette*, the wife, Letitia, manages to make a home in an isolated western forest.¹⁵ The narrator, visiting Letitia's cabin, describes a domestic scene fashioned out the wilderness around them:

Letitia's frugal supper consisted of a corn meal cake, some excellent butter of her own making, a dish of wild fruit gathered by her amiable daughters as an expression of goodwill to the friend of their mother. A cloth of snowy whiteness was set upon a well-scoured table, the furniture of which was of the plainest kind, set with order and neatness (34).

After Letitia graciously pronounces the meal "a dinner of herbs and love therewith," and the party is just about to eat "with no common relish," (34) the drunkard husband Frederick's "bloated and loathsome" figure comes crashing towards the cottage (35). He

falls “headlong into the house,” cuts his hand on his broken rum bottle, and lies “wallowing in rum, blood, and broken glass — uttering the most horrific language” (35). The contrast between the two descriptions is sudden and stark. Where the wilderness yields Letitia and her daughters food, shelter, and beauty, it has reduced Frederick to an animal state, “reeling,” “wallowing,” and “crawling” (35). In the equally depressing “Mary Stanley” (1856) by Mrs. E.L. Bicknell, Mary’s husband John’s alcoholism drives the family west numerous times, first from England to Baltimore and then to increasingly far-flung frontier outposts. The tale ends with John, who had once been part of the English nobility, “travel-worn, and old, with poor clothing” wandering up to a western “farmer and his wife [...] sitting in a grape-shaded porch” (287). The woman recognizes him and asks about his wife, to which “the brutish man” replies, “She is dead and gone to — ten years ago” (287). The woman replies sharply, “She was too good for you” (287). Like the “hoary-headed men” in Sigourney’s “The Intemperate,” the farmer and his wife are the realization of the dream of western settlement. The farmer’s wife’s statement, which is the last piece of dialogue in the text, serves as the community’s judgment on the drunkard.

In these images there are some obvious parallels between Crèvecoeur’s earlier depictions of the “mountain man” who would eventually disappear to make room for more civilized versions of the U.S. citizen. Those men, though, were to some degree martyrs to the cause of national growth. They degenerated because they dared to go beyond the pale of civilization and found themselves without either competent “magistrates” (59) or “the power of example, and the check of shame” (60). Given these circumstances, their destruction was inevitable not because of their own failings but

because of the absence of a stable society. At the same time, the work they did to settle the wilderness was indispensable in ensuring the nation's future. The doomed drunkards of women's degradation tales have no similar excuse and serve no such lofty purpose. The logic that seems to underlie each of these men's bestial degeneration is that the crucible of western living reveals or exacerbates a fundamental personality flaw.

This position is stated baldly in "The Contrast" (1836), published in *Mother's Magazine*.¹⁶ The story involves two families, the Genetts and the Ladds, both of whom had migrated to the West at some point in the past. The narrator explains, "As is too often the case, the labors and hardships incident to clearing up the new settlements, proved the means of exposing the latent evils of the human heart in all their disgusting deformity. In the course of a few years, both these husbands became confirmed drunkards" (88). Just as the definition of masculine freedom as responsible fatherhood responded to images of the West as a place to shed the constraints of Eastern domesticity, the image of the drunkard in tales of degradation responds both to the oft-expressed fear of a western wilderness "capable of rendering the white man savage" and to the suspicion that a U.S. white civilization responsible for bringing alcoholism to the continent could not be as pure as it claimed. They deal with this difficulty by arguing that, because he is either already a drunkard or a carrier of "latent evils" that will turn him into one, the white man's descent into savagery is not caused by the West or, as Crèvecoeur claims, by its lack of restraining societal institutions. Rather, like the "half civilized" Iroquois guides in Irving's *Astoria*, for whom liquor released the "passions inherent in their nature," he is already marked before his migration. Since his drunkenness results in his eventual death or total marginalization, he occupies the same position as the "vanishing" Indians or

Frenchmen (276). The West becomes not a contested terrain that presents the possibility of white conquest or racial mixing, nor a stage on which civilization's inevitable and dramatic advance is enacted. It is, instead, a space to which the eastern drunkard and all the disconcerting blurring of racial boundaries that he represents is exiled and eventually expunged. It is his wife and daughters, not a future, more civilized wave of humanity, who are then free to settle the West. This subtle reworking of Crèvecoeur's thesis places white women, as is discussed further, below, in a more significant, active position than that of domesticating agent.

Of course the removal of the corrupted and corrupting alcoholic leaves a power vacuum that must be filled. In tales of western degradation this is done by the wives and daughters who thrive on the frontier and are thus placed in the unusual (for women) position of founding new family lines that will settle the country. In "The Intemperate" Jane eventually returns to the East, but the effect of her presence lingers in the mind of the town's inhabitants: "[W]hen they remembered the example of uniform patience and piety which she had exhibited, and the saint-like manner in which she had sustained her burdens, and cherished their sympathies, they felt as if a tutelary spirit had departed from among them" (45). She goes on to educate her daughter — significantly, her son does not survive — "in industry, and that contentment virtue teaches" (45). Though "The Promising Lover" ends on a rather hopeless note with Letitia returning to her cottage "with trembling steps" to patiently endure abuse and await death, it is significant that, once again, the only son has died as a result of the father's abuse. Her daughters, however unpleasant their life may be, are described as "miniatures of their mother in early life — they even possessed something of the refinement and polish of her manners, though bred

in a log cabin, and trained up in a forest, with no education but what their mother gave them — an interesting proof of the power and efficacy of maternal influence instruction, in the most adverse circumstances” (34). After it is established that the two husbands in “The Contrast” are drunkards, the story becomes a comparison of Mrs. Ladd’s and Mrs. Genett’s mothering techniques. Mrs. Ladd, who insists that her children obey their father “whenever they consistently could,” produces a daughter who marries “a useful and pious” county politician. Mrs. Genett, on the other hand, foregoes any discipline whatsoever, and her daughter’s eventual marriage becomes a “revolting comment upon her mother’s miserable management” (89). As in “The Promising Lover,” no mention is made of the two women’s sons or the life that they eventually make for themselves in the West. Instead, the focus is on the daughters and their role in growing or retarding the Western settlement.

While it may not be within the wife’s power to save the drunkard, she is capable of saving her children and the frontier community from his debased influence. As in redemption tales, the “foreign element” that has traveled to the West in these tales is the white male settler himself. It is he whose influence must be defended against in order to make the wilderness a home. The fact that this tainted specimen corrupts the East and is marked for death in the West means that degradation tales are as steadfastly convinced of the promises of manifest destiny as their redemption counterparts. However, in these plots the white woman’s role is active rather than passive, and armed conflict with Indians, Mexicans, and Frenchmen is replaced by her sustained determination to make a home of the frontier despite her husband, and her eventual success in wresting from him the role of western progenitor.

REDEMPTION, DEGRADATION, AND SETTLER CONSCIOUSNESS IN *A NEW HOME, WHO'LL FOLLOW?*

The prominent role the West plays in fictional temperance stories certainly places them somewhere within the national discussion about westward expansion. However, these temperance tales cannot be used to argue that actual female settlers saw western drunkenness as either an existential threat to the nation or as a problem they were uniquely equipped to solve. For that, I turn to Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* (1839), a fictionalized account of her family's emigration to Michigan in 1837. *A New Home* chronicles the adventures of the pseudonymous Clavers family in their attempt to found the town of Montacute. In reality, Kirkland's husband, William had purchased more than thirteen hundred acres of land in western Michigan and founded on it the town of Pickney (Baym, "Literary Legacy" 131). Kirkland's novel, told through a series of satirically comedic vignettes, details the difficulties of building a settlement in the forest and of adjusting to what Clavers sees as the coarse and crude habits of her new western neighbors. The text ends when the town has begun to thrive and Clavers has become an established member of the community. However, Clavers never wavers from her position that her "own class and region should predominate in the new kind of community and culture that it depicts with such freshness" (Zagarell, "'America' as Community" 155).

After exploring some of the debates about the text's facticity (crucial to my point above that Kirkland is writing as an "actual" western settler), my discussion focuses on three main points: that *A New Home*'s subtle revision of western degradation tropes offers a very particular critique of upper-class western dilettantes like Irving and

Hoffman; that this revision of common tropes undoes to a degree the symbolic association between white womanhood, the domestic sphere, and civilization, and that trio's corresponding symbolic opposition to the western wilderness and its indigenous people; and further that this partial erasure of established borders between "savagery" and "civilization" reflects *A New Home's* strain of settler or second-world consciousness.

Because of its popularity, *A New Home* has received considerably more critical attention than many of the ephemeral temperance stories discussed above. On its original publication it was praised by no less than the *North American Review* and Edgar Allan Poe, sold remarkably well in the East, and raised the ire of Kirkland's Pickney neighbors, who saw themselves reflected in a number of her biting sketches. In her next, significantly toned-down book, *Forest Life*, a chastened Kirkland assures her readers, "I am sincerely sorry that any one has been persuaded to regard as unkind what was announced merely as a playful sketch, and not as a serious history" (4). Since then, the discussion of where *A New Home* fits on the continuum between novel and travel narrative has continued. In 1975, Robert Bray argued that Kirkland's humorous sketches of frontier types were precursors to what is now thought of as Midwestern realism (267). Mark Twain and Hamlin Garland, he writes, "could not have fashioned the tradition they did without drawing, consciously or not, on Kirkland" (270). A decade later, in 1984, Annette Kolodny, in *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers 1630-1860*, saw Kirkland's work as a realistic, female corrective to romantic male fantasies about the frontier (134). In 1998, Caroline Gebhard dismissed Kolodny's interpretation, arguing instead that "*A New Home* is not autobiography but fiction" — a novel in the style of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* in which the most interesting character

is Kirkland's narrator persona, Mary Clavers. Sandra Zagarell, in "'America' as Community in Three Antebellum Village Sketches," places *A New Home* within the fictional tradition of antebellum sketch literature.

Whatever the veracity of the individual "commonplace occurrences" Kirkland describes, it is clear that *A New Home* is based on her own experiences Michigan in the late 1830s, after the Erie Canal opened to white settlement the land ceded by the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi in the 1805 Treaty of Detroit (Kirkland 3; Gebhard 296). Kolodny is clearly correct that Kirkland was a white, female settler fictionalizing her own experiences in a conscious rejoinder to the frontier texts of male writers like Irving and Hoffman. Expanding on and complicating Kolodny's argument, Rachel Borup has explored how *A New Home* is additionally responding to the exploits of Davy Crockett and Cooper's Natty Bumpoo. In an article that is perhaps more indebted to Kaplan than it lets on, Borup argues that Kirkland, like Sigourney, sees in the settlement of the West "a second opportunity to make good on the utopian dreams of the original colonists: to wipe the slate clean, to leave behind old social problems and create a new, ideal society" (241). Kirkland is responding to "genteel fears that the West had to be yielded up as a breeding ground for social degeneration and extremist individualism" by "symbolically claim[ing] the new territory for women and for domesticity" (Borup 245). Ana-Isabel Aliaga-Bucheneau concurs, claiming that, "in Kirkland's view, women are the bearers of culture. They are the 'magic circle' that allows for community formation [...] in an often dangerous and threatening environment" (76).

Kirkland, then, was writing at a time when the acquisition of western territory was a key concern of U.S. nationalism, and she was attempting to make an argument for

women's place in the anarchic process of empiric growth. However, despite the fact that Kirkland's role in "settling" western Michigan was also necessarily tied to the process of removing Indians from the land, only a few scholars have focused on how issues of race and Indian removal intersect with Kirkland's brand of traveling domesticity. Two of these are Dawn E. Keetley and Lori Merish. Merish remarks on the relative scarcity of Indians in *A New Home*. She argues that "the structuring opposition of savagery and civilization is displaced largely from its racial referents and mapped onto class and gender relations" (70). This argument has merit. The "savages" in Kirkland's text are most often white men of both classes and lower-class white women who spurn delicate, feminine, Eastern ideas of domestic refinement. Dawn E. Keetley, who pursues the issue in greater depth, notes that Clavers occupies a liminal space between a feminine "interior, home-bound domesticity and a [masculine] exterior, free-ranging frontier individualism" (18). However, according to Keetley, Clavers finds the boundaries of race that present themselves in the occasional appearance of Indians within *A New Home's* pages as much more impermeable, in part because in nineteenth-century rhetoric, "'woman' and 'home'" were virtual synonyms for a sanctuary from all that was 'savage' on the white frontier" (19). As a result of this ideological separation, Keetley argues, Kirkland's text "does not portray her frontier as a place of mutual interchange in terms of race" (29). Kirkland instead "has erased the Native American culture" and "has substituted the proliferating classes of whites on the frontier for other races" (32), thus becoming "ensnared in the vast classificatory net of 'white womanhood'" (33).

What neither Merish nor Keetley discuss, and what is mentioned only in passing by other scholars, is that "savagery" in *A New Home*, whether embodied by middle class

white men, lower-class white men and women, or marginalized Indians, almost always includes references to alcohol or alcoholism. In fact, her sketches frequently take the shape of typical western degradation temperance tales, which “map” savagery onto alcoholism. While I am not claiming that Kirkland intended *A New Home* as a piece of temperance literature, I do suggest that alcohol was a powerful, recognizable, cultural metaphor for the West and that Kirkland used the familiar rhetoric of western temperance stories to strengthen her broader point that “egalitarianism in the West is excessive, often allowing the settlers to follow their worst inclinations [and] jeopardize the formation of a stable and functioning community” (Zagarell, “Introduction” xxxi). Moreover, this use of western temperance tropes allowed her to further undercut the romantic, masculine narratives of men like Irving and Hoffman. In Kirkland’s hands, the tendency of western temperance texts to figure white, male drunkards as savage threats to community is used to blur the lines, clearly demarcated in most nineteenth century texts, between white woman as “culture bearer,” white man as conqueror, and Indian as threat. This blurring in turn contributes to *A New Home*’s position as a settler text that wrestles, through the metaphor of alcoholism, with the competing inclination to separate itself from the British tradition and to colonize the frontier for a civilization modeled closely on British principles. This tension, in turn, produces a critique of “implicit imperialism” that has been “disguised as nationalism” (Watts, “Settler Postcolonialism” 452).

Kirkland’s account opens with a description of the various difficulties Mrs. Clavers and her husband have on the journey to Michigan. As many scholars from Kolodny on have noted, Kirkland seems acutely aware of the male travel narratives she both imitates and attempts to subvert. In a tongue-in-cheek paragraph in the first chapter,

she warns her reader not to expect a typical western adventure story: “I have never seen a cougar — nor been bitten by a rattlesnake. The reader who has patience to go with me to the close of my desultory sketches, must expect nothing beyond a meandering recital of common-place occurrences” (3). This oblique reference to male-authored western adventurers becomes more pointed as Clavers and her husband enter the Michigan swampland. Kirkland-as-Clavers writes, “All I knew of the wilds was from Hoffman’s tour or Captain Hall’s ‘graphic’ delineations,” referencing Hoffman’s *A Winter in the West* and popular western author James Hall (6). What follows is a satirical send-up of what she obviously views as Hoffman’s overly romanticized depiction of the frontier. She mocks his assertion that “in a country where you may drive a barouche-and-four for hundreds of miles in any direction through the woods, the expense of constructing more artificial ways will be comparatively trivial” by describing how quickly their carriage is brought to a halt by the first appearance of a Michigan mud hole (Hoffman 188). Clavers includes herself in the joke, explaining that they have to be rescued by a French hunter after the near-destruction of Mrs. Clavers’s entirely impractical “paper-soled shoes” (6). When the subject is merely Hoffman’s decision to describe countless romantic “oak openings” at the expense of a single serious description of the ubiquitous Michigan mud hole, Kirkland’s tone is light and self-deprecating. She and her husband are as much at fault for naively believing the fanciful travel narrative as the fanciful travelers are for writing them in the first place, and the whole debacle is offered up for the reader’s amusement.

When she turns her attention to the effect of western alcoholism on women and children, Kirkland’s tone becomes much more serious, employing language and imagery

typical of temperance tales. Just after the mud hole incident, the Clavers spend the night “in a wretched inn, deep in the ‘timbered land’” of Michigan (7). In Hoffman’s text, “inns” are universally delightful. In Pennsylvania, they provide “a blazing fire of seasoned oak” (28); in Kalamazoo, they welcome him with “comfortable-looking chimneys”; and in Prairie Ronde, the inn’s doors swing open on the motley drinking “company” he describes in the rhapsody quoted above. Kirkland’s inn, instead, is the setting for a classic western degradation tale. The establishment, she writes, “was not without its terrors, owing to the horrible drunkenness of the master of the house, whose wife and children were in constant fear for their lives, from his insane fury” (7). Kirkland briefly describes the inn-keeping family’s migration from “a well-stored, comfortable home in Connecticut to this wretched den in the wilderness.” She then abruptly flashes forward to explain that the man eventually went to prison for murder, where “he died of delirium tremens, leaving his family destitute” (7). She ends by reflecting that the sight of the woman, “sitting trembling and with white and compressed lips in the midst of her children” is one she will “never forget” (7).

Since this vignette follows so closely on the heels of overt critiques of Hoffman’s romanticism, it is not difficult to conclude that she had Hoffman in mind here, too. But regardless of intent, the effect is to counter Hoffman’s enthusiasm about the homosocial conviviality afforded by a “social glass” with the vividly described suffering of women and children and the ultimate destruction of the degraded patriarch. She ends the story with another move typical of temperance literature, that is, a wider indictment of liquor production: “So much for turning our fields of golden grain into ‘fire water’ — a branch of business in which Michigan is fast improving” (7). Thus from the opening chapter of *A*

New Home, savagery lurks in the woods in the form of a “raving,” murderous white man degraded by the intentional, suicidal decision of the community to change “gold” into poison.

Through additional, less vividly described examples throughout the text, Kirkland makes it clear that men’s alcoholism is a constant threat to western wives. Another family with whom the Clavers stay in their first weeks in the wilderness is the Ketchums. When the Clavers arrive a little after eight in the evening, Mr. Ketchum has already passed out from the “potent effects of his evening potations.” Mrs. Ketchum tries vainly to cover for her husband by claiming, against obvious fact, that it is too late for him to be up and, “like so many other poor souls [Mrs. Clavers] has known, tried hard to hide her husband’s real difficulty” (37). Later still an innocent woman becomes the victim of hurtful (if ridiculous) village gossip as the result of her husband’s alcoholism since “a drunkard’s word was not worth much” (132).

References to alcoholism generally serve one of the twin purposes of the opening sketch in the inn: to establish the western alcoholic as the new frontier “savage,” and to mock the western adventurer’s tendency to glamorize alcohol. Both of these functions are evident in the second major appearance of liquor in the text, Mr. Clavers’s ill-fated camping trip with some over-confident Easterners. These greenhorns are charmed by the idea of roughing it and are convinced that an ample supply of brandy will ward off the malarial fevers endemic to the region (25). After only one day, the chastened and bedraggled band takes refuge with a French fur-trader and his Indian wife. They awake in terror in the middle of the night at the sound of “hideous yelling, which to city ears could be no less than an Indian war-whoop,” but turns out to be merely a group of Indians in

search of more whiskey (29). With these two references to alcohol, Kirkland renders the young, Eastern adventurers not manly but ridiculous, first putting faith in the myth of a stiff drink shared among men to protect them from the ravages of mosquito-infested Michigan swamplands, and then revealing their comic naiveté when faced with the actual “savagery” released by alcohol on the frontier. The only hero is Mr. Clavers, who joins the expedition only out of curiosity and then refuses to take part in the men’s scheme to buy the marshland and sell it to the unsuspecting “poor artizan, the journeyman mechanic, [and] the stranger” at exorbitant prices, making it clear that the temperate, middle-class family man, with his wife and children by his side, is the only one actually equipped to settle the West (31).

Thus far, Kirkland seems to be repeating common messages of western degradation and redemption tales. However, the incident also hints at a theme she develops more fully later and that is not present in the western temperance tales discussed above. It is a theme that echoes parts of *A Son of the Forest’s* argument and *Franklin Evans’s* subtext, this time with female characters. That is, not only were white alcoholics a degraded threat to western communities, but also Indians, in this case Indian women, could be temperance heroines. In so doing, Kirkland challenges Irving and Hoffman’s class-based assumptions about the frontier and makes the line between “civilization” and “savagery” — less distinct.

This subtle blurring of the boundaries is first evident in the incident at the French trader’s cottage. When the men arrive, they are greeted by the trader and his wife, a reserved Indian woman who serves as a translator between the men and a group of “Indians who were hanging about the house” (29). The trader then supplies the Indians

with whiskey; the white men settle down to a “luxurious” meal and retire “to rest in a much more comfortable style than on the preceding night” when they attempted to camp. They are (as described above) awakened in the middle of the night by the Indians returning for more alcohol. The next morning, the trader explains that he is entirely justified in supplying the surrounding Indians with liquor because it keeps them from stealing from him. His apparently disapproving wife listens “with no pleased aspect to this discussion of the foibles of her countrymen” (30).

Keetley argues that the “veritable chaos” of the trader’s home indicates Kirkland’s disgust with the “deeper cultural disorder perpetrated by that and any other intermarrying between the races” (31). Janet Floyd has pointed out that Keetley’s reading lacks nuance and as a result is unnecessarily harsh in its assessment. Floyd notes that the Indian wife is an excellent hostess who produces “precisely the kind of supper endlessly praised in domestic discourse” (110). She is also a “supporter of that favorite middle-class Anglo-American cause, temperance,” as evidenced by her disapproval of her husband’s justification of his whiskey business (111). For Floyd, Keetley’s failure to notice the wife’s domestic credentials illustrates the problem with the “increasing [critical] tendency to contextualize domestic description predominantly in terms of class fantasy and imperial strategy” (111). Her point can, I believe, be extended by examining how Kirkland’s description of the wife draws even more heavily on temperance tropes that Floyd identifies, and in so doing posits that alcohol is a more significant threat to western communities than the Indians and French whose disappearance Anglo explorers described as necessary and inevitable.

Up to this point in the novel, the Clavers have encountered racial or ethnic others only twice. The first was a French hunter who helped them ford the mud hole in the first chapter. He, though “as wild and rough a specimen of humanity as one would wish to encounter,” is described as performing an act of “true and genuine and generous politeness” (7). The second is the group of Indians I have been discussing here. In this instance, Kirkland certainly engages in vanishing rhetoric. The Indians visit is in order “to procure whiskey [...] the baleful luxury which performs among their fated race the work of fire, famine, and pestilence” (Kirkland 29). However, she also spends a paragraph describing one of the Indian visitors in detail:

He was well dressed, in his way; his hat boasted a broad band of silver lace; his tunic, leggings and moccasins were whole and somewhat ornamented; his blanket glorying in a bright red border; and on his shoulders, slung by a broad thong was a pack of furs of considerable value. He seemed to be an old acquaintance of the family, and was received with some animation even by the grave and dignified mistress of the mansion. The trader examined and counted the skins, spoke to the Indian in his own tongue, and invited him to eat, which however, he declined, with a significant gesture to the huts [where the others had gone to drink] (29).

There is irony here. The phrase “grave and dignified mistress,” for example is clearly tongue-in-cheek. However if Kirkland’s purpose was only to add mockery of French and Indian intermarriage to that of foolhardy Eastern explorers, it seems odd to interrupt the narrative to describe a single character (who will never return again) in such detail.

Instead, I believe his presence adds to the domestic drama that underlies the comedy. The Indian wife is “grave and dignified,” but also, Kirkland intimates, dominated by her husband: she declines “conversation, or indeed notice of any sort unless when called upon to perform the part of interpreter” (29). Thus when the visitor described above elicits from her “some animation,” it indicates his importance to her. In the midst of her apparently lonely, solitary existence as a wife/servant, the friend’s presence grants her a brief, unguarded moment. And her husband proceeds to supply him with the whiskey that will reduce him to a member of a drunken, screaming mob. The moment of interchange between the wife and her friend serves to humanize her further. Taciturnity, the reader realizes, is not her natural state, but the result of her abusive situation. Further, readers who would have recognized both her favorably-described cooking ability and temperance principles would also recognize the scene, repeated again and again in temperance tales, of the wife or mother forced to stand helplessly by as the destructive “social glass” is urged on a beloved son, brother, or husband. Kirkland/Clavers is clearly invested in the racist “vanishing” rhetoric of U.S. white culture. She refers to Indians in degrading terms and more than once turns her ironic humor on the trader, his wife, and the Native residents of the area. However, there is a familiar domestic temperance tale wrapped up in the story about firewater and vanishing. In that tale, the Indian wife appears as the heroine, and Kirkland draws a clear parallel between the “fated” Indians drinking themselves into oblivion to the distress of their temperate female relatives, and the equally fated U.S. white emigrants who did the same. In so doing, she also draws a parallel between the heroic temperance wives of the degradation tale and the Indian women among whom she lived in Michigan.

While this is the last image of Indians vanishing as a result of whiskey in *A New Home*, there are multiple additional examples of vanishing white drunkards. The Clavers's house-raising results in multiple injuries due to a "jug of whiskey" brought by the settler Jem White (41). A short time later, he "carried his 'bad luck' to a distant country, and left his wife and children to be taken care of by the public" (41). A chapter devoted to "a class of settlers" who "seem to work hard, to dress wretchedly, and to live in the most uncomfortable style in all respects" describes the neighboring Newland family (107). The Newlands claim abject poverty and are unashamed to borrow various items from the Clavers. The Clavers grudgingly accept the habit until, one day, on a visit to check on Mr. Newland's health, they discover the entire family in the midst of a drunken and suspiciously opulent Christmas party, the highlight of which is a "tin pail nearly full of a liquid whose odor was but too discernible; and on the whiskey, for such it seemed, swam a tin cup" (109).

