

"TO A CERTAIN DEGREE": NORTHERN EDUCATION REFORM,
SETTLER COLONIALISM, AND THE EARLY U. S. NOVEL, 1782-1872

By

Matthew E. Duquès

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

English

August, 2013

Nashville, TN

Approved:

Professor Dana D. Nelson

Professor Colin Dayan

Associate Professor Teresa A. Goddu

Professor Daniel J. Usner

For Diana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Chapter	
Introduction.....	1
I. Educating Settler Fathers and Citizens in Crèvecoeur’s <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> and Charles Brockden Brown’s <i>Edgar Huntly</i>	26
II. Educating Women of Pleasure in Hannah Foster’s <i>The Coquette</i> and Sukey Vickery’s <i>Emily Hamilton</i>	67
III. “A Carefully Guarded Standard”: Spanish Studies and James Fenimore Cooper’s <i>The Prairie</i>	115
IV. Common Schooling Lydia Maria Child’s <i>Philothea</i> and <i>A Romance of the Republic</i>	151
Coda: “Where We Have Been Heading All Along”: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Manifest Destiny, and the Politics of Education.....	196
Bibliography.....	207

Acknowledgements

I never would have completed my dissertation without the help of advisors, colleagues, family and friends. Dana Nelson always gave my writing, no matter how unpolished it was, the critical attention it needed and for that I know I will always be grateful. I also want to thank her for leaving articles and dog toys in my mailbox while I was in course work. I will always remember this unexpected, repeated kindness on her part. Colin Dayan's positive feedback and powerful writing has been a continued source of inspiration. From my participation in her print culture class to the present, Teresa Goddu has been a superbly constructive reader of my work and, at a challenging time for me, she gave me a job that helped me feel connected to the university community while I finished up my work.

During my fourth year, several of us formed a writing group composed of Americanists working on very different projects. I want to give special thanks here to that group for reading some very messy versions of my early chapters and for insisting I had great ideas, which only needed to be clarified. So thank you, Donika Ross, Chris Pexa, Elizabeth Barnett, and Nikki Spigner. Donika in particular, gave me some "tough talks" and read and reverse outlined much of my critical work with humorous yet always insightful outcomes.

I also want to thank my fellow fellows at the Robert Penn Warren Center: Diana Bellonby, Robert Watson, Anna-Lisa Haling, Joanna Marzurska, Alison Suen, Matt Eatough, Tara Plunkett, and Will Bishop. Rob, Tara and Diana helped create a unique mid-dissertation writing experience in Dauphin Island, AL in which we wrote, cooked, and hung out by the beach.

Several graduate students ahead of me or behind me in the program were kind enough to share their time and to listen to my ideas and to share their own. Justin Haynes, John J. Morrell, Sarah

Passino, and Derrick Spires gave me advice and friendship while they were finishing their degrees and/or teaching, and working. I am indebted to my squash partner Hubert Cook and tennis partner Killian Quigley for letting me bounce ideas around during and after our games. Jane Wanninger also read my entire second chapter at an early stage and provided feedback when she was working on finishing her own project.

Prior to coming to Vanderbilt, I completed a MALS degree at Dartmouth. There I met a wonderful group of professors, students, and friends. Kiara Vigil and I started this degree together and became fast friends while co-writing a massively over theoretical paper on Charles Eastman and Booker T. Washington. Had it not been for her support and continued friendship I would likely have not kept going with grad school. Professor Klaus Milich, Donald Pease, and Ivy Schweitzer helped cultivate my interest in further graduate work through their kindness, curiosity and energy. Ivy deserves special thanks for being my MA thesis advisor and, just as importantly, for suggesting I apply to Vanderbilt.

Special thanks also go to my family. My parents supported my decision to go to grad school and provided me countless opportunities to get a good education prior to my arrival in Nashville. With a busy academic schedule and a young son to parent, my aunt Susan nevertheless always managed to find time to give me great encouragement, advice, and much assistance along the way. Thanks to my best friend, and brother, Scott for listening to me complain about the small challenges in academia and for reminding me about what ought to matter in life. Finally, and most importantly, thanks to Diana for her enthusiasm, intellect, sensitivity, and sense of humor. Everyday she teaches me the difference between criticism and cynicism. We began this program together and have grown closer every year. I am grateful every day to have you in my life.

Introduction

In the late eighteenth century, U. S. reformers called for new ways of practicing and administering formal education in the new nation. Historians writing about the early national period have interpreted this call as a means for reformers to extend the separatist impulse from Europe that first inspired Anglo-colonists to found permanent colonial settlements.¹ Under the throes of settlement, U. S. reformers aggressively sought more effective means of instructing the next generation. The shared affinity for the bible, combined with an abiding concern for potential spiritual and social dissolution in the so-called “new world,” inspired reformers to create new schools and to seek new strategies for teaching citizens and converting non-citizens. The post-revolutionary period, which followed another break from Europe, was, in this respect, not all that dissimilar from the early modern period.² One of the biggest differences, though, was that the pedagogical philosophies, communication and knowledge production technology, and student demographics changed and would continue to change during nearly a century of nation building and expansion that led up to and persisted through the Civil War. While formal education practices and proposals continued to buttress North American settlement and to extend social and political influence under a national banner, they did so through a wide range of approaches, methods, materials, and subjects.

¹ See for one example Perry Miller who notes in, “Education Under Cross Fire,” in colonial New England, “where our public school tradition originated, service to society meant training ministers. A child learned to read and write so that he could ultimately preach sermons. Those not destined to such dignity went a limited distance along the educational way, and upon reaching their limit—as the majority quickly did—fell off into being farmers or merchants” in *Responsibility of Mind in a Civilization of Machines* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979), 88.

² In New England’s First Fruit (circa 1640), William Wood observes, “After God had carried us safe to New England and we builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God’s worship, and settled the civil government: one of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity.”² For Wood, education was, strictly speaking, neither divinely ordained nor a civic necessity. It was a general desire, something “we longed for and looked after” indicative of culture and cultural continuity. But, of course, only a small group had access to the fruits of this desire.

Current early U. S. literary and cultural studies scholars are reimagining their field in ways that enable us to re-conceptualize American and transatlantic literatures produced from the late enlightenment through early reconstruction, yet few focus their attention on changing education practices. Informed by postcolonial theory and world-systems theory, transnational studies has questioned the geographic and cultural insularity advanced under national critical paradigms. At the same time, attention to the writings of American Indians, African Americans, Euro-American women, backcountry folk, and marginalized immigrant figures, as well as their disruptive presences in early national and antebellum Anglo-American texts, is revealing how representations of separatism and reform were shaped as much by untenable, aggressive empires as by groups of people who typically possessed less power in the early nation. While analyzing excavated literary works and reevaluating canonical ones, scholars are revealing new ways of understanding inter-American and intra-American literatures. In comparison to these new directions in scholarship, studies of early U. S. education history seem like artifacts of an earlier time when American studies primarily chronicled the formative lessons of lettered, upper class, white men and presented insular assertions of national exceptionalism that retained a grouping of northern U. S. states as the implicit signifier for America.³ However, historical facts about formal schooling, including the discourse pertaining to its reform, have now become critical sites for addressing the gaps exposed by recent transnational and spatial turns in early U. S. literary and cultural studies. Histories of education, that is, can provide rich contextual information about the

³ See Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982); Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001); *Reconstructing American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982). For an overview of this historiography see Cathy Davidson *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). As I discuss later, this history includes important work written since Davidson's book.

formative, local transnational, sociocultural, and multimedia environments through which U.S. authors and readers assessed new freedoms and restrictions.

To a Certain Degree builds upon discrepant education histories in order to create an alternative literary history of education *in* the early U.S. novel. My dissertation outlines a regional effort to implement education reforms and argues for a persistent, creative tension between the aims of those reforms and the aims of the novel form. Identifying and understanding this tension, far from absolving the novel form from its pedagogical tendencies, helps specify how novels worked to mold readers' civic and parental priorities in a developing and expanding representative democracy. The framework of northern education reforms takes shape in my dissertation through readings of tracts, plans, manuals, common schoolbooks, and children's stories published in, and circulated among, the New England and mid-Atlantic states during the late eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century. Using these materials, I delineate different early national and antebellum attempts to expand access to primary education, integrate schools with government and market influences, and temper dependence on European curricula. I paint this picture in order to show how seven novelists writing across this period participated by way of their novels in the field of regional education reform. These novelists include J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Charles Brockden Brown, Hannah Foster, Sukey Vickery, James Fenimore Cooper, Lydia Maria Child, and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton. Each writer, I argue, used his or her novel in a different way to critique education reforms and to amend education practices through narrative fiction. Making up for what their authors saw, or anticipated, as deficiencies in formal education, their works taught readers how to acquire new knowledge without giving up on the freedoms made possible by civic responsibility.

Settler colonialism is a key concept throughout my dissertation because it informs the kind of education the novel critiqued and provided to early national and antebellum readers. This process of violent and often aggressive relocation and dispossession has been under-emphasized in recent early American literary and cultural studies, which favor a colonial/post-colonial binary or an inventive qualification of this foundational opposition. This limited scholarly attention to settler colonialism makes sense given that recent critical works, such as Sean Goudie's *Creole America* (2006), have focused more on inter-American ties, federal mandates, revolutions, and rebellions, rather than on the process of extending and maintaining settlements. However, current definitions of settler colonialism illustrate the centrality of this concept to the early U. S. and its most popular literary form. For instance, the blog, *Settler Colonial Studies*, identifies settler colonialism as a "global and transnational phenomenon. There is no such thing as neo-settler colonialism or post-settler colonialism because settler colonialism is a resilient formation that rarely ends. Not all migrants are settlers: settlers come to stay, and are founders of political orders who carry with them a distinct sovereign capacity."⁴ Anthropologist Patrick Wolfe notes that, "settler colonialism destroys to replace and insists that invasion, in settler colonial contexts, is a structure not an event."⁵ The blog's and Wolfe's definitions of settler colonialism call attention to its endurance as a blending of relocated, empowered, and disempowered emigrant and immigrant traditions. They remind us that some of the most consistent ideologies and practices in the Americas during the period of reverberating new-world, anticolonial revolutions were based on the commitment to permanently relocating and replacing indigenous peoples. Such an arduous activity was essential to becoming "American" in a modern sense.

⁴ <http://settlercolonialstudies.org/> (9/12/12).

⁵ See Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*. (London: Cassell, 1999), 4.

During the early national and antebellum periods, proponents of this way of thinking justified incursions into unfamiliar territory by portraying American Indians and marginalized migrants as inherently susceptible to extinction. Post-revolutionary settler colonists did not necessarily promote the extinction of indigenous peoples, but they did reckon with the fact that their settlements—and their abilities to modify their own freedoms—were predicated on official campaigns designed to remove people who supposedly did not or could not become settlers. Early U.S. novelists wrote with the ineluctability of settler colonialism in mind. They prepared their readers for the *unsettling* prospects of reformed schooling by encouraging them to pursue new aptitudes and latitudes without de-sanctifying the foundational commitment to settlement life in the new nation. In short, early U. S. novelists provided complex and creative instruction, which we might term a “settler-colonial education.”

In the communities deeply shaped by the global phenomenon of settler colonialism, schools demonstrate sovereignty on new land insofar as they symbolize culture, moral and political authority, and the prospects of social reproduction. Changes to schools in the wake of revolutions and political movements had the potential to reinforce settlement stability by naturalizing instruction or purporting to create a better fit between the people, their pedagogies, and the polity. Other reformers treated pedagogical changes as a means to produce new local knowledge, which would buttress official endeavors to draw in new territory and peoples. Patrick Wolfe speaks to this point when he observes that the attempts to “generate claims to authority over indigenous discourse made from within the settler colonial academy necessarily participate in the continued usurpation of indigenous space.”⁶ At the same time, proposed changes to education were profoundly unsettling because the tasks of providing access to new knowledge

⁶ Wolfe, 5.

and of bringing more students into a sociopolitical order from which they have been excluded could disrupt community identity, existing links between generations, and prevailing conceptions of class, gender, and race.⁷

In *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784), Thomas Jefferson expresses the legislative drive for post-revolutionary education reform in the U. S. as well as the apprehension fostered by that drive under the influence of settler colonialism. In his well-known query XIV, he concludes by observing, “Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree.”⁸ This statement serves as the overarching philosophy behind his proposal in this treatise to create a U. S. education system that would train people to keep more effective tabs on their rulers and, at the same time, prevent them from encouraging sociopolitical degeneration. Far from proposing an egalitarian society, the education system he devises applies exclusively to young, wealthy, white male students whose new and improved schooling would make them aware of fresh civic duties in a representative democracy. However, the limit asserted in his ambiguous phrase, “to a certain degree,” also suggests that Jefferson’s concerns about eschewing national provincialism were in competition with his fear of non-citizens who might contest their forced exclusion from the republic. To address these competing concerns, “a certain degree” of improvement (and no more!) must include both new cognitive recommendations for enfranchised white men. But it must also include a rationale for excluding non-citizens, particularly African Americans, whom Jefferson argued should not be educated due to their

⁷ See the introduction to *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race Ethnicity, and Class* ed. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Sage, 1995). See also Dolores Janiewski’s overview, “Gendering, Racializing, and Classifying: Settler Colonization in the United States, 1590-1990.” in this collection.

⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* ed. Frank Shuffleton (New York: Penguin Classics, 1999)

mental capacities, and should be expelled from the U. S. settlements if they were given their freedom from slavery.

Two Latin roots of the word “education” help illuminate the northern lineage and the succession of Jefferson’s race-based education reforms for U. S. novelists from the late-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century. On the one hand, *educāre* means “rearing or bringing up of children and animals by supply of food and physical wants” and, on the other hand, *educēre* means “bring[ing] up young persons from childhood so as to form their habits, manners, and intellectual and physical aptitudes.”⁹ *Educāre* involves providing subsistence to animals and humans alike, whereas *educēre* involves using tutors and schools to “draw forth a condition of latent, rudimentary, or merely potential [human] existence.” As novelists created specific lessons for prospective settler-readers based on early national and antebellum state and federal reforms in the north, similar to the reforms Jefferson encouraged, they relied on a broad definition of education, which encompassed the two meanings of this word. By conceptualizing education as both bare physical necessity as well as privileged formal schooling, they were able to work between these two meanings to advance new, refined protocols for contesting the sociopolitical organization of settlement life without abandoning it entirely.