A short time later, Mrs. Clavers is called to nurse the eldest daughter after what appears to be a botched abortion and finds the girl's body "swollen and discolored" and the "shrieks of the mother and her children" echoing in the cabin (110). Shortly thereafter, the Newlands depart for the further west, and Kirkland ends the chapter by observing, "Texas and the Canada war have done much for us in this way; and the wide west is rapidly drafting off those whom we shall regret as little as the Newlands (111). Finally, Kirkland ends a sketch about a drunken mob by declaring, "Montacute is far above mobbing now. The most mobbish of our neighbors eventually flitted westward, seeking more congenial association" (119). From the opening western degradation sketch set in the Michigan woods to the last gasp of the "mobbish" neighbors about to be

removed from fast-settling Montacute, the repeated image in Kirkland's text is of drunken, lower class, and mostly male settlers vanishing, like Indians and Frenchmen, into the wider west, and leaving behind a sober, stable, and family-oriented community. The paragraph could have been lifted from Crevecoeur but for the rather unusual role white women play in the drama – a role that is developed in the relationship between Mrs. Clavers and more recently arrived Eastern emigrants, Harley and Anna Rivers.

Here, too, the message at first seems typical. Anna Rivers finds herself in Michigan as a result of the efforts of her father-in-law, who has brought the wild Harley west “with the view of settling [him]” (57). It is not long before Mrs. Rivers and Mrs. Clavers, being of the same class and background, become close friends. One evening, returning from a visit to a sick neighbor, they come upon the mob described above. The men, feeling that they have been cheated, are preparing to throw a traveling ventriloquist into a village pond. In the process, the good citizens of Montacute have been reduced to “shouts and howling — erdich screams — Indian yells— the braying of tin horns, and the violent clashing of various noisy articles” (119). Ultimately, it is the intervention of the two women themselves that puts a stop to the riot. They stand on the hillside above the pond and “set up a united shriek, a screech like an army of sea gulls. ‘Help! Help!’ [...] our white dresses distinctly visible in the clear, dazzling moon-light” (120). The same white woman who stands in symbolic opposition to Indian “savagery” here stands literally against the savagery of the white, male, drunken mob, which is describe in Indian terms. The individuals who make up such a mob are, like the Indian and Frenchman being “drafted off” or “flitting away” to the West. They are disappearing in the face of civilization, but more specifically, in the face of a white, middle-class

civilization that brings the type of women whose white dresses and piteous shrieks bring out men's naturally protective, chivalrous nature.

In the temperance-obsessed cultural milieu of the 1840s, alcoholism was a way for Kirkland to express powerfully the idea, already familiar from Crèvecoeur, that uncivilized frontiersmen would disappear to make way for more refined easterners. Relatedly, Kirkland's use of the typical western degradation tale, invested as it is in the parallels between vanishing Indians and white drunkards, strengthens Merish's argument that racial difference is mostly subsumed by class difference in *A New Home*. Temperance also provides another perspective from which to view Kirkland's already well-documented satiric treatment of western travel narratives. As is evidenced by the hapless and ultimately vicious band of explorers, Kirkland laughs away the hard-drinking, individualistic masculinity offered by Hoffman and Irving as a failed, even ludicrous model. What is required instead is the temperate, family-oriented masculinity of a western redemption tale — that of Mr. Clavers and of the men who are easily subdued by the presence of a white woman in distress. All of this would be enough to argue that there is a significant strain of previously unexamined temperance discourse running through *A New Home*. But to leave the argument here is to ignore a final tale of failed western redemption — that of Harley Rivers. Rivers' story, examined alongside that of his wife, certainly strengthens Kirkland's indictment of Eastern male adventurers in the West. But it also emphasizes how the flow of liquor effaces distinction between upper and lower class, "savage" and "civilized" — an effacement that first occurred, as I mentioned above, with the Indian wife of the French trader. As it becomes more pronounced in the story of Harley's dissipation and Anna's woefully inadequate response

to him and to the West, the apparently uncomplicated image of white women in white dresses civilizing a savage crowd becomes more nuanced and more difficult to place within the “vast classificatory net of ‘white womanhood’” (Keetley 33)

I have already made the case that Harley was, according to his father, “wild” and that his removal to the West was intended to “settle” him. What I have not mentioned is that he was also an alcoholic. On their first meeting, Mrs. Clavers notices that Harley’s face “shewed but too plainly the marks of early excess” (64). Later, when an overly romantic Eastern transplant remarks her envy of Mrs. Rivers since “Rivers was the sweetest name! and Harley was such an elegant fellow!” Mrs. Clavers comments disapprovingly, “We thought poor Anna had been anything but fortunate. She might better have been Fidler or Fiddlestring all her life than to have taken the name of an indifferent and dissipated husband” (104). It also becomes clear early on that Harley, in the words of Edward Watts, does not want to settle the country, but “to play Indian, to slum” (*Remote Country* 95). In his first meeting with the Clavers, “he made innumerable inquiries, touching the hunting and fishing facilities of the country around us, expressed himself enthusiastically fond of those sports, and said the country was a living death without them, regretting very much that Mr. Clavers was not of the same mind” (64). With this introduction, Harley Rivers, more than any other major character in the text, is made to resemble the Irvings, Hoffmans, and Halls to whom Kirkland’s text is at least partially intended as a response.

As such, his story arc echoes that of the rapacious land developers whose disastrous camping trip was described earlier in the book. When the town of Montacute was reduced to a drunken mob replete with “Indian yells,” Harley was in the midst of it,

only attempting “to effect the release of the ventriloquist, after Mr. Clavers had joined him” (119). But the full extent of his depravity is not revealed until he becomes president of the “wild cat” bank of the neighboring town of Tinkerville, an occupation that allows him “abundant leisure for his favorite occupations of hunting and fishing” (124). As it turns out, the bank’s paper notes are backed not by gold and silver but by heavy boxes filled with “broken glass and tenpenny nails” (126). The bank’s speedy collapse results in the ruin of countless settlers. Clavers ends the account by describing Harley and his coconspirators in terms of both savagery and intemperance. They are, she writes, “soulless wretches who [...] drained the best blood” of the settlers (126). The victims’ revenge is imagined in the following metaphor: “Could one of these heart-wrung beings have been introduced, just as he was, with the trembling yet in his heart, and the curses on his lips, into the gilded saloon of his betrayer, me thinks the dance would have flagged, the song wavered, the wine palled, for the moment at least” (126). This scene never becomes a reality, since the Rivers return to the East to “live very handsomely [...] on the spoils of the Tinkerville Wild-cat” (127).

Watts has argued that “in the 1830s leisure-class white men often actively sought in the racially dangerous frontier setting opportunities to test or discover their manhood in ways not offered in their everyday lives” (*Remote Country* 95). In their narratives, these men depicted the frontier as consisting of sober, upper class men like them and a “degenerated” and “undisciplined ‘mongrel race’” a “frontier ‘rabble’” in a “narrative [that] esteems class over race as a means of discerning and stabilizing identity” (117). As I have shown in my discussion of the texts above, alcoholism is frequently used to mark the lower-class rabble. Alcohol use by middle or upper class white men generally

indicates their superior self-control, while alcohol abuse by the same introduces anxiety about the potentially porous boundaries between “civilized” and “savage.” Western temperance tales by white women capitalize on this anxiety either by redefining western manliness or by asserting that middle-class white women are particularly immune from degradation and thus best equipped to settle the West. For the most part, Kirkland follows this formula. “Rabble” like the Newlands and Jem White vanish; women like Mrs. Ketchum and the trembling, abused, Connecticut wife strive to maintain their homes and children despite their husbands’ degradation. But, as I have pointed out, she occasionally strays from the pattern.

There is the Indian wife who embodies both the ideals of domesticity and the principles of temperance, and there is Harley Rivers, whose “dissipation,” intemperance, greed, and ultimate savagery are not the result of a racially ambiguous western frontier but the natural state of men who wish to “play” in the West and be “gentlemen” at home. In Harley Rivers, then, Kirkland continues her practice of relating uncivilized behavior to alcoholism. But his presence complicates Merish’s argument that “savagery” in *A New Home* is always “mapped” onto lower class characters or middle-class men insufficiently appreciative of domesticity. In fact, it is his class that allows him to elude the fate of the Newlands, of Jem White, and of the raving Connecticut drunkard whose degradation tale opened the text. Protected by money, he is free not just to “play Indian” in the woods and enjoy the drunken freedom of a mob, but also to ravage the frontier community, which in turn provides him the capital to make good on his boast that “he *would* live like a gentleman” (Kirkland 127). Here, the western temperance plot is revised. Rivers is indeed marked before he ever heads west, but the West fails to destroy him. He and his

“gilded saloon” hint at the cultural guilt encoded in firewater myths and, in his unpunished return to the East, suggests that there is deeper disorder in white U.S. society than that of the drunken rabble that can be “drafted off” by the further frontier. Kirkland’s text here reverses the work of the typical temperance tale, which offers the West up as a method of purifying the national body and ensuring the stability of its borders.

But what of Mrs. Rivers, whose vulnerable presence on the hillside snapped Harley back to temporary chivalry? As I mentioned above, tales of western redemption in which the husband is saved from drunkenness often involve a parallel restoration of the wife from the sin of extravagance. Elsewhere in the novel, Kirkland plays with this model in another sketch of two young emigrants, Cora and Everard Hastings. Aside from the fact that Everard is not a drunkard, the pair’s story could have served as a model for “Born to Wear a Coronet,” the western redemption tale described above. The plot details of the two stories are almost exactly the same. The romantic-ninny-turned-sober-housewife, Cora, in *A New Home* even turns out to be one of Clavers’s old school-friends, as was the case with the narrator and main character in “Coronet.” Since Kirkland is clearly familiar with the dictates of this redemption formula and since Clavers shows great affection for her friend, one might expect Mrs. Rivers to renounce her husband’s ill-gotten spoils and show that the West has saved her from her previous state of selfishness. Alternatively, if Mrs. Rivers were the heroine of a degradation tale she might make an effort to build a humble home in the wilderness despite Harley. She does neither of these things. Instead, as Mr. Rivers oversees the importation of “pile after pile of huge boxes” of furniture from the east, Mrs. Rivers “astonished the natives in our log meeting-house [...] by a Parisian bonnet of the most exquisite rose-color, her husband’s

taste” (123). Clavers had realized on her first day in a log cabin that what had seemed necessary was now superfluous and bowed to the superior wisdom of a servant who saw that an unwieldy cupboard would do “yeoman’s service [...] as a corn-crib” (45).

Conversely, Mrs. Rivers’ apparent capitulation to her husband’s greed comes long after she should have learned better and mere pages after her pivotal role in ending the riot. Kolodny, who has pointed out that Mrs. Rivers functions as a foil to Mrs. Clavers, argues that she is dismissed from the narrative because the “mentor device is beginning to wear thin” (278). I would argue instead that Anna Rivers disappears at this juncture because she has finally failed to embody the type of middle-class white woman who will ultimately settle the West, one who has, like Mr. Lee in *Franklin Evans*, absorbed some indigenous customs into a “superior” white culture. Clavers herself is presented as the model of this type of woman, but she, too is ultimately ambivalent about her position, displaying in that ambivalence the hallmarks of a second world or “settler” consciousness, which simultaneously participates in the colonization of new territory (be it the North American continent or Australia or New Zealand) and attempts to detach itself from the original, European colonizer. Clavers’s greater ability to adapt to life in the woods is measured first by her guidance of Mrs. Rivers in gracious interaction with their settler neighbors and second by her ability to interact with Indians, which, as is made clear in the following discussion, develops over the course of the text.

Mrs. Clavers makes great efforts to teach Mrs. Rivers how to be appropriately neighborly. It is she who induces Anna to don her best dress for a Montacute wedding by explaining they would be suspected “of undervaluing our rustic neighbors” (66). More significantly, Mrs. Clavers proves herself (at least in comparison to Mrs. Rivers) as

something of an expert on interaction with the Napanee and other Indian tribes living around Montacute. It is worth tracing the development of that expertise. This discussion necessitates a brief departure from the novel's temperance themes but ultimately supports a larger argument about their function.

In an early scene, Mrs. Clavers is asked by a swindling developer named Mr. Mazard to give the future town a name:

I tried for an aboriginal designation, as most characteristic and unworn. I recollected a young lady speaking with enthusiastic admiration of our Indian names, and quoting *Ypsilanti* as a specimen. But I was not fortunate in my choice; for to each of the few which I could recollect, Mr. Mazard found some insuperable objection. One was too long, another signified *Slippery Eel*, another *Big Bubble* (12).

Taking the huckster's interpretation of various Indian words at face value, the as-yet-uninitiated Clavers resorts to "Montacute." Just a few pages before, Clavers lamented that the English poets Percy Shelley and Charles Lamb are unequal to "the wildflowers of Michigan," which "deserve a poet of their own" (5). Here she admits herself unequal to the task and falls back, instead, on "an English surname of a line of nobles in the position of earl of Salisbury" (204n). She is, it seems, rather self-consciously expressing the concern, common "even in the nineteenth century that Americans were still colonial, unable to express local experience and obedient to the commands of a centralized, imperial metropolis in London" (Watt, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 4). Through Clavers's choice of the name "Montacute," and her later presumption of superiority over her western neighbors, early in the novel Kirkland allows her narrative persona to enact

the role of colonizing elite, imposing “Anglocentric standards on American subjects regardless of their appropriateness or viability” (Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 11).

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Clavers is introduced to a character with far better knowledge both of Native terms and of the land itself. Mrs. Danforth, with whom the Clavers are staying, mentions casually that a neighbor’s child has been bitten by a “Massisanga.” Mrs. Danforth explains that the term means “rattlesnake,” and that “the Indians call them Massisangas and so *folks* calls ‘em so too” (16). Mrs. Danforth then leads a hesitant Mrs. Clavers on a jaunt through the woods, declaring that she is capable of killing forty rattlesnakes should the need arise. Clavers, still the western neophyte, is comforted, but as yet unable to copy Mrs. Danforth’s frontier patois. She remarks that the ensuing walk was “as enchanting as one of poor Shelley’s gemmed and leafy dreams,” once again falling back on British modes of expression despite recognizing they are unsuited for the task (16).

The Clavers who spouts English literary allusions and laments that “the social character of the meals [...] is quite destroyed, by the constant presence of strangers, whose manners, habits of thinking, and social connexions are quite different from your own” gives voice to an earlier Republican model that “chose those modes of British textuality most suited to placate and order the turbulent American sphere” (Kirkland 53; Watts 13). This Mrs. Clavers would be most at home in one of Cooper’s novels, in which the frontier is best run by “an American nobleman” overseeing inferior whites who are organized into a highly stratified system of “social subordination to the landed gentry” (Slotkin 103). However, as Gebhart and Zagarell have made clear, Kirkland is not entirely Clavers, nor is Clavers’s snobbish identity entirely stable.

Clavers's walk with Mrs. Danforth occurs in chapter five. It is not until chapter 20, approximately midway through the book, that she begins discussing the Michigan wilderness as "our soil," in which she has planted a garden composed of both indigenous and imported plants (79). This chapter, Zagarell argues, is intended as a simultaneous satirization of Clavers's snobbishness and a sign of how her "deepening capacity to appreciate her neighbor's standpoints becomes emblematic of the formation of a genuinely Montacutian local culture" (Zagarell, "'America' as Community" 155). This second point is made when Clavers is "momentarily able to [...] take note of the diversity of the local culture [and] her language transforms into a marvelous polyglot appropriate to the multiplicity of Montacutians' many talents" (Zagarell, "'America' as Community" 154). In other words, if, as Zagarell argues, "the drama of Montacute's formation takes place within [Clavers] as well as around her," then part of the story of western settlement involves the formation of a hybrid identity manifested in the "marvelous polyglot" of a narrator whose new self is forming despite her best efforts to remain stiffly aloof from her neighbors.

Kirkland's chosen narrative structure, in fact, takes on a form that Watts and others have identified as peculiar to "second world" or "settler" postcolonial texts. These texts, as I discuss in the introduction, are products of settler communities, such as the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, which are "the site of a very particular dual inscription; a place that is colonized at the same time as it is colonizing" (Lawson qtd. in Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 16). Second world texts, in their struggle to determine how the settler nation will become "something other than a mere extension of the metropolitan center [...] very deliberately live double lives, wherein secondary

narratives about the act of writing itself coexist with otherwise recognizable primary narratives telling a story about something else” (Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 18). From the first page, Clavers insists that she is *not* composing a Cooperian adventure. She has, as I noted above, “never seen a cougar — nor been bitten by a rattlesnake” (3). In “a secondary narrative about the act of writing itself” that runs throughout the text, she reminds the reader, by way of apology for her feminine predilections, that they are not reading Cooper or Irving or Hoffman (Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 18). In one typical example, she explains:

I know this rambling gossiping style, this going back to take up dropped stitches is not the orthodox way of telling one’s story; and If I thought I could do any better, I would certainly go back and begin at the very beginning; but I feel conscious that the truly feminine sin of talking ‘about it and about it,’ the unconquerable partiality for wandering wordiness would cleave to me still; so I proceed in despair of improvement. (82)

Kirkland, then, alerts the reader to her intentions immediately and reminds them of them continually throughout the text. Clavers, the narrator whose mode of expression at first seems to have been colonized by British textuality, hints here at how the narrative later destabilizes the class structure of the frontier created by Eastern white men intent on reiterating there “industrial-era class-based distinctions” (Watt, *Remote Country* 96). This destabilization is eventually accomplished on two levels — first by the refusal to pick up the “dropped stitches” in her unconventional narrative quilt and second by the “polyglot” identity Clavers eventually forms.

An additional part of that identity is also revealed in chapter twenty. It is a section of this chapter that both Merish and Keetley, in their insistence on the “erasure” of Indians from the text, ignore entirely, and that Zagarell omits in her focus on Clavers’s momentary adoption of frontier vernacular.¹⁷ In this section, Clavers explains the intricacies of trading with Indians:

The Indians bring in immense quantities [of whortle-berry] slung in panniers or mococks of bark on the sides of their wild-looking ponies; a squaw, with any quantity of papposes, usually riding *a l’Espangnole* on the ridge between them. ‘Schwap? Napannee?’ is the question of the queen of the forest; which means, ‘will you exchange, or *swap*, for flour.’ and you take the whortleberries in whatever you choose, returning the same measured quantity of flour (81).

Clavers goes on to explain how trading for venison, strawberries, and ponies is conducted via a complex system of hand signals. Beside the fact that Indians seem to be welcome and regular visitors to Montacute, this passage reveals that Clavers communicates frequently and effectively with them. Her interactions in this semi-public domestic economy further illustrate the blurring of racial and gender boundaries on the frontier. As we saw with the French trader’s wife, admirable domesticity is not necessarily the exclusive domain of white women and women’s work is not entirely bounded by the home and yard. Finally, while the chapter begins with a critique of Michigan settlers’ failure to appreciate Clavers’s flower garden, it evolves, as Zagarell has argued, into an ode to the fecundity of the Michigan forest and the multiplicity of roles its settlers are able to play. The Indians’ whortle-berry is introduced as yet another example of frontier

bounty: “A fruit sometimes despised elsewhere, is here among the highly-prized treasures of the summer,” the berry is “a different affair from the little half-starved thing that bears the name elsewhere. It is of a deep rich blue [...] and of a delicious sweetness” (81). The whortle-berry, thus becomes a small but important part of truly appreciating Michigan frontier life, and obtaining it involves a necessary, ordinary interaction with the Indians who make up some reasonably significant portion of the local economy with which the evolving Clavers seems entirely comfortable.

Two chapters later, Mrs. Clavers’s comfort is juxtaposed with the radically different reaction of Mrs. Rivers. The two women are on a ride to the neighboring town of Tinkerville when they encounter an Indian. As might be expected given the conclusion to chapter 20, Mrs. Clavers is unfazed. Mrs. Rivers, on the other hand, freezes in terror. Mrs. Clavers comments, “It had never occurred to me that Indians would naturally be objects of terror to a young lady who had scarcely ever seen one; and I knew we should probably meet dozens of them in the course of our ride” (85). It is difficult not to hear in her comment an echo of Mrs. Danforth’s earlier assurance to Mrs. Clavers that she’d “as lief meet forty [rattlesnakes] as not,” and to see Mrs. Clavers stepping into her role of wise frontier guide. When Mrs. Rivers “turn[s] so ashy pale that [Clavers] feared she might fall from her horse,” it is equally difficult not to see shades of Cooperian heroines who behaved similarly. There is Elizabeth Temple, whose “cheeks were blanched to the whiteness of marble” as she was paralyzed by the sight of a panther (Cooper, *The Pioneers* 128). There is also the perpetually trembling Alice Munro in *The Last of the Mohicans* who, when bound to a tree by the Huron warrior, Magua, finds that the “withes which bound her to a pine, performed that office [...] which her limbs refused, and alone

kept her fragile form from sinking” (107). While managing to not quite fall over, she looks to her hero, Duncan Heyward, “with infantile dependency” (107). Of course in Cooper, these events are played for high drama. The white woman is the symbolic antithesis of the wilderness. By protecting her in her infantile dependency, the white man is protecting civilization itself. In Kirkland’s text, however, Mrs. Rivers’ response is merely ridiculous, indicative of her inability to adjust to frontier reality. Beyond its comedy, the scene also adds another unsettling corrective to the traditional western narrative. Successful white female settlers do not evade cougars or kill rattlesnakes. They also do not become Indians’ trembling captives. They trade with them for whortleberries.

Thus when Mrs. Clavers and Mrs. Rivers stand on the hillside in their white dresses to stop the drunken white mob and its “Indian yells,” they do represent white womanhood in its opposition to savagery, but in very different forms. Anna Rivers, paralyzed by the presence of an entirely harmless Indian, is ironically blind to the savagery of her own dissipated husband, who, after egging on the rioters, is neither embarrassed nor repentant, but instead chastises his wife “rather sharply” for putting an end to his “lark” (119). Mrs. Rivers’ passive acceptance of the fruits of Harley’s greed follows closely on the heels of this incident. Thus Mrs. Rivers, who fits the mold of a white woman in Cooper’s adventures is, as a result, entirely unfit for the role of conquering wife in a western temperance tale. In her and Harley’s story, Kirkland suggests that the greatest threat to western community and to the nation itself are neither vanishing Indians nor even lower class drunkards who will vanish along with them, but

the degraded white men, who, protected by their class, destroy the frontier and carry that destruction back with them to the east.

Kirkland's text, then, reveals a number of things about the intersections of temperance, gender, and western territorial expansion in the early nineteenth century. Her deft use of temperance tropes common at the time of her writing and throughout the antebellum period suggests that *A New Home* was both influenced by and an influence of more traditional temperance literature. By including a number of western degradation tales in the midst of her sketches, she connects alcoholism to class in order to "vanish" the drunkard from the frontier and suggests the importance of white, female influence in restraining the region's wildness. She pillories the naiveté and fundamental viciousness of the Eastern, upper-class white man playing adventurer in the West and uses her husband's contrasting behavior to praise the temperate, family-focused masculinity of the western redemption tale's hero. She further suggests that his version of degradation threatens not just the frontier but also the nation itself. Finally, she proposes that the woman equipped to settle the frontier is certainly white and middle class, but also capable of adjusting to a hybrid frontier identity, which not only absorbs the habits of the white settlers, but also recognizes in Indian women temperate allies and valuable trading partners.

Thus she expresses a consciousness that is certainly "complicit in colonialism's territorial appropriation of land, and voice, and agency" (Slemon qtd. in Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 17). But it is also a voice that demands "that readers initiate and engage the perpetual 'ongoing dialectic' between the colonized and colonizing sides of their collective historical experience" (Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 19). Since

alcoholism in the early nineteenth century U.S. imagination represented simultaneously the force that removed indigenous people from the West to make room for colonizing Anglo Saxons; the possibility that that very Anglo-Saxon culture was fundamentally corrupt, destroying the Eden of the new world; and the danger that the wilderness would “render the white man savage,” it is not surprising that Kirkland drew on the language of temperance to discuss how identities were formed in the “flowing plurality in which colonialism and anti colonialism are just two of many coexisting presences in an unfixed and unfixable postcolonial blend” (Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* 17).

Given the extreme popularity of the temperance movement and the overriding national drive to seize western territory, it is not surprising that the two discourses would intersect. As I have shown in this chapter, white women used cultural images produced by each discourse — that of themselves as the symbolic representation of white civilization and that of the white, male alcoholic as racially degraded savage — to posit a more significant place for themselves in the history of the founding of the U.S. empire. What I have not discussed up to this point is that all of this was occurring in the years leading up to the Civil War, when disorder within the nation erupted into violence in those barely settled western border states of Missouri and Kansas. In that context the image alcoholic white man as foreign threat became, as I will discuss in the next chapter, more potent, dangerous, and difficult to contain.

CHAPTER FOUR
BORDER RUFFIANS

“The warrior lit the pile and bound his captive there.

Not unavenged the foeman from the wood

Beheld the deed, and when the midnight shade

Was stillest, gorged battle-axe with blood.”

--William Cullen Bryant, “The Western World”

“Am wearing the Bloomer dresses now; find they are well suited to a wild life like mine. Can bound over the prairies like an antelope.”

-- Miriam Davis Colt, *Went to Kansas*

In 1815, thirteen-year-old Lydia Maria Child was living in Norridgewock, Maine, with her sister and brother-in-law. That summer, a severe thunderstorm brought down a very large, very old tree. In its tangled roots the curious residents of Norridgewock found a church bell, which, as it turned out, had tolled over a Jesuit priest’s congregation of Abenaki Indians more than seventy years before (Karcher, *First Woman* 107). The tribe’s story captured Child’s imagination, and in 1828 she published “The Church in the Wilderness,” dramatizing their 1724 massacre by New England militiamen. In Child’s rendering, the Puritans ambush the Abenakis during mass: “Armed men rushed in amid their peaceful worship. The clashing of swords, the groans of the dying, and the yells of the frantic, mingled in one horrid chaos of clamor. Not one escaped; not one” (249). It is a tale about the merciless brutality of white colonists. Since the massacre is to some

degree caused by the priest's rejection of his two mixed-race adoptive children, it is also about the U.S.'s failure to establish a "society enriched by racial and cultural intermingling and freed from the compulsion to stifle human nature" (Karcher, *First Woman* 114).

Child chose as the story's epigraph lines from William Cullen Bryant's poem, "The Western World," quoted above. It is the same poem Walt Whitman would use later, in 1842, to introduce the "The Tale of Wind-Foot" in *Franklin Evans*. Taken by itself, "The Western World" clearly argues that Indian vanishing is due to Indian brutality: early North American tribes slaughtered each other to make room for whites under whose government "towns shoot up, and fertile realms are tilled" (Bryant 53). However, given Whitman and Child's uses of the poem, it seems that for them, its violent verses hinted at the genocidal and suicidal urges of white colonists as well. Wind-Foot's story, as I outlined in chapter two, presented U.S. whites with two possibilities: They could descend, through alcoholism, into the same violence that destroyed the Indians. Or they could, by absorbing what Whitman considered "noble" elements of Indian character, become temperate heirs to the North American continent. Traces of this same argument appear in Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* and again in Child's 1856 serialized novella, *The Kansas Emigrants*. After a long career spent advocating for women, Indians, and the enslaved, Child returned in *Emigrants* to the theme of white violence understood through the prism of colonial Indian/white relations.¹⁸ The novella details the ongoing conflict on the Kansas/Missouri border. It is by no means a piece of temperance literature. However, the conclusions it reaches about citizenship and whiteness,

Indianness and alcoholism, are, as we will see, curiously similar to Kirkland's and Whitman's.

The image of the alcoholic "white savage," which we have encountered in previous chapters, was particularly prevalent in Northern propaganda about Missourians. It allowed Child and others writing about the border conflict to explore possibilities for white women's empowerment in Kansas Territory. As I argue in chapter three, the white male drunkard's failure to settle the West gave white women the opportunity (at least on the pages of temperance fiction) to argue for their own importance in the undertaking. In the 1850s, another field of western agency opened to them in Kansas. White men's drunken violence on the border created a setting in which white women were free, as settler Miriam Davis Colt puts it above, to "bound over the prairies like an antelope" (65). And yet, as we will see, previous narratives of national expansion molded the scope and nature of this freedom.

Specifically, *The Kansas Emigrants* and a second, lesser-known novel titled *Western Border Life: Or What Fanny Hunter Saw and Heard in Kansas and Missouri* (1856), which was published anonymously but is usually attributed to Mrs. W.H. Corning, meld tropes common to the colonial Indian captivity narrative with those of the western temperance tale. This melding allows the texts to comment both on the changing role of frontier white women and the nation's uncertain future.¹⁹ I argue that both texts reflect how "the imminent threat of sectional violence [...] pushed and reshaped the boundaries of Victorian gender norms" in Kansas, and that both (albeit in very different ways) use the popular association of drunkenness with racial degeneration to make those reshaped boundaries more acceptable to a conservative eastern readership that might

otherwise have rejected them as overly radical (Oertel 58). I also examine how each text uses these same powerful cultural associations of alcoholism with otherness and temperance with a peculiarly “Anglo Saxon” trait of self-possession to respond to the crisis of U.S. empire precipitated by the conflict over slavery’s expansion. I argue that the continued insistence on the racialized nature of alcoholism provided a way for U.S. whites to discuss their anxieties about the tenuousness of national citizenship and national union while avoiding fully confronting the empiric desire that fueled national expansion. In other words, Corning’s and Child’s work show how the intersection of temperance and western territorial expansion repeatedly returns to issues of nation and empire.

THE WAR IN KANSAS AND CORNING’S AND CHILD’S RESPONSES

Before discussing the specific ways narratives about Kansas were shaped by temperance and captivity tales, it is important to explain how Kansas Territory became embroiled in conflict. Eighteen fifty-four saw the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The legislation essentially nullified the Missouri Compromise, which had outlawed slavery north of the 36°30’ parallel, except within Missouri. The Act formed two new territories, Kansas and Nebraska, and declared that their free or slave status would be determined by popular vote. In response, a number of northeastern emigrant societies were formed in hopes of flooding the territory with antislavery voters. The most famous of these was the New England Emigrant Aid Company, founded by Eli Thayer and Amos A. Lawrence. In September 1854, Aid Company settlers established the town of Lawrence, while competing pro-slavery settlements were formed at Lecompton, Leavenworth, and Atchison. Rumors that the Aid Company had raised \$500,000 and recruited 20,000 prospective emigrants spurred Missouri senator David Atchison to call

pro-slavery men to armed resistance, and in March of 1854 the first territorial elections were hijacked by a company of around 5,000 Missouri “border ruffians” who intimidated free-state voters and cast their own, illegal ballots (Andrews 504). According to historian Horace Andrews Jr., 4,903 of the 6,318 votes cast were illegitimate (504). When President Franklin Pierce indicated his intention to uphold the election results, incensed free-state settlers began arming themselves and, in 1855 and 1856, the territory descended into a low-level civil war that presaged the national internecine conflict to come. Some of the most notable events of the Missouri/Kansas war occurred in 1856. On May 19 and 20, Representative Charles Sumner of Massachusetts gave an impassioned speech excoriating the behavior of the pro-slave forces. On May 21, those forces invaded and destroyed Lawrence, and the next day Representative Preston Brooks brutally beat Sumner with the head of a cane. That event served as a catalyst of sorts for the abolitionist, John Brown, who carried out massacres of slavery supporters in Kansas Territory and later launched an attack on the federal armory in Harper’s Ferry, Virginia in 1859.

Both *Emigrants* and *Fanny Hunter* were published in that watershed year of 1856 in direct response to the crisis, but neither has received significant critical attention. Historian Kristen Tegtmeir Oertel’s *Bleeding Borders: Race, Gender, and Violence in Pre-Civil War Kansas* focuses largely on how the Kansas conflict allowed the new Republican Party to formulate a more egalitarian and ultimately more popular gender ideology than that of the Democrats. She mentions Child and Corning’s texts in passing, but her focus is narratives by actual Kansan women. Carolyn Karcher’s essay “From Pacifism to Armed Struggle: L.M. Child’s ‘The Kansas Emigrants’ and Antislavery

Ideology in the 1850s” is one of the few extended readings of either work. Karcher makes the case that *Emigrants* was a departure from the strict pacifism of the antislavery movement. She also claims the text argues for “a new woman, ready to take her place in the public arena” thus placing most of her focus on *Emigrant’s* obvious feminist elements, which I read slightly differently below (154). In *Free Hearts and Free Homes: Gender and American Culture*, historian Michael D. Pierson examines how both *Fanny Hunter* and *Emigrants* advocate anti-slavery and observes, like Oertel, that both books discuss the relatively expanded role for women encouraged by the Republicans. Finally, Brie Swenson Arnold’s 2008 doctoral dissertation, ““Competition for the Virgin Soil of Kansas’: Gendered and Sexualized Discourse about the Kansas Crisis in Northern Popular Print and Political Culture, 1854-1860,” analyzes the role of rape rhetoric in free-state propaganda, including fictional and first-person accounts by free-state women. Arnold also mentions *The Kansas Emigrants* and *Fanny Hunter* but does not deal with either in great detail.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the paucity of critical work on these texts, their temperance elements have escaped serious examination. In reading the two novels, however, it is difficult not to note the insistence with which the “border ruffians” are portrayed as drunkards whose vicious behavior is at least partly attributable to their love of whiskey. This characterization, as I discuss below, was no doubt influenced by contemporary newspaper accounts of the conflict and from the personal accounts of actual Kansas settlers.

SOURCE TEXTS: BORDER RUFFIANS AS DRUNKARDS AND DRUNKENNESS
AS A CATALYST FOR WHITE, FEMALE ACTION

One of Child's sources was almost certainly Horace Greely's *New York Tribune*, which first published her novella. Greely coined the term "border ruffian," and reports of these Missourians' perfidy dominated the paper from 1855 until 1858 (Gilmore 53). Often, accounts compared the ruffians to Indians in unflattering ways. An early reference in an untitled editorial item from the Monday, April 23, 1855 edition summarizes their violent, illegal participation in the March elections for a territorial legislature and then declares:

We hold it to be the duty of the Government to take measures to arrest the further lawless proceedings of the organized and armed band of ruffians who hover on the eastern line of Kansas. [...] The most predatory tribes of savages that ever trod the Western prairies were nevermore deserving of the prompt and effective action of the Government troops than these graceless wretches who are stalking from outrage to outrage (4).

Later, on September 5, 1857, another untitled article mocking Southerners for their willingness to ally themselves with Indian slaveholders made this comment:

No Indians, in their bloodiest days, ever surpassed the barbarities practiced for the maintenance of Slavery in the South and for its extension into Kansas. The unsought attack, the cowardly ambush, the tomahawk and the scalping knife of the Border Ruffians, prove what apt disciples they are of their red brethren and how they can better their instruction and their examples (4).

Further references to Indians are scattered through the *Tribune's* descriptions of the border conflicts in often-contradictory ways; comparisons of the ruffians to “savage” Indians are followed in other articles by condemnatory discussions of those same ruffians’ inhumane treatment of Native people. For example, an account from June 5, 1856, which first accuses the Missourians of raping free-state women then relates how one of their leaders, General Harney, tortured an enslaved woman and her husband to death and murdered Indian “women and children” under “a flag of truce” (4). The paper’s descriptions of border ruffians, then, to some degree reflected the schizophrenic language of Indian vanishing: The Missourians and their leaders were both merciless oppressors of helpless Native victims and more barbaric than the “predatory bands of savages” they replaced.

The *Tribune's* ruffians were also often drunk. They were not portrayed as alcoholics per se, but as drinking thugs who mobbed polling places and attacked innocent free-state settlements. Their weakness for whiskey is attributed at some points to their low character, at others to the machinations of pro-slavery government officials who provide them with liquor, and at others still to the assumed general intemperance of Southern men. Senator Atchison is one of the few labeled an actual alcoholic. A November 27, 1855 article titled “The Senatorial Election in Missouri” reports that a “worthy minister” and friend of Atchison had told the *Tribune's* correspondent that the senator was “killing himself with whiskey” (4).

This combination of lawlessness described in racial terms, drunkenness, and slaveholding is worth discussing further. Slave ownership and vice, including intemperance, had long been linked in antislavery rhetoric.²⁰ While it was popular to use

actual enslavement as a metaphor for alcoholism (that is, being “enslaved” to the bottle), it was also common to describe slave owners as drunkards and rapists.²¹ On the pages of the *Tribune*, various images of depravity mingled in the figure of the border ruffian. He was aligned with the “Slave Power,” and so with vicious celebrants of violence and excess like the alcoholic Atchison. He was also a slave to his passions who could be used by pro-slavery leaders for mob violence. And finally he was Indian-like, according to the older metaphor of white man turned wild by liquor and the frontier, a condition that explained his brutal tendencies.

In addition to the *Tribune*'s accounts, Child and Corning probably also drew on the popular travel narratives of a number of free-state women who migrated to Kansas during the conflict. These included Miriam Davis Colt's *Went to Kansas* (1862), Sara Lawrence Robinson's *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life* (1856), and Hannah Anderson Ropes' *Six Months in Kansas* (1856). All three texts, it appears, provide models not only for the two authors' inebriated villains but also for their unorthodox heroines. Specifically, these narratives present frontier drunkenness as a catalyst and justification for women's atypical public-sphere action.

The first example comes not from the women's texts but from the Reverend Richard Cordley who moved to Kansas after completing his studies at Andover Seminary in 1857 and served as pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Lawrence. Cordley would eventually write three books about Kansas history: *The Lawrence Massacre* (1865), *A History of Lawrence, Kansas From the First Settlement to the Close of the Rebellion* (1895), and *Pioneer Days in Kansas* (1903). In each, he comments on the growth of temperance societies in the free-state settlements. In *A History*, he links

temperance efforts specifically to Lawrence's women. In the twelfth chapter, he relates how, after the town's prohibitory liquor law was ignored by a number of "tippling shops" in 1856,

The women took the matter in hand. They first tried to buy the stock of liquor and then close up the business. When this was found impossible, they took the hatchet and poured all the liquor they could find [...] But as the town grew, wild and restless spirits came in, and several saloons were kept in full blast. At last the women undertook the work again, and in January 1857 forty of them visited every saloon in the town and persuaded their owners all to close them. In some cases they used moral suasion, in other cases they used another kind of argument.²² (169)

The women's unorthodox temperance activities are used to introduce a paean to their valor during the border conflict, including a reference to the frequently-repeated story of two women (Margaret Wood and Mrs. George Brown) who carried ammunition past Missourians' checkpoints by hiding it under their skirts, in their stockings, and in their sleeves.²³ Cordley ends the section by explaining, "The women of Lawrence were womanly. They had been tenderly reared in cultured homes, and were as modest and retiring as any that could be found. They simply had strong convictions and devoted their lives to their maintenance" (170). Cordley's argument is similar to that of countless previous temperance stories: "womanly" women are driven to acts of physical violence by the danger alcohol poses to the domestic sphere. His anecdote superimposes a familiar temperance anecdote of the northeast on the town of Lawrence and uses it to justify behavior that the women's contemporaries might have judged unseemly.

In the accounts of Ropes, Colt, and Robinson, these justifications become more specific to the frontier setting and focus on the otherness of the drunken border ruffian. In *Six Months in Kansas*, for example, Ropes relates a story about a woman who rides home alone because her husband, “being one of the soldiers, could not return with her” (164). On her journey she is accosted by a half-drunk Missourian who attempts to steal her horse. When she refuses and spurs her pony to a “fast trot,” he threatens to shoot but lacks “the steadiness of nerve to hold [his gun]” (164). Ropes writes that the woman’s “spirit was now up, she did not fear a drunken man on horseback, so she made a wide circuit, bringing herself back to where the pistol lay; it was but the work of a moment for her to jump to the ground, secure the prize, spring upon the horse, and gallop home” (164). The woman’s action is not one of evasion but aggression. She could have easily continued towards home; but a “drunken man on horseback” is no match for a determined horsewoman. He is, primarily because of his drunkenness, less of a soldier and less of a man, and it seems a matter of course that a woman with her “spirit up” would challenge him.

A similar incident occurs in *Went to Kansas*. Colt’s narrative documents the misadventures of a company of emigrants trying to form a utopian vegetarian community in Kansas Territory. It becomes apparent that the experiment is doomed fairly early in the book, and the family begins a flight eastward during which Colt’s husband and son both die of dysentery. While on the journey, the family hires a Missouri teamster named Henley to drive them. Colt relates that one evening, “Henley, under the influence of liquor, comes up to our wagon, takes out his large knife, begins to whet it on the wheel, and says, ‘I am a Border Ruffian! now, your blood or your money!’” (153). Colt’s

already weakened husband is so frightened by the interchange that he “began to have a chill” and urges his wife to “try to quiet him [Henley]” (153). After she puts Mr. Colt to bed in a nearby house, Colt returns to the scene of conflict, resolving, “If there are any battles to be fought I must put on manly bravery and fight them” (153). She spends the evening in the wagon with her children while Henley heads to a nearby plantation to drink with the slaves. Colt writes, “It is growing dark; can see his disgustful figure gliding here and there, with the negroes, among the clumps of bushes. May an Arm, stronger and higher than mine, be over and around us tonight” (154). The scene is similar to that of the confrontation on horseback described above. Once again, the woman returns to the scene of conflict rather than running away. However, in this case, her husband is not absent and in fact specifically instructs her to engage the drunkard. His feebleness and his directives are reminiscent of the western redemption tales discussed in the previous chapter in which women seem better suited than men to the challenges of the frontier. In this case, too, white drunkenness is specifically linked to racial otherness. Henley drinks with black men, and his body becomes “disgustful” and cloaked in darkness.

Of the three travel narratives, Sara Lawrence Robinson’s *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life* contains the largest collection of drunken Border Ruffian anecdotes. She describes “bands of whiskey-drinking, degraded, foul-mouthed marauders” who disrupt the initial elections in 1854 and thereafter rarely includes a description of Missourians that does not mention whiskey or drunkenness. She records also the murder of free-state settler R.P. Brown by a group of Missourians who had become “brutal by the free use of liquor” (171). After pulling the man from his house they “literally hack[ed] him in pieces

with a hatchet [and] showed themselves fiendish beyond the unenlightened savage” (171). Governor Shannon is the final recipient of Robinson’s revulsion. She describes him as a “drunken and debauched” governor who “insults women in their own dwellings with language too profane for insertion here” (258).

Taken together, the extracts from the *Tribune* and the free-state narratives point to a few tentative conclusions about how drinking and drunkenness were used in Northeastern nonfiction texts about the Kansas/Missouri conflict. First, the association between stereotyped Indian “savagery” and alcoholism was so ingrained that the Border Ruffians’ drunkenness and violence are described in racial terms. At the same time, the Missourians’ leaders were also characterized by the mid-century temperance rhetoric that linked the degenerate behavior of white slaveholders to alcoholism. Finally, as in many temperance texts, the presence of alcoholic men explained and excused women’s atypical and unfeminine behavior. Each of these observations is important to understanding the depictions of alcohol use in *The Kansas Emigrants* and *Fanny Hunter*. In these two novels, elements that appear haphazardly throughout the source texts are put to particular strategic use.

ALCOHOL, WOMEN’S RIGHTS, AND U.S. EMPIRE IN *THE KANSAS EMIGRANTS*

The Kansas Emigrants was first published serially in the *Tribune* during the final months of the presidential contest between John C. Frémont and James Buchannan. The story chronicles the rise and fall of the town of Lawrence and the fortunes of two New England couples, William and Alice Bruce and John and Kate Bradford, who move to Kansas to aid the young settlement. Over the course of the narrative, tensions between the free-state settlers and Missourians rise until William is murdered, shot in the back while

riding home alone one evening.²⁴ After the murder, Alice Bruce, whose defining characteristic is her overwhelming timidity, suffers a nervous breakdown. She never recovers and spends the rest of her life in a state of semi-conscious delusion. The hardier Kate begins drilling with a rifle to defend the town, and the novella ends with the sacking of Lawrence. Before she dies, Alice recovers enough to tell Kate she has been dreaming of a free Kansas. Kate exclaims that she “hail[s] the omen,” whereupon Alice promptly dies (363).

The text borrows heavily from a number of the free-state women’s nonfiction narratives summarized above and employs the same incendiary language used to describe Missourians in the *Tribune*. At first glance, it appears to be nothing more than an unusually well written piece of antislavery, pro-Kansas propaganda. However, the story’s scenes of drinking and drunkenness can and should be read against the multiple cultural meanings those acts had acquired by the middle of the nineteenth century, especially on the frontier. In a novel twist, Child also combines the temperance trope of the racially degraded alcoholic with elements of the violent opening scenes of popular Indian captivity narratives. This combination certainly supports Karcher’s interpretation of *Emigrants* — that it is an argument for antislavery advocates to reject pacifism for the sake of self-defense. But it also works to domesticate Kansas Territory in both a national and familial sense, making white women, rather than white men, the natural instruments of required defensive violence.

The second part of my argument about the novel deals with *Emigrant’s* depictions of alcohol and the novella’s position as a settler or second-world text. The battle over Kansas can be understood as part of a larger struggle being waged between the North and

South for control of the western hemisphere. The rise of a new and seemingly foreign Southern power intensified for free-state Kansans what postcolonial scholars identify as a key dilemma of settler communities: The desire to further colonize conquered territory while renouncing the identity of their own, earlier colonizers. Kansan pioneers were faced with the prospect of a bloody, territorial conflict with Plains Indians that left little doubt about their own colonizing aspirations. At the same time, their struggle against the more powerful Missourians allowed them to cast themselves as beleaguered colonists whose violence was only aimed at resisting the oppression of Old World powers. In *Emigrants*, temperance themes are used to express and resolve this dilemma. The trope of white men rendered Indian-like by alcohol becomes part of a larger strategy in which Southerners are portrayed as the savage natives whose suppression is a national necessity. Manifest destiny's imperative to colonize the West remains unchanged, but the objects of colonization are now degraded white men. However, at the same time that the border ruffians' rank-and-file fill the role of frontier savage, the Southern "slave power" is portrayed as an Old World regime that oppresses the white, free-state settlers. The New England emigrants to Kansas are then compared directly to Indian tribes displaced by a U.S. tyrannical government. Thus we see in Child's text a melding of the separate phenomena I described in chapters two and three. The alcoholism of Western white men confers agency on white women. Meanwhile, as in *Franklin Evans*, by bifurcating "Indian" identity, Child could claim the indigeneity of temperate whites while still justifying conquest in the terms of U.S. white superiority.

BREAKING DOWN “THE WALLS OF A WOMAN’S DESTINY”: TEMPERANCE
AND CAPTIVITY THEMES IN *THE KANSAS EMIGRANTS*

For Child, the desire to act violently against the Missourians was personal. After the destruction of Lawrence, she wrote to Charles Sumner, “My old heart swells almost to bursting . . . ; for it is the heart of a man imprisoned within the walls of a woman’s destiny” (qtd. in Karcher, “From Pacifism” 144). Nineteenth-century popular culture offered, already, two circumstances in which women could act with “the heart of a man.” The first, as we have seen in previous chapters and in the discussion of free-state Kansan women’s narratives, above, was in protecting home and family from the alcoholic. The second, which I discuss in more detail below, was defending their frontier cabin from Indian attack. In *Emigrants*, Child deploys both images in order to widen the cracks, already apparent by the mid 1850s, in the “walls of a woman’s destiny.”

Child presents the Kansan settlers as modern-day Puritan colonists. The two principal male characters, John Bradford and William Bruce are, for example, clearly modeled on the colonial leaders John Winthrop and William Bradford (Karcher, “From Pacifism” 145). It is in this context of colonial history that the specter of Indian attack is first raised. The story opens on William Bruce attempting to convince Alice to come to Kansas with him. He begins by comparing Kansas’s New England settlers to “those heroic pilgrims, who left comfortable homes in England and came to a howling wilderness to establish a principle of freedom” (303). Alice, who shows little enthusiasm for the venture, is first saddened by the prospect of leaving family and friends, then concerned about the ubiquity of Kansan “snakes and guns,” and then positively alarmed at the thought of “going in with the sounds of an Indian war whoop” (304). William’s

response is an amalgamation of common-sense assurances — “The Indians are in a very different state now [...] [T]hey are too well aware of the power of the United States government, to make any aggressions” (304) — and versions of Child’s own liberal if patronizing position on Indian civilizations: “Who can read Catlin’s account without being struck with the nobility of character often manifested by their much-injured race?” (304). He describes for her a frontier free from Indian threats. Child, it seems, is determined to separate the image of heroic Pilgrims domesticating the wilderness from the bloodthirsty conquerors obliterating native peoples that she had criticized in her previous work.²⁵

The end of Bruce’s speech, however, takes a curious turn. In a last ditch-effort to sway his reluctant fiancé he says, “You seem greatly to admire that young Puritan bride, who cheerfully left home and friends behind her and crossed the tempestuous ocean, to brave cold and hunger by her husband’s side in a wilderness where wolves and savages were howling” (304). After carefully establishing Indians as a benign “injured race,” in his final sentence he transforms them again into animalistic howling savages. The implication, contrary to what he has said thus far, is that some kind of savage danger does, in fact, wait on the frontier, and that willingness to face it is proof of an Anglo-Saxon woman’s heroism.

The idea that Puritan women could be models for their modern descendants was not unusual in the nineteenth century. As I noted chapter three, the image of the white woman defending her home against Indian invaders was common and commonly valorized. It had its roots not in nineteenth-century frontier battles, but in the literature of the colonial period, specifically female Indian captivity narratives. According to Kathryn

Derounian-Stodola, the Indian captivity narrative is, arguably, “*the* archetype of American culture or its foundation text” (xi). Sundquist concurs, claiming that the nineteenth century’s distorted views of Indian culture were due at least in part to “the longstanding popularity of captivity narratives, whether actual or fictional, which had in essence been the colonies’ first imaginative literature and which remained through the nineteenth century a widely read and influential genre” (115). The typical U.S. Indian captivity narrative involves the abduction of individual or small groups of Europeans by Indians and ends with the captive’s restoration, death, or integration into Indian culture (Derounian-Stodola xi). Because the captives in question were often women, many have identified it as “the first American literary form dominated by women’s experiences as captives, storytellers, writers, and readers” (Derounian-Stodola xi).