One example of this creative jockeying between animal necessity and supplemental human improvement appears in the preface to a late-eighteenth-century autobiography in which Anglo-American, Connecticut schoolteacher, Eliza Niles, introduces Venture Smith’s autobiography *A Narrative: Life and Adventures of Venture A Native of Africa* (1798). Niles invokes the two Latin roots of the word education simultaneously to emphasize the moral and civic implications of Smith’s life history:

⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*.

The reader here is presented with an account, not of a renowned politician or warrior, but of an untutored slave, brought into this Christian country at eight years of age, wholly destitute of all education but what he received in common with domesticated animals, enjoying no advantages that could lead him to suppose himself superior to beasts, his fellow servants. (iii)

Niles, like the novelists studied in my dissertation, upholds a broad definition of education powerfully inflected by both the dehumanizing conditions of slavery and by enlightenment tenets, such as Locke's belief that, through their minds, people could be molded into skeptical citizens. This flexible definition also aligned education with classical tenets, such as Aristotle's belief that "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth."¹⁰ Like Aristotle and the novelists I analyze, Niles allows the word *education* to signify broadly so that his narrative could inspire relative latitude among his readers, encouraging skeptical attitudes toward the governmental and market forces of oppression, without disrupting the commitment to settlement.

The Novel

To a Certain Degree uses northern education reform as a lens for analyzing the novel form alone because of the popularity and dramatic transformation of this form from pseudo-travelogue and seduction narrative to historical and sentimental romance during the late-eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century. The wide readership and dynamism of prose fiction suggest the form's ability to speak to and influence pressing economic, social, and political concerns. Some critics have treated the capacity of the U. S. novel to be "of the moment" as a sign of the form's radical difference from European literary traditions. For

¹⁰ Aristotle, *On Education*. Noah Webster, Alonso Potter, and Horace Mann all cite this passage from Aristotle's text.

instance, in *The American Novel and Its Traditions* (1957), Richard Chase argues that the modes of symbolism developed by writers such as Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville set them apart from European predecessors. More recent historicist studies have argued that trans-historical claims about American romances, such as Chase's sweeping thesis, preclude our understanding of the rich cultural contexts that influence narrative forms.¹¹ Critics who trace the form's national beginnings back to the American Revolution emphasize the subversive and reactionary social work of some of the earliest U.S. novels, such as William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) and Susannah Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791). Yet, in examining how early novels engage questions of power and cultural authority during pivotal historical moments, critics have focused almost exclusively on direct links between the author or the form and partisan politics, including imperialist and anti-imperialist U. S. policies and conflicts. In contrast, my dissertation presumes that early U. S. novels were not quite as expressive of, or even as directly reactive to, party politics, treaties, laws, and rebellions as these studies suggest. Novelistic attempts to create simultaneously entertaining and instructive texts, as I see it, complicate any one-dimensional relationship between literature and political history. And in their efforts to articulate and address political theories and conflicts, novelists repeatedly looked to current education reforms. Because proposed changes to formal education were routinely presented as *the* cure for economic, social, and political ailments in the new nation, they functioned as a powerful disseminator of policy and prevailing ideologies. The nation's novelists latched onto such changes, critiquing the flaws in recent trends or offering alternative remedies, through a rhetorical mode—narrative fiction—that entertained while instructing and instructed while entertaining its readers.

¹¹ This historicist list is too long to cover, but for a helpful overview of this historicist shift in a discussion of John Neal see Matthew Pethers, "'I Must Resemble Nobody': John Neal, Genre and the Making of American Literary Nationalism" in *John Neal and Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* ed. Edward Watts and David J. Carlson. (Plymouth, UK: Bucknell University Press, 2012),1-38.

By entering into the field of education reform, early U. S. novelists carried out their own subtle and distinct lesson plans. Writers often signaled their intent to provide such lessons by inserting scenes of common and/or elite schooling into their fictions. Cathy Davidson first identified signs of this literary pattern of encapsulating customary approaches to schooling when she noted the frequent “scenes of instruction” across a wide range of revolutionary-era and post-revolutionary-era novels by women and men.¹² However, this pattern is also apparent in later nineteenth-century novels and other prose forms. Descriptions of formal education, for example, appear in early U. S. Anglo-American short stories, as illustrated by the satire of the heady schoolmaster, Ichabod Crane, in Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820) and the haunting boarding-school experience of the eponymous narrator and his doppelgänger in Edgar Allan Poe’s short story, “William Wilson” (1839). Descriptions of education recur in non-fictional narratives in powerful scenes that push back against the boundaries of formal schooling conventions, as in Benjamin Franklin’s and Frederick Douglass’s autobiographical narratives.

Literary descriptions of formal and informal schooling vary widely. But their regular appearance in early U. S. narrative writing shows that these authors believed formative schooling scenes were important for a new nation of readers to reflect upon because such scenes conveyed concerns about constraints created by the new government, social inequalities, and possible individual and communal improvements in the face of constraint and inequity. Andy Doolen, American literary and cultural critic, explains how the schoolhouse typically served three functions in early U. S. writings: the schoolhouse 1) “surfaced an anxiety about the absolute subjugation of young whites to a teacher authority figure or an anxiety about their impending homogeneity as members of an undifferentiated class”; 2) exposed “the psychological impact of

¹² According to Davidson, “virtually every American novel written before 1820” includes a discussion of education (66).

hegemonic white culture and the physical violence between and against non-whites in American history”; or 3) functioned as a “powerful engine capable of encouraging democratic practice as a corollary to recognized commonality.”¹³ Toward one or more of these objectives, many early U.S. novelists integrated charged schooling scenes and references to customary lessons or pedagogical praxes in order to raise critical questions about the broader social, political, economic import of education in the settler-colonial nation.

Formal aspects of the novel—namely, its modes of character development and epistolary or episodic narration—enabled writers to move freely from schooling scenes to depictions of characters pursuing new educational practices, which authors imagined as strategies for mollifying sociopolitical problems. For example, characterizations of the settler father figure showed readers how settler fathers were to deal with the civic constraints they newly experienced under a representative democracy. In Farmer James of *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur models the act of an Anglo-American man ceding cultural and political authority in order to reclaim it through civic and domestic channels. Portrayals of settler women, particularly unmarried white women, provided lessons in how women could negotiate their denied rights to equal education and social and sexual pleasures. Through the heroines and anti-heroines of seduction novels and novels of manners, Hannah Foster and Sukey Vickery show their female readers how to broaden their access to knowledge and pleasure through new social networks. U. S. novelists also fictionalized new strategies for dealing with foreign subjects and foreign topics of study, often in ways that respected cultural difference and the integrity of the union while critiquing discriminatory education reforms.

¹³ Andy Doolen, *Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 189. Doolen, in his provocative cross reading of Pequot activist, William Apess and white abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison pays illuminating attention to the representation of the schoolhouse.

Periodical reviews confirm that, not only novelists, but also readers considered novels with an eye toward their contribution to a formal education in need of reformation. For example, in Edgar Allan Poe's review of Lydia Maria Child's *Philothea: A Grecian Romance* in *Broadway Journal*, he strongly recommends the novel "to the attention of teachers who might introduce it advantageously into our female academies."¹⁴ The form, in short, functioned as an insightful and pragmatic response to the educational institutions and practices it was criticizing—a response that often amounted to a progressive recommendation for qualified re-settlement in the early nation.

Regionalism

Early American literary and cultural studies often have presented the north tacitly as America. However, scholars are now beginning to question this metonymic formulation. Critics increasingly interpret the north as a region or group of regions striving to become the country's representative culture while struggling to live up to that self-imposed burden.¹⁵ Whereas postcolonial theory has inspired this shift by proposing a transnational scale for early American literary and cultural studies, early U. S. studies has enhanced our redefinition of northernness by recovering literary texts and artifacts from the south and the west, as well as by accounting for

¹⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, *Broadway Journal* 1 (May 31, 1845): 342-345. Cited from William S. Osborne, *Lydia Maria Child* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 61.

¹⁵ See Jennifer Greeson, *Our South: Geographic Fantasy and the Rise of American Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). Greeson reminds us that post-revolutionary print reveals a different story from the one historians commonly tell in which north-south sectional politics emerge in the 1780s in legislative chambers. She observes that in magazines, newspapers, and textbooks "there existed no corresponding regional term for the obverse of the "Southern States," no "North" or "Northern States."

the cultural significance of northern writers' global travels.¹⁶ *To a Certain Degree* engages these revisionist turns by offering a new northern study that contextualizes the relationship between narrative fiction and formal education in the settler-colonial north, attending to the region's particularities by appreciating efforts among northern novelists to differentiate the region from Europe, non-northern states, and non-northern territories in a rapidly expanding U.S.¹⁷

Because leading citizens living in New England and the mid-Atlantic during the 1780s and 1790s often sought preeminent status as the nation's cultural and political leaders, they did not use the word "north" to describe their communities, nor did they use the word "northern" to describe themselves. Such particularization would have threatened the imagined cohesion of the north qua the nation. Instead, throughout early national writings, the word "north" refers to a transatlantic affinity, such as the bond Charles Brockden Brown imagines in an article entitled, "Education in Scotland" when he wonders: "It is somewhat remarkable, that in those civilized countries whose climate is most cheerless, and soil most rude, knowledge and genuine refinement should be more thoroughly established, and more extensively diffused than

¹⁶ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983). In the wake of Anderson's study, the word "regional" offers scholars of various fields a way to frame the recovery of what has been overlooked about shared and distinctive cultural forms when they were confined to national paradigms. The "regional" promises to reveal something heretofore concealed by the national. And it provides a much-needed geopolitical place/space through which to view past cultural formations. In literary studies, the regional has provided an amorphous yet also comprehensive unit for exploring the historical embedded-ness of fictions and poems. See Edward Watts, in *An American Colony: Regionalism and the Roots of Midwestern Culture* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2002). Watts has brought new attention to the literary work of writers, such as James Otis Warren and others, who lived and wrote in the west. While such studies provide a refreshing break from traditional loci of early American studies (New England and Virginia) they also remind us of how past monographs of northern authors as representative American writers overlook the particular practices and economies that made these writers distinct from their southern, western and mid-western neighbors. In short, new studies on the south and west make regional studies of the north increasingly important.

¹⁷ The dissertation takes an approach similar to the one advocated and practiced by Bryan Waterman: a "situated" rather than a text/context mode of literary analysis. By situated, Waterman means a way of reading attentive to how early US northern writers engaged in Atlantic-focused conversations while remaining rooted within local networks and responsive to the knowledgeable authorities living in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. See Bryan Waterman, "From Text/Context to 'Situatedness' in Atlantic History and Literature," *William and Mary Quarterly* (January 2008): 171-74. Also published in *Early American Literature* 43:1 (2008): 191-95.

elsewhere.” For Brown, being northern meant aspiring to parity with northern Europe during the moment when the U. S. was curtailing its political and economic dependence upon England and its ties with France.¹⁸

To underscore the social and political concerns of becoming northern, in Brown’s sense of the word, writers of the early republic used the term “region.” For example, a decade earlier in *Letters from an American Farmer*, Farmer James frets, “If I attach myself to the mother country, which is 3,000 miles from me, I become what is called an enemy to my own region; if I follow the rest of our countrymen, I become opposed to our ancient masters” (152). In a similar manner, the commanding narrator in a 1783 sketch from the *Boston Magazine* called “Vision” decrees, “I suffered your knowledge to reach even as far as the motion of the heavenly bodies; that you might pass with security from one region to another, connect yourselves more generally with your fellow creatures, and enjoy the various productions of art and nature that the planet affords.”¹⁹ For late-eighteenth-century writers, a “region” could protect traditions, yet it could also foster proximate antagonisms based on the mixed allegiances created by distant geo-cultural affinities. The word was a permeable place marker, a way of indicating areas decidedly offset from others, yet osmotic enough to permit change and movement. In order to explain northernness and recover its anxieties, I use the word *northern* in Brown’s sense and in the sense evoked by the word *region*. Embracing a regional approach allows me to show how northern education reformers necessarily navigated competing drives: radically transforming the populace and

¹⁸The popularity of this term suggests it helped ex-colonists reckon with their recalibrated sociopolitical obligations and personal liberties in the post-revolutionary period, enabling them to deal with their desire to be as educated as folks in Scotland supposedly were while they lived in a region still haunted by its history as a colony.

¹⁹ *Boston Magazine*, Oct 1783, Vol. 1, 17.

recognizing the limits enforced by territories and generations, which the populace relied upon for social connection and community during a period of violent change.

To a Certain Degree covers the period when the word “north” explodes in print due to the sectional politics pertaining to expansion and race-based slavery. By maintaining a regional perspective throughout the study, I am able to keep within view the genesis of this constructed geo-political opposition between the north and the south, while also indexing the power of inveterate settler-colonial binaries between the north and the non-north. Studies with an emphasis on sectionalism typically invoke the economic practices and value systems of race-based slavery, foregrounding contention around state rights, the cultural and political divisions produced by plantation economies, and the imminent threat of slave revolts and civil war in the early U. S. Because studies that use the term “sectionalism” trace impending disunion—a fall-out from the effort to unify the nation after the revolution—they often focus less on the antebellum reformulation of a division that always existed, but had been based more explicitly on European affiliations and continental development than on slavery.²⁰ Thinking regionally, as I do throughout my dissertation, helps us understand the complexity of northern-ness as a cultural construction and the workings of the northern states as a political grouping that sought to act and think in harmony on behalf of the nation prior to and up through the Civil War.

²⁰This divide appears in early settler colonists writing. A century later, in two variations on a single cartographic theme, William Byrd observes in *Histories of the Dividing Line* (1724) that the North Carolinians south of him were the rudest and most backward people. Recent histories of the colonies have illustrated how literary texts during this period can be read in terms of the way their authors define regional identity based on both north-south binaries and east-west transatlantic binaries. See also Jennifer Greeson, “Colonial Planter to ‘American Farmer’: South, Nation and Decolonization in Crèvecoeur’s Letters” in *Messy Beginnings: Postcoloniality and Early American Studies*, ed. Malini Johar Schueller and Edward Watts (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2003), 160-186.

History and Method

The alternative education history *To a Certain Degree* constructs through historicist readings of early U.S. novels begins in the 1780s and '90s. During this post-revolutionary period, leading, northern citizens and non-citizens, such as Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, Noah Webster, and Judith Sargent Murray, proposed that the new government and its people remove—or at least mitigate—foreign, elitist, and desultory modes of formal study. These reformers sought to replace such models with more inclusive, locally rooted, and well-organized curricula and pedagogies. Their proposals were shaped by egalitarian rhetoric from the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions as well as by the reactionary efforts to contain the independent and diverse states after the American Revolution. Education reformers contested and consolidated power, critiquing inequity and buttressing existing Anglo-American male authority based on the privileges and effects of formal education.