One particular colonial narrative, that of Hannah Dustan, resurged in popularity in the nineteenth century.²⁶ After being abducted in 1697, Dustan killed and scalped an entire Indian family before escaping and returning home. Historian Barbara Cutter argues that Dustan’s story’s reappearance in the 1800s resulted from a desire to emphasize “the ‘necessity’ of violence against Western Indians” (22). Dustan provided “a model of American identity in which violence committed by the United States was, by definition, feminine, and therefore justified, innocent, defensive violence” (Cutter 26). Cutter further notes that the Dustan story saw significant revivals at key moments in U.S. imperialist history, including Indian Removal and the U.S.-Mexico War (19-20).

We can, then, reexamine William Bruce’s opening speech as it would have been received by a nineteenth-century audience already immersed in the propagandistic use of stories of violence by and against colonial women. When he speaks admiringly of Puritan

women who had bravely confronted the “savages” of the wilderness, readers would likely have recognized not only the overt reference to the nation’s founding mythology, but also the oblique connection to captivity narratives, national expansion, and justified, feminized violence against those who opposed it. The white women who faced down enemies in the wilderness, whether seventeenth-century Pequots or nineteenth-century Mexicans, were national heroes carrying out the necessary work of manifest destiny. For Child, who had bitterly opposed the U.S.-Mexico War and whose progressive views on Indians and slavery have already been discussed, Bruce’s “howling savages” remark seems uncharacteristic. However, it soon becomes clear that the reference does not refer to Indian people. Rather, it is the first step in establishing Missourians as the neo-Puritans’ barbaric enemy. As Karcher notes, “The ‘savage’ enemies they face in their new environment are not Indians but Missouri Border Ruffians” (*First Woman* 392). As we see below, much of this enemy’s savagery is caused by their alcoholism.

Once in Kansas, Alice keeps herself “almost entirely employed with in-door occupations” (322). The bolder Kate “sallie[s] forth [...] to do the shopping and gather water” (322). She is intrigued by the “odd-looking Missouri cattle-drovers, and Indian squaws, with bags full of papooses strapped to their shoulders” (323). These women pose no threat. Instead, as in the western degradation tales outlined in chapter three, the western exploration narratives that came before them, and the anti-Missourian propaganda discussed above, the alcoholic white man rises to take the place of howling frontier “savage.” In fact, Kate’s outdoor excursions become dangerous only when conspicuously drunk, “fierce-looking Missourians” begin to populate Lawrence’s streets. Her first interaction with these men occurs on a shopping trip:

In the little shops she often found more or less of these ruffians, half tipsy, with hair unkempt and beards like cotton-cards, squirting tobacco-juice in every direction and interlarding their conversation with oaths and curses [...] On one of these occasions, a dirty, drunken fellow said to Kate, “They tell me you are an all-fired smart woman. Are you pro-slave? Or do you go in for the abolitionists?” (323)

A “cotton card” also known as a “hand carder” is a large flat brush with tightly spaced, rigid teeth. Cotton, especially before the invention of the cotton gin, was rubbed between two cards in order to clean and untangle the fibers. It is possible that Child’s simile was meant to indicate that the men’s beards bristled like the card’s teeth. However, her reference also conjures the then-common image of African American men and women using cotton cards as hair brushes. As Kathleen M. Hilliard explains in *Masters, Slaves, and Exchange: Power and Purchase in the Old South*, in the 1850s, Southern stores began stocking “‘Jim Crow Cards,’ cotton or wool cards used by bondpeople to style their hair” (92). Diane Simon further points out that the term was “popularized for white audiences first in blackface minstrel shows of the 1850s and 1860s” (49). The reference, then, however subtly, is racialized, following the pattern we have seen thus far of alcoholism’s association with a loss of whiteness.

After “concealing her disgust” at the man’s appearance and behavior, Kate replies that she is against slavery. The Missourian curses her and spits “a quantity of tobacco juice in her face” (324). When Kate returns home from her altercation in the store, her mother asks a younger sister to call the men from the fields. Kate replies, “No mother! No! [...] Never send *her* out! *Never!*” (317). Kate’s exclamation is the first hint that the

ruffians pose a sexual threat to free-state women. That threat intensifies over the course of the text, culminating, as I explain below, in an actual rape. At this juncture, though, it is important simply to note that one of the first images of danger in *Emigrants* is that of white women alone in a frontier cabin, fearing attack and possible sexual violation at the hands of roaming bands of enemies who have twice been characterized in terms of racial difference.

This is the precise threat posed to women in captivity narratives before the violent attack that typically begins their stories. As Kathryn Derounian-Stodola explains, the “narrative pattern — but not necessarily historical reality” of the typical women’s Indian captivity narrative “records a husband, father, or teenage sons either absent or killed early on” (xxi). The women’s resulting vulnerability creates “anxiety regarding sexual violation” that is “a common feature of captivity narratives” (Scheckel 82). In *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst*, Christopher Castiglia concurs and ascribes a particular propagandistic purpose to the persistent shadow of sexual violence that hung over captivity stories. He writes, “Dominant narratives of manifest destiny, from the colonial era through the present have relied for dramatic tension on the threatened sexualization of white women by men of color who possess uncontrollable, violent, and animalistic lusts” (123). When we consider that Alice and Kate have been carefully modeled on the Puritan heroine who “brave[d] cold and hunger by her husband’s side in a wilderness where wolves and savages were howling” it is difficult not to see in Kate’s fear for her sister an echo of that dread that had been handed down to nineteenth century readers in countless retellings of popular captivity stories (Child, *The Kansas Emigrants* 304).

In making this argument, though, it is important to note that Child was not unique in deploying rape imagery to demonize and racialize the Missourians. The presence of such imagery in *Emigrants*, then, does not automatically suggest a connection between Child's text and the captivity genre. As Arnold has argued at length, depictions of rape were common in free-state accounts of the Kansas conflict and took three basic forms: The depiction of Kansas itself as a virgin territory defiled by Missourians, actual rape of free-state women by Missouri men, and the plunder of women's private belongings, sometimes coupled with home invasion.²⁷ These latter two images, she points out, became much more prevalent in the months leading up to the 1856 election (when *Emigrants* was published) and were intended to incite northern white men to violence. It is possible Child was merely using tropes common to free-state propaganda, just as she based a number of incidents in *Emigrants* on other accounts of the conflict. However, Child's rape scenes, both symbolic and literal, do differ from contemporaneous propaganda in one important respect: they exploit the parallel established early in the text between Kansan pilgrims and colonial ones and the cultural association of drunkenness with Indianness. The result is to render the Missourians foreign and specifically "Indian" invaders of the domestic sphere. The ruffians are simultaneously white drunkards and marauding "savages", presenting Kate with enemies whom it was acceptable to face with "the heart of a man." Thus where most free-state propagandists focused on encouraging white male violence, Child's account works to develop a rationale for white women's martial activity.

Before Kate takes up arms, the threat of rape returns in three successive scenes of increasingly severe violence in which the ruffian perpetrators are described both in terms

of drunkenness and negative Indian stereotypes. The first occurs shortly after Kate's initial encounter with the tobacco-spitting Missourians. William Bruce's brothers, who accompanied him West, go to Kansas City to pick up a shipment of goods from their Massachusetts relatives. On the trip back, they encounter "fifty or sixty Missourian Ruffians carousing round a rum-shop built of logs" (336). The rabble stops the wagon and demands its contents. Since it was "vain to remonstrate and useless to fight against such desperate odds," the Bruce men comply (336). The Missourians "tore open the boxes and pulled out home treasures," even insisting on confiscating personal correspondence (336) When the free-staters are sent back, empty-handed, to Alice, she reflects that "the quilts so neatly made by [her mother's] dear hands, would be spread on muddy floors for drunken revels" (337).

References to the ruffians' drunkenness begin and end the scene, heavily implying that liquor is responsible for their behavior. The images framed by the twin reminders of the men's inebriation are of sexually tinged violation. Personal and intimate keepsakes are ripped from their containers and exposed to a jeering crowd while the Bruce men look helplessly on. The sexual undertones of the attack are made even clearer when Alice, who was not physically present, is inserted into the scene in the last sentence, imagining the fate of her mother's quilts. In that sentence also, quilts, the product of meticulous handiwork and patient self-control, are thrown violently down inside a structure whose owners have not even the discipline to build a floor. This invites comparison with Child's earlier description of Lawrence's "several neat houses and many cabins, the appearance of which indicated industrious inmates who would rapidly increase their comforts and enlarge their borders" (316). Drunkenness, extreme irresponsibility, and sexual predation

combine in the ruffians to create a version of western settler fundamentally different from the free-state men.

Finally, it is worth noting that concern about wagon-train hijackings was ubiquitous among nineteenth-century western emigrants. The structure of the scene seems borrowed not only from free-state propaganda about raiding Missourians but also from the stories western settlers told each other about the danger awaiting them on the trail. According to Historian Glenda Riley, though the number of actual attacks by Indians was very low, because of the numerous media images of “hostile, vicious, and evil” native peoples, “when they finally reached the trail, [emigrants’] nerves were taut with fearful anticipation; they were ready for the worst of fates at the hand of American Indians” (83). The Missourians’ difference from the free-state men is, then, particularized. The drunken white mob is not just a frontier danger; it is the incarnation of the wilderness’s “howling savage,” which was a particular threat to white women’s virtue.

The second example of violence with a sexual undertone further intensifies the connection between inebriated Missourians and hostile Indians, specifically those of colonial legend. Not long after the incident with the Bruce brothers, Kate and John Bradford’s cabin is invaded by another band of ruffians. As I mentioned above, descriptions of home invasions often served as metaphors for rape in free-state propaganda. Here, again, we see Child deploying that image in connection with allusions to popular stories of Indian violence. The scene begins with a description of a night on the prairie that reprises language from Bruce’s speech earlier in the text. Recall that when trying to convince Alice to go to Kansas, Bruce praised Puritan women for their

willingness to brave a “wilderness where wolves and savages were howling” (304). To set the stage for the attack on the Bradford’s home, Child writes, “The distant whoop of Indians on the prairie and the howling of hungry wolves disturbed them not. They were in dread of a more infernal sound than these; the midnight yell of the Border Ruffian” (339). In these two brief sentences, she reminds her readers that the raiding Indians of their collective imagination are not a danger on this frontier. At the same time, she draws on that powerful cultural image of Indian attack to heighten the scene’s tension, further vilify the Missourians, and give her white female characters a culturally-acceptable opportunity for heroism.

According to historian Sandra L. Myres, even more than the distressed wagon train, “the picture of the frightened woman, huddled with her helpless children in the corner of the cabin while bloodthirsty savages lurk just outside the door was already deeply ingrained in American literature by the early nineteenth century. Schoolbooks and magazines printed lurid pictures of the embattled settler woman,” making it a scenario “familiar to every American schoolchild” (59). Sundquist, also, has noted that “the rise of the novel and the accelerating process of western expansion and Indian Removal were coincident in America, and episodes of captivity played an important part in novels treating frontier life as a symbolic moment in the drama of American historical development” (115). He also lists a number of historical and ethnographic texts from the early to mid-nineteenth century that repeated the violent elements of fictional and fictionalized captivity accounts, thus “corroborat[ing] them within an apparently scientific context” (115).²⁸ A number of these volumes, including John Frost’s *Heroic Women of the West* (1854) and Samuel Drake’s *Indian Captivities* (1839), included

graphic descriptions of the frontier woman who, “when danger threatens the household, when the lurking savage is seen near the dwelling, or the war-whoop is heard in the surrounding woods [...] becomes a heroine, and is ready to peril life, without a moment’s hesitation in the approaching conflict” (Frost iii). As I make clear below, the attack that follows Child’s ominous description of evening on the prairie makes deft use of these popular tropes.

The actual attack on the Bradford cabin comes at dawn, as did a similar raid on the home of Mary Rowlandson, a captivity heroine far more famous than even the celebrated Dustan. *A Narrative of the Captivity and Removes of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) was immensely popular on both sides of the Atlantic throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence* 95-96). Rowlandson maintained her Christian faith despite watching her family murdered and her home burned, seeing her injured child die on the subsequent forced march, and living briefly as a slave before being returned to her Puritan community. Her piety and submission to what she perceived as God’s testing earned her lasting admiration, and by the nineteenth century, her narrative had achieved canonical status.²⁹ As we will see, there are numerous similarities between the opening scene of Rowlandson’s text (and similar scenes from other captivity narratives) and the Bradford invasion, offering further evidence that in modeling her characters on Puritan heroes, Child also drew on the best-known literature of the colonial period.

The first connection between Rowlandson and Child’s texts is the invaders’ language. The ruffians who descend on the Bradford’s cabin are both incomprehensible and profane: “Never, out of the infernal pit was heard such a volley of blasphemy and

obscurity as poured out of their foul mouths” (Child 339). Later, they “curse” at Kate’s mother “and spit at her, and, knocking the nightcap from her head, make a mockery of her gray hairs” (339). Throughout, they do not speak a single intelligible sentence. When they leave, John describes them as “a wolfish pack” of “human blood-hounds” (344). Similarly, Rowlandson describes not words, but “the roaring, and singing, and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell” and “a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting, and insulting” (14). In both descriptions, the mixture of animalistic and demonizing adjectives is accompanied by the failure of coherent speech. In both also, the sounds the invaders do make are ascribed to demonic influence (they are “infernal,” hellish). The similarities between the two texts become more interesting when we consider that typical colonial captivity narratives “made its heroines or heroes representative of a larger community whose resolve was being tested by the satanic forces of the wilderness” (Sundquist 115). Thus while Child does not, in this scene, directly refer to the Missourians in Indian terms, she does link them to those same “satanic forces of the wilderness” which, in captivity stories, were embodied by Indian enemies.

If the demonic nature of Indian invaders was important to colonial captivity narratives, the severing of family ties remained a key element throughout the life of the genre. Derounian-Stodola notes that captivity “inevitably sundered families” and that the typical narrative included “a pregnant or recently delivered woman; a baby who died in the initial attack of soon thereafter; and surviving children who were separated from the rest of the family, teenage girls being seen as particularly vulnerable” (xxi). In this element, too, *Emigrants* offers important similarities. Flora, the teenaged sister Kate was

so anxious to protect earlier, has been “hidden in the loft, in case of such an emergency,” highlighting again concern about her sexual vulnerability (340). And throughout the scene, Kate’s young, very ill son, Johnny, cries out inconsolably that he is afraid, referencing an extremely common captivity trope in which a mother tries to quiet a sick or terrified child.³⁰ Thus when Child sets the scene for the Ruffians’ invasion by describing how little the “distant whoop of Indians” disturbed the Bradfords, she not only pays Indians the backhanded compliment of being less terrible than a drunken horde, she also mentally prepares her readers for what follows: a scene that will play out along the already-familiar lines of Indian invasion and justified, female, defensive violence.

When the ruffians arrive on the doorstep, Kate is thus well positioned to “become a heroine [...] ready to peril life, without a moment’s hesitation in the approaching conflict” (Frost xiii). Her moment comes in the middle of the melee when she and her mother throw themselves over John and exclaim that the men will have to kill them first. The ruffians strike Kate “with their fists, they tr[y] to pull her away” but she holds on “with a convulsive power that was too strong for them” (340). Finally, Tom Thorpe, the single honorable (and therefore doomed) Missourian of the story, arrives and orders them to “let the women alone!” (340). The Missourians, some ashamed and some frightened, disperse, and Kate is finally able to comfort Johnny. She “took the poor attenuated child in her arms. Those arms, so strong a few moments ago; and tears were dropping from the eyes that lately glared so sternly on her husband’s enemies” (341). When John exclaims, “How manfully you stood by me!” she rejoins, “How womanfully you mean” (343-344). Her correction — “how womanfully” — and her transformation back into a weeping mother when the danger abates are important in reminding the reader that the “convulsive

power” that makes Kate (rather unbelievably) stronger than a gang of armed men has done nothing to detract from her femininity. She is not a modern, feminist radical but another U.S. heroine in the mold of those Puritan women who braved all to stand by their husbands.

As John continues his praise, he introduces to the scene the contrast between temperate Free Staters and intemperate ruffians. He says, “I assure you, Kate, it required more courage to refrain from seizing my rifle, than it would have to discharge its contents among those rascals. Though we stand pledged to avoid bloodshed, I verily believe I should have broken my pledge, if your voice had not pleaded all the time, ‘don’t, John, don’t!’” (344). While the logic of the captivity narrative makes Kate’s actions both womanly and heroic, John’s willing acceptance of his wife’s protection could be construed as impotence. His assertion that he was, in fact, close to murdering the men makes him instead a model of temperate self-control. The detail also allows Kate to fill an additional role. She is not just the temporarily violent victim of Indian attack. She is also the temperate wife whose influence keeps her husband from succumbing to temptation.

The text’s link between temperate abstention from alcohol and temperate abstention from violence is stronger than it might initially appear. Many scholars have pointed out that intemperance was feared in part because of its association with the loss of self-control. Murphy, for example, argues, “On one level, the fictional drunkard represents the man who fails to control his own body and therefore fails to achieve the promises that capitalism offers equally to all men” (“Enslaved Bodies” 96). This was true both in the association of drunkenness with lost whiteness and in the later image of the

drunken slave owner whose lust for power depraved him. The Missouri drunkards of *Emigrants* likewise lack self-command, and as a result, cannot access frontier prosperity. Their alcoholism and intemperate violence turn them into thieves living in floorless hovels, unable to “increase their comforts and enlarge the boundaries of their borders” as the free-staters do (316). While there are no scenes in *Emigrants* of free-staters righteously refusing a proffered glass, one of their key distinguishing features is their “moderation,” exemplified by their refusal to fight except when absolutely necessary for self-defense. John’s behavior, above, is one example; another occurs earlier when the Bruce brothers are waylaid by ruffians. Their inability to protect their women’s belongings and, by extension, the women themselves, is described not in terms of impotence but wisdom and moderation, illustrated by their calm responses to the out-of-control ruffians. The Missourians accost them “with a frightful yell” and proceed “shout” or “bawl” the remainder of their comments (337). The Bruce men assess situation’s risks, respond calmly to each provocation, and later announce they will seek restitution from the authorities. Thus, in a move I discuss in much more detail below, the white, free-state men’s apparent defeat is rendered as a triumph of moderation (that is, temperate behavior) in the face of drunken excess.

In each of the scenes of Missourian aggression against women described above, a number of powerful cultural images are used. There is the male alcoholism that, as we have seen, carried with it the threat of racial degradation and was often cited to sanction women’s action in the public sphere. There is also the threat of rape that was a staple both of captivity narratives and free-state propaganda. And there is, finally, the attack on a family at home. It is this last detail, especially, that allows Child to argue for the

appropriateness of Kate's decision to move from protecting her husband and children within her own cabin to joining the full-scale military defense of Lawrence. Each one of the Missourian attacks described in the first two-thirds of the story is perpetrated against families and homes, not armies and forts. The Missourians' violence is a violation of the domestic sphere, which, Child argues through her reliance on popular tropes, white women are suited (and perhaps morally obligated) to defend by whatever means necessary. By the end of the novella, that threatened domestic sphere has been widened to encompass the entirety of the Kansas Territory, which, in turn, is transformed into a terrain on which the most womanly of acts is a military drill.

This transformation begins with the third example of sexual violence, an actual rape. After a hard winter, the emboldened Missourians multiply their raids into Kansas. On one expedition, "they seized a woman, whom they suspected of concealing ammunition, and dragged her into the woods, where she was subjected to their brutal outrages" (355). Following the attack, Kate immediately likens the rapists' behavior to that of Indians: "I called them *savages* [...] when they scalped some of their victims; but I did injustice to the savages; for, in their worst cruelties, *they* always respected the modesty of women" (355).³¹ As she has done multiple times before, Child employs language that simultaneously distances current Plains Indians from stereotyped "savage" behavior and equates them with it. "Scalping" characterizes the Missourians as "savage" and "Indian"; rape makes them even worse than that. Child thus exonerates Indians of the most terrible of offenses and renders the Missourians an even more foreign threat.

Child then emphasizes the extent to which the transformation of individual Missourians into alien others by alcohol has been mirrored on a national level. As Kate

waits in vain for help from her beloved Massachusetts, she reflects that “she *could* not believe that the government of her country was in league with such abominations and outrages” (356). But this is exactly what has happened. Once the Missourians have been transmuted into a foreign, even demonic, enemy of the state, the U.S. government’s decision to support them becomes not the unpopular but necessarily accepted decision of a representative body but a sign that the invasion of Kate’s home by “infernal” “hell-hounds” augured the corruption of the national domestic sphere by “abominations.” In response, Kate arms herself. After hearing reports of the rape, she practices “with rifle and pistol and became expert in using them” (355). She even finds a number of military-minded women “who agreed to act under her command if the emergencies of the time required it” (355). We have already seen Kate act as the beleaguered defender of the hearth multiple times. By presenting the Kansas territory as a domestic space imperiled by degraded elements within it, the woman’s rape, despite occurring outside her home, becomes yet another attack on the home and thus a threat white women are uniquely equipped to face.

This message becomes even clearer in Child’s description of the destruction of Lawrence by a “furious, tipsy crew” of ruffians (358). In this scene, all the elements previously established converge: The Border Ruffians are drunk, the nation itself has become contaminated, and the worst fears of captivity narrative are realized. As they prepare their assault, the Missourians, “in their drunken frankness [...] say they will shoot the men, violate the women, kill the children and burn the houses” (347), thus laying out the typical pattern of the captivity narrative I noted above, replete with “absent or killed” husbands, murdered infants and sexually vulnerable women (Deorunian-

Stodola xxi). Lawrence's "Free State hotel is demolished; General Robinson's house, with its valuable library, burned to the ground; and many of the cabins set on fire" (359). The emotional focus of the scene, though, is not military defeat but familial destruction. After relating the town's losses, Child quickly shifts to the "mothers [...] weeping, as they fled across the prairies, and the poor bewildered little ones [...] screaming and crying in every direction" (359). The language is similar to Rowlandson's, which describes "the house on fire over our heads, and the bloody Heathen ready to knock us on the Head if we stirred out. Now might we hear Mothers and Children crying out for themselves, and for one another, *Lord, what shall we do!*" (13).

In a move that resembles a scene from another captivity account *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan* (1795) Kate hurriedly passes her son to his uncle, and then, "pistol in hand," runs "back to aid some of her sickly neighbors, who were breaking down with the weight of their clinging children" (360). Kinnan's story describes running away from the invaders and turning back for similar reasons: "I scarcely touched the ground as I coursed over the plain when the cry of my child supplicating for help arrested my ear. The yearnings of maternal affection extinguished my prudence [...] I flew to assist her" (110). As Kate turns finally to leave, "she stood within the sight of her blazing home and her hand was on her pistol. The temptation was strong. But she remembered the oft-repeated words of General Robinson: "Act only on the defensive. Make no aggressions," so she turns to repudiate the Missourians verbally: "You *think* you have silenced the Herald of Freedom," she says, "but you are mistaken. That trumpet will sound across the prairies yet" (361). In response, one of the Missourians exclaims, "What a hell of a woman!" [...] and they laughed aloud in their drunken mirth, while the lurid

flame of blazing homes lighted her way across the prairie” (361). The “lurid flame” serves a double purpose. It casts a devilish light on the inebriated, cursing Missourians making them all the more alien, and, with their laughter, all the more evil. Because the light that guides Kate’s steps comes from the “blazing homes” of her and the other settlers, it also reemphasizes the defensive and thus justified nature of her cause. Once again, the chaos of an Indian-like raid invites the protective heroism of a white woman. This time, though, the total absence of male protectors allows Kate to step into the male role of temperate exemplar, tempted by violence against the drunken horde, but righteously abstaining. The end result of the combination of temperance and captivity tropes is what nineteenth-century readers would have read as a powerful case for white women’s action.

However, this apology for white, female assertiveness, wrapped in an argument for free-soiler violence, is predicated on an argument about whiteness and white civilization’s superiority. While genuinely liberal impulses probably promoted the depiction of the Missourians as “worse than” the “savage” Indians, Child’s use of racial markers and willingness to draw on centuries-old stories of Indian/white violence means that western settlement is still described in terms of a superior civilization that must conquer and remove racial others who are, by definition, incapable of grasping the promise of capitalist democracy. Even as Child’s text makes a fairly radical case for white women’s entirely un-domestic military involvement, her argument is predicated upon the belief that the frontier white woman was the ultimate representation of home. Thus *The Kansas Emigrants* can be read as an example of the workings of Kaplan’s manifest domesticity, in which the domestic is “not a retreat from the masculine sphere of

empire building,” but a reenactment and re-concealment of “the violent appropriation of foreign lands” (*The Anarchy of Empire* 50). The “foreignness” of Southerners was, as I explain below, also key in Child’s understanding of the Kansas conflict.

THE *KANSAS EMIGRANTS* AS A SETTLER TEXT

The events in Kansas were, obviously, a sign of deep internal strife. But they also raised the specter of a dissevered union and of two young empires, rather than one, vying for control of the western hemisphere. Free-state advocates were deeply suspicious of the territorial aspirations of Southerners for whom the maintenance of a slave empire was a key concern. These pro-slavery forces had set their sights not just on the North American West but on the southern half of the hemisphere as well. The earlier massive acquisition of Mexican land had done nothing to quell, and had in fact increased, the popularity of filibustering expeditions, in which U.S. citizens attempted unauthorized military takeovers of Cuba, Mexico, and various Central American countries, including Nicaragua.

In the mid-1850s, while free-soil and proslavery forces were skirmishing in Kansas and Missouri, the most famous filibusterer of them all, William Walker, was leading an army into Nicaragua, ostensibly to aid the Liberal Nicaraguan forces in their war against the conservative, aristocratic faction. If successful, Walker had been promised the right to establish a U.S. colony in the country. Though he did manage briefly to gain control, things did not go as planned. Walker, who had previously espoused free-soil principles, soon set himself up as a military dictator, proposed reducing the native population to a state of peonage, and most shocking of all, suggested reinstating the African slave trade, “which had been execrated and abolished by the

civilized world for decades” (Slotkin, *Fatal Environment* 247). Walker was eventually deposed in 1857, but not before leveling the city of Granada in an act that “was universally condemned as barbaric” (Slotkin, *Fatal Environment* 250). During the tumultuous years of 1855 and 1856, however, the pro-southern *New York Herald*, a competitor of the *Tribune*, represented Walker’s crusade as a triumphant example of manifest destiny at work and contrasted the image of a unified, conquering U.S. with the factionalism at work in Kansas. In *The Herald*, Slotkin notes, “Kansas stories and Nicaragua stories were often juxtaposed, the contrast always tending to show that the tropical frontier was the legitimate extension of the traditional safety valve of the West” (*Fatal Environment* 253). Antislavery advocates, not surprisingly, viewed these forays with dismay. Child, for one, was skeptical of John C. Frémont, the very candidate *The Kansas Emigrants* was written to endorse, because he had engaged in a filibustering expedition to Mexican-controlled California that “had done much to stir up that unjust war” (Child, qtd. in Karcher, *First Woman* 398). Later, in 1864, when Frémont, considered running again, this time against Lincoln, Child was more direct, writing of the 1846 filibuster, “I have no doubt he did it in obedience to secret instructions from the Slave Power” (qtd. in Karcher, *First Woman* 476).

It seems clear, then, that Child viewed the Missourians not just as a domestic danger, but also as part of a potential foreign power conspiring against the U.S. However, it is also a matter of historical record that settling the Kansas territory was part of the U.S.’s policy of Indian removal and an act of culturally chauvinistic empire building, regardless of whether the individual white settlers were free-staters or advocates of slavery. As Slotkin notes, “The basic impulse behind the emigration to Kansas was in fact

not different from that which had led to settlement of Kentucky or Iowa. The land hunger of American farmers, [and] the hope for an improved condition [...] were among the basic forces at work (*Fatal Environment* 262-3). Moreover, “as part of the arrangement that opened Kansas, measures were taken to dispossess Indian tribes who had reservations in the area — measures that might have constituted a national scandal had they not been overwhelmed by ‘Bleeding Kansas’” (263-4). Thus northeastern settlers marched into Kansas with the same imperialist impunity the U.S. had used to acquire over a million acres of Mexican territory during what Child called “that unjust war.” Free-state emigrants to Kansas were as much imperialist colonizers as they were national heroes, and there is ample evidence to suggest that Child, as one of the era’s most vocal progressives, was aware of the inconsistencies. As Karcher notes in her biography of Child, she

knew [...] that all too many of her Republican readers wanted to define ‘Free Kansas’ as a white preserve. The *Tribune*’s Kansas correspondent, William Phillips, for example, had given a virulently racist account of the territory’s Indian tribes and had recommended their ‘extradition to the wilds further west’ on the grounds that they could never successfully mix with whites. (*First Woman* 394)

In her reading of *The Kansas Emigrants*, Karcher notes that Child deals with these inconsistencies in part by having her heroes espouse her own egalitarian views, even as they are unquestionably settlers appropriating formerly Indian land. William Bruce, for example, argues against a measure (which was, in reality, eventually passed in Kansas) restricting black emigration to the territory. After he delivers his speech, the novella’s

narrator comments that the racist delegates “were blind to the fact that hundreds of coloured slaves could be found, who were more fit for the office, than the white ones they had appointed to rule over Kansas” (332). The arguments for racial equality Child includes in this scene, however, do not explain the historically inaccurate portrayal of total amity between free-state settlers and Indians presented in the text. Those depictions required, at the very least, some calculated omissions, which can be usefully read as a response to some of the anxieties peculiar to settler postcolonial writers.

First, the empiric designs of many free-state Kansans made it difficult for Child to write about them in a way that rejected “both colonial cringing and jingoistic self-enunciation [and] to reflect on how parallel patterns of continued colonization or implicit imperialism might be disguised as nationalism,” the nuanced approach Watts associates with the settler writer (“Settler Postcolonialism” 452). In supporting the free-state cause, she risked offering unequivocal support to an implicit imperialism she surely recognized. Second, the project of conquering Kansas raised questions about the free-state settler’s right to the land they sought. As I describe in more detail in the introduction and second chapter, the United States’ separation from Great Britain placed its citizens in an uncertain position – neither members of the first world, nor “indigenes living on aboriginal land” (Watts, *Settler Postcolonialism* 9). Since Child was aware that western settlement meant the displacement of the territory’s native inhabitants, she had to justify the free-state emigrants as legitimate, if not natural, residents of the West.

The Kansas Emigrants responds to the first concern — the racism and land-hunger of her supposedly heroic settlers — by associating the Missourians and the Southern slave power not only with Europe (a standard trope of U.S. exceptionalism) but

with the particularly imperialist designs of the Old World. The text's response to the second concern can be seen in a move reminiscent of Whitman's strategy in *Franklin Evans*. In chapter two, I argue that by separating the concept of "Indianness" into a savage and intemperate state to which white men can descend on one hand, and a purely temperate one untouched by European corruption on the other, Whitman is able to present the ultimate "American" identity as being possessed by the white man who can successfully absorb positive Indian traits. Child follows this same pattern by drawing attention to the noble "Indian" characteristics of the settlers. Child can thus criticize the oppression of "mistreated populations" without allowing any of that criticism to apply to her vision of an idealized United States.

One technique Child employs to distance the free-state settlers from the charge of imperialism is to cast them as anti-European revolutionaries. Anti-European rhetoric was, as I mention above, common in the middle of the nineteenth century, a standard strategy for espousing U.S. exceptionalism. However, in this case, Child's insistence on the Missourians' role as European-style conquerors of the territory distances the anti-slavery Kansan settlers from similar charges. Early on in *Emigrants*, during the Bradfords and Bruce's long journey to Kansas, they begin talking about the world they intend to create in the new territory. Alice imagines the climate will be somewhat like Italy's, and Kate counters, "I hope it will be like Italy only in its externals [...] I trust there will be no lazaroni, no monks, no banditti, no despots to imprison men for talking about the laws that govern them" (312). Here, despite the obvious fact that the U.S. had long before definitely separated itself from Europe, Child casts the central goal of western settlement

by anti-slavery advocates as the continued rejection of the Old World, rather than violent conquest of the new.

Kate's initial reference to Italy is developed in two additional scenes, making it clear that the imperialist forces the Kansans face are the United States government allied with the "Slave Power," a theme that develops over the course of the text until the U.S. government itself is figured as a foreign power. Before the territory descends into actual war, Child recounts that supply trains and steamboats to Kansas are regularly robbed by Missouri ruffians who have been commissioned by "slaveholding gentlemen and statesmen who used them as puppets, to do the disgraceful work they were ashamed to do openly themselves." The raids were intended "to tighten the serpent coil of slavery more securely around the neck of freedom" (330). Interestingly, the rank-and-file ruffians carrying out the raids are described as "banditti on the borders," echoing Kate's fear about the possible fate of the territory if the free-state settlers are not successful (330).

Later, just before the invasion of Lawrence, "President Pierce issued a proclamation, which made it treason for the citizens to defend themselves. The best and truest men were arrested and imprisoned as traitors, because they had no respect for the laws passed upon them by a Missouri rabble" (359). The language indicates that, as Kate feared, a pro-slave Kansas has become a new version of despotic Europe in which men are imprisoned "for talking about the laws that govern them" (312). Just as Alice's early reference to the "howling savage" are reprised multiple times throughout the text to establish the Missourians as a degraded, brutal frontier enemy, so Kate's apparently off-hand allusion to anti-democratic Italy is repeated to establish the Missourians (and by extension, the Pierce administration that supports them) as a new incarnation of the Old

World that threatens the United States' national identity as a free and freedom-granting republic rather than an European-style colonizer. At another point in the text, Child notes that U.S. colonists' "wrongs from the British government were slight compared to [the Kansans]" (330). She also includes numerous other comparisons of the Kansans to heroic U.S. revolutionaries: They have the "old spirit of Lexington and Concord" (351), drill "to the tunes of '76" (351), and style themselves, as I note above, descendants of the original wilderness-conquering Puritans. The overall effect is ironic. By opposing the democratically elected U.S. president, the Kansan settlers solidify their position as true U.S. patriots. This technique allows Child to distance the free-staters from the less savory aspects of their settlement of the new land, such as Indian removal, that might call into question the justice of their cause.

The Missourians' Europeanized identity is also linked to imperialist desire. After the convention at which William Bruce argues against racial requirements for Kansan emigration, he spends some time explaining the Missourian's aggression to Alice. She is confused since "there are thousands of acres of land uncultivated in Missouri," which would be more than enough to satisfy their needs. William replies that the Missourians "care little for the land, except as a means of increasing their political power" (333). He continues: "They are not content with stretching their dominions to the Gulf of Mexico and seizing Texas. They wish to grasp the Northern Territories also, that they may be able to be secure of keeping the Free States in political subjection [...] For many years they have been artfully availing themselves of every means to increase their power" (334). Bruce's explanation, with its insistent repetition of "they" and the use of terms like "dominions" and "subjection" work to establish pro-slavery forces as a foreign power

bent on overpowering the democratic and truly U.S. American free-state forces. Alice's innocent assumption that the Missourians would be satisfied with access to "uncultivated land" also, once again, serves to distance the free-staters from expansionist designs. Alice's comment makes it appear that free-state emigrants dreamed only of becoming yeoman farmers and traveled west only to find "uncultivated lands" to put to that use. The fact that many were sponsored by emigrant aid societies formed for the express purpose of increasing the number of anti-slavery votes and thereby extending the "dominion" of the free-state political cause is strategically omitted from the conversation.

Child also makes it clear that the ruffians are not themselves free citizens but oppressed subjects. These same "banditti" who spend their days robbing wagon trains also pour over the Kansas border to vote illegally in the elections. They do so not of their own free will but because they have been paid "a dollar a day, with plenty of whiskey." The reference to whiskey seems significant here, since it harkens back to the character of the dissipated slave owner who is not only drunk with power and liquor, but, in Frederick Douglass's words, uses alcohol as "the most effective means [...] in keeping down the spirit of insurrection in his slaves" (74). The Missourian elite thus become land-hungry imperialists who model their behavior after the worst of the European despots, and in so doing subjugate and even enslave ordinary Missourians, forcing them to trample on the rights of the free-state settlers who alone occupy the position of true U.S. patriots.

However, even "true U.S. patriots" were not necessarily true "Americans." In chapter two I discuss that a particular concern of white U.S. American was the issue of nativeness. Their desire to claim the title of "Native American" for themselves manifested itself in sometimes-bizarre rituals of Indian impersonation. In my discussion

of *Franklin Evans*, I argue that the ascendant U.S. white man is the one most able to meld the supposedly white qualities of temperate self-control with the “noble” traits of the Indians. Indian identity in that text was, thus, bifurcated with stereotyped nobility on one side and the equally stereotyped “drunken Indian” on the other. We have already seen how Child uses drunkenness to mark the Missourians as “Indians” of the second type. In a fascinating and apparently contradictory move, she also directly compares the free-state settlers to Indians of the first.

In one notable instance she writes that the “settlers were told to obey the laws and be good children to their father, President Pierce, and they should be protected” (338). Referring to the president as a “father” was common in nineteenth-century writing about Indians, especially writing that purported to translate the conventions of various Indian languages into English. Black Hawk’s autobiography, *Autobiography of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak, or Black Hawk* (1833), which was dictated to a white interpreter, frequently discusses Andrew Jackson in these terms. For example, he writes, “I concluded it was best to obey our Great Father and say nothing contrary to his wishes” (121) and later, “Our chiefs and head men were called upon to go to Washington to see their great father (53). The phraseology is explained in Catlin’s *Life Amongst the Indians*, a text Child specifically references in the opening pages of *Emigrants*. Catlin writes: “They, from their child-like nature, call all government officials in their country ‘fathers’ and the president of the United states their ‘Great Father’” (3). Given Child’s familiarity with Catlin’s text and her own extensive writing on Indians, it seems unlikely that she would have used this term to describe the settlers’ relationship to president Pierce without understanding its implications.

That her goal is to draw parallels between the white Kansas settlers and oppressed Indians becomes even clearer in a long enumeration of the wrongs the emigrants suffered under Pierce's administration:

Was ever a people so hard bested? Disheartened by sickness; plundered of provisions; lying down every night with the prospect of murder before morning; mocked at by the government of their country; their conscientious scruples appealed to, to keep the peace where there *was* no peace; lured into concessions, by fair promises and false professions; threatened with a traitor's doom, if they dared defend their homes! (347)

The statement echoes a number of similar passages in Catlin's text. He, for example, quotes a "chief" as saying "If the Great Spirit sent the small-pox into our country to destroy us, we believe it was to punish us for listening to the false promises of the white men" (349). But a better example comes from Child herself who, in a column in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* in 1843, wrote that the Indians are "accustomed to our smooth, deceitful talk when we want their lands and to the cool villainy with which we break treaties when our purposes are gained" (Child, "Letter XXXVI" 186). Just before the passage cited above in *Emigrants*, she referred to the Missourians as "smooth-tongued plotter[s]," making the parallels even more obvious (347).

Thus we see the Missourians and their supporters in the U.S. government described as oppressive, European powers while the free-state emigrants are oppressed Indians displaced from their homes. The revelation adds new purpose to those repeated turns of phrase in which Missourians were portrayed as being like Indians, but not — in other words, like them, but worse. In those descriptions, the ruffians are allowed to

embody the Indian characteristics of racist myth, while Child reserves for her heroes the noble Indian characteristics that U.S. whites romanticized and used to fuel their guilt. The ultimate effect is a combination of the phenomena described by Kaplan and DeLoria. First, it accomplishes what Kaplan describes as one of the key functions of domesticity on the frontier: it “make[s] Euro Americans feel at home in the place where they are initially the foreign ones” (Kaplan 34). Then, it goes a step further by claiming for those newly-settled Euro-Americans, an indigenous identity. Finally, it makes the “Slave Power” and all who support it definitively foreign – neither “white” nor “American.”

But what, if anything, does this all have to do with temperance? Throughout the novella, as I note above, the key distinguishing feature of the free-staters is their “moderation,” exemplified by their refusal to act violently except when absolutely necessary for self-defense. This character trait is contrasted directly with the drunkenness and intemperate violence of the Missourians. For example, when the Missourians, “in their drunken frankness,” discuss their plans to kill the free-staters, Governor Robinson “still pursues his course of moderation, and orders the men not to fire till the very last extremity” (347-48). It is this edict that inspires Kate, at the last, not to fire her pistol into the crowd of drunken rowdies.

Just as the Missourians’ drunkenness is associated with a degraded sort of Indianness, this extreme self-control in the face of drunken excess is associated with “real” Indian character. When Kate, in that final and pivotal moment of self-control, reminds herself to “make no aggressions,” she attributes her mastery of self-will to Robinson’s exhortations. However, the language she uses is, in fact, a repetition of Bruce’s description of the Indians at the beginning of the story. In his efforts to convince

Alice to head west with him he assures her that the Indians would “never would have made unprovoked aggressions” (304). When Bruce himself is shot in the back, Child comments that his “justice and *moderation* were known to all men” [emphasis added], and as a result “the leaders of the Delawares and Shawnees arrive to aid the beleaguered Kansans since “The Indians knew how to respect those qualities” (350). Child’s second use of Indian and temperance imagery, then, further separates the Missourians from the category of “real Americans.” Not only are they savages, carrying all of the nineteenth century’s deeply-ingrained, racialized connotations of that word, they are also not truly “American,” since they lack the temperate self-control that is once again the birthright of the indigenous people whose place the emigrants have come to occupy.

Thus *The Kansas Emigrants* uses images of alcoholism and of Indians in two distinct and distinctly problematic ways. The first, following the mold both of western temperance tales and of free-state women’s narratives about their lives, uses the trope of the degraded white, western, male alcoholic to create a western terrain uniquely suited to white women’s action. Child, by drawing specifically on the violent opening scenes of captivity narratives, also deploys white women’s symbolic position as representatives of “civilization” to make white female violence on the Kansas frontier seem even more reasonable and the drunken Missourians even more dangerous. At the same time, by associating the Missouri forces first with a corrupt, imperialist Europe, and then with an oppressive, genocidal U.S. government, she draws on the same culturally appropriative argument used by Whitman in *Franklin Evan*, that the true “American” was the white man who had absorbed the noble traits of Indianness, evidenced at least in part by temperance.

WHAT FANNY HUNTER SAW: CAPTIVITY AND TEMPERANCE ON THE BORDER

W.H. Corning's *Western Border Life: Or What Fanny Hunter Saw in Kansas and Missouri* is similarly populated by drunken border ruffians described in the stereotyped terms of Indianness. But instead of merely alluding to the violent initial scenes of the captivity narrative, the novel borrows its structure from that genre. At the same time, it draws on familiar features of the western temperance tale, particularly its twin foci on the power of white women to domesticate the West and the white male alcoholic's potential for redemption. The novel's rising tension results from the contradictory dictates of the captivity narrative and the western redemption plot. Ultimately, captivity triumphs, creating an ending that speaks to the inevitability of civil war, despite the novel's surface insistence on the necessity of national reconciliation. After a brief discussion of the plot and the novel's troubling positions on race and slavery, I will trace how captivity and redemptive temperance vie for control over the narrative and how both draw on the multilayered meanings of drinking and drunkenness that I have explored thus far.

Corning's novel details the adventures of its eponymous heroine, Fanny Hunter, who has accepted a position as governess for the children of Missouri slaveholder and occasional ruffian, Jack Catlett. Fanny, like the Bradfords and the Bruces of *Emigrants*, is a New England transplant. In her case, though, it is not a burning passion for free soil that drives her west, but the desire to provide for her mother and sister after her clergyman father's death. Over the course of the novel, Fanny attempts, with limited success, to educate and domesticate Catlett's children. Eventually, she falls in love with a St. Louis attorney by the name of Harry Chester who harbors free-state principles and is leaving the law for the ministry. When he is captured by a regiment of intoxicated Ruffians,

Fanny risks her life to save him. After a number of melodramatic plot twists, she is restored first to Catlett's Missouri family and then to her New England home, where she will wait for Chester to finish seminary and return to marry her.

It is worth noting here that *Fanny Hunter's* racial politics are as confused as they are disconcerting and would provide ample material for another, very different and equally useful analysis of the text. Throughout, the Catletts and other Missourians are tacitly critiqued for their poor treatment of their slaves, but slavery itself is never really condemned on moral or humanitarian grounds. Instead, it comes under fire mostly for its deleterious effects on white progress and innovation. Fanny, for example, is disturbed by the Catletts' "clinging to the customs and habits of their Virginia ancestors" and their rejection of "all the laborsaving machines of the present day; not only doing everything in the hardest possible manner, but persisting in calling it the best" (101). The most vociferous argument the novel makes against slavery regards its suppression of white, working-class wages: a pathetic "poor white" character named Mr. Jenkins blames his poverty on "this cursed *slavery* that's [...] robbed us of our honest livin' [and] dragged us down lower than the lying, thievish, black-faced rascals they call slaves" (225). Enslaved people themselves are given little consideration. Mrs. Catlett essentially works a young black girl, Tilla, to death, and though the incident is described with some pathos, Mrs. Catlett is never entirely a villain. Even Fanny, who counsels the white children to be kind to Tilla, does so in the most unselfconsciously offensive terms possible, giving "her scholars a lecture upon cruelty to animals" (106). Corning is no Lydia Child, advocating immediate abolition and universal suffrage, nor is the Catletts' plantation, like that in *Franklin Evans*, a place where intemperance invites taboo interracial relationships.

Rather, Corning's enslaved men and women are portrayed as religious and submissive, neither posing a threat to the Catletts nor articulating a particularly powerful critique of slavery as an institution.

The novel's treatment, or, more accurately, lack of treatment of Indians is equally curious. Unlike in Child's novel, in which the actual Indian residents of the Plains are reduced to a double metaphor for drunken Missourians on the one hand and honorable, beleaguered free-staters on the other, Indians in *Fanny Hunter* have disappeared entirely. The only reference to them comes when Mrs. Catlett says that her traveling husband "may be dead and buried over there [in Kansas] among them wild Indians for all I know," indicating that Indians, both temporally and spatially distant, exist as an abstract concept rather than a present danger (50). The text's assumption that enslaved people are benign and Indians absent makes the novel seem invested in the idea of a frontier scrubbed free of racial enmity. The absence of racial others emphasizes the foreignness of the Missourians themselves, which is marked at least in part by their intemperance. As I argue below, the establishment of this alcohol-induced and potentially transitory retrogression early on in the text sets the stage for the dueling narratives of captivity and western redemption that are apparent in the remainder of the novel.

INTEMPERANCE AND FOREIGNNESS IN *FANNY HUNTER*

The synopsis of the novel, above, does not do justice to the multiple plots and subplots that unfold over the course *Fanny Hunter*, nor would it be useful (or even possible) to summarize them all. However, as a general organizing principle, it is important to keep in mind two basic stories: Fanny's integration with the Catlett family in Missouri and Mr. Catlett's attempt to drive a free-state Kansas family from their land in

order to give it to his son, Dave. In other words, there is a domestic plot and a military one, and in both, intemperance is a powerful marker of foreignness. The domestic tale begins with the arrival of Fanny's stage in the town La Belle Prairie, Missouri. Dave meets her in front of "the store," a "low, narrow, log building standing on the edge of the prairie [that] had for many years performed the duties of private residence, post-office, [and] tavern" (22). Its "tavern" function is particularly important. The proprietor's "excellent tobacco and whisky [which] furnish[ed] irresistible attractions to all the loafers of the prairie" have allowed it, shabbiness notwithstanding, to continue to serve as La Belle Prairie's communal center for "many years" (23). A more prosperous and industrious community, one assumes, would have long since built separate establishments to address the store's multiple functions. Like the drunken Missourians who reveled in floorless cabins in *The Kansas Emigrants*, the drunken "loafers" of La Belle Prairie have failed to grasp the promise of Western prosperity.

This same failure to progress is intimated in Fanny's initial impressions of the Catlett family. Each successive member is more physically grotesque than the one previous. Dave is a "lank, ungainly, overgrown boy" (23). Mrs. Catlett is "a sallow-faced woman of forty [...] dressed in a faded calico," the children are "wild and neglected," and Mrs. Catlett's great aunt, Madam Hester, is "ghastly and hag-like" (27, 36, 37). These physical descriptions indicate the Catletts, like the town itself, have failed to thrive in the Western environment — that they are, perhaps, congenitally or temperamentally ill-suited for the task of settlement.

The description of the plantation supports this conclusion as well. Mr. Catlett had been "represented" to Fanny's family as "a gentleman of wealth and respectability

recently moved from Virginia: a “representation” far removed from the cursing, semi-literate ruffian introduced in the book’s initial pages (33). Meanwhile, the Catletts’ home is a ruin of Southern aristocracy. On the one hand there are “cracks between the logs,” a handmade carpet composed of clashing “coarse green stripes,” “wooden seated chairs, scanty in number and dilapidated in condition,” and windows without either glass or curtains” (27-30). On the other, there is a “rug of the finest Brussels,” a “display of silver plate,” and a fine piano (27-28). The description of Madam Hester as “haglike” comes in the midst of a frightening scene in which she dresses herself in a rotting ball gown and mulls over a trunk of family heirlooms while apparently in the throes of dementia (37). The once-wealthy slaveholding gentry, it seems, have transferred the accouterments of civilization to the edge of the wilderness, but instead of domesticating it, have succumbed to its degrading power.

At least one of the reasons for their failure to thrive becomes clear when Fanny comes to breakfast after her first uncomfortable night in the Catlett home. She finds the children gathered around a gourd that an enslaved woman named Martha has brought. After much coaxing, Fanny is persuaded to take a drink, which tastes “slightly of whisky and very strongly of brown sugar.” The gourd is then passed from child to child until it arrives at Maria, the second oldest. She exclaims, “I’m sure I’ll be glad when pa comes home [...] if it’s only to mix the drink. Ma is so scrimpin’ with the whisky” (41). What follows is a greed-infused discussion of how much liquor the slaves have been given, how much Dave has drunk, and so on. The image is all the more powerful because it plays on those scenes (described first by Hoffman and Irving, and later by Kirkland in her rendering of the Newlands) of degraded, drunken settlers who will eventually be “drafted

off' further and further west. In Fanny Hunter's domestic plot, then, whiskey works to align the Catlett's in general and the Missourians in particular with the vanishing Indians and degraded whites of popular U.S. mythology.

As Fanny's sojourn with the Catlett women and children progresses, Mr. Catlett's crusade against the free-state family, replete with brutal, alcohol-fueled violence, is unfolding on the Kansas border. After an unsuccessful attempt to drive the family from their claim, an incensed Catlett returns to La Belle Prairie to raise a posse of Missourians. He calls a meeting at the store, drawing an audience with a "barrel on tap" and a promise to be the "man who paid the bill" (122). As the evening goes on, Catlett's account of his run-in with the free-staters becomes more exaggerated as the men get drunker. When the oratory has reached a fever pitch, Catlett exhorts the crowd to "return in in a body, break up their settlement, burn their cabins and drive them, at least a hundred miles into the wilderness" (125). He then promises, "I will pay with liquor" (125). The men begin marching towards Kansas soon after, and the narrator comments, "Methinks I see grinning devils hovering over those whisky barrels, giving each other now and then, a chuck in the ribs, and writhing and twisting about with suppressed laughter, while an image of a death's head seems to play along the lines of the cavalcades" (129). Here, the wanton brutality and language evoking satanic possession that was common in Puritan captivity narratives is linked, as it was in *The Kansas Emigrants*, to the transformative powers of alcohol.