Transnational from their inception, the resulting reforms were based on John Locke's conception of the malleable young mind and Jean Jacques Rousseau's natural education, which liberated while it inhered, as well as other European and Eastern pedagogical philosophies.²¹ Yet, they were also based on a constructed national character—a character similar to the essence James Madison warily described as the “genius of the people of America.”²² With these influences in mind, reformers tried to narrow what they took to be the epistemological and cognitive gap between the people and their representatives *and* to create pliable citizens and non-citizens. They wanted to inculcate knowledge and skills for the sake of responsible governance

²¹ Even a brief survey of sources listed in writing on education from the early national period reveals writers routinely borrowed ideas from not only Scotland, France, and England but also India, Sweden, Germany, and China.

²² See *Federalist* 55, 344.

and to shape the desires and expectations of the people. Lacking political infrastructure, print networks, and the money to implement changes across states governed by different laws and mores, they struggled to recreate and implement New England- and Anglo-American-centric models of education. Yet, their efforts helped bring settlers, families, and post-revolutionary rural towns, which had managed more autonomously under monarchical rule, into relation with the new government.

Northern education reformers established a regional qua national school-culture in the early nineteenth century.²³ The economic boon from continental expansion and from interconnected, niche print markets contributed to these institutional successes in providing “public” education. At the same time, changes in geography and communication inspired new models of elite, private instruction to distinguish citizens from European counterparts and from a widening collection of middling citizens and non-citizens, who were inhabiting the union and receiving government-supported instruction there. By the 1830s and ‘40s, reformers, such as Horace Mann, promoted this school-culture through journals and bureaucratic avenues, forming what is now typically called the “common school movement.” Proponents of common schooling supported general education primarily for lower- and middle-class white boys and girls. They sought to remove impoverished children from their homes and from dire circumstances and to enroll them in schools defined by a gentle, secularized, Anglo-Protestant mission and teaching style. While espousing a liberal rhetoric of universal benevolence, they advanced a highly partial worldview, which gave students a lasting sense of cultural inferiority as they established their allegiance to their benefactors and to the institutions that “rescued” them. In the immediate post-

²³ Literary and cultural critics, Richard Broadhead and Elisa Tamarkin discuss how this important shift created cultures for schools and colleges in the antebellum period. See Richard Broadhead, *Culture of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

bellum period, as Michael Katz explains in *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools* (1975), education reformers attempted to reinvigorate the bureaucracy they had created with individualism, a bureaucracy institutionalized in common schooling. Meanwhile, students and teachers, citizens and non-citizens, found themselves increasingly dependent upon—and disempowered by—this bureaucracy to advance their rights and liberties.²⁴

By outlining changing practices in formal schooling and the critical discourses surrounding them, I illustrate how we came to think that reforming education would free us from inequity and prejudice. At the same time, I show how the novel warned us about investing too much of our energies into what became an institutionalized process that often retained, or even extended, social hierarchies under the guise of inclusivity and enlightenment. To illuminate these intersecting material, intellectual, and literary histories, my dissertation builds on early U. S. literary and cultural studies that have turned to pedagogical tracts to demonstrate the philosophical rigor of American letters. However, these studies tend to highlight the direct influence of philosophy on literature and the direct correspondence between the hegemonic ideologies found in literary fiction and education reform treatises. In contrast, my dissertation interprets northern education reform as a dynamic, mediated, and mediating practice enacted by both non-fiction writers and novelists who engage prevailing philosophies, national policies, and settler-colonial conflicts.

My approach to recovering the interactive relationships among prose fictions, philosophies of reform, and political realities combines new archival findings in education history with distinct, new education history studies, such as those by education historian Nancy

²⁴ Michael Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (New York: Praeger, 1975).

Beadie, U. S. women's historian Mary Kelley, and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In particular, I embrace Bourdieu's overarching definition of formal education as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon intrinsically mired in class hierarchies. Together, these historical studies and sociological models help me recover education reform as a vital, regional source of inspiration for early U. S. novelists who, I argue, turned to the question of education in order to address—and revise—social, political, and economic disruptions during the early national and antebellum periods.²⁵ Beadie's, Kelley's, and Bourdieu's works buttress my arguments for attributing the root of a novel's social critique to northern education reform and their insights help me illustrate how such critiques enabled novelists to advance alternative models of settler-colonial conduct.

Chapter Breakdown

Each chapter in *To a Certain Degree* situates one or two novelists within a transforming early national or antebellum culture characterized by a malleability that was particularly evident to them because of the region's education reforms. In some instances, the forays of particular authors into the field of education, given their positions as teachers, school-book contributors, or children's literature editors, helps substantiate the ties between their novels and prevailing

²⁵ Mary Kelley with her *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) and Nancy Beadie with her *Education and the Creation of Capital in the Early American Republic* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2010) have resuscitated this field by emphasizing school practices and their intersection with contemporary political and economic mandates, revealing the lived culture created by schools and demonstrating how formal education reoriented family and community values, respectively. See Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Culture, and Society* (Sage, 1990) for one important example among others.

pedagogical views and methods.²⁶ In others, a novel's staging of contemporary lessons, along with its critique of formal education as a catalyst or salve for tensions between political subjects, suffices to illustrate the links between these works and relevant education practices. In all instances, however, *To a Certain Degree* demonstrates how novels reflect ideologies mediated by education reform and function as textual agents—essentially, novels working to influence reform. Toward that end, the dissertation is organized to reflect the evolution of the novel and common schooling, with the first two chapters focused more on epistolary novels and the latter two chapters focused on romances. This organization reflects my view that the novel—much like the nation's changing schools—became an increasingly structured form, with its authors continuing to revise their styles of articulating civic and worldly skills designed to prepare readers for foreseeable local and global obstacles.

Chapter 1, “Educating Fathers and Citizens in Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer* and Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly*,” examines two late-eighteenth-century works of prose fiction alongside state and federally focused post-revolutionary school plans. The chapter begins by looking at an understudied moment at the end of Crèvecoeur’s epistolary collection when farmer James expresses his concern that the “imperceptible charms of an Indian education” may radically transform his children if the family chooses to relocate to the western Pennsylvania frontier. In the first half of the chapter, I demonstrate how *Letters* builds toward this apprehensive final scene, thereby serving to prepare Anglo-American settler fathers for their shifting familial and civic responsibilities as a divisive new political system replaces monarchy. I

²⁶ My decision to make these ties has been shaped by recent studies focused on the figure of the child and on children’s literature: Karen Sanchez Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child’s Part in Nineteenth Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Caroline E. Levander, *Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child, and National Belonging from Jefferson to W.E.B. Du Bois* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Anne Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Race, Violence, and the Making of the Child Victim* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

argue that the work's overarching agenda is particularly apparent when we read *Letters* alongside Jefferson's model of national education in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. The second half of the chapter shows how Brown's novel, *Edgar Huntly*, emerges in response to what Bourdieu might identify as a *field* of 1790s regional education reform, which was spurred by Jefferson's ideas and by the proliferation of core republican values. This field helped connect those who lived in rural, northern towns to a forming capitalist representative democracy. And, I contend, it also shaped how Brown presents his eponymous, prospective settler father struggling with looming parental duties and abiding commitments to the memories of old male friends and new ones. These reforms, that is, spur Brown's sobering demonstration in *Edgar Huntly* of how settler fathers could handle post-revolutionary rebellion and nation-building.

Chapter 2, "Educating Women of Pleasure in Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* and Sukey Vickery's *Emily Hamilton*" shifts locales from Pennsylvania farms and racked frontiers to New England elite and middling homes and parlors, which served as backdrops for both Foster's and Vickery's novels. This chapter builds on the outline of 1790s education reforms from the second half of chapter 1 by drawing on different writings by similar reform writers like Benjamin Rush and a host of other voices from Mary Wollstonecraft to Hannah More to Judith Sargent Murray all of whom spoke about changing women's formal education in impactful ways for the new nation. My argument here is that this discourse on women's education reveals how early U.S. women's novels emerged, as Annette Kolodny puts it, "out of non-dominant cultural traditions" as well as how these novels complicated the divide between the public and the private spheres.²⁷ To prove my point, I treat Foster's seduction novel, *The Coquette*, and Sukey Vickery's proto-

²⁷ Annette Kolodny, "A Map for Rereading; Or Gender and the Interpretation of Literary Texts *New Literary History* Vol. 11 No. 3, On Narrative and Narrative II (Baltimore: University of John Hopkins Press, 1980) 451-467.

realist novel, *Emily Hamilton*, as distinct responses to the volatile debates surrounding late-eighteenth century women's boarding schools. With the putative character and content of this privileged, white women's education in mind, I argue, that these novels show women how to deal with their restrictive roles as either idealized mothers and daughters or scorned, unsettled women of pleasure in the early republic.

Chapter 3, "A Carefully Guarded Standard": Spanish Studies and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Prairie*" shifts back to the U.S. frontier. In this case, though, it looks to a novel written in the late 1820s when the breadth of the western frontier had changed dramatically from the late eighteenth century. The official catalyst for this dramatic change, the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, serves as the explicit subject of Cooper's concluding legend to the Leather-stocking series. In this chapter, I show that Cooper's depiction of this newly acquired western land, with its violent clashes between and among outlaws, American Indians, military men, settlers, and the frontiersmen Natty Bumppo, had imaginative roots in northern education reform. Cooper presents the kidnapping of a young Spanish woman and her imprisonment in a "ragged fortress," in response to the politically motivated interest in studying Spanish history and culture after the creation of the Monroe doctrine. His outlaw figures bear more resemblance to young northern gentlemen leisurely taking in knowledge for knowledge's sake than they do to rough provincials tackling a dangerous frontier. The tragic undoing of their family exposes the destructive effects of this selective, curricular change in an institutionalizing north. *The Prairie* critiques the refinement program I call Spanish studies and illustrates how to create Spanish-minded scholars who knew about those people Cooper refers to as our "southern neighbors" without overlooking familial and civic duties.

Chapter 4, “Common Schooling in Lydia Maria Child’s *Philothea* and *Romance of the Republic*,” situates Child’s novels in relation to a powerful, regionally centralizing, antebellum reform movement to diffuse and standardize primary education. Pioneered by Horace Mann, common schooling sought to transform the lives of poor children and to redefine the contours of the family and the nation. It popularized mainstream narratives of social uplift for impoverished Anglo American children. Child’s work as a teacher of, and writer for, children during the birth of the common school movement, I argue, informed her fiction, including how she constructed her romances and how readers read those romances. This pedagogical influence is most apparent and culturally revealing in her classical novel *Philothea* and in her post-bellum abolitionist novel *Romance of the Republic* where she builds upon the social uplift mission of common schooling through her chronicles of the lives of two young orphaned women. In these two literary works, she tests racial, class-based, and most importantly for her, sex-based limits of common schooling in order to prep women readers in particular for regional dis-settlement that might produce continued sexism, racism, and classism.

To a Certain Degree concludes with the coda, ““Where We Have Been Heading All Along’: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Manifest Destiny, and the Politics of Education.” This coda begins by elaborating on prominent education historian Frederick Rudolph’s provocative claim in the 1960s that a survey of education in California indicates that California represents the state of society “where we have been heading all along.” Rudolph contends that this eventuality remains hidden from U.S citizens. And, furthermore, he suggests the early U.S. tracts pertaining to northern education reform make transparent the political and cultural cogs advancing this eventuality. His late twentieth century vantage point resembles a way of thinking that had shaped late-enlightenment and antebellum novels. Put another way, his conception of California is

profoundly northern. On the one hand, he similarly cranes in search of a less onerous and more equal society peopled by settlers who had come to the U.S. to stay. On the other hand, he also presumes the hindrances to realizing this possibility are the result of one's limited understanding of the systematic operations and effects of formal education. Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought it?* (1872) engages, like Rudolph, with the history of northern education reforms. What distinguishes her novel from others discussed thus far is Burton's scathing treatment of New England culture. Her cure for citizens and non-citizens' inability to recognize and navigate ramifying liberties and restrictions in the post-bellum U.S. is to abandon the conception of the settler state represented for Rudolph by California and to look outside the U.S. for alternative ways of thinking, acting, and coupling.

Traversing nearly a hundred years and covering a geography circumscribed by the reform sites of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York and a terrain of literary settings including northern locales as well as New Orleans, the central plains and western deserts, Mexico, the Caribbean, Africa, Ireland, and Italy, this project makes no claim to offer a comprehensive story about literary traditions or about formal education. It offers case studies intended to illustrate how important a regional education history was for shaping the sociopolitical function of the early U.S. novel. I have, therefore, concentrated on these novels not because they represent the range of the genre, but because they illustrate the influence of northern education reform, a discourse, which shaped practices addressing and aggravating the rocky transition from settler colony to settler colonial nation. In the readings of these novels presented here, the lessons of, and changes to, an already heavily transnational humanities curriculum are treated to scrutiny rather than accepted as foundational programs to be rescued or abandoned in the face of academic crises today. Such scrutiny helps recover the complex roles of teachers and students who witnessed the

start of the pervasive, gentle institutional and professionalizing pressures. But it also reminds us that literature, novels in particular, have long exposed injustice, even as they tried to modify and transform exclusive, stale, or misguided lessons, and to improve them to a certain degree.

Chapter 1

Educating Settler Fathers and Citizens in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* and Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*

In the final epistle of Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), the narrator, farmer James, worries that his children may be seduced by the "imperceptible charm of an indian education" if his family resettles with American Indians. James justifies his fatherly concerns and explains what he means by an "indian education" through several references to unredeemed captives, or white, young men and women who cut ties with their families and become American Indians. His explanation encourages readers to consider challenges settler fathers experienced as Euro-American-American Indian conflicts persisted and revolutionary rhetoric spread the idea that American children were pursuing their natural right by disobeying their English parents. James sees the appeal of this separation for his own children, suggesting his awareness that they will likely want to break with existing social and political hierarchies, and they will need to possess different knowledge and skills from their father on the other side of the war. At the same time, he is reluctant to give them up to experiences entirely different from his own. Unlike late-colonial accounts of redeemed captives, which address fissures in distant and local Anglo American governance by representing settler-Indian violence and abductions, this threat of an "indian education" in *Letters* anchors a strategy in this literary work for addressing anxieties settler fathers faced in the new nation.²⁸

²⁸ See Teresa Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Michelle Burnham, *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press 1997); Chris Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996). For early U.S. novels that include instances of unredeemed captive

Farmer James's concern with his children's "indian education" gives us a compelling reason to reconsider Crèvecoeur's canonical work as a response to changes in formal education in the post-revolutionary north, which complicated the role of the settler father and exposed his latent anxieties.²⁹ Moreover, it encourages us to explore how literary responses geared toward prospective fathers evolved in the 1790s when the novel emerged as a national form. Taking up these two inquiries, this chapter examines Crèvecoeur's *Letters* and Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly: Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* (1799) in relation to trends in northern education reform. Both literary works emerge from distinct, late-eighteenth century U.S. contexts in which the settler colonies were starting to become different states under a democratic political system and proposals directed at correcting formal education were transforming widely held conceptions of freedom and equality. *Letters* appears in print while the revolution continues and state and federal school plans appear for the nation. *Edgar Huntly*, in contrast, reaches readers during a moment when the xenophobic Federalist Alien and Sedition Acts have been passed and anti-federalist education reforms are influencing civic and familial responsibilities. However, both Crèvecoeur and Brown entertain the notion that formal education reforms would fix the inequity and injustice occurring during this unstable period by focusing on the views of settler men who live in rural settlements—a father and an expectant father neither of whom contemplates moving east, for they were in America to stay. These figures see such reforms not as welcome remedies but as challenges, forcing them to reconsider how much control the new government would have over their lives and the latitude they might give their families. Reforms check their authority;

women see Susannah Rowson's *Rueben and Rachel* (1798). And for an earlier historical book see John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage Press, 1995).

²⁹ Relevant discussions of the early U.S. novel and the above influences appear over the course of the chapter in the footnotes but it bears noting here work on the novel and its particular dangers that is relevant for this chapter: see Terence Martin, *The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961); Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Ed Cahill, *Liberty of the Imagination: Aesthetic Theory, Literary Form, and Politics in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

and, in the process, reveal that settler fathers' sway depended upon their arbitrary role as mediators between an Atlantic world connected by ideas, goods, and slavery, and an anarchic and communalist frontier. More than just exposing these figures' tenuous authority, regional reform reveals how these literary works serve as timely guides, showing settler fathers that reckoning with their domestic fates involved amending their patriarchal privileges and civic responsibilities.

Learning in *Letters*

Published in London in 1782 when the outcome of the Revolutionary War was known on either side of the Atlantic, *Letters from an American Farmer* provided readers with a challenging patchwork narrative composed of twelve letters describing life in North America.³⁰ The letters in the original collection were supposedly written by the provincial American, farmer James, to the European man of letters, Mr. F.B., and they included the following subjects: an American farmer, an American, the coastal towns of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyards, Charles Town and slavery, Snakes and Humming-birds, an exchange between a Russian gentleman and the botanist John Bartram, and the Distresses of a Frontier Man. Because they encompassed such diverse peoples, places, and customs, and included different vantage points, the over-arching message of the work has been tough to decipher. The collection might have served as "useful entertainment" for readers which (as the collection advertised) could help "happily reunite" the "parent state and colony." It could have also exposed how irreconcilable the two countries were. At least one reader, critic Samuel Ayscough, saw a third option: presenting the country's "allurements" using

³⁰ References to *Letters from an American Farmer* come from Albert Stone's edition (New York: Penguin, 1981).

the voice of a “humble cultivator of the earth,” could encourage an exodus that could “prove more fatal to this country [England] than the war itself.”³¹

Since scholars recovered the epistolary collection in 1922, the author’s biography has offered support for these differing readings of *Letters*. Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur travelled from France to New France in 1755 where he served in the military in the French and Indian War as a surveyor. In 1759, he relocated to Orange Country, New York where he became a British citizen, changed his name to John Hector St. John, married an American, Mehitable Tibbet, and began earning a living as a farmer until the Revolutionary War. Critics have stressed similarities between the author and his protagonist, Farmer James, in order to argue that his rich representations of farming life are signs of the French immigrant’s genuine love America and his established British loyalism. On account of the author’s European affiliations, other more recent critics have interpreted James as more of a fictional persona, constructed, as Ayscough suspected, to undermine the authority and popularity of the British empire. Most recently, Ed White observes that readings of *Letters* in terms of characterization and form suppress a more localized understanding of the author’s entire corpus.³² Studies highlighting the novelistic qualities of *Letters*, that is, also emphasize how the author constructs a falsely provincial

³¹Ayscough continues, “This time being come when independence of America is in some measure acknowledged by this country, we already see allurements being thrown out to encourage the inhabitants of all nations to settle with them and by that means to recover from the desolation it has sustained through the war by draining the various nations of their most useful inhabitants without waiting for the slow increase of natural populations” *Remarks on the Letters from an American Farmer, or, A detection of the errors of Mr. J. Hector St. John: pointing out the pernicious tendency of these letters to Great Britain* (1783).

³² Ed White. “Crèvecoeur in Wyoming” *EAL* 43, no. 2 (2008): 379-407. White relies heavily on Dennis More’s foundational work in broadening our understanding of Crèvecoeur’s writings. See the introduction to *More Letters from an American Farmer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995). For examples of the global trend see Ralph Bauer, *Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Christopher Iannini, “The Itinerant Man’: Crèvecoeur’s Caribbean in , Raynal’s Revolution, and the Fate of Atlantic Cosmopolitanism” in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61.2, April 2004; and Yael Ben-Zvi, “Mazes of Empire: Space and Humanity in Crèvecoeur’s ‘Letters’” in *Early American Literature*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2007), pp. 73-105

American perspective in response to a changing Atlantic World. This pattern creates the sense that Crèvecoeur was first and foremost an “itinerant intellectual” rather than a farmer and “British North America [is] simply a palimpsestic component of a broader analysis of Atlantic commerce and slavery...and the Pennsylvania frontier a meager reality effect, a random setting or fictional frame of little relevance.”³³ After recovering the local influences obscured by a globalizing early American Studies, White concludes with the observation that Crèvecoeur’s “aesthetic project” is more in keeping with the writings of a “cultivateur philosophique who represents a range of perspectives through which a totalizing verdict of New World colonization could be formulated” than a heavily ironized late- eighteenth century novel.³⁴ However, one can avoid consigning the North American terrain in *Letters* to a “reality effect” and retain an impression of the text’s novelistic qualities as narrative fiction by focusing on Crèvecoeur’s identity not as farmer, intellectual, and diplomat, but as a settler colonist—a European husband and father who tried to create a permanent home in North America. Focusing on this aspect of his identity leads us to a new critical question: how does *Letters* prepare readers for that post-revolutionary transition when settler colonial fathers were called upon to be farmers, intellectuals, and citizens?

At the start of letter V, Farmer James remarks that “the easiest way of becoming acquainted with the modes of thinking, the rules of conduct, and the prevailing manners of any people is to examine what sort of education they give their children” (127). *Letters* confirm this point with regard to Farmer James’s family and the settlement in which they reside. For instance, in letter I, James’s wife reminds James that she knows more than he does because “when I was a girl Father sent us to the very best master in the precinct” (41). And in letter XII, James explains

³³ White 380-381.

³⁴ Ibid, 403.

to his European interlocutor, Mr. F.B., “distant as I am from any places of worship or school of education, I have been the pastor of my family and the teacher of many of my neighbors. I have learnt them as well as I could the gratitude they owe to God, the Father of harvests, and their duties to man” (212). James’s wife receives instruction with a school-master who received and sought out exemplary students.³⁵ In contrast, James instructs his children and his “neighbors” more informally, taking on the task because of limited options. The first type of education permits greater separation between parents and children, with children acquiring knowledge outside their parent’s ken. The second type blurred parenting, preaching and educating, often leaving children with similar skills and values to their parents. With the first, students developed ties with the towns along the coast and across the Atlantic, and learned to think of themselves as colonists rather than settler colonists. With the second, students experienced a more isolated upbringing supported by the prospect of continued settlement. These two examples indicate more than education practices; they explain what Crèvecoeur refers to as the “modes of thinking” used by Farmer James’s people. Together, they suggest this group harbors an epistemological tension between fostering a connected topography that made one feel at home in the world but less likely to call anywhere in particular home and maintaining a rooted and wary yet also hospitable settlement.

According to James observations in *Letters*, this epistemological tension does not exist throughout North America. He indicates as much when he describes child-rearing and schooling in the north. In letters IV-VIII, he paints a picture of an industrious, earnest Nantucket seaside

³⁵ As Nancy Beadie explains, in the late colonial period primary schooling in rural areas involved school-founders and instructors competing for students in nearby towns, and, contrary to popular belief, attendance was generally higher in rural areas than it was in the cities. Beadie’s social history, *Education and the Creation of Social Capital in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) revises our critical tendency to equate the urban with the learned and to see education reform as first motivated by liberal antebellum reformers troubled by the poverty and inequity created by nineteenth century industrialization. Her study turns to the economic and political effects of education reform, and she uses Crèvecoeur’s adopted home state of New York as her primary case study.

community where harmony, tolerance, and morality have been established through exemplary parenting. He notes, Nantucket children “are corrected with tenderness, nursed with the most affectionate care, clad with that decent plainness from which they observe their parents never to depart.” Using “the force of example, which is superior even to the strongest instinct of nature, more than by precepts, they learn to follow the steps of their parents to despise ostentatiousness as being sinful” (127). According to James, parents employ training methods popularized by John Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1694), which emphasizes positive, pragmatic role models contra abstract dictates and harsh disciplines to fill in the initially blank mind and to draw out existing aptitudes.³⁶ Following this approach, Nantucket parents monitor their behavior and their children’s behavior. This meticulousness, according to James, leaves them unburdened by their separation from England or their proximity to American frontiers because they have achieved a balance between refinement and civic responsibility and have reproduced that balance in their children in order to govern their settlement.

Crèvecoeur designs *Letters* to illustrate why James cannot discover, nor can he create, a similar balance in his Pennsylvania settlement to the Lockean system he finds in Nantucket. The first letter foregrounds this problem and underscores its gravity for settler fathers through a discussion over whether Farmer James should send letters about American customs and mores to an English scholar. In response to the request, James, his wife, and a local minister discuss what this act of writing signifies for James and what it might signify for the settlement. Initially, the request causes each character to pronounce James’s differences from this scholar. The minister calls James a “*tabula rasa*” for whom “spontaneous and strong impressions are delineated with

³⁶ See Fliegelman’s *Prodigal and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) for a study of this transition in pedagogical theories along with the rise of revolutionary sentiment and rhetoric. Fliegelman emphasizes the popularity of Locke’s text in the North American colonies.

facility” in contrast to the “good and enlightened Englishmen,” and his wife declares that he is unable to converse with a man who “lived an abundance of time in that big house called Cambridge” (46,40). Furthermore, James admits, he “possess[es] a very limited power of mind” in contrast to Mr. F.B. (39). Such descriptions construe James as good-natured yet highly impressionable and emotional rather than discerning and logical, a man inclined to openness yet prone to emotional outbursts, in short, an eighteenth century subject in need of an education rather than one offering it to others. The first letter then shifts from addressing this concern to discussing the consequences of this correspondence for James and his family. The minister reminds James that the Englishmen would provide him with connections abroad while James’s wife details the potentially harmful social consequences of James’ decision to begin this correspondence and, in the process, become known as “the man of the pen” (49). She reminds James that other settlers will “foresee some great alterations in the welfare of thy family” and pleads with him to keep his new occupation a “a great secret,” as it would cause him to “be accused of idleness and vain notions not befitting thy condition.” And it would draw outside attention to the settlements with “our colonel would be often coming here to know what it is that thee canst write so much about.” The discussion dramatically re-enacts the familial and civic pressures settler fathers might experience. Relations and neighbors encourage them to establish transatlantic networks and warn them of the deleterious consequences of those connections; they task them with acquiring new skills and concealing that knowledge, so they do not disrupt social divisions. As a result, instead of inspiring the “tenderness” and “decent plainness” admired in Nantucket, they often vacillate between serving as blank slates and serving as heads of households and plantations.

Crèvecoeur highlights the effect of social pressures on settler fathers in letters II and III when James describes his life as an American Farmer. By writing about himself and his people, James discovers the “relative state of nations.” But he never uses this knowledge to jettison his original position as a man poorly-fitted to the task of a transatlantic correspondence. That is, as James conveys details about his home, he periodically reconfirms his status as an untutored subject, noting that he remains who he is regardless of how much he knows and how well he can express it. Lack of character development creates the sense that James’ personality is the product of attributes he already possessed before he reflected on the nature of his experiences, rather than his accumulated sensations. Furthermore, he never refers to the habits and mores he describes in letters II and III to explain his remarks in later letters.³⁷ This disconnect has to do with the form of the original collection: discrete packaging of letters devoted to different content according to Mr. F.B. requests. But this pattern of forgetting begins before James becomes a “man of the pen.” James notes that while Mr. F.B. stayed with his family in Carlisle the Englishmen, “conducted me, on the map, from one European country to another; told me many extraordinary things of our famed mother country, of which I knew very little, of its internal navigation, agriculture, arts, manufactures, and trade; you guided me through an extensive maze, and I abundantly profited by the journey” (39). How James profits is unclear since he claims that he is not able to “possess recollections,” and that he still knows very little about how the world looks and acts beyond his settlement. James neglects these so-called “profits” in letters II and III. His inability to accrue knowledge is also apparent in the difference between personal letters (I-III, IX, and XII) and ethnographic letters (IV-VIII, X), and in letter IX where James describes the

³⁷ For critics who argue that James’s learns over the course of the letters (part of the trend toward mapping bildungsroman form onto the letters), see Yael Ben-Zvi: “James’s views gradually change, as he learns that imperial practices and discourses fail to protect happy, free human existence which an idealized version of empire seemed to promise” (81).

violence of slavery as if encountering it for the first time, enraged to discover American failings and unsure of what, if anything, he ought to do about them. Paradoxically, his claim in letter IX that he can “never leave behind...the remembrance of the dreadful scenes to which I have been witness” only underscores that he has forgotten most everything else (201). Instead of progressively improving, he goes back to square one; though he appears to be a blank slate to his minister, *Letters* shows how easy it is to erase that slate and begin filling it in again.