When they finally encounter the free-stater after a long march punctuated by frequent trips to the whiskey keg, that transformation is complete. They do not arrest him, or even arrange for him to be hanged in some version of rough prairie justice. Catlett

does not kill him nobly in hand-to-hand combat. Instead, the mob beats him to death in a graphic, ruthless frenzy that echoes the murder described by Sara Robinson in which Missourians’ “literally hack[ed] [a man] in pieces with a hatchet [and] showed themselves fiendish beyond the unenlightened savage” (171):

They sprang upon him, striking him with the butt ends of their guns and pistols, pounding, kicking, and battering him in the most brutal manner. Blood flowed freely, and the sight of it seemed only to rouse them to fresh fury [...] At length someone plunged a bowie knife into the victim’s side [...] drunk and furious, they disobeyed orders; and then rushed to the whisky barrels and betook themselves to the liquor. (132)

The men are depraved, but their depravity is apparently caused by their drunkenness. It is whiskey that causes them to disobey orders, whiskey that they flock to after the deed is done, and, one can infer, whiskey that causes them to be inflamed by the flow of blood. As I explain below, there is a subtle but crucially important distinction between savagery that is simply coupled with drunkenness and savagery that is caused by it. The first places the Missourians beyond hope of redemption and makes Fanny’s presence among them a term of captivity with the enemy. The second marks the men as prime candidates for redemption and holds out to Fanny the role of temperance heroine.

As the free-stater is dying, the Missourians carry him back to his own cabin, where they are met at the doorstep by his wife. She is accompanied by “an infant in her arms [and] two rosy children [clinging] to her skirts” (133). She seems more angry than afraid and issues this passionate rebuke: “Come and take possession of his lands, nobody will hinder you – but mark me, they’ll never do you any good, for the curse of the widow

and orphan will rest on them” (134). The moment is a perfect re-creation of that image, analyzed by Dawn Keetley and described in detail in the previous chapter, of a white woman on the “threshold of [her] home barring the doorway” (21), and thus creating “the momentary convergence of domesticity and heroic, even violent action in the body of the pioneer woman” (22). The settler’s wife is, in the typology of U.S. frontier myth, the white woman embodying civilization and facing down savagery. The drunk Missourians are, once again, the savages.

FANNY HUNTER AND CAPTIVITY THEMES

As I explain above, by using alcohol use and abuse to mark the Missourians as retrograde in the early pages of the novel, Corning is able to exploit tropes common to the captivity narrative and to the Western redemption tale. It is generally accepted that the Indian captivity genre developed through three roughly distinct phases: “authentic religious accounts in the seventeenth century, propagandist and stylistically embellished texts in the eighteenth century, and outright works of fiction in the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century” (Derounian Stodolax xii). In one form or another, then, stories of white women abducted by Indians and rescued by white men were popular in the U.S. for more than three centuries.

Christopher Castiglia argues that if, as traditional scholarship has held, the genre’s attractiveness lies in “the misogyny and racism that fuel aggressive American nationalism,” then the implied “reading — and arguably national — public” would be composed entirely of white males, since white women and American Indians could “presumably [...] take only a masochistic pleasure in witnessing a caricature of their lives that denies them the possibility of discursive or social agency” (Castiglia 3). Instead,

Castiglia makes the case that captivity narratives maintained their popularity because they offered a way for white women to imagine themselves as part of “ a female picaresque, an adventure story set, unlike most early American women’s literature, outside the home” (4). This was particularly true in the “wilderness novels” of the nineteenth century, fictional accounts influenced by captivity stories, in which female captives experience “an escape from what were perceived as the strangling conventions of an increasingly commercial society with rapidly rigidifying gender expectations” (112). In arguing that Fanny Hunter’s experience with the Catletts can be better understood through the lens of the fictionalized captivity narrative, I do not mean to suggest that Corning intentionally modeled her novel on captivity accounts, as, I strongly suspect, Child did. It is more likely that the tropes of captivity were so ingrained into U.S. thinking about white women’s adventure that Corning’s “female picaresque” set in the Western wilderness and informed by free-state propaganda about drunken, savage, and degraded Missouri Ruffians could not help but take some of its cues from the genre (Castiglia 4).

The first of those cues are in the novel’s title and the prefaces to its 1856 and 1863 editions. The title, *Western Border Life, Or What Fanny Hunter Saw and Heard in Kansas and Missouri*, calls on the authority of direct experience. The 1863 preface assures readers that “the writer of this little volume lived among [the Missourians]” (v). The original, 1856 preface is even more direct, stating that the author “may, without egotism, claim, that, by a long residence as a familiar member of a family in the further part of Missouri, she became acquainted with the actual condition of things, and knows whereof she affirms, much better than any stranger (v-vi).”³² Both prefaces also frame the

account as being morally instructive. In 1856, before civil war was inevitable, readers are encouraged to see the novel as an indictment of the doctrine of popular sovereignty ushered in by the Kansas-Nebraska Act (vi). In 1863, with the war ongoing, they are asked to scan the story for “some method of impeding its [the war’s] progress” (vi). Readers are thus led to expect a narrative that is not *entirely* fictional, but the eye-witness account of an actual participant whose story has been modified and fictionalized for some particular didactic purpose. This, in many ways, matches the function of the captivity narrative preface, a feature of particular importance to that genre. Often penned by ministers or other male editors, captivity preface sought to frame the accounts as illustrations of religious truth or evidence for a particular position and in so doing restrict the “reader’s (and often the writer’s) interpretive freedom (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 114). As Derounian-Stodola points out, “in the prefaces of many captivity narratives [...] an author or editor capitalizes on the factual but simultaneously acknowledges its gaps” (xxvii). In the case of captivity narratives, this often occurs because “the voice of the captive ‘duels’ with the voice of the editor” who dramatizes “the figure of a captive woman” to make the tale’s “moral, religious, or propagandistic [...] lessons particularly memorable” (xxviii). In *Fanny Hunter* a similar effect is achieved. The title and preface(s) suggest the authority of a settler woman’s actual experience while the presence of an omniscient, editorial narrator ensures that the story itself is not under her control. That narrator can thus insert sensational and sentimental plotlines and instructive asides that make the text’s “lessons particularly memorable.” As with the captivity narrative, the text is both Fanny’s own story and a carefully structured sermon.

Front matter aside, for a truly compelling argument to be made regarding the captivity genre's influence on *Fanny Hunter*, Fanny herself, who is never abducted by Indians, must in some way fit the definition of "captive." Castiglia's argument about the appeal captivity stories held for their white female audience helps to show why. Just as temperance literature allowed for discussion of taboo topics such as marital rape and domestic violence, the captivity genre gave "symbolic form to the culturally unnamable: confinement within the home, enforced economic dependence, rape, compulsory heterosexuality, prescribed plots" (Castiglia 4). The situation that leads Fanny to Missouri bears the marks of some of these "unnamable" forms of confinement. Her father, a spendthrift New England pastor, dies, leaving Fanny, her mother, and her sisters dependent on the charity of "Uncle Peter" who resides "somewhere at the West" (32). The stretch of time between Reverend Hunter's death and Fanny's removal to Missouri is described as a term of domestic imprisonment. Instead of grieving, Fanny "constrained herself to receive visits of condolence" in order to spare her mother the painful experience (31). When Uncle Peter announces that he will happily pay all of the family's future expenses, "Fanny gave a cheerful response, but her own mind was far from being at ease. Such an entire dependence upon any one save an own parent was extremely trying to a spirit like hers" (33). She eventually begs permission to obtain employment in the West and gains the "reluctant consent" of her mother and Uncle Peter (33). Fanny's New England life, which is ostensibly to serve as a model for the less-civilized Missourians, is thus depicted as a domestic captivity replete with physical confinement and enforced economic dependence that she escapes by begging a place in the wilderness.

As if to compound the point, the first thing Fanny remarks upon when she arrives in Missouri is the physical freedom the new land affords her. When Dave collects her at “the store, he presents her with a horse that will be hers for the remainder of her time in Missouri. Fanny is overwhelmed with gratitude: “‘A horse to myself,’ said the lady, ‘to ride over this ocean of land. O how delightful! I shall never tire of it, I am sure’” (26). She soon finds that “oceans of land” are not the only thing primitive Missouri has to recommend itself. While in New England, she was both physically confined and economically constrained. On the Catlett plantation, she is a wage-worker whose schoolhouse is designed for the express purpose of domesticating “wild” children, but is also very nearly a part of the wilderness itself: It sits alone on the prairie, light filters in through the “chinks between the walls” and a “smooth round log” serves as a bench (71). As teacher, Fanny is free to go on numerous unchaperoned “rambles” with the children and makes forest excursions part of the curriculum (87-93). Thus she is, like the heroines of numerous fictionalized captivity accounts, set loose in a “literary wilderness” in which “dualisms” like “public/private, commerce/domesticity, male/female, practical/frivolous — are denaturalized and hence opened for debate (Castiglia 113).

Fanny experiences the freedom afforded by this “literary wilderness” as an almost dangerous form of excitement. When she takes the children out to gather autumn leaves, the youngest boy, Johnny, urges her to venture further into the forest:

Fanny needed little persuasion. In the beauty of the scene before her [...] in all the glorious freedom of the forest, she experienced a kind of wild delight that carried her back to the days of childhood. She could have danced about with the little ones or shouted and sang as they did [...] But

though she refrained from any such manifestations of delight there was
[...] a flush on her usually pale face, that told of intense enjoyment” (94)

It is not uncommon for nineteenth and early twentieth century women, constrained as they often were in long, unwieldy skirts, to reminisce wistfully about the lost physical independence of childhood.³³ The scene above echoes that nostalgia. But it also, in Fanny’s “wild delight” and “flushed face” introduces a kind of veiled, atavistic sexual response to the wilderness. As Slotkin notes, the sexual temptation of the forest is a key element of the captivity myth. In early, Puritan narratives, “the wilderness was seen as a Calvinist universe in microcosm and an analogy of the human mind” where Indians “often carried off good men and pure virgins into hellish captivity and sexual temptation” (*Regeneration* 77). Later, in the extremely well-known, fictionalized eighteenth-century “Panther Captivity” story, the heroine first refuses to sleep with and later kills an Indian giant. Slotkin interprets her ability to resist sexual temptation as “making her worthy.” Likewise, as Scheckel notes, “female authors of captivity narratives often felt the need to defend their sexual conduct to avoid suspicions that might prevent their full reacceptance into the white society to which they returned” (82). Obviously, the prospect of rape at the hands of Indians was a real concern, but beneath that lay also the perhaps more frightening possibility of white women’s taboo desire, a desire that is at least hinted at in this scene.

Sexual attraction that is both exciting and dangerous provides a useful segue into the other, darker side of the captivity story. At the same time that Corning plays on the trope of domestic captivity and wilderness adventure as escape, she also uses elements of the typical captivity story to accentuate the alien and even frightening nature of the

Missourians in general and the Catlett home in particular. On her first day with the Catletts, Fanny's uneasiness at the primitiveness of her surroundings and her hosts is expressed in terms that could have come from a Puritan-era captivity heroine: "In the first gush of disappointment at finding everything so rough and strange; with the desolate, loneliness fresh upon her, that one seldom from home feels in a new place, she had sunk down astonished and overwhelmed at the prospect, giving way to the most despairing thoughts" (34). However, she soon pulls herself out of her despair by remembering her Christian faith. "What right have I to murmur, if indeed Christ is my friend? O! I can never be alone while I keep near to him," she thinks (35). And then, feeling "rebuked for her selfish despondency and want of trust in God" she turns to her bible from which she gains renewed "courage and patience" (36). She resolves, in other words, to accept "the trials of captivity" including "the spiritual dangers of pride and despair; and the psychological dangers of emotional damage, depression, and guilt" by "turn[ing] to her bible" and relying on the grace of God (Derounian-Stodola xxii).

The combination of desire for wilderness adventure and fear of wilderness danger places Fanny in what Scheckel and others have described as the "liminal phase" of the captivity experience "during which the captive exists suspended between two worlds and belonging to neither" (Scheckel 79). In this period, the captive at least partially acculturates to the world of the captors and, as numerous scholars have noted, undergoes significant transformations. Slotkin notes that "even the most pious returned captives acquired altered outlooks on the nature of the wilderness and the Indians" (*Regeneration* 114). And Scheckel, writing about the nineteenth-century narrative of Mary Jemison, a white woman who chose to stay with her Seneca captors, notes that the act of writing the

narrative is a necessary part of the reintegration process since it involves an “implicit assertion” of the importance of “the transformations that have resulted from captivity” (80). Castiglia, too, views the liminal period of acculturation as an experience that causes the captive to question fixed ideas of racial identity: “By making the captive part of the tribe,” he writes, “The Indians show that ‘identity’ is not the result of preordained essence but of acquired language and behavior” (49). In tracing the heroine’s acculturation into Indian way of life, the captivity genre calls into question the fixedness of racial identity thus necessitating an ending that involves proof of her reincorporation into her home culture.

FANNY HUNTER AND WESTERN TEMPERANCE THEMES

If *Fanny Hunter* were to be read only in terms of the traditional captivity narrative, it would make sense at this point to trace Fanny’s acculturation to the Missourian border community. However, for most of the novel, *both* Fanny and the Missourians exist in a liminal position, Fanny not quite embracing and not quite rejecting the Missourians’ culture and the Missourians not quite given over to alien “savagery” nor entirely possessed of supposedly “white” self-control. In the same way that *Fanny Hunter* borrows from the conventions of captivity narratives, it also draws on the themes of the Western temperance tale. To briefly recap my discussion of white women’s Western temperance stories in chapter three, there are two primary plots, that of redemption and that of degradation. In the degradation plot, the white, male alcoholic is killed or entirely unmanned by the frontier, a move that serves the proto-feminist goal of claiming for white women the nationally significant role of frontier settler and the empiric one of removing foreign elements from both family and nation. In the redemption tale, the

journey West is recast as the goal of a man seeking domestic responsibility rather than fleeing from it and suggests the inevitability of continental ambitions. Redemption tales, particularly, focus on the white woman's power to redeem the white alcoholic.

Fanny Hunter draws on tropes common to both plots and alters them slightly to reflect on the looming national crisis of civil war.

The whiskey-drinking family that Fanny encounters in her first days in Missouri is, indeed, rendered foreign by their intemperance. But that intemperance also reflects a failure of domesticity. Above, I described Mrs. Catlett's sickly complexion and the narrator's observation that the Catlett children were "wild." These two details echo an observation Kaplan makes about the effect of wilderness life on home and family present in numerous nineteenth-century stories about Western settlement. In these tales, Kaplan notes, "[T]he mother's ill health stems from the unruly subjects of her domestic empire — children and servants [in the Catlett's case, slaves] — who bring uncivilized wilderness and undomesticated foreignness into the home" (34). Kaplan's observations of this pattern lead her to the conclusion that "the fear of disease and of invalidism that characterizes the American woman also serves as a metaphor for anxiety about foreignness within" (34). This "empire of the mother" — that is, the depiction of the white, middle-class home as microcosm of the empiric process — "embodies the anarchy at the heart of the American empire [...] a double compulsion to conquer and domesticate — to control and incorporate — the foreign within the borders of the home and the nation" (32). In *Fanny Hunter*, the Missourians' foreignness adds an additional dimension to this common pattern. Mrs. Catlett is not only an ailing mother, she is also incapable of purifying her domestic empire and apparently unaware that such action needs to be taken.

Instead, Fanny, as the white woman from the states, is presented as a missionary of sorts – the only hope to bring order and domesticity to the Catlett’s wildness. In showing the Catlett home as an example of failed domesticity, Corning makes a broader comment about the failure of Southern slaveholders to adequately conquer or domesticate Western lands. What is needed, it seems, is a woman from New England who, being herself free from “traces of foreignness, is better able to redeem the alcoholic and thus domesticate the Western frontier.

To see this principle at work further, we need only return to the brutal murder of the free-state settler, described above. Certainly, the scene of the white woman standing at the threshold of her cabin, shielding her child from the sight of their murdered father is a powerful evocation of that assumed binary opposition between the white woman as representative of civilization and the violent, racially other invader as corresponding embodiment of the wilderness. But the aftermath of the scene is significant as well. After the widow issues her passionate reproof, Catlett, unlike the ruffians of Child’s account, begins to feel some remorse. “For heaven’s sake come away,” he tells one of his deputies. “I can’t stand this nohow” (134). Later in that week, Catlett goes to a church service where the sermon, “Remorse,” is delivered by a fire-and-brimstone preacher who was himself converted from intemperance by the prayers of his dying mother (141). Catlett gives “more than ordinary attention” to the service and, when it is over, comments meditatively that “a man may have too much [land] for his peace of mind” (142, 146). Catlett’s responses – first to the woman and then to the mother-converted preacher – reveal a crucial difference between the drunken Ruffians of *The Kansas Emigrants* and at least Catlett, if not his entire posse as well. In Child’s account, the drunk Missourians

become, wholly and irredeemably, the barbaric enemy of the Great Plains. Corning, instead, emphasizes that the descent into “savagery” experienced by the white male drinker was temporary, not “essential to” his body (Murphy, “Enslaved Bodies” 111). The effectiveness of the widow’s curses and the minister’s mother’s prayers further remind readers of the temperance trope, common in the 1850s, in which the salvation of “even the sorriest drunkard” was frequently portrayed as the result of “some combination of religion, abstinence and, usually, a woman’s caring guidance” (Warner 133). Corning, in other words, invests in her white, female characters the power to turn the drunkard back from the precipice.

This point is reiterated again later in the novel when Fanny attends a Christmas party held by the young people of the prairie. Harry Chester, who will later become Fanny’s love interest, explains to her that the men’s frequent disappearance upstairs can be explained by the presence of a whiskey barrel. When he insinuates that New Englanders are as fond of “wine drinking parties” in which men “pour down glass after glass unblushingly in the presence of ladies,” Fanny maintains that the women of New England “almost with one voice, have chosen the right side, and have given all their influences to bring about the desired end” (198-99). Chester returns that if this were true it would “almost supersede the necessity of a Maine law” (198). The exchange does two things: first, it makes the alcoholism that has turned the Missourians into almost unrecognizable savages in the murder of the free-stater a universal problem of U.S. white men. Second, it makes the transformation temporary and capable of being reversed through the influence of a good, temperate, white woman.

Thus the tension in the novel is created through the combination of two common plots — the wilderness captivity as adventure story and the Western redemption tale, with Fanny and the Missouri men each tenuously balanced between two states. Fanny hovers between acculturation into the slaveholding family on the one hand and a very different version of New England domesticity on the other. The Missourians waver between total depravity — represented in the novel by their drunken sprees — and chivalric self-control. For most of the text, the conclusion remains in doubt. Will the plot resolve itself along the lines of a redemption story? Or will it adopt, instead, the contours of a captivity narrative? In exploring that question, we see how *Fanny Hunter* takes up the issue of whether U.S. domesticity, with its “double compulsion to conquer and domesticate,” is powerful enough to conquer and domesticate the internal contagion: the drunkard slaveholder, whose presence is ultimately more frightening than new Mexican citizens, rebellious slaves, or Irish immigrants, since his presence suggests the instability of whiteness, of white U.S. citizenship, and of the nation (Kaplan 32).

REDEMPTION OR CAPTIVITY? *FANNY HUNTER* AND THE INEVITABILITY OF WAR

What is at stake in the novel is what was, contemporaneously, at stake for the nation: the physical control of Western lands. Would they remain a part of the national domestic sphere or revert entirely to foreignness? These two potential resolutions are explored in two scenes involving Fanny alone in the wilderness. The first occurs when she is out on a walk with one of the children, loses both the child and track of time, and finds herself out alone after dark. She waits patiently on the bank of a river for the child to return. Though she finds “the solitude of the place [...] oppressive” grows “nervous,”

and feels “alarmed” when she hears the sound of an approaching horseman on the other side of the river, the event resolves into romance (152). From her partially obscured position, Fanny anonymously guides the rider (who turns out to be Chester) along the riverbank from a washed out bridge to a safe fording-place. It is difficult not to mark the odd reversal of gender roles in this scene. From the traditional captivity narrative to Cooper’s romances, which draw on captivity themes, the unmarried white woman alone in the dark in the woods is in need of male rescue. The wilderness, with all its connotations of foreignness threaten her, and in the darkness are cougars and rattlesnakes, rushing rivers, and of course the figure of the Indian, poised to carry her off. We might reasonably expect Fanny to tumble headfirst the river so as to make herself available for a daring and romantic fishing-out. Instead, the opposite occurs. Fanny directs essentially passive male across the river as she might direct him to come to the dining room for supper. Throughout the interchange, she remains out of sight. Any latent sexual passion she might have felt in her first, giddy moments in the wilderness is now appropriately suppressed. When she eventually finds the missing child and arrives back at the house, no one seems particularly concerned by her absence. It appears that the Missouri wilderness has been rendered as safe a domestic a space as Fanny’s original New England home. In this way, Corning’s novel offers a much more optimistic vision of the Kansas and Missouri territories than Child, whose female protagonists fear setting foot outside their cabins. However, the second wilderness scene, as I explain below, reveals this optimism to be premature.

The climax of *Fanny Hunter*, as with many women’s narratives of Bleeding Kansas, comes with the sack of Lawrence. As the Catlett family is traveling in one

direction, Chester is headed in the other with his mentor and Catlett family friend, Judge Stanton. Both of these two separate parties (the Catletts and the Chester/Stanton pair) eventually run into the Missouri militia marching towards Lawrence. The militia captain, who is “not a whit better off for the liquor he had drank since morning,” impresses Catlett into service (348). As a loyal Missourian, Catlett promises to fight after getting assurances that the Catlett women will be treated well in the Missouri camp. Chester and Stanton, on the other hand, are suspected (correctly) of abolitionism. The army takes them prisoner and sets them to be executed the next morning by “a whiskey drinking court” (358).

That evening, when Fanny and Nanny Catlett (the eldest Catlett daughter) realize that Chester and Judge Stanton are held in the cell next to their room, they spring into action. Fanny arranges for Nanny’s beau to bring the prisoners a saw and the Ruffians some additional whiskey, so that they will be less attuned to the sounds of escape outside. The plan is entirely successful – the Ruffians notice nothing amiss until Stanton and Chester have mounted horses and disappeared. The problem arises when a slaveholding woman by the name of Madam Gamby, who is acting as a soldier, discovers Fanny’s role in the plot. She immediately becomes violently angry, and we see, for the first time in *Fanny Hunter*, the threat of rape when Gamby threatens to turn Fanny over to the drunken and enraged ruffian band:

‘O, Madam Gamby, save me! Save me! Cried Fanny. “Will you give me up to these ruffians?’

‘Yes, I will. There’s nothing too bad for you, you —’

Fanny stopped to hear no more. Almost deprived of her senses by the woman's threats, and frantic at the thought of falling into the hands of a set of drunken ruffians, she sprang past her persecutor like a frightened fawn, and the next moment was rushing through the darkness and the storm. (367)

Fanny's fevered escape from the Ruffian camp can be usefully compared to her romantic evening escapade by the river. In the first event, Fanny is both comfortable in her surroundings and portrayed as the expert. As she watches Chester attempting to find a place to cross the river, the narrator comments that Fanny "knew that [the] road had fallen entirely into disuse, the bridge being broken, and the stream impassible at this point" (152). She calmly directs the man to the ford and advises him to "keep close to the bank" (154). When she eventually meets up with the child she was accompanying, the two of them hurry home, untroubled by the darkness. In this second adventure in the darkness, fleeing what she believes will be rape by a gang of Ruffians, the Western wilderness becomes for Fanny an alien and threatening terrain:

The thorns and briars cruelly wounded her slender feet, but she felt no pain. A hundred voices seemed calling her to stop, a hundred feet hurrying in pursuit, and with frantic haste, unheeding the darkness, wind and rain, the poor fugitive fled on. On and still on, till the glimmering camp lights were but a speck in the distance, and she felt that she was alone in the solitude of the night. Then, faint and exhausted, she pressed her hands to her poor fluttering heart, and sank upon the dank ground. (367)

Assuming that she is going to die, Fanny prays that Kansas will be freed from the “minions of slavery” and then falls unconscious. Fanny is eventually rescued by a family of abolitionists and returned to the Catletts. However, in this scene of frenzied flight, imbued as it is with the threat of sexual tainting, a crucial line has been crossed. The Missouri Border Ruffians have transformed, once and for all, into “savages.”

Indeed, Madam Gamby’s role in the proceedings makes this reality all the more certain. Gamby, who before this moment played a minor part in the novel, is notable for her failure to adhere to traditional gender norms. She is introduced as “hollow-chested as a man, with coarse features and a red face” (50). She runs her farm without the assistance of any male relatives and treats her slaves more cruelly than even the capriciously vindictive Mrs. Catlett. Her gender-bending reaches its apex in the scene with Fanny and the ruffians since she, clothed and armed as a soldier, assumes the position of military leader. The next day, when the men are sober, they learn that “they were sent out to arrest a young lady, who had been taken under their guard” and curse Madam Gamby as a “she devil” (370). However, the point has been made. Southern men, at least under the debasing influence of liquor, are more likely to be influenced by a she-devil than by a vulnerable white woman.³⁴

As I discuss above, the typical Indian captivity narrative posed a threat to white culture and its ideology of fixed racial identity because of the heroine’s assimilation into Indian society. This threat was neutralized by her eventual rescue and reintegration into her home culture. Numerous scholars of the captivity genre have noted that the final, necessary step of the typical plot is the captive’s successful reintegration into the

community from which he or she came. Castiglia goes so far as to argue that in captivity narratives

the greatest threat to the captive's extra-vagant imagination typically came neither at the moment of capture nor during her trek through a new physical and cultural terrain but on her return. No matter how far a captive went toward joining the lives of her captors or challenging the assumptions of her home culture, such revisions usually ceased once return appeared inevitable (119)

The captive, as noted above, is also most often "ultimately 'rescued' only by a white man or group of white men" who "supervise the reinscription of conventional narratives of identity on her body" (Castiglia 119). For most of the novel, though, Fanny Hunter's Missourians have not been exactly, or at least not entirely, "foreign." Fanny's spirited defense of Yankee ingenuity, her disapproval of wine drinking parties, and her insistence on the good behavior of the Catlett children at least initially meet with grudging acceptance, indicating that the family might eventually be swayed to her way of thinking. At the same time, these insistent if minor rebellions against the Catletts' way of life serve as reminders that Fanny has managed to remain independent, an unassimilated New England woman amid Southerners who are almost countrymen.

However, after the incident with the army, when that important boundary between "civilized" and "savage" was crossed, it becomes clear that Fanny will not be able to redeem any Missourians, not even the Catletts. In the final chapters of the novel, Fanny's assimilation into the Catletts' culture occurs with a jarring suddenness, and their lifestyle, which has, up to this point been portrayed as backward but potentially redeemable, is

revealed to be catastrophically diseased. In its final chapters, the novel transforms itself, rather surprisingly, into a captive rescue story, a move that forecloses not only the possibility of a Western redemption finale, but of national reconciliation as well.

Fanny's rescue from the Catletts occurs alongside the first true signs of acculturation. Following her flight from the Ruffians and subsequent return, Fanny comes down with chills and fever (probably malaria) and is confined to bed for several weeks. Her illness precipitates Uncle Peter's arrival, which ends with his insistence that she return home with him. Since her discomfiture in the loft on her first night with the Catletts there has been little mention of the homestead's shortcomings. Seen now through Uncle Peter's eyes, it is primitive to the point of being dangerous. Details not mentioned elsewhere in the text come rapidly to light. Peter notes the "tobacco stains on the hearth and the cobwebs in the corners" as evidence that Fanny's "mother's back shed is in better order this minute than the parlor" (382). He points out that the cellar beneath the schoolhouse is "half-full of stagnant water" and that the Catletts "couldn't have contrived a better place for breeding fevers if they had tried" (384). He speaks authoritatively and, under his critical gaze, Fanny's residence on the plantation seems for the first time like a period of captivity.

What is perhaps more surprising than the reader's growing realization that the homestead is in a far worse state of decay than the narrator ever let on is the reaction of Fanny herself. The New England heroine who was appalled by Mrs. Catlett's housekeeping at the beginning of the novel and who, in the middle of it "saw enough of the shiftless slovenly manner in which things were done to shock all her New England ideas of neatness and order" is now incredulous at Uncle Peter's disapproval. It strikes

her “so ludicrously that two or three times she [can] hardly keep from laughing” (381). In the midst of defending everything from the glassless windows to a long-broken door that Mr. Catlett has failed to mend, she issues the most bizarre argument of all: “Mrs. Catlett is so fretted and overworked, and the servants indolent and careless. You don’t know how difficult it is to teach them anything [...] You haven’t the least idea, uncle, of the difficulty of managing black servants” (382).

The speech is surprising and does not fit the description of Mrs. Catlett or the enslaved members of the Catlett plantation that we have seen in the novel previously. There is not, in fact, a single scene of Mrs. Catlett attempting to teach anything at all. She is most often noted for her listless, apathetic housekeeping punctuated by moments of cruelty towards the men, women, and children who wait on her. If Corning is here attempting to emphasize the importance of mutual understanding between North and South, the effect is undercut by the preponderance of contradictory evidence about slavery on the Catlett plantation in previous parts of the book. Moreover, since Peter is naming concrete, physical evidence of decay and incompetence and Fanny, fevered and recently returned from a traumatic encounter with a mob, is merely explaining them away as unimportant, the overall impression is that Fanny has been somehow brainwashed. Her uncharacteristic behavior makes her seem for the first time really in need of rescue, not from temporarily depraved drunken ruffians, but from the very Southerners who, throughout the text, have shown the most potential for conversion.

This impression is heightened by the fact that Fanny’s behavior presents a passivity that does not fit with her previous persona. Prior to this, Fanny has been portrayed as a vigorous defender of the New England way of life. She responds to Mr.

Catlett's jokes about her home region "with spirit" (11). She tells Chester she "cannot let any insinuation against New England ladies go undisputed" (199), and she remonstrates with Mrs. Catlett to be kinder to Tilla (163). In this scene, however, she not only seems to have accepted the Catlett's obviously bad habits, she responds equally listlessly to Uncle Peter. When he tells her to "make up your mind to get ready, and go with me like a sensible girl," the normally voluble Fanny makes "no reply" (387).

Two curious things, then, have happened to coincide with Uncle Peter's arrival. The Catlett's farm has grown significantly worse and Fanny significantly more submissive. The effect is to make Fanny definitely a captive in need of rescue and not the redeeming white woman of the Western temperance redemption plot. The move also fits a pattern Castiglia identifies as peculiar to captivity narratives: "Forced by historical necessity to anticipate and appeal to a masculine audience," Castiglia writes, "white women frequently conclude their captivity by depicting themselves as passive, vulnerable, xenophobic – in short, as 'rescuable' in marked contrast to their earlier self representations" (120). Certainly, Fanny in her weakened condition seems both "passive" and "vulnerable." The xenophobia, which in Indian captivity narratives is expressed when the heroine recovers her temporarily misplaced hatred of her captors is, in this third-person novel, supplied by the newly darkened vision of the Catlett's living conditions that filters to the reader from Uncle Peter's critical and apparently clear-sighted appraisal of the state of the plantation.

The novel ends happily enough with Fanny back in New England writing regularly to Chester, who has entered seminary. The youngest Catlett daughter is contemplating a life as a Western missionary and even Madam Gamby has apologized for

her bad behavior. However, Peter's odd reappearance, Fanny's abrupt departure, and the reestablishment of patriarchal authority — in other words, the text's resolution along the lines of the captivity narrative — indicates that the substitution of white drunkards for Indian captors has created anxieties the text cannot adequately address. That is, that the conflict between North and South was based on profound differences and that the two peoples perhaps could not be united either a single roof or a single flag. Had the novel ended with a redemption plot and Fanny married to a reformed Catlett who was now tempted neither by drunkenness or ruffianism, there might have been hope for national reunification. However, Fanny's failure to influence the drunken mob indicates that whatever their surface appearances, they are in fact, irredeemable and foreign. The only possible response is for Fanny to be reclaimed by the rescuing white men who must now prepare for war.

CONCLUSION

I began this chapter by taking up, for a second time, William Cullen Bryant's paean to U.S. conquest, "The Western World." It seemed curious to me that two of the most respected and well-known authors of the nineteenth century (Whitman and Child) would see in his lines of self-congratulatory nationalism the seeds of a story about national decay. They recognized, it seemed, that the popular, comforting image of Indians fading away could not be separated from the reality of genocide, violence, and disorder, and so could not read the poem's triumphalism without a trace of irony. That they would both, eventually, discuss that reality in terms of alcohol: of drunkenness and sobriety and the easy slippage between the two states, indicates the extent to which the temperance had become much more than a social movement or even the raw material out of which, as

Reynolds argues, the “major authors” of the period fashioned powerful literature. It was also one of the fundamental metaphors by which U.S. Americans strove to understand, to explain, and explain away the anarchic process of U.S. empire, with its contradictory and ultimately impossible desire to conquer and incorporate foreign land while remaining simultaneously “pure.”

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: ANTEBELLUM WESTERN TEMPERANCE AS A USABLE PAST FOR WHITE WOMEN

Temperance writing of the first half of the nineteenth century was, of course, only the beginning of the story, especially for U.S. women. After a forced hiatus during the Civil War, their temperance activism only intensified. In 1872, women in Ohio began praying and singing in front of saloons to shame their owners out of business. This “Women’s Crusade” spread rapidly across the Western United States and gave birth eventually to the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the most powerful women’s activist organization the nation, and, for that matter, the world, had ever seen (Bordin 15).

Many WCTU women’s first experiences of activism had come through the emergent Republican Party’s support of anti-slavery, women’s rights, and temperance in the 1850s. They had grown up reading temperance tracts, listening to ministers and politicians speak in support of the Maine Law, and waiting anxiously for reports of drunken border ruffians to filter in from Kansas Territory. One of these women, Frances Willard, who served as WCTU president from 1879 until her death in 1898, became the most powerful leader in the organization’s history. Willard was, like many of the Western temperance heroines I have discussed thus far, an Easterner transplanted to the then-frontier. In 1841, when she was only two, her father moved the family from New York to Oberlin, Ohio. In 1846 they moved west again, to a farm on the outskirts of Janesville, Wisconsin and later settled in Evanston, Illinois. Once there, her family quickly became involved with Republican Party leaders and organizers (Gifford and Slagel xxiv).

Willard “gained significant insight into how the American political process worked by observing the organization of grassroots support for the Republican Party.” She also watched enviously as her brother and father marched off to vote for John C. Frémont, in the 1856 presidential election (Gifford and Slagell xxiv-xxv).

This reform-minded frontier heritage was to become a key part of her personal mythology. In her tenth presidential address to the WCTU in 1889, she affirmed, “patriotism has always been part and parcel of my religion. From the first flag I ever saw, made for me by my mother when I was a little prairie girl [...] I have always looked upon America as the Majestic Mother” (qtd. in Gifford and Slagell 139). In 1891, she praised Elizabeth Cady Stanton for advocating women’s rights “when I was but a romping girl upon a prairie farm” (qtd. in Gifford and Slagell 150), and in her memoir *A Wheel within a Wheel: How I Learned to Ride a Bicycle* (1895), she mused nostalgically on the freedom of her prairie girlhood.

More problematically, Willard also invoked this past as a defense against charges of racism. Though the WCTU accepted black members, those members were marginalized within the organization’s power structure and confined to segregated chapters. In 1894, Willard faced intense criticism from African American activist Ida B. Wells for tacitly accepting the claim that Southern lynching was justified by black men’s rape of white women. Gifford and Slagell note that Willard was “unable to respond to the racial issues at the core of this controversy” (194). More specifically, as Maegan Parker points out, much of Willard’s argument for women’s rights was built on the idea that white women, particularly, were desireless and pure and therefore fit guardians of the

home. She could not, or would not, admit Wells's argument that Southern white women had consensual sex with black men, nor could Willard accept women of color as equals.

As if to emphasize her inability to change with the changing times, more than thirty years after the end of the Civil War, Willard was still using her family's antebellum progressive activism to explain both her current attitudes towards race and those of the WCTU itself. During her fifteenth presidential address in 1894, she dismissed Willard's charges by saying:

The World's and National W.C.T.U take no cognizance of color either in their social customs or their legislation, and never have done so. It would have been impossible for me to be interested in a movement that made any such distinction, for my ancestors on both sides were, without exception, devotedly loyal to the colored race, and my earliest recollections are of an abolition home, and an abolition college town of which my parents and all relatives who enjoyed the higher education were at one time or another students or graduates

The excerpt and the dismissive remainder of the speech make a number of things clear. First, Willard believed that she, and by extension, the organization she controlled, was immune to charges of racism as a result of her "ancestors'" abolition activity. Second, despite her claim to "take no cognizance of color" she saw those ancestors as patrons of "the colored race," rescuers whose devoted loyalty placed them in a necessarily superior position. Finally, her failure to grasp Wells's fundamental critique of the WCTU's racist ideology and her blindness to her own racism, is somehow linked to her conception of herself as a descendent of antebellum temperance and abolition heroes.

In other words, it seems that Willard had created what is often called a “usable past” in order to grant herself and the WCTU’s white membership both the moral authority to preside over an international crusade and immunity from charges of racism. The term “usable past” was coined by the progressive-era literary critic Van Wyck Brooks and elucidated in his 1918 essay “On Creating a Usable Past.” Brooks was talking specifically about the need for U.S. writers to reject received national literary history in order to be free to form a new understanding of themselves as artists. However, the essay is peppered with evocative and far-reaching statements such as this:

The past is an inexhaustible storehouse of apt attitudes and adaptable ideals; it opens of itself at the touch of desire; it yields up, now this treasure, now that, to anyone who comes to it armed with a capacity for personal choices. If, then, we cannot use the past our professors offer us, is there any reason why we should not create others of our own? (339)

And this:

Every people selects from the experience of other people whatever contributes most vitally to its own development. The history of France that survives in the mind of Italy is totally different from the history of France that survives in the mind of England, and from this point of view there are just as many histories of America as there are nations to possess them.

(339)

Thus the idea of a “usable past,” in general, and as I use it here, refers as Jeffery Olick puts it, to “an invention or at least a retrospective reconstruction to serve the needs of the present” (19). The question that interests me, as I draw this project to a close, is if (and if

so, how) late nineteenth-century white temperance women, represented most publicly by Frances Willard, drew on antebellum temperance rhetoric to shape for themselves a “usable past” that provided the sense moral authority and white superiority necessary to launch a national and international crusade.

Throughout this project my analyses of temperance rhetoric in literature and its relationship to U.S. expansion has worked from the new historicist premise that literary texts circulate with nonliterary ones within a specific historical and cultural milieu. However, in making these connections, I have been aware of Murphy’s caveat in *Hemispheric Imaginings* that “lines of causality” between literary expression and socio-political reality are “impossible to trace with any degree of empirical certainty” (18). Instead, I have relied on her strategy of examining how “one discursive utterance both relies on and modifies a shared discourse, which can in turn affect subsequent words and actions” (18). That warning, and the necessarily tentative conclusions that result from such an analysis of the shifting form of shared discourse, is perhaps most important to keep in mind here, where my hope is only to point towards an avenue of future scholarship.

In closing, then, I offer one example, one potential way to approach my question about the relationship between the Western temperance tales that entertained post-bellum reformers in their youth and the myths they believed in old age. That example is Frances Dana Gage’s 1867 novel, *Elsie Magoon, or The Old Still-House in the Hollow: A Tale of the Past*. It offers at least partial evidence that, in the years after the Civil War, temperance women began to fashion out of numerous antebellum tales of Western degradation and redemption an alternate history of U.S. empire-formation. The novel,

then, can be tentatively read as the beginnings of late-nineteenth century temperance women's "usable past."

Gage (1808-1884) was a women's rights and temperance activist who is today most discussed by scholars for her 1863 written account of Sojourner Truth's "Aren't I a Woman" speech at the 1851 Women's Rights convention in Akron, Ohio. This particular incident has received the attention of historians and literary critics for what it reveals about the politics of white, female abolitionists — the "ancestors" Frances Willard spoke of with such affection. Historian Louise Michelle Newman explains that Gage's rendering of the speech, which focuses on Truth's physical prowess and repeats the line "Aren't I a woman" multiple times, was on one level intended as a response to "opponents of woman's rights who were asserting that (white) women's need for physical protection and support was a legitimate justification for their exclusion from the franchise" (36). On another level, it reflected the fact that while "white women sometimes invoked claims to a universal sisterhood that contained assumptions about a universal womanly character," at others times, they invoked "a new self-understanding [...] that they, as white women, had a moral responsibility to reform an evil political system" (Newman 61). In other words, in 1863, Gage was already invested in the idea of white women's "devotedly loyal" service to women of color they assumed to be inferior.

Before the Civil War, Gage wrote for various reformist newspapers, including Amelia Bloomer's *The Lily*, where her series of temperance stories, "Tales of Truth," were published. She was also the author of a number of moralistic children's books written under the pseudonym "Aunt Fanny" and crusaded tirelessly for abolition and women's rights. It is not unreasonable to imagine that Frances Willard, coming of age in

a hotbed of Republican activism, would have run across Gage's tales. After the war, with the question of abolition, at least, settled, Gage turned more significant attention to temperance, publishing three temperance-themed novels between 1868 and 1870: *Elsie Magoon*, *Gertie's Sacrifice or Glimpses at two Lives* (1869), and *Steps Upward* (1870). The novels are occasionally mentioned for their explication of Gage's women's rights positions (Smith), and a 1988 article by Mary Loeffelholz examines the "subversive" potential of *Elsie Magoon*. For the most part, though, all three books have been ignored by scholars. Certainly, no one seems to have paid particular attention to the fact that *Elsie Magoon* is a work of historical fiction that incorporates the themes of frontier temperance I discuss above.

Gage's novel draws on Western redemption and degradation tales of the antebellum period, discusses issues of captivity in relation to the permeable boundary between whiteness and Indianness, and clearly figures the settling of the West as primarily the work of temperance women of previous generations. In so doing, Gage not only melds the mythical image of the frontier with the moral cause of temperance, she also creates for temperance women a version of U.S. history in which white women's antebellum political and economic action was essential to national survival. Ultimately, these strategies work to fix the "postcolonial blend" of *A New Home Who'll Follow*, the ambivalent desire both to incorporate Indian identity and obliterate it seen in *Franklin Evans* and the *The Kansas Emigrants*, and the fundamental uncertainty about the nation's future that dominated the 1850s, into a historical version of the West as rigidly defined by class and race the one in Cooper's romances. The only difference is that white women, instead of men, occupy the pinnacle position of power.

The story related in *Elsie Magoon* begins around 1818 and ends in 1858. The novel contains multiple ancillary subplots but is essentially the story of Mrs. Elsie Magoon, her husband, Richard, and their eldest daughter, also named Elsie. Like many of their temperance tale precursors, Richard and Mrs. Magoon are upstanding former denizens of Massachusetts, who have moved to the early frontier town of Smithville, Ohio. They have “brought with them to their new home the sterling virtues and indomitable force of will and character, native to the air of their beloved State” (13). However, a debt he owes to his vindictive father-in-law drives Richard to open a still-house, since he assumes it will be a sure form of income. As might be predicted, the introduction of hard liquor to the formerly temperate town wreaks disaster and reduces Richard to alcoholism. Eventually, since the novel is also an indictment of property laws that favored men, Mrs. Magoon gains control of the estate, shuts down the still-house, and restores order to the town. Richard lives, emasculated but happy, for a few years before succumbing to the lingering effects of heavy drinking. The novel ends with a final redemption tale. Elsie’s younger sister moves to San Francisco, where her husband becomes an alcoholic and is unjustly accused of murder. Elsie goes to San Francisco, is surprised by the appearance of her long-lost-lover-turned-successful-attorney, and together with him exonerates the brother-in-law and starts the west coast family on the path to temperance.

Throughout *Elsie Magoon*, Gage recycles a number of Western degradation tropes to establish that the West is a deadly region for alcoholics and that their presence thus weakens the frontier community. In one of the novel’s early scenes a young man is killed during the still-house’s raising because (as in *A New Home* and numerous

degradation tales) the men are drinking while they work. Five years later, Truman, the man who caused the accident, has become a confirmed alcoholic, and his children have turned “even more wild and ungovernable,” like the Catlett brood (42). This “wildness,” in fact, appears to have afflicted most of the community’s offspring since, a few pages later, Elsie remarks to Richard, “Just think what schools we have now; what rowdyism; what wild young men” (51). Shortly thereafter, two of the town’s most promising boys get into a drunken brawl that ends in murder. The force turning the sons into killers is also killing their fathers. One, in particular, “who had been a reputed man of wealth and character” becomes an alcoholic and falls “ready prey to a violent Western fever which seldom spares its victims, if addicted to intemperance” (63-64). Similarly, a family friend’s husband, in a scene reminiscent of the death in Gage’s earlier “Tales of Truth (No. 1),” falls face-first into a wallowing hole dug by pigs and freezes to death (284).

In a move that also echoes degradation tales, Gage shows drunkards’ wives and daughters successfully settling the West. As in a number of the tales described in previous chapters, Mrs. Magoon’s sons are removed from the story, becoming respectable but distant residents of neighboring towns while her daughters, particularly her namesake, Elsie, take up the temperance cause. Focus shifts to Elsie and her temperance work approximately halfway through the novel. Her efforts include delivering public lectures despite the objections of “the majority of townspeople [who] opposed the idea of a woman speaking in public” (271), recruiting for the local chapter of the Sons of Temperance despite their policy against women laboring “publicly in the cause,” and traveling as a sort of temperance evangelist despite the censure of the local

Daughters of Temperance who “refused to recognize the efforts of Elsie as in harmony with their own” (276).

Through Elsie’s story, Gage is obviously writing a thinly veiled account of the events that roiled the temperance movement in the early 1850s. As reformers’ strategy shifted from moral suasion to legislative reform, temperance women became increasingly uncomfortable with their limited public role. Susan B. Anthony formed the first women’s temperance society in 1852 after being denied the right to speak at a New York temperance convention (Bordin 5). In 1853, temperance organizer Clarina Howard Nichols found herself “forced to defend women’s rights at a number of stops” on her lecture tour of Wisconsin “because of the prejudice toward women speakers” (Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women* 16). Amelia Bloomer refused to join the Daughters of Temperance “because women were only accepted into the auxiliary unit” (Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women* 26). And finally, from the late 1830s through the 1850s, Gage herself wrote for reformist newspapers in favor of temperance and went on frequent lecturing tours (Smith 3).

The similarity between Elsie’s activism and that of Gage and her antebellum compatriots lends credence to the argument that *Elsie Magoon* is an attempt to create a positive vision of temperance women in the history of Western settlement. Interestingly, it also avoids any discussion of impending war or the border politics that pitted free-state and pro-slave Westerners against each other. This erasure of any political context beyond the need for a national Maine Law and female property rights to limit the damage caused by drunkard husbands has two effects. First, like Western redemption tales, it makes eventual continental domination and national unity foregone conclusions. Second, it

emphasizes Brooks' assertion that "there are just as many histories of America as there are nations [or groups] to possess them" (339). Where Child and Corning used alcoholism as a metaphor to explain the nation's impending disintegration, Gage, looking back at the same period, makes actual alcoholism the nation's most pressing problem.

Elsie Magoon, though, is not entirely, or even primarily, about Elsie. It begins as Mrs. Magoon's story, and she remains an important figure throughout. According to the novel's (occasionally vague) chronology, Mrs. Magoon and Richard arrived in Ohio from Massachusetts around 1811, and he decided to open the still-house approximately seven years later, when the story begins. The town's subsequent descent into alcoholic poverty occurs over the next twenty years or so. Thus while Elsie would have come of age alongside Kate Bradford, Mrs. Magoon is roughly the same age as Mrs. Clavers.³⁵ Her powerful influence over her children, none of whom become alcoholics, places her in the role of the heroine of the antebellum degradation tales. She is one of those women who find in the West the strength of moral character that her husband lacks and, as a result, is able to "mother" a new generation of pioneers.

In antebellum degradation tales, however, the heroic mother's specific interventions are either not fully explained or are limited to dispensing motherly advice and maintaining the home. In her portrait of Mrs. Magoon, Gage seems determined to rework this familiar character in order to create in her readers' minds a more aggressive and less domestic Western temperance foremother. In so doing, she locates the genesis of white women's organized temperance activism even further back in time, on the mythical early frontier. The fatal fight between the two young men mentioned above occurs early on in the text, around the year 1824. At the funeral, Smithville's minister

inveighs against alcohol and then encourages the congregation to sign a temperance pledge. One woman rises “partly from her seat” before being pulled back down by the “strong hand of her husband” (60). Another “young wife rose, and advanced a step when the husband caught his hat, twitched her sleeve and left the house” (61). In the end, Mrs. Magoon is the only woman in the entire assembly to sign the pledge, and she does so without Richard’s knowledge or consent. Before returning to her seat, she briefly addresses the congregation with the words “Alone! – I stand alone” (61).

The scene sets Mrs. Magoon apart in ways that foreshadow later issues in the temperance movement. She appears in public without her husband while the women around her are closely watched and physically restrained. She is willing to risk her husband’s wrath by inflicting on him a profound humiliation — he is, after all, the sole proprietor of the community still-house. And finally, in a detail that cannot, for Gage, have lacked significance, she breaks spontaneously into a brief public address before a mixed-gender assembly. The message appears to be that the unprecedented activism of reform women in the 1850s was the result of the rebellious nature of their Western emigrant mothers.

As the novel continues, Mrs. Magoon’s transgressions against acceptably submissive domestic behavior grow more flagrant. Shortly after her declaration at the funeral, she and the murderer’s sister help him to escape prison, on the principle that the still-house was infinitely more responsible for his crime than he (71). Several years after that (the novel passes over great swaths of time in a sentence or two), Mrs. Magoon organizes an alcohol-free Fourth of July celebration. Since the occasion usually involves copious drinking, she must first win over the women’s association charged with planning

the event. She accomplishes this by delivering a strongly worded impromptu speech, which the women respond to

as if a spell were upon them, every hand was raised. So all-pervading is the influence of one strong heart in the cause of right. Few know their own power, or the influence they may exert over others. A resolute, determined “I can, and I will,” has often saved a neighborhood. The bold, fervid spirit leads on the mob, and the same spirit by its subtile [sic] magnetism can subdue it. (79)

The language used to describe Mrs. Magoon’s influence over the women reprises and intensifies the nonconformist tendencies she displayed at the funeral. Just as in that previous scene, she spontaneously rises to speak. Here, though the audience is appropriately female, Gage gives Mrs. Magoon the “subtile magnetism” of a mob leader. Mobs in temperance fiction and, one supposes, nineteenth-century reality, were made up of men intent on enacting some violent retribution or effecting through violence some political or legal change. Where Mrs. Magoon’s first public address briefly usurped the public space of the male minister, her second is described in terms tinged with violence and masculine action.