Shifts between the push toward the improvement and obliviousness for settler fathers do more than deconstruct a binary between American men and Englishmen. Instead, they illustrate why the Pennsylvania frontier in particular prompted anxiety for settler fathers, and they gesture toward potential, strategic solutions for this figure living in this territory. In letters focused on this mid-Atlantic territory (II, III, XI, XII), James sees his people living in a liminal state between the “eastern provinces” with “the accuracy and wisdom with which they have settled their territory; for the decency of their manners; for their early love of letters; their ancient college, the first in this hemisphere,” and the more sparsely populated western frontiers where “remote from the power of example and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of our society,” and where “tender minds [who] have nothing else to contemplate but the example of their parents; like them they grow up a mongrel breed, half civilized, half savage” (68,77). And, they are located between a north replete with instances of good conduct and a south where good conduct goes “unseen,” and “no one thinks with compassion of those showers of sweat and of tears which from the bodies of Africans daily drop and moisten the ground they till” (170). The mid-Atlantic contrast between fertile and abundant land and the ceaseless conflicts over that land further underscores this uncertain position, suggesting that this area could

become either a useful garden or a ruined landscape and that this outcome depended greatly on the behavior of the settler father.³⁸

What made this vexed territory and crucial figure important at the close of the Revolutionary War was the newly confederated U.S. government's unproven ability to protect citizens and non-citizens and to let those living on existing settlements organize and survive as they had done prior to the War. Those living on settled mid-Atlantic frontiers relatively removed from English influence yet near the new U.S. government experienced profound ambivalence over ceding monarchical authority and emerging national federal authority.³⁹ One of the primary ways they intuited what the future might hold was by assessing variations within the field of education. For this was, as James mentions, the "easiest way of becoming acquainted with a people" and, as *Letters* implies, the easiest way of spying unwanted changes in that people. In short, formal education signaled how hierarchical or uniform the nation might become after the Revolution, whether the government would determine the social mobility of citizens and non-citizens, and how amendable it would be to post-revolutionary appeals for freedom and equality. While the thirteen states' representatives ratified the Articles of Confederation, citizens began proposing state and federal models for education reform and non-citizens began contesting the

³⁸ Dennis More and Ed White discuss the importance of the Wyoming Valley (an area of the state about which the author wrote extensively). Before, during, and after the Revolutionary War, Pennsylvania Pennamites and Connecticut Yankees fought in this valley because King Charles II issued charters rights to both colonies causing them to believe they were entitled to land long inhabited by the Susquehannock. The Paxton Boys, a group of Scots-Irish frontiersmen, who murdered a community of Connestoga (Susquehannock) living near Lancaster under the protection of the colonial government had settled there in 1769 in opposition to the Penns. In his response to the Paxton Boys riots, in, "Narrative of the Late Massacres", Ben Franklin claimed that the Connestoga would have been safe anywhere else except among the "Christian savages of Peckstang and Donegal." Benjamin Franklin drummed up support for land schemes as the war concluded. In a tract published the same year as *Letters*, he reminded readers that "several Instances of large Tracts of Land, bought, on what was then the Frontier of Pensilvania, for Ten Pounds per hundres Acres, which after 20 years, when the Settlement had been extended far beyond them, sold readily with any Improvement made upon them, for three Pounds per Acre."

³⁹ See Judith Ridner, *A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

conditions of their exclusion by trying to reformulate the narrow field of education. These efforts to organize and contest the composition and organization of the new nation were catalyzed by cultural and economic differences across the country.

In the early 1780s, Thomas Jefferson composed a national plan for education reform and included it in his well-known query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia*. The proposal draws heavily upon elements of the successful training James finds in the north/east and combines such methods with the uneven mid-Atlantic school practices James and his wife reference. Jefferson proposes basic pedagogical reforms to keep youth from becoming “early victim[s] to premature exertion.” He argues that instructors must no longer presume that “young and tender subjects” possess “the flattering appearance of their being men while they are yet children,” and “end in reducing them to be children when they should be men.”⁴⁰ He wishes to change instruction so it fits physical and cognitive development and “stor[es] memories with the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European and American history [and] the first elements of morality,” and he proposes a curriculum in which “all children” learn “reading, writing, and common arithmetic” and “every person [is] entitled to send their children three years gratis.” But then his proposal shifts, offering additional schooling only to those who “please paying for it” and to “geniuses” while the rest of the students are relegated to a process Jefferson refers to as “dismissing the residue” or “raking away the rubbish.” He aims to remove “ambition under every disguise it may assume,” by providing “an education adapted to the years, to the condition of every one, and directed to their freedom and happiness,” but the new system of instruction he creates complies

⁴⁰ All references to Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* come from Frank Shuffelton’s edited edition (New York: Penguin Books 1999).

with his conception of the natural order of things.⁴¹ As *Letters* suggests, such northern-centric education reforms were often met with uncertainty. They presented opportunities for improving settlers lives by providing connections for those living in more isolated places with citified U.S. merchants and English elites with whom they might share school-masters and connections to resources that might help protect settlements from inter and intra-colonial incursion. At the same time, they threatened to change familial and civic roles and expose settlements to government control and exploitation.

Northern education reforms motivate James's comments on living with American Indians in the final letter, "Distresses of a Frontier Man". While other letters (ex. III) refer to the western frontier as a place where "either tawny or white" risks becoming "lost in the immensity of these woods", Crèvecoeur fully addresses this apprehension in the last letter when James entertains the prospect of moving to remote territory for good (78). In this epistle, James explains that violence looms just outside his front door, shaking the very ground he, his family, and his slaves have tilled. He wonders, "What can an insignificant man do in the midst of these jarring contradictory parties, equally hostile to persons situated as I am?" (209). And he finds one possible answer: the way to escape encroaching violence and powerful factions of loyalists and patriots is to relocate to American Indian country and live as Indians do. Whether James imagines a generic location, considers going "native" for rhetorical effect, or intends to live with a specific tribe, is unclear. His erratic commentary suggests he is either mad or simply bluffing in hopes that Mr. F.B. and others will see the seriousness of his situation. But his belief that he will be permitted to settle

⁴¹ This same query includes thoughts on race and criminal punishment. Jefferson admits inconclusive findings about racial difference while also pointing out the "real distinctions which nature has made" and then goes on to explain that slaves had to be exported rather than freed and "incorporated" because of "deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made... [will] produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race" (145).

with the Indians with whom he claims to be “well acquainted,” his elaborate “schemes” for how they will live, and even his fears about race-mixing suggest that he has thought the matter through, and is indeed “resolved” to “seek a change of place” in an American Indian village. Eighteenth century print conventions prove similarly inconclusive. On the one hand, locating James’s endangered home in western Pennsylvania positions the farmer well to head into American Indian territory. On the other hand, figuring American Indian country anonymously (“the tenants of the great--village of—”) creates the sense that his potential new home was representative not actual.⁴²

Scholars have found James’s strained allegiance to England and America, and his representation of America’s ruined landscapes in this last letter indicative of Crèvecoeur’s ability to tap into, and rework, political, literary, and philosophical traditions.⁴³ However, this analytical focus has created the sense that James’ decision to live with American Indians is less relevant to the epistle’s parting message. For instance, reading the letter’s landscapes alongside Edmund Burke’s notion of the sublime, Ed Cahill has concluded that the author is not “merely reporting atrocities during the Revolution but instead offer[ing] an implicit critique of the idealized discourse of western expansion....[by] reinserting into the celebratory scenes of wilderness cultivation the violence, oppression, and contingency of settlement politics.”⁴⁴ If, as Cahill

⁴² For an argument about print anonymity in eighteenth century periodicals and letters see Jared Gardner, “The Literary Museum and the Unsettling of the Early American Novel” *ELH* 67 (2000): 743-71.

⁴³ See Myra Jehlen, J Hector St. John Crèvecoeur: Monarcho-Anarchist in Revolutionary America,” in *American Quarterly* 31.2 (1979); Teresa Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) Ed Cahill, *Liberty of the Imagination*. With emphasis on James’ unstable mind in the final letter, they find a representative political philosophy, a gothic display of America’s troubling commitment to freedom and slavery, and, aesthetic theory exercised in the midst of political upheaval, respectively.

⁴⁴ Cahill continues, “it contests the unity of national territorial identity through the turbulent specificity of the local and turns the teleological thrust of American futurity and the empire of liberty on its head” (132). In philosophical terms, he explains, “emotional and physical conflict are expressed through the discourse of the sublime, they function potentially contradictory ways. Both humbling the astonished perceiver with ideas of insurmountable

contends, the letter “challenges the balance of aesthetic liberty and constraint” on which expansion relies, do its comments on living with Indians support or conflict with this challenge? Are they part of the work’s aesthetic experiment, illustrating how James’s feverish mind and ruined America stem from not just the Revolutionary War but the grievous toll of Western expansion, including settler Indian violence? Or is his imagination of what life would be like living among American Indians a way of delineating how future settler fathers might (re)form a more harmonious U.S.?

The remarks on American Indians in “Distresses of a Frontier Man’s” resemble strategies of Euro-American self-preservation prevalent in Western missionary tracts, travelogues, and philosophies in which Indians serve as generic others in order to address Western existential crises.⁴⁵ Much like in these earlier representations, American Indians appear in letter XII as contradictory figures, and they inspire contradictory reactions from farmer James. For instance, James claims to be “so well acquainted with the principal manners of these people that I entertain not the least apprehension from them...I rely more securely on their strong hospitality than on

power and ennobling him with a sense of inner dignity and greatness, sublime convulsions simultaneously upset the perceptual order of the narrator and the formal order of the text” (128). See also Christina Holbo, “Imagination, Commerce, and the Politics of Associationism in Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*” in *Early American Literature* 32 (1997) 20-65. She claims of the last letter that it is “caught in a dialectical tension between the beautiful and the sublime, between philosophy and madness, liberty and imprisonment: a dialectical tension in which the differences between these opposed possibilities dissolve, and yet in which a middle ground is just out of reach” (52).

⁴⁵ While similarities within colonialist rhetoric suggest that settler colonial emigration schemes in the period were unchanging written and enacted strategies—effective ways of dealing with Indians—writers focused on specific regions of interest to perspective settlers and readers. They depicted places with recent tumultuous histories and presented dilemmas that might be dealt with or avoided if only one learned from those events. I am influenced in my thinking here by Dana D. Nelson’s approach in *The Word in Black and White: Reading “Race” in American Literature, 1638-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Other analyses of importance here include Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*; Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1953); *A Study of the Indian and the American Mind*; Gordon Sayre, *Les Savages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Laura Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

the witnessed compacts of many Europeans,” and, “they will not take up the hatchet against a people who have done them no harm...far superior in their motives of action to the Europeans, who for sixpence per day, may be engaged to shed that of any people on earth” (219).⁴⁶ He also notes that while living with them his children will “revert into a state approaching nearer to that of nature, unencumbered either with voluminous laws or contradictory codes, often galling the very necks of those whom they protect,” and “acquire a confirmed taste for that simplicity which so well becomes the cultivators of the land” (211, 224).⁴⁷ After admitting this point, he shifts from “entertain[ing] not the least apprehension” to “dread[ing] lest the imperceptible charm of an Indian education may seize my younger children and give them such a propensity to that mode of life as may preclude their returning to the manners and customs of their parents” (219).⁴⁸

American Indians are, for him, familiar and exotic, cooperative and corrupting. However, as he goes on to describe this “indian education” in which abducted settlers “can never be prevailed on to readopt European manners,” he emphasizes that living with them for any extended period may

⁴⁶James’ besieged home is similar to a middle ground, a term coined by historian Richard White, to refer to regions’ defined not by collaborations, and intra- and inter-communal bargaining and violent contestations. See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a recent treatment applying White’s concepts to the western fringes of the mid-Atlantic see Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁴⁷ James’s positive generalizations about Indians links his work to French New World writings, specifically Baron de Lahontan’s travels in New France. Nearly a century earlier, this French ex-patriot and ex-soldier had written *Nouveau Voyage* (1703), a popular travelogue that, like *Letters*, took the form of a series of letters to an unknown European correspondent. When James speculates that Indian country may offer a simpler, better environment in which values and farming practices can once again complement each other, he relies on comments about Indian life that appear to be taken directly from *Nouveau Voyage*. Like Lahontan, James claims that Indians are “without temples, without priests, without kings, and without laws, they are in many instances superior to us; and the proofs of what I advance are that they live without care, sleep without quietude, take life as it comes, bearing all its asperities with unparalleled patience, and die without any kind of apprehension for what they have done or for what they expect to meet with hereafter” (209). In both his frontispiece and his letters, Baron de Lahontan sought to inspire French and Franco-American social reform by using as a foil a stock Indian identity free of worldly and other-worldly concerns. Jefferson and other late eighteenth century creole elites had copies of Lahtonon’s *Nouveau Voyage*, but it was also well known in London, where, like *Letters*, it had been originally published.

⁴⁸ He also argues that “the strongest prejudices [that] would make me abhor any alliance with them in blood: disagreeable no doubt, to nature's intentions which have strongly divided us by so many indelible characters” (223).

help settlers avoid alienating conflict and social pressure, yet it may also make them unredeemable captives.

Such conflicting claims about settlers living with American Indians indicate how the shifts from positive Indian influences to fears of an “indian education” in the letter address social and political changes in the early U.S. The final letter is influenced by strategies of control and empowerment, which appeared through northern education reforms. In this unstable context, with theoretical and actual concerns heavily interwoven, “indian education” developed competing meanings, which it did not have in the late colonial period. In addition to captivity, the phrase invoked the prospect of relinquishing European privileges in favor of egalitarianism. Plans to bring order to the frontier, as Benjamin Rush notes in a letter to representative George Clymer, involved founding schools on “Indian lands recently acquired,” meaning that this kind of settler “indian education” not only fostered early national consolidation by bringing distant subjects under federal control and serving as a way for settlers to achieve more respectable, state-sanctioned status; it depended upon the dispossession of American Indians. At the same time, “indian education” also meant teaching American Indians particularly in the post-revolutionary north where the possibility of Indian education in schools segregated from and alongside settlers continued to receive interest, fuel controversy, and shape U.S. policy.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See recent studies emphasizing the agency of Indians and showing how the tension between evangelizing and civilizing Indians through formal education transformed colonial America and the early U.S. Hillary Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies: Reading, Writing, and New England Missionary Schools, 1750-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); Linford D. Fisher *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). See also Phillip Round, *Removable Types: Histories of the Book in Indian Country, 1663-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

As he moves from illustrating his familiarity with Indians to fears about an “indian education” re-forming children, to his view of settlers educating American Indians, James covers these meanings of this phrase “indian education”:

take a young Indian lad, give him the best education you possibly can, load him with your bounty, with presents, nay with riches, yet he would secretly long for his native woods, which you would imagine he must have long since forgot; and on the first opportunity he can possibly find, you will see him voluntarily leave behind all you have given him and return with inexpressible joy to lie on the mats of his fathers (217).

Such representations of Indian students were not simply fanciful accounts. They described a common problem for settlers who watched Native students and scholars learn in their schools and yet not give up their cultural heritages in the process. For this reason, it is unsurprising that Indian students were popular and highly charged figures in early U.S. prose and poetry. With “An Indian Student, or, the Force of Nature” (1784), Philip Freneau wrote a similar account in verse, beginning, “In Yanky land there stands a town/ Where learning may be purchased low--/ Exchange his blanket for a gown,/ And let the lad to college go” and ending with an Indian student unable to accept his white education because he cannot dispatch the “Force of Nature.” These descriptions invoke and dispel those Indian students who used settler education to work within and outside tribal communities, enacting as Mark Rifkin puts it, the “uneven and fraught dynamics by which the settler state recognizes/disavows indigenous modes of peoplehood.”⁵⁰ In this way, they suggest the validity of Gauri Viswanathan’s observation that “representations of the moral and intellectual insufficiencies” of non-Western literary characters “must be

⁵⁰ Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality and Native Sovereignty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 17.

considered as an ongoing response to readers' claims to self-determination."⁵¹ But they also present the formal education of American Indians as a perfunctory instance of scholastic incorporation and rejection essential to stabilizing the charged political environment in the early nation. Just as Crèvecoeur's sketch of the Indian student, who "secretly long[s] for the woods" belittles formative experiences of young American Indian men and women who studied and wrote their way into the republic of letters, it also suggests that educating American Indians had to continue. References to captive settlers and Indian students in the letter counter the positive implications of American indian influence, while disclosing the similarity between captivity and education, between an indian education ("the imperceptible charm of Indian education may *seize* my younger children") and an indian education ("*take* an Indian lad").⁵²

"Distresses of a Frontier Man" registers concerns about these similar restraints and influences in order to underscore how they led early U.S. citizens and non-citizens to be as skeptical of new government restrictions as they were of life among American Indians. James raises these concerns by elaborating on current education: "Still the danger of indian education returns to my mind, and alarms me much...then again I contrast it with the education of the times; both appear to be equally pregnant with evils" (226). In his mind, settlement schools are equally disturbing because they distance children from their parents and put them under the supervision of foreign instructors who use harsh methods and promote impractical and non-standardized skills ("geometrical rules, the use of the compass, or of the Latin tongue") instead

⁵¹ Gauri Viswanathan, "Subjecting English and the Question of Representation" in *Disciplinary at the Fin de Siecle* ed. Amanda Anderson and Joseph Valente (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 179.

⁵² American Indians attended charity schools and colleges because they were captured, by Indians from other tribes and settlers, or their families had severe medical or fiscal problems or, as Margaret C. Szasz notes, they sought a "way to move across cultures, enabling them to serve their own people through a wider base of understanding." See Margaret Connel Szasz *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1988) 6.

of gentler methods and relevant values (“sobriety, diligence, and modesty”).⁵³ His distrust of foreign lessons and teachers was a common one in the early republic because they signaled American recidivism in the form of renewed European political, economic, and cultural dependence. Crèvecoeur’s final letter depicts two causes of alienation, which were often addressed by education reforms, such as Jefferson’s. The early pages of the letter, prior to the discussion of Indians, contain a confession of sorts in which James admits the difficulty of giving up his ingrained habits as he witnesses England’s tyranny. He explains that his affective bond with England took root when the “sentiments they [ancient principles] inspired grew with my earliest knowledge and were grafted upon the first rudiments of my education” (204-205). Such inveterate bonds between his “earliest knowledge” and “ancient principles” make it difficult for him to conceive of himself in any other way and, therefore, difficult to imagine keeping pace with the progressive currents of social and political change. If sentiments, like plant grafts, give settlers a better hope for healthy survival by connecting them to something larger, over time they also make it harder to distinguish between foreign and indigenous elements, a confusion apparent to James who no longer sees himself as transplanted stock but instead as a host whose separation is painful, even self-destructive.⁵⁴ This settler epistemology gives rise to a second concern. James asks, “were I to send them to such schools as the interior parts of our settlement afford at present,

⁵³ James’ critical view of rural education calls to mind two popular types of late eighteenth century satire: European critiques of North American backwardness understood as signs of environmental degeneration. European writers provincialized even the most urbane of colonial institutions and manners and early U.S. writers lampooning of elite European training and fashionableness flamboyantly practiced by colonists at the expense of their own engagement with the local folks around them. The first implies there is little to learn in the settlements because labor rather than consumption occurs here; the other suggests there is little Americans can learn from the metropolis, as evidenced by laughable leading citizens, policy makers, and educators who have erroneously pegged their identity and authority on Latin texts, and English and French cultural capital. For readings that highlight the importance of each kind of narrative, see Ralph Bauer, *Cultural Geography* and Ed Watts *Writing and Postcolonialism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1998). Bauer’s work illustrates the intellectual division of labor that accompanies north/south colonialism and Watts writes about US early national white writers as Second World citizens. Bauer offers a thorough reading of Crèvecoeur’s *Letters* although he does not focus on the last letter.

⁵⁴ Crèvecoeur presents a view of himself as an Anglo-American similar to the one expressed a half century later by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* (1835): a dissenting people who leave Europe when “their political education had long been accomplished.”

what can they learn there?” and “How could I support them there?”, alluding in the latter question to the distance and expense of an education no longer under English control though still unfunded by state or federal subsidies (223). In his reforms, Jefferson had only proposed how to answer this the question with his common school curriculum and his decision to restrict only those who could pay or were “geniuses” from furthering their education. James’s question considers the fiscal and familial costs of a new education from the perspective of a man who has already received lasting instructions as an English settler and is surveying the consequences of a different kind of training for his children.

The final pages of “Distresses of a Frontier Man,” reveal that the question of access to education has led James to eschew current schooling options for his children and reconfirm his decision to move and live with American Indians because, “Reason points out the necessity of chusing the least dangerous, which I must consider as the only good within my reach” (229). He persuades himself of the merits of a lifestyle he can “afford” in which his children will more likely possess values and skills similar to his own while gaining the positive attributes he sees in Indians. What seems like a genuine concession to live a less privileged, Euro-American life is James’s way of retaining his potentially waning social influence. He relinquishes control over his family by permitting them to live with Indians, but to prevent them from changing too dramatically, he keeps them within reach and even promises “to employ them in the labour of the fields, as much as I can,” and further adds, “I am even resolved to make their daily subsistence depend altogether on it.” (219). The concluding resolution illustrates the letter’s connection to northern education reform rather than its ironic similarity to late-eighteenth century promotional schemes for land speculation. Similar, alternating expressions of passivity and aggression

characterize proposals, which outlined new curricula and regulations to more delicately enlighten and more comprehensively restrict the nation.

Because the gravity of James's resettlement is expressed through education reform discourses, the epistolary collection concludes with a more prescriptive than deconstructive, more proto-national reformist than anti-imperialist message. The squandered pastoral utopia and foundering father in the final letter hardly serve to advertise expansion. But they do affirm the possibility of a renewed settler colonialism by admonishing settler fathers to reevaluate their beliefs (so far as they are able) and attend to the next generation's education, to compromise their liberties and the liberties of their children, even if this means temporarily obscuring the differences between the old and the young, the Indian and the non-Indian, the black slave and the white farmer. The concluding dilemma over the possibility of an "indian education" implies that for future U.S. inhabitants becoming Indian and becoming a citizen raise similar concerns. Through this comparison, and the manifold distresses surrounding it, Crèvecoeur prepares citizens and non-citizens for a shift whereby settler fathers needed to cede some privileges as they dealt with new options for his children, including their education, livelihood, and loyalty in an independent nation. The war-torn setting inspires rash decisions, which make these elaborate changes appear imminent. Instead of referring to yeoman industry and fecund fields to promote an isomorphic relationship between character and land, Crèvecoeur names horrors framed by, or pertaining to, education, which index the corrupted world awaiting them without the farmer, and highlight the corrections they needed to survive in America. In this way, education provides a consistent logic within a letter characterized by excessive feelings and irrational thoughts. This kind of logic, as we will see, also proved to be a promising template for the next generation of early U.S. novelists to explore how freedom from restriction might justify new amendments for

future settler fathers that would accommodate sociopolitical obligations without endangering individual privileges.

The E.D. in *Edgar Huntly*

Unlike the concluding epistle of *Letters from an American Farmer*, nowhere in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly: Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* (1799) do its author, protagonist, or ancillary characters use the phrase "indian education."⁵⁵ Yet *Edgar Huntly* elaborates upon the significant fears of this mysterious phenomenon. In fact, in a sense it picks up where Crèvecoeur leaves off. The novel describes the fate of a young Pennsylvania Quaker man struggling with his uncertain marriage, fortune, and fatherhood, the mysterious death of his friend, the tragic story of that friend's potential murderer, and the memory of his parent's death from settler-Indian violence. This eponymous narrator confirms farmer James's suspicions about his jeopardized children when this narrator, Edgar Huntly, breaks from his settlement and his family and goes on a somnambulistic, wilderness rampage inspired by his encounter with an Irish immigrant named Clithero Edny. In addition to this unifying concern connecting the two literary works, *Edgar Huntly* shares relevant formal characteristics with *Letters from an American Farmer*. Both begin with their narrators fretful about composing their stories with clarity and propriety and end with those same narrators in a state of unresolved distress. Both also include extensive narratives by "foreigners." This happens in letter XI, which shifts to the perspective of a Russian emigrant. And it happens in *Edgar Huntly* with the story of Clithero Edny. But where Crèvecoeur addresses

⁵⁵ References to Brown's novel in this section come from the 2006 Hackett edition edited by Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro. Their new edition has been invaluable to me in constructing this reading. It should be clear, though, that my reading differs from their claim that *Edgar Huntly* critiques the colonialist impulses exposed by the "global reach of Anglo-French imperialism and commerce" (ix).

challenges facing settler fathers as the American Revolution concludes, Brown uses *Edgar Huntly* to examine the obstacles aspiring fathers had to navigate under freshly implemented education reforms. In light of new state and federal school controls over the region, his novel meditates on the radically disruptive nature of an “indian education” upon the betrothed and *nearly* paternal Edgar Huntly and Clithero Edny.

Scholars have found signs of federalist or antifederalist politics in *Edgar Huntly* and Brown’s other gothic novels as well as support for the novel’s imperialist or anti-imperialist perspectives.⁵⁶ More recently, though, critics have shifted the focus of this nationally-framed opposition by illustrating how the darker works in Brown’s oeuvre fit in transatlantic, intellectual histories and register global economic and political developments.⁵⁷ This new international Brown is now often considered wary of rising Atlantic imperialism and the consolidation of federal power. He bears little resemblance to the Brown whom literary and cultural critic David Kazanjian linked with early U.S. colonizing schemes for American Indians or even the Brown associated with indian-hating or with western expansion.⁵⁸ This shift in scales encourages

⁵⁶ Much of this earlier criticism looks to the revealing end to the author’s career as a novelist and his shift to a career as an editor. For recent examples that are less focused on this shift but are oriented by the divided and anxious state of the early nation in terms of politics see Justine Murison, “The Tyranny of Sleep: Somnambulism, Moral Citizenship, and Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly*,” in *Early American Literature* 44.2 (2009): 243-270 and Paul Downes, “Sleep-Walking Out of the Revolution: Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly*,” in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29.4 (1996): 413-31.

⁵⁷ See Stephen Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (State Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Sean X. Goudie, *Creole America: West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) and Robert Levine, *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth Century American Literary Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁵⁸ See David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). While he does not focus on *Edgar Huntly* extensively, he sees Brown as engaged in a process in which the aestheticizing and assimilating of American Indian culture “is the always incomplete precondition for the transformation of white settler colonials into national citizen subjects” (9). For other work focused on Brown’s representation of American Indians see Bette S. Weidman, “White Man’s Red Man: A Penitential Reading of Four American Novels” in *Modern Language Studies* 4 (1974) 14-26; Newman “Indians and Indian-Hating in *Edgar Huntly* and *The Confidence Man*” in *MELUS* Vol. 15, No. 3 65-74; Richard

readers to appreciate the literary and philosophical traditions and vast global networks against which Brown's fictions work. However, privileging enlightenment ideas and Atlantic-driven economic forces simplifies a complex early U.S. frontier, which his novel depicts with elaborate detail. Importantly, though, it does help extend a dialogue about *Edgar Huntly*, which is not only informed by late colonial and early national settler-Indian relations and aesthetic and political philosophy, but also by transnational education reforms.

Cultural studies work on the early republic often presents the 1790s—the decade in which Brown created several of the nation's first novels--as a period in which new federal powers yielded disturbing schemes for putting down rebellions, exploiting non-citizens and citizens on the western frontiers, and excluding many immigrants who reached America's eastern shores. Following ratification of the Constitution, the country experienced domestic and foreign conflict, including the Whiskey Rebellion (1794) in western Pennsylvania and the Quasi War with France (1798-1800), fought in the Atlantic. In response to such conflicts, congress passed the Jay Treaty (1794) and the Alien and Sedition Acts (1798), insidious pieces of legislation allowing federal officials to bypass state authorities to arrest internal dissent and temper external threats raised most powerfully by Haitian emigration. This is, however, only a partial picture of the decade. As leading citizens devised and implemented federal policies to quell dissent, citizens and non-citizens carried out and debated gradual, curricular, pedagogical, and administrative changes in schools. Believing that creating a more educated populace was the best way to resolve early national conflicts and injustice, they reinforced their commitment to these changes by presenting

Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence* (Normal: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975); Jared Gardner, "Alien Nation: *Edgar Huntly's* *Savage Awakening*" in *American Literature* Vol. 66, No. 3 (1994), and Janie Hind's "Deb's Dogs: Animals, Indians and Post-colonial Desire in *Edgar Huntly*" in *Early American Literature* Vol. 39 No. 2 (2004) 323-354; and Matthew Sivilis, "Native American Sovereignty and Old Deb in *Edgar Huntly*" in *American Transcendental Quarterly* 15.4 (2001) 293-304. For nationalist expansionism, see Cecilia Tichi's "Charles Brockden Brown, Translator" in *American Literature* Vol XLIV, No. 1 (March 1972) 1-12.

ideas in ethnographic studies (as in Jefferson's *Notes*), commencement speeches, periodicals, and private letters. In doing so, they endorsed far-reaching resolutions that staunch federalists took for granted when devising expedient, national resolutions. Moreover, by proposing measures for educating more people, they fostered a discourse through which it became customary to assess changing opportunities for the disenfranchised to upend the economic, racial, and gendered rationales for their limited mobility.