Shortly after Mrs. Magoon’s speech, Richard returns home drunk and in a rage over her interference in his Independence Day liquor business. When he follows her into the cellar muttering “the most terrible curses and threats,” she, “by an adroit and quick movement [...] passed him, stepped out” and locked the door. Gage notes that though “a woman of less resolute and determined will” would have released Richard fairly quickly, Mrs. Magoon continues his confinement until the next day, when he emerges chastened

and apologetic. The chapter ends with the sentence, “She had conquered!” This scene, too, echoes the incident in the church. In that moment, each husband restrained his wife from obeying the dictates of her conscience. Here Mrs. Magoon exerts that same “husbandly” physical force over Richard to remind him of his. The cumulative effect of this series of unlikely events, which ends, as I noted above, with Mrs. Magoon taking her husband’s place as head of the household is, to create out of Mrs. Magoon a fit progenitor for 1850s activists and the post-bellum founders of the WCTU. But it also paints a portrait of an early Western woman Gage’s readers might have found anachronistic and unsettlingly undomesticated. It is thus worth exploring the particular strategies Gage uses to explain and justify Mrs. Magoon’s behavior.

As we have seen, the first radical action Mrs. Magoon takes is her public speech at the young man’s funeral. On the evening before that event, she sits on her steps pondering the pernicious hold alcohol seems to have over the town. She considers the “many homes [filled] with desolation and death” and then,

by an instinctive movement, she leaped to her feet and turned sharply round to see if the flames had not seized [her home] or some frightful calamity overtaken it. There it stood! The home of her beloved, free from all apparent evil; the starlight clung lovingly about it, the tender vines hung their festoons of beauty and grace upon it. But through all this vision of its peace and loveliness, she saw fearful shadows threatening it — fierce fiendish shapes closing about it, — until to shut out all, she sank again upon the step where *he* had so often sat with her beneath the holy stars, when their hearts were as peaceful and unclouded. (57)

This very image is discussed in chapters three and four alongside Keetley's assertion that it represents in numerous Western narratives "the momentary convergence of domesticity and heroic, even violent action in the body of the pioneer woman" (22). In the scenes Keetley describes, the "savagery" at the doorstep is embodied by Indians. When Child and Corning reimagined that "savagery" as mobs of drunken white men, they did so in order to emphasize the foreign and degraded nature of Southerners. Gage's references to "fearful shadows" and "fiends," invokes that same association between alcoholism and racial degradation, but in her no-doubt conscious reworking of the scene, "savagery" is embodied by a husband and father. Thus, where Kate Bradford was justified in defending her home against Missourians but was required to revert back to trembling motherliness as soon as the threat was removed, the transformation of Mr. Magoon and the rest of Smithville's husbands and brothers into "fiends" justifies Mrs. Magoon's near-permanent adoption of "masculine" behavior. This blending of temperance activism with a recognizable frontier myth may also have made Gage's apparent historical inaccuracies easier for readers to swallow.

As I touch on briefly above, in creating this heroic frontierswoman, Gage employs one of the problematic strategies of earlier Western temperance fiction: the effacement of political conflict or racial difference from the Western frontier. In chapter three, I argued that this allowed temperance stories to use the idea of an unspoiled West as the ultimate solution to the problem of an ambiguous and liminal national identity in which whiteness was no longer necessarily a determiner of citizenship nor proof of superior self-control and independent will. Gage, like these previous authors, downplays the Indian threat to white emigrants and indicates that that Indians' removal was brought about with little

trouble long before Richard and Elsie ever arrived. In Gage's only reference to Indian/white conflict, a woman giving a presentation about the early history of Ohio equates Indian people with animals by stating, "The danger had passed; the wild beast and the savage had been subdued" (221). Given these images, Gage's historical West is, like the West of antebellum temperance tales, a new New England. The threat it faced was not the violent resistance of foreign nations or hostile tribes — Indians had faded cooperatively away without a fuss — it is instead the male alcoholism that affords white women the opportunity for heroism.

Yet sandwiched between these two references to removal is a rather curious allusion to a character named Granny Hall. After a man has been killed in the town's very first drunken accident and his wife becomes hysterical and eventually insane, she is attended to by Hall, "the Indian 'doctor-woman' as she was called, — who, without the learning, had more native skill in disease than many a diplomaed M.D. of our times" (26). Hall, Gage is quick to add, was not called an Indian "because the blood of that race was in her veins, but because having been carried off in her youth from a frontier settlement, she had learned during her seven year's captivity among them, all the secrets of the medical art in their rude hands [...] The hardy life of these children of Nature had brought to its fullest development the frame of the robust maiden" (27). Here, Gage seems to be drawing on that strain of settler consciousness I identified above in *A New Home Who'll Follow* and in the chapter one's discussion of Whitman's *Franklin Evans*. Just like Mr. Lee in Whitman's text and, to a lesser degree, Mrs. Clavers in *A New Home*, the character of Granny Hall suggests that the successful settler community is one that

has absorbed the positive elements of “Indianness” and now can put them to use for the benefit of the nation.

However, unlike in *Franklin Evans* and *A New Home*, this absorption does not occur in the body of the wealthy, temperate paragon, but in a marginalized figure marked by her dialect as lower class and possibly racially other. “Now honey, you just go lie down, or you’ll be where *she is* ‘fore you know it; go right ‘long, Granny knows” (27-28), is one of Hall’s only lines in the text. There are no African American characters in the book, the Irish characters’ speech is written in a significantly different dialect, and the poorer whites of Smithville are not marked by any alternate speech patterns at all.³⁶ Hall’s speech, then, seems to indicate that, whatever her homeopathic expertise, a woman who can be brought to her “fullest development” in a life with Indians remains tainted even after she has been reintegrated into white society. She is useful in that she has retained what was useful of the expelled civilization, but she is not, and never can be, fully part of the community. That Granny Hall falls asleep reading her bible and allows the grief-maddened widow to wander into her husband’s funeral, where she is attended to by an “aged minister,” is further indication of her ultimate unfitness for the work of the white women whose destiny it is to take up the temperance cause. Gage’s two-generation saga combines and intensifies the familiar plots of antebellum temperance fiction in order to provide a usable past for the rising generation of temperance women. Midway through the novel, Mrs. Magoon passes the baton to Elsie who later extends it to women of the growing temperance crusade. It is significant, then, that Elsie’s last act – her journey to California to rescue her sister, Mary, and drunkard brother-in-law, Walter, is one that

exemplifies both her mother's women's rights ethos and the classism and racism that are the legacy of a heroic history built on the myths of U.S. conquest.

The women's rights message is obvious both in the fact that Elsie journeys west and in the particular form that the journey takes. Keetley has argued that white women's traditional role was "disarming men's impulse to rove further west" (19). Elsie subverts this expectation by boarding a ship from New York to San Francisco, thus taking the same route of numerous adventurous sailors and gold-hunters. Before departing she also rejects the proffered protection of a male friend by saying, "A woman who cannot protect herself [...], in these days when men treat women with so much kindness, is scarcely worth protecting" (304). Previously, Gage has reminded her readers that Walter and Mary departed for California in 1848, a year that was certain to trigger an association with the California gold rush and the waves of rough men who journey to populate the camps there. Elsie's brusque rejection, then, serves as a reminder to Gage's 1870s readership, that the temperance woman of the recent past was neither in need of male protection nor particularly intimidated by the men they were likely to find in Western outposts — men who, it went without saying, might not be prepared to treat an unaccompanied woman with "so much kindness."

The racist and classist elements of Elsie's final journey are slightly more subtle, but still apparent. Once in California, Elsie introduces herself, half-missionary, half-rescuing hero, as a "visitor from the States" (306). She first puts to rights her sister's household, which is being poorly run by an Irish maid. The woman is both instinctively servile and a domestic failure. After having been acquainted with the maid for no more than ten minutes, Elsie sends the "faithful Elsie out for food" and begins combing her

sister's unkempt hair (307). She then proceeds to the jail to rescue her brother-in-law. Once there, she finds her long-lost ex-lover, Fred Hill prepared to defend Walter. In one of the final scenes of the novel, Elsie contrasts her dissipated brother-in-law Fred Hill. Walter Heath's "beautiful complexion, once so clear" has become "crimson and purple, his fine blue eyes, lurid and blood shot" (310). The now-temperate Hill, who originally fled his home after a drunken altercation with his father, stands next to him, "in his manly strength and health," resembling "an angel of light" (311). The implication is clear: the perpetually moving Western frontier, first in Ohio and finally in California, was conquered by pure white women who, through their temperate influence, rescued white men from the terrifying, racially-inflected degradation of liquor.

CONCLUSION

The ambiguous liminality of the early nineteenth century frontier, where rich white men could be far more dangerous scoundrels than Indians, and a white woman's helpless purity was as often a curse as a blessing, was represented in Kirkland's text by the alcohol that flowed in equal measure among rich and poor alike. Whitman imagined the possibility that some absorption of Indianness could lend legitimacy to the white North American, while Apess envisioned the Indian as temperate exemplar of U.S. citizenship. The antebellum United States was a place whose ill-defined boundaries and fundamental uncertainty allowed each of these authors to create, through the lens of temperance, the possibility of a new, hybrid U.S. citizen who accepted rather than feared the potential permeability of racial and class boundaries. By the end of the Civil War, Gage saw, instead, a teleological progression of white civilization, the story of which

could be altered ever so slightly and put to use to assure the ascendancy of white women, empowered by temperance activism.

I suspect that that story influenced the post-bellum women's temperance movement more than has previously been acknowledged or understood. This concluding reflection on Gage's novel is a tentative step towards connecting antebellum U.S. temperance activism to the imperial ambitions of the WCTU in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Part of the reason Willard was forced to respond to Wells's critique was that news of her alleged support of lynching had reached England, and thus put in jeopardy the massive international, missionary efforts of the World's WCTU. The organization, it should be noted, weathered that particular storm, and by 1927 had "more than forty national affiliates and many more countries" not to mention 766,00 members worldwide" (Tyrell, *Women's World* 2).

Ian Tyrell notes in *Woman's World/Woman's Empire* the "profound connections of the WCTU's international campaigns with cultural imperialism" (147). Missionaries and WCTU temperance reformers saw their crusade against the international alcohol trade as a critique of economic imperialism. However, since reformers "sought to assert reform through Western, imperial structures and the morally ambiguous principle of trusteeship to little brown brothers and sisters, the implication was always that just imperial authority would remove the source of friction and establish the legitimacy of imperial rule" (142). It seems to me, then, that just as the U.S.'s transition from territorial expansion by means of "adjacence" to global imperialism in the late nineteenth century was intimately connected to its earlier continental conquest, so the international efforts of

late nineteenth century temperance women could be built upon myths crafted from the sometimes-ambiguous rhetoric of antebellum frontier temperance (Said 10).

That, of course, is a project for another day. But in these closing pages, I feel I should return to that afternoon in late November with which I opened this dissertation. My students, if you recall, had made the casual assumption that “western” meant “American” and “American” meant “white” and that in otherness were the roots of addiction. At the time, I lifted a cautionary hand and said, “Well. Now. Hang on a minute. Think about what we’re saying here. All the soldiers in this book aren’t even white. I don’t think we want to make these assumptions.” And the students, obedient, eager to please, and afraid of being wrong, acquiesced quickly. Apologized. Began wedging terms like “people of color” into awkward, hesitant sentences. If I could go back, which in teaching you rarely can, I would have said, “Well. Now. Hang on a minute. Think about what we’re saying here. I wonder why we’re talking this way? Let’s try to figure it out.”

Notes

1. The whiskey excise tax was the brainchild of treasury secretary Alexander Hamilton who knew congress was unlikely “to oppose a measure designed both to reduce drunkenness and to raise money” (Rorbaugh 52). The law was immediately unpopular in both the South and the West, and in 1792 congress altered it to exempt personally owned small stills (Rorbaugh 52). The change did not appease western Pennsylvanians, who argued that turning their grain into whiskey was the only reasonable way to profit from it. The Allegheny Mountains, they said, presented an insuperable obstacle to transporting raw grain to east coast markets. The region revolted in 1794, and Hamilton persuaded President Washington to put down the rebellion with federal troops. The troops won, but the law was soon repealed. Rorbaugh concludes that the tax was “not in line with the economic reality” that farmers needed a market for surplus grain, and that U.S. Americans “resented a measure that appeared to favor the rich who drank Madeira over the poor who drank whiskey” (55; 56)
2. Tyrell’s is still one of the most frequently cited studies of the U.S. temperance movement, though his analysis is not without its critics, which I mention when appropriate.
3. The remaining epigraphs come from Washingtonian temperance hymns and lectures and from widely recognizable sources like Shakespeare and Dickens. Since it is highly unlikely that both the editor of the *Common-Place* book and Whitman would happen upon the same poems independently of each other, it seems reasonable to assume that the text was a source.

4. First published in 1828, the account was edited and reissued in 1831. The 1831 version, which I reference unless otherwise indicated, is more smoothly written and is missing a long account of Apess's departure from the Methodist Episcopal Church because of its refusal to grant him a preaching license. He was eventually ordained in the more reformist, working-class Methodist Protestant Church (MPC). Mark J. Miller speculates that many of the edits to the second edition reflect Apess's attempt to follow the MPC's shift to a more conservative, less reformist position in the early 1830s.
5. For a discussion of the loss of physical whiteness and alcoholism, see Gautier 34 and Castiglia and Hendler vi.
6. The others gifts include a fiddle, playing cards, gold, and an old leg bone.
7. Eric Sundquist, who finds radical elements in Apess's later work, similarly dismisses *A Son of the Forest*, writing that it "is less interesting as autobiography than as a text that mirrors Christianity's uneasy complicity in the process of conquest" (102).
8. Most scholars who discuss Apess and temperance focus on his founding of a temperance society among the Mashpee in New York during their revolt of 1833.
9. Apess's appendix to *A Son of the Forest*, which O'Connell notes is essentially a paraphrase of Elias Boudinot's *Star in the West* (1816), elaborates his position.
10. Others include "The Child's Champion" (1841), "Reuben's Last Wish" (1842), "Wild Frank's Return" (1841), and the unfinished temperance novel *The Madman*, an opening chapter of which was published in the New York *Washingtonian and Organ* in 1843.
11. A number of scholars link Whitman's temperance involvement to labor politics. Jerome Loving in *Walt Whitman, The Song of Himself*, argues that while Whitman clearly believed in the temperance cause when writing *Franklin Evans*, he was probably drawn

to the Washingtonians because it “became a labor movement in which workers were encouraged to abstain from the use of alcohol so as not to be exploited by their bosses” (72). Noting the importance of temperance to working-class politics, Betsy Erkkila in *Whitman the Political Poet*, writes that the “issue of temperance was basic to the cause of artisan republicanism in New York City,” and argues that Whitman’s true intention was to teach “the republican ‘system’ [...] through the temperance form” (32).

12. Apess’s text is a conversion narrative which, according to Carolyn Hanes and others, was written according to a very particular formula involving first a description of the author’s life before conversion, second the “conviction” or “awareness of [his] sinfulness,” third, his conversion and the immediate rewards of it, and finally “further temptation and subsequent renewal.” The illness and attendant visions of hell that Apess describes here are part of the second stage.

13. In the second half of the story, the daughter Maria is courted by Wharton, a recent arrival to the settlement. The elder Maria watches the courtship with growing and warranted anxiety. Wharton kills a man and frames Jack Murdock for the crime. Maria leaves her daughter to solve the crime. Wharton then bribes a band of Indians to kidnap her. She finally escapes, but not after discovering another white, female captive, naked and apparently insane, babbling Wharton’s name. After her escape, Maria is able to free her husband from prison. It is eventually revealed that the woman, Angelica, was a mistress Wharton imprisoned with the Indians after his wife discovered their affair and the murdered man the jealous husband of another seduced woman. At the end of the story, Wharton returns and makes his confession, and both he and the younger Maria die.

14. Sigourney published more than 200 pieces of prose and poetry over her career and, according to Gary Kelly, was “the major national female poetic voice for the middle-class American public” (16). The assertion that Sigourney’s text may have influenced other temperance writers is based both on her undisputed popularity and on a number of similarities between hers and other, later texts, including the alcoholic husband’s insistence on “hardening” a sickly son by throwing him outdoors in the midst of a storm.

15. The tale appears to have been written by Phoebe Hinsdale Brown, who published under the name “Mrs. P.H. Brown.” A similar version of the tale titled “The Victim” was published in Brown’s *The Tree and its Fruits or Narratives from Real Life* (1836).

16. The *Mother’s Magazine* began publication in Utica, New York in 1833. Its audience was white, middle-class women, and its stated goal was to instruct these women in meeting the “variety of responsibilities” they faced, most obviously instructing their children in proper Christian behavior (qtd. in Robbins 80). Sarah Robbins argues that additional recipients of the ideal mother’s instruction were female servants and the poor (80). The intense focus on a mother’s power in this story is thus also probably at least partially due to the editorial mission of the magazine.

17. Keetley’s omission is especially odd. Her thesis that Clavers’s identity as a white woman is irreconcilable with an identity as an Indian woman depends on arguing that Kirkland moves Indians to the periphery of the text. In order to support this argument she states that Indians appear only twice in *A New Home* — during the stay at the trader’s cabin and when Mrs. Clavers and Mrs. Rivers meet an Indian on horseback. Given Clavers’s description of trading with Indians in chapter twenty, Keetley’s assertion seems to be simply untrue.

18. Lydia Child (1802-1880) was, throughout her career, an activist espousing a number of progressive causes. Her early novel *Hobomok* (1824) recasts the Puritans as dour sexists and plays with the idea of interracial marriage. Later, she became active in the abolitionist movement, advocating for full membership rights for women and publishing, in 1833, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Known as Africans*. In 1868 she published *An Appeal for the Indians*, which indicted the U.S. government for its behavior towards the continent's native people.

19. It is extremely difficult to locate information about Mrs. Corning. Multiple scholars attribute *Fanny Hunter* to her without explanation. I have located excerpts from the novel attributed to her in periodical literature, the most notable being "A Western Christmas," contained in the anthology *A Budget of Christmas Tales* (1895). This is probably the origin of the critical consensus about the novel's authorship. There was a Reverend W.H. Corning who appears as a donor in the 1858 donor records of *The Missionary Herald*, published by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He was married to a woman named Mary Spring. Another Mary Spring Corning authored two books, titled *Miss Elliot's Girls* and *The Patchwork Quilt Society*, both published in 1886. I surmise that this Mary Spring Corning may be the daughter of the Mrs. W.H. Corning who wrote *Fanny Hunter*, though I have as yet been unable to verify that theory nor is it clear to me if *Fanny Hunter* is, as the two prefaces claim, based on the author's actual experiences in Missouri or not.

20. See Robert S. Levine, "'Whiskey, Blacking and All'": Temperance and Race in William Wells Brown's *Clotel*' *The Serpent in the Cup in Temperance, Race, and American Literature*. See also Susan Marjorie Ziegler, "Mankind Has Been Drunk," in

Inventing the Addict: Drugs, Race and Sexuality in Nineteenth Century British and American Literature.

21. According to Susan Marjorie Ziegler, in the 1850s, the metaphor of drunkard as slave reversed itself, so that drunkenness became instead a metaphor for slave mastery. “Two figures,” she argues, “come to dominate the racial history of addiction: the master whose condition signifies his vicious enjoyment of violence toward chattel, and the drunken slave whose condition signifies the intense misery of all chattel slaves” (67). Slave owners like Stowe’s well-meaning but impotent Augustine St. Clare and the dangerous, drunk Simon Legree illustrated this first type.

22. Cordley does not explain what this “other” form of persuasion was, though it seems from the context that he is referring to the violent destruction of the liquor-seller’s stock.

23. For a full description, see Oertel 77.

24. This event is obviously modeled on the real-life shooting of free-state settler Thomas Barber, which was recounted in Sara Robinson’s narrative.

25. “The Church in the Wilderness” is one example of this critique as is *An Appeal for the Indians*.

26. Dustan’s name is also spelled Dustin and Duston, depending on the text.

27 This first type of imagery — that of Kansas as virgin land — precipitated the caning of Charles Sumner. In his May 20, 1856 speech “The Crime Against Kansas,” he compared the Missourian’s invasion to rape, infuriating Southerners.

28. The captivity genre included accounts, like Mary Rowlandson’s, which seem to be, as much as is possible, factual accounts related by a participant in the event. Others, for example, “A Surprising Account of a Lady” (1787) appear to be entirely fictional

(Derounian-Stodola xix). Still others, such as *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan* (1795) and *A Genuine and Correct Account* (1792) by Jemima Howe, despite “factual foundation [...] exploit the growing popularity of sentimental fiction and enhance readability” (Derounian-Stodola xix). These types of narratives can best be understood as “fictionalized” renderings of actual events.

29. Rowlandson’s narrative was frequently included or summarized in anthologies of American literature. In 1826, “An Oration” by Isaac Goodwin commemorating the 150th anniversary of the destruction of Lancaster, Massachusetts commented, “The details of that day of carnage and ruin are sufficiently familiar to your minds” (324). Two new encyclopedias of American literature, both published in 1888, referenced Rowlandson’s inclusion without explanatory comment in the same sentence as William Penn and John Adams, suggesting that for most nineteenth-century U.S. Americans, “Mary Rowlandson” was a household name.

30. The popular eighteenth-century narrative, *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson*, recounts Mrs. Hanson watching a maid prevail “with the biggest [child] to be quiet and still” (67). The child could not stop screaming and was killed. Similarly, *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Sufferings and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe* (1758) describes being forced to give her child up to a group of Indians in these terms: “The babe clung to my bosom with all its might; but I was obliged to pluck it thence, and deliver it, shrieking and screaming, enough to penetrate a heart of stone, into the hands of those unfeeling wretches whose tender mercies may be termed cruel” (99). Much later, in 1836, *An Authentic Narrative of the Seminole War; and of the Miraculous Escape of Mary Godfrey*

and her Four Female Children was published. In that account, Mrs. Godfrey is driven into the Florida swamps to hide from the Seminole war bands. The narrative relates that “as the savages appeared by their yells to approach very near, to prevent a discovery she was obliged to use every exertion to induce her suffering little ones to stifle their cries and lamentations, though driven to it by pinching hunger and burning thirst!” (222).

31. The idea that Indians did not rape their captives was common in the nineteenth century. Captives had a vested interest in denying they had been violated, and it appears to be the case that New England-area tribes did not rape prisoners (Namias 89). Plains Indians, on the other hand, especially Comanche, did regularly use rape as a tool of war (Gwynne 44).

32. Except here, all citations come from the 1863 edition.

33. For example, see Frances Willard’s rueful acknowledgement in *Wheel Within a Wheel: How I Learned to Ride a Bicycle* (1895), that from the day when, at sixteen years of age, I was enwrapped in the long skirts that impeded every footstep, I have detested walking and felt with a certain noble disdain that the conventions of life had cut me off from what in the freedom of my prairie home had been one of life’s sweetest joys” (72).

Madeleine B. Stern’s assertion that Louisa May Alcott, who wrote in her journal as a young girl that she “ran in the wind and played be a horse,” would be forced to transfer “all the early exuberance” to the fictional Jo Marsh (7).

34. Gamby’s character also reverses a common critique of free-state women made by Southerners and Democrats. That is that their involvement in political organizing and military action — particularly in the period leading up to the sack of Lawrence —

had unsexed them. Oertel notes that a speech attributed to David Atchison in which he allegedly ordered that “Ladies should, and I hope will, be respected by every gentlemen. But when a woman takes upon herself the garb of a soldier, by carrying a Sharpe’s rifle, then she is no longer worthy of respect. Trample her underfoot as you would a snake!” (78). Oertel notes that whether or not Atchison actually made this speech, it shows that “violence against women who embodied traditional ideals of womanhood was prohibited; antislavery women with guns, however, deserved the same treatment as their male counterparts” (78).

35. It is possible that *Elsie Magoon* contains a veiled reference to Kirkland’s western writing. When two young men from the city happen upon the Magoon estate, one comments to the other that they are likely to find “the company of a man who will bore you to death about his crop, chew tobacco by the handful, and bespatter the porch floor for a yard around, whip two or three white headed urchins to bed before sundown and be yourself, nine times out of ten, invited to take a hand at paring apples for the old lady [...] and be acquainted in the meantime with all the village gossip and neighborhood scandal for miles around” (194-195). He follows this description with assurance that he knows it to be accurate because “You know our Eastern travellers are fond of writing Western adventures” (195). This description bears a resemblance to a number of Kirkland’s sketches, both in *A New Home* and *Western Life*, and reference to “Eastern travellers” makes it possible that there is a connection.

36. For more discussion of vernacular in U.S. nineteenth-century literature, see Gavin Jones’s *Strange Talk*. Jones discusses how written approximations of vernacular speech

were used to mark racial difference, as Gage does here, but also how they were used as a response to racism.

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