Similar education reforms appeared in mid-eighteenth century tracts pointing out flaws in current instruction and offering new teaching materials and strategies to carefully train young blank minds. In *Prodigals and Pilgrims* (1982), Jay Fliegelman argues that this Lockean pedagogical discourse helped inspire the rhetoric of the American Revolution.⁵⁹ Late-eighteenth century education reform was distinguished by two related factors. First, by the end of the century, as Fliegelman notes, the belief that the perfect education could form skeptical citizens lost traction outside education reform discourse as a general concern arose that there was a there was "a danger of mistaking or being manipulated into mistaking a false appearance . . . for a certain reality," despite the best training. Second, northern education reform at the end of the century did not deal with the dismantling of a global political system but rather with the forming of a new one. And, by the late 1790s, this system had the state and federal control to use education to familiarize students with the nature of the representative democracy defining this new system. As historian Nancy Beadie notes, 1790s U.S. schools "help[ed] to integrate ordinary households and social networks into party politics and a state political economy . . . convert[ing] the already considerable social capital commanded by schools into political capital for the

⁵⁹ See Fliegelman's *Prodigals and Pilgrims*, particularly the introduction. For a recent study that reacts against the tendency in intellectual histories to align the framers and their philosophical wisdom with the Revolution see Terry Bouton, *Taming Democracy: "The People," the Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

modern liberal state.”⁶⁰ School and colleges helped induct students, families, and communities into a partisan, market environment, and, as a result, the associations that formal education once held changed. While in the late 1770s one’s education signified shifting allegiances to a sustainable, rural community or the Atlantic world, a decade later that sign system was altered by state and federal mandates. New pedagogies and curricula shaped citizens and non-citizens views of national risks and responsibilities through a two-party system that was refashioned out of these two older, dueling allegiances. At the same time, the implementing these reforms generated concerns among Federalists who believed that increased investment in education came at the cost of defense and commerce.

As schools became vehicles for familiarizing students with political parties and state and federal laws, education reformers continued to detail why to transform formal instruction and how to diffuse it, in many cases showing little sign of general suspicion with Lockean pedagogy. For example, a year before ratification, Benjamin Rush penned his address, “A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools and the Diffusion of Knowledge in Pennsylvania; to Which Are Added Thoughts upon the Mode of Education, Proper in a Republic” (1786). His title reflects his interest in making a school system and “adapt[ing] our modes of teaching to the peculiar form of government.” Similarly, his well-known call in the address for the creation of “republican machines” exemplifies his desire to teach more students and maintain a republic with a narrowly defined citizenry who had been conditioned to know truth from falsehood.⁶¹ Subsequent reforms

⁶⁰ Beadie, 16.

⁶¹ Rush’s “Plan” supports inculcating and disseminating staples of modern republicanism, the common good, personal industry, liberty, commerce, and faith. He counters federalists who advocate the importance of resolving public credit, regulating a militia, and building a navy. For Rush, education is superior to these measures because it predetermines outlook and behavior, instilling habits guaranteeing people respond correctly to the challenges left to a U.S. beholden to European powers and beset by internal dissension. He argues that “they will enlighten us in the great business of finance.”: “They will teach us all the modern improvements and advantages of inland navigation.

in the beleaguered U.S. also worked through the challenges of transforming and diffusing education. In “Remarks on Education,” (1797) Samuel Harrison Smith asserts, “we should cease to glory in error solely because it proceeded from our ancestors... we should not be attached so much to the soil as to the institutions and manners of our country.” (181). To attenuate ties to heritage and lands, Smith proposes every one be given the opportunity to “abstract his attention from groveling pursuits and disengage himself from the sordid cares of low occupation.” He argues that “a nation cannot be too enlightened,” yet he also cautions, a country’s “subsistence depends entirely on labor and the productiveness of labor depends on the time devoted to it.”⁶²

Struck by the limited access to formal instruction, 1790s social critics and reformers looked to education reform to confront the injustice created by expanding federal power and exacerbated by ingrained prejudices against the poor, women, and racialized others. Robert Coram produced a scathing critique of class inequality by identifying a link between an “improper bias in favor of commercial and mercantile habits and interests” and the few early U.S. “country schools” where “the teachers, or the regulations, are in every respect completely despicable, wretched, and contemptible.”⁶³ Non-citizens also traced inequality to education and argued for more equitable schooling in the country and the city. Prior to and following the Wollstonecraft’s publication of

They will defend us against hasty and expensive experiments in government by unfolding to us the experience and folly of past ages, and thus instead of adding to our taxes and debts, they will furnish us with the true secret of lessening and discharging both of them.” For analyses of Rush’s plan see Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) and William Hunting Howell, “A More Perfect Copy: David Rittenhouse and the Reproduction of Republican Virtue” in *WMQ* 3rd Series Vol. LXIV No. 4 (2007) 757-790. References to Rush’s text come from Rudolph Frederick, *Essays on Education and the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

⁶² Smuth advocates “a moderate increase of the hours of reflection and a small decrease of those of labor as a leading feature in a system of republican education” (196).

⁶³ Coram continues, “The buildings are in general sorry hovels, neither windtight nor watertight, a few stools serving in the double capacity of bench and desk and the old leaves of copy books making a miserable substitute for glass windows. The teachers are generally foreigners, shamefully deficient in every qualification necessary to convey instruction to youth and not seldom addicted to gross vices.” (137). The full title is *Political Inquiries; to Which is Added, a Plan for the General Establishment of Schools throughout the United States*.

Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792), writers, such as Judith Sargent Murray argued that intellectual standards were skewed toward men, and they could only be amended by changing women's education. In the appendix to their *Narrative* (1794) about the conduct of African Americans during the Philadelphia yellow fever outbreak, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones urged those who "keep slaves and approve the practice to "try the experiment of taking a few black children, and cultivate their minds with the same care, and let them have the same prospect in view, as to living in the world, as you would with for your own children, you would find upon the trail, they were not inferior in mental endowments."⁶⁴ For these writers, the unequal state of education in the new nation inspired conjecture and experimentation.

In addition to addressing the roots and ramifications of post-revolutionary inequity, education reforms revealed the dangers of limitless interpersonal control and, paradoxically, produced the disturbing sense that no matter how much education transformed and diffused it would not create equality because it could not quell impulses for self and social destruction. For instance, as Samuel Harrison Smith observes in his tract, "the years of infancy are those in which the chains of virtue or of vice are generally forged." He proposes, let "those truths in which all men agree be firmly impressed, let those which are probable be inculcated with caution, and let doubt always hang over those respecting which the good and wise disagree. Above all things, let the infant mind be protected from conviction without proof" (225).⁶⁵ For Smith, children had to be shielded from bad ideas (a.k.a. unproven claims) because unlike validated claims, they infect true notions, "tyranniz[ing] them with despotic authority." (193). Such common, late-eighteenth

⁶⁴ The full title is *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications.* (Philadelphia: Printed for the authors, by William W. Woodward, 1794)

⁶⁵ For Smith, truth and virtue are synonyms, and so "the preceptor should cautiously avoid instilling into the mind of his pupil a mean idea of human nature," thereby making the mind "subservient to virtue and truth.."

century caution was based on a view of the malleable mind derived from John Locke's treatises. This caution arose as a reaction against abstract precepts and physical punishments characteristic of early modern European and Euro-American instruction. But it also justified new types of control for the sake of a healthy U.S. polity, many of which were apparent when it came to the dynamics between parents and children, students and teachers, and schools and communities. Ceding this much influence to education, that is, augmented state and federal power while raising concerns about the nature of that power.

When Benjamin Rush proclaims that his reforms will bring about a "whole state tied together by one system of education... [into] one great and equally enlightened family" he produces the unsettling sense that only the state can facilitate civic unity, not the private family. More explicitly, Samuel Harrison Smith emphasizes that private families perpetuate prejudices, and he argues on the basis of this error in judgement that the state had the "right to educate" because it alone could best inculcate truth and, therefore, virtue. (190). But he assures readers that with a proper education "virtues appropriate to a family would be secured as well as rendered more captivating, secured by the enlightened conviction of the intimate connection between duty and interest, rendered more captivating by their borrowing a new character from the liberal spirit inspired by reason" (180). He tries to make acceptable what the state can now justifiably do in the name of virtue and reason. Robert Coram contends that basic instruction in the "obligations to society" be requisites in schools and colleges while "no modes of faith, systems of manners or foreign or dead languages should be taught" (141). His wish to discontinue teaching what he sees as artificial and unequal European laws and manners and ensure education "incorporate with the government or [be] regulated by it" highlights the government's potentially far-reaching power to make its subjects like-minded. Just as importantly, these examples describe how to cultivate

unity and abrogate false practices *conclusively*, thereby inviting the potentially frightening realization that, despite civic ingenuity and the meticulous attention to proper instruction, reform could not account for the vagaries of human passions.

Charles Brockden Brown wrote *Edgar Huntly* as 1790s education reformers confirmed the malleability of U.S. students and helped extended the reach of state-oriented institutions. His short yet prolific career as a novelist overlapped not just with the French and Haitian Revolutions and the era of high federalism, but also with this predominantly antifederalist education reform. And Brown was likely attentive to these plans and practices because, prior to working as novelist and editor, he used his substantial Latin education to gain employment at a grammar school in the early 1790s. *Edgar Huntly's* preface confirms this formative influence and the relevance of these reforms to this novel as well as their relevance to the conscientious national project of novel-making. Brown notes, "America has opened new views to the naturalist and politician, but has seldome [sic] furnished themes to the moral painter." Given abundant local "sources of amusement to the fancy and instruction to the heart," he argues that novelists ought to "exhibit a series of adventures growing out of the condition of our country" instead of dwelling upon "puerile superstition and exploded manners" from Europe. He tries to Americanize the novel by using "incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness." But he also participates, less explicitly, in the process of transforming and diffusing instruction so that it corresponds with the local reality in which it takes place and in which it is most relevant. As a "moral painter," he designs his novel to derive from, and be applicable to the places, characters, and scenarios it describes.

Contributing to education reform, writer and declaration signer, Francis Hopkinson observes in a tract entitled, "An Improved Plan for Education" that "many schemes by ingenious men

have been formed....to blend the *utile* with the *dulce*, in so intimate a connection that the pupil becomes so insensibly instructed whilst he thinks he is only amusing himself.” Hopkinson presumes this combination works best when lessons involve calisthenics. He devises different sports to play “on a twenty acre plot,” each teaching a different lesson from a different discipline, which he argues, allow “desirable acquisitions to go hand in hand, mutually improving and strengthening both mind and body by one amusing process.”⁶⁶ While Hopkinson’s plan is more creative than others, its explicit mission of making the body integral to learning rather than attenuated by it was common in the period’s plans.⁶⁷ Similarly, Brown contributes to this trend as well by engaging in this field of reform through his novel. His focus on sleep-walking, that curious phenomena in which the body unwittingly acts out what is repressed by the mind, allows him to dwell on the tenuous union between the body and the mind, which Hopkinson and other reformers envisioned forging for good. Brown’s novel reveals how well-intended efforts to bring the mind and body together fail in an individual and body politic governed by “a mind sorely wounded.” But the novel, at the same time, illustrates how to bridge the gap between mind and body, to temper ruthless self-mastery and stifling social and political control so that prospective settler fathers might go un-haunted in the early republic.

Edgar Huntly opens with the eponymous narrator emphasizing his struggle to extricate himself from the alluring and dangerous vagaries of frontier life in order to describe the events that have occurred. Edgar Huntly writes a letter to his fiancé, Mary, explaining that he has only now been able to “disengage my senses from the scene that was passing or approaching” so as to

⁶⁶ Hopkinson explains that he found his idea for this plan in a Defoe novel, and he promises to include in the next issue additional games for teaching under poor weather conditions. No additional entry appears in subsequent issues of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* (1796).

⁶⁷ Rush, Smith, and Coram all emphasize the perils of cramped and degenerating education for youth and college students

tell her what has happened (5). Here Brown establishes a parallel between what has happened to Edgar (the subject of the entire novel) and Lockean education, which sought to work on all fronts to secure the attention of the senses since they were reputedly the origin of all our ideas about the outside world. Emphasizing that he has been preoccupied by “passing or approaching” events highlights the extent to which Edgar has been distracted from marriage, paternity, and settlement security, and it stresses his positioning of himself as a spectator/student of this “scene” rather than an agent/teacher creating it. The “scene” securing his attention, however, primarily involves Edgar trying to establish a relationship with the Irish immigrant, Clithero Edny and to teach his new acquaintance the errors of his ways.⁶⁸ On its first page then, *Edgar Huntly* hints at an early national political problem created by the gradual transition from monarchical settler colony to representative democracy: mandated education reforms based on the power of the senses require a disclaimer since they allow citizens to absolve themselves of their actions and inactions by declaring that something has presented itself to them rather than the truth, that they have gone in search of something more engaging than their present view. Without this disclaimer, the “senses” provide a compelling justification for endless self-fashioning, a government-sanctioned alibi for pursuing personal perfection and general, social engineering.

The relationship between Edgar and Clithero simulates the regional repercussions of this pedagogical alibi in the 1790s. Edgar first encounters Clithero digging near the spot of Mary’s brother’s murder. When he realizes Clithero is sleep-walking, Edgar wonders if Clithero is

⁶⁸ Critics have noted that the novel’s representation of wilderness conveys organic, gothic North American fixtures and that it allows the author to reference the famous Penn Treaty Elm thereby alluding to the seventeenth century colonial mythos of Quaker benevolence stretching back to William Penn’s conduct toward American Indians and, moreover, that the novel’s emphasis on conscious and unconscious walking calls to mind Quaker settler duplicity against the Delaware in the infamous Walking Purchase or Walking Treaty of 1737. See for instance, Steven C. Harper, “Delawares and Pennsylvanians After the Walking Tour” in *Friends and Enemies in Penn’s Woods: Indians, Colonists and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (State Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004)

Waldegrave's murderer or simply an unfortunate man unconsciously roaming the Pennsylvania wilderness. Edgar's attempts to answer this question cause him to alternate between antagonism toward, or deep sympathy for, Clithero. He tempers the former feeling and strengthens the latter by trying to control his senses and think like a father, reminding himself that his highest aim with regard to Clithero should not be to seek revenge but instead to "emulate a father's clemency, and restore this unhappy man to purity and to peace" (24). While trying to discover Clithero's story, Edgar realizes that Clithero is an exception in his Quaker settlement, which "was, for the most part a patriarchal one. Each farmer was surrounded by his sons and kinsmen" (12). Controlling his own conduct then is also Edgar's way of trying to fit Clithero into the Quaker settler scheme. By attempting to make Clithero another son among fathers and sons, Edgar pursues the actions of post-revolutionary male teachers who made backcountry immigrants and inveterate settlers mindful of new state and federal policies through their work as teachers for new common schools. Following the reform ideas of men like Rush and Hopkinson, they sought to improve young men's mental and physical health. Similarly, Edgar tries to fix Clithero's "disease" by using different strategies: he studies Clithero's behavior, requests his services as a laborer, begs a private conference with him, solicits his story, and provides him with food and consolation. All these strategies do not seem to work. Their failure, Brown suggests, is the result of the fact that their instructor, Edgar, is trying to be a good father before he has given up his commitment to proving that he can be a good son. He is seeking to discover who his student is even as he tries desperately to correct his own behavior and his students. In this way, his temporary (pre)occupation models the fraught agenda of leading northern citizens who sought to monitor their performance and understand what the nation was, while also proposing how transform it into what they wanted it to become.

To underscore how Edgar's vexed paternal relationship with Clithero reenacts 1790s northern education reforms, Brown differentiates Edgar's pedagogical efforts from other examples of formal education. For instance, Edgar explains that before his murder, Waldegrave gave up deism and adopted an orthodox faith before his death, "compelling him to seek his livelihood by teaching a school of blacks" even though "labour was disproportioned to his feeble constitution, and the profit was greatly disproportioned to the labour" (96). And he tries to console Mary by noting, "I know the impatience with which your poverty has formerly been borne, how much your early education is at war with that degradation and obscurity to which your youth has been condemned" (104). These references underscore the differences between Edgar's work on behalf of Clithero and African American and white women's education. But they also make that work seem more like another kind of education, the type he participates in to avoid having to deal with these other forms of instruction, or their potential impact in the early republic. An illustration of this occurs when Edgar describes his own education, which is both like and unlike his undertaking with Clithero. He reminds Mary,

[when] Sarsfield came among us, I became his favorite scholar and the companion of all his pedestrian excursions. He was fond of penetrating into these recesses, partly from the love of picturesque scenes, and partly to investigate its botanical and mineral productions, and partly to carry on more effectually that species of instruction which he had adopted with regard to me, and which chiefly consisted in moralizing narratives of synthetical reasonings (67-68).

His evident fondness for this memory, and the fact that this fondness occurs to him as he tells Mary of his experiences with Clithero, suggests how Edgar conceives of his encounters with this sleepwalker. He sees himself reliving a version of his own instruction with his former British tutor. He finds a known outsider digging in the dirt, searching for something unseen, and he proceeds to follow him around in order to understand how he thinks.

In the process of figuratively transforming himself into “the favorite scholar and the companion,” Edgar also plays the role of the teacher/father seeking to correct his pupils’ bad behaviors. His shifting position from scholar to teacher suggests that he has adopted more progressive instructional methods, converting his privileged Euro-American male dyad into a less hierarchical and exclusive and more democratic bond. Further support for this notion comes from the men’s similar ages, the non-institutional setting, and their different backgrounds (Pennsylvania Quaker and Irish Catholic). However, this egalitarianism provides Edgar with an initial escape from the unstable socioeconomic conditions hinted at by both frontier violence and the allusions to charity schooling and women’s education accompanying violence in the novel. By attempting to learn from Clithero and to teach him to shed his guilt about his past crimes, Edgar creates a highly convincing rationale for absolving himself from the ties to Waldegrave’s “school of blacks” and a reason for keeping Mary from “secur[ing] to [her] leisure to cultivate and indulge [her] love of knowledge” (104). References to these types of education draw into focus how prospective settler fathers used changes to the training bequeathed to them by their British fathers as alibis to free themselves from their existing responsibilities and from institutional and non-institutional contact across class, race, and gender.

However, Edgar Huntly’s encounters with Clithero only expose him to different obligations and lead to jarring contact with diverse frontier inhabitants. Through Edgar’s failures, Brown demonstrates how Edgar’s strategy foments what it seeks to avoid. Instead of forming a more perfect union with Clithero, Edgar’s grasp on reality falters, all of his social ties temporarily break, and he eventually confronts strangers and acquaintances from the perspective of a migrant rather than a settler. Specifically, after he learns he cannot marry Marry because the money her brother had does not belong to her (the same moment we learn he is to be a father), he falls

asleep and wakes up in the cave where he previously searched for Clithero. It is at this moment that he realizes that he too is a sleep-walker. From here, he encounters Delaware Indians who have taken a young, white girl captive. He frees the girl, fights with the Delaware party and has to deal with other settlers as he tries to find his way back to his uncle's home. Edgar's education with/of Clithero leads Edgar to kill Delaware Indians and witness gruesome settler-Indian violence and leaves Clithero worse off (in terms of his psychological state) than he was at the beginning of the novel.

Late eighteenth century rhetorical uses of contagions demonstrate the link between Brown's representation of Edgar's unconscious and conscious frontier rambles and *Edgar Huntly's* critique of northern education reform. Writing about Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*, a novel Brown wrote at the same time as *Edgar Huntly*, Andy Doolen stresses the importance of "contagions" in Brown's novels and in the late 1790s U.S. as "an elastic metaphor because of its utility in articulating the spread of a variety of social, political, and economic threats."⁶⁹ In *Arthur Mervyn*, Brown traces the effects of contagions on the body to its effects upon the body politic. Set during the Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793, the novel uses theories about how this disease spread and how citizens and non-citizens dealt with the resulting death and disorder to address myriad symptoms of the early republic's federalist-driven xenophobia. In *Edgar Huntly*, "contagions" are powerful and unseen forces that act upon Edgar and Clithero when they have come to think that their security is assured and their communities' integrity is beyond reproach. For instance, Clithero transforms from a man who believes he has not been harmed by "contagious principles" and is happily betrothed his benefactress' adopted daughter to a man "harassed by the repetition of one idea": he must kill his benefactress or "snatch from their minds

⁶⁹ Doolen, 84.

all traces of the existence of Clithero” (55, 60). His transformation appears to coincide with his acquisition of this “wonderful disease” known as sleep-walking. Similarly, Edgar’s contact with Clithero leads him to catch the disease at a moment when he and his Pennsylvania Quaker community seem poised to put past, colonial tragedies behind them.

Similar sentiments of imminent triumph characterize the 1790s with citizens and non-citizens subscribing to the position that the country had overcome initial post-revolutionary struggles. They felt, like Clithero and Edgar prior to their contagious infection, that they could control their conduct because they had survived the important initial stages of development. “As my views were refined and enlarged by history and science,” Clithero explains, “I was likely to contract a thirst of independence, and an impatience of subjection and poverty,” and “[I] might have been suspected of a dangerous tendency” (35). But he passes the “feverish period of youth” without succumbing to “the allurements of sensuality and dissipation incident to my age” (31). Through the mutually destructive spread of sleep-walking from Clithero to Edgar, Brown illustrates the dangers of such assumptions. He urges readers to take Clithero and Edgar as an example of how wrong and potentially destructive this optimistic position is; and to remember, well-trained men, like nations with solid foundations, are still able to go awry. His warning serves as more than just a general critique of Lockean pedagogy for helping to foster the hope that the nation might be beyond its sensational undoing, nor is it solely a critique of representative democracy for its failure to inspire skeptical citizens and thereby protect the country from supposed external and internal threats to social order. Rather it is a critique of northern education reform’s fusing of schooling with partisan politics for stimulating prospective husbands and fathers to seek escape from new state strictures and for spurring contestation within and violence against the state. In *Edgar Huntly*, northern education reform is, in essence, a pharmakon, a cure that is also a

disease: social and political change that can smooth the rocky transition from settler colonial monarchy to representative democratic nation-state, but, when left to its own devices, it is sure to inhibit that transition.

Because Brown's two sleep-walkers periodically recognize the significance of their struggles and missteps in the context of rising Atlantic and continental early U.S. imperialism they *not only* show which traits to avoid accepting when addressing the putative limits of self and social control in the early nation. Brown suggests that both men are insightful critics of imperialism's disguises and more mindless creators and facilitators of its structural injustices.⁷⁰ For instance, Edgar's final frontier episode reveals that his generosity toward Clithero masks deep-seated fears of American Indians and foreigners. But Edgar is, at the same time, also aware of the socio-economic disorders and prejudices his rationalism conceals. Thus, we find Edgar viewing panthers and Indians as "savages" alike, yet also critiquing U.S. materialism: "Our countrymen are prone to enterprize, and are scattered over every sea and every land in pursuit of that wealth which will not screen them from disease and infirmity, which is missed much oftener than found, and which, when gained by no means compensates them for the hardships and vicissitudes endured in the pursuit" (104). Similarly, Clithero critiques Edgar for his false generosity, but he admits Edgar's accusations are justified, and his "efforts for my benefit [are] not useless" (180). By suggesting that even those men who appear mysteriously compelled to bring about ruination still possess valuable critical tools, *Edgar Huntly* encourages readers to prevent themselves from remaining (to use Edgar's words) "unfit for a contest and a scene like this" (128). It inspires them to recognize how destructive it is to pursue self-mastery or self-denial in strict accordance

⁷⁰ One argument Barnard and Shapiro make in their recent edition of *Edgar Huntly* is that Huntly is generally a poor reader, commonly mistaking appearance for reality. While this is true at times in the novel, as in his misreading of the Selbys, it is not a consistent pattern. Huntly is often quite insightful both in the wilderness and in his reading of the structural causes of his own misfortunes.

with regional education reform and urges them to turn inculcated meticulousness and generosity into less self-destructive and polarizing behaviors.

Edgar's experiences journeying and sleepwalking in the wilderness is the primary inspiration for this message. These experiences draw the cycle of violence fostered indirectly by northern education reform into frightening relief. In their place, Brown pushes his readers to look for and work toward a more peaceful alternative: a disposition other than one that involves worrying that "consciousness itself is the malady" or, conversely, fretting, "How little cognizance have men over the actions and motives of each other!" (189). For this reason, even the bleakest revelations in Brown's novel—such as the news on the final page that Clithero has drowned and Lorimer has had a miscarriage—are reformist rather than imperialist or anti-imperialist. They are signs of the far-reaching, contagious effects of these changes in formal education. By disclosing the impact of such reforms upon prospective settler fathers, *Edgar Huntly* illustrates how these men might deal with difficult late-1790s episodes when federal protocols vied with diffused pedagogical amendments to rescue the country from dissension and disunion. The novel provides ample reasons for being apprehensive about seemingly egalitarian reforms, shaped by facile, optimistic political agendas, such as the novel's last line from Edgar's tutor Sarsfield, "May this be the last arrow in the quiver of adversity!" (194). And, yet it also highlights the need for these influential figures to entertain truly equalitarian pedagogical and institutional avenues.

Letters from an American Farmer and *Edgar Huntly* suggest that from the 1780s through 90s, northern education reforms became a legible discourse shaping perceptions of freedom and equality. Moreover, they illustrate that this discourse became the language par excellence for assessing the settler colonial father's changing roles in the early republic's first prose fictions. Disconcerting changes in pedagogy helped Crèvecoeur construct a literary work designed to help

readers deal with the initial transition from being subjects of a distant monarch to being citizens and non-citizens in a capitalist, representative democracy in which they would be freer to separate from English influence yet bound by new civic responsibilities. Brown's novel engages with similar early national reforms at a moment when they were implemented across the region. For both writers, the potential threat of an unredeemed settler captive, or what Crèvecoeur refers to as "an Indian education," taps into that discourse to index the destabilized roles of settler fathers and disclose how this diverse group of citizens might survive under a new social order. Popular novelizations of women's seduction, as we will see, reveal a different yet nonetheless important and subtle relationship between 1790s northern education reform and the early U.S. novel.

Chapter 2

Educating Women of Pleasure in Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* and Sukey

Vickery's *Emily Hamilton*

In 1811, well-known Boston publisher and book-seller Isaiah Thomas Jr. published Asa Lyman's *The American Reader containing Elegant Selections in Prose and Poetry: Designed for Improvement* (1811). For binding material, he chose to use leftover sheets from John Cleland's *Fanny Hill: Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748).⁷¹ Thomas's use of this pornographic English novel to cover his proprietary American schoolbook seems like a joke. And perhaps it was a dig at reformers in the ex-colonies who thought they could use primers to "cleanse" the new nation of the supposed refuse of the former metropolis and the questionable history of settler colonialism. Regardless of Thomas's intentions, *The American Reader*—with its literary excerpts wrapped in *Fanny Hill*—suggests that in the early republic regional education reformers and early U.S. novelists grappled, together, with the problem of educating "women of pleasure." This figure symbolized the threat of a woman dangerously desiring a life of untrammelled sensual pleasures and its significance cut to the core of reform platforms, many of which perceived the fate of the nation falling in the hands of women whose improprieties could destroy it. Writing within a male-dominated society that heavily monitored their behavior, women such as Hannah Foster and Sukey Vickery faced the woman-of-pleasure symbol as an rigid stigma that had to be rejected or revised—both in the context of the novel *and* in discourses about women's boarding schools—if women's access to educational opportunities was to be expanded.

⁷¹ The Library Company in Philadelphia has a copy of this primer in their archives. It was one of several items discussed at a print culture seminar held there several years ago.

Ministers and writers examining the state of women's education commonly used the following verse phrase from I Timothy to illustrate the dangers of inappropriately educated women: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."⁷² J. L. Chirol, for example, quoted a version of I Timothy for his epigraph to *An Enquiry into the best System of Female Education; or Boarding School and Home Education, Attentively Considered* (1809): "The woman who has children, and does not shew them piety at home, nor guide her house, but liveth in pleasure, and is wandering about from house to house, idle, tattler, and busybody, is dead while she liveth."⁷³ In this study, Chirol vigorously argues for home education, praising its ability to prevent women from unfettered pleasure and physical and cognitive itinerancy. He argued that boarding school teaches women to value pleasure and neglect marital and domestic duties; for this reason, boarding school instructors deserve "the accumulated scorn and detestation of every friend to order and domestic happiness" for turning women into "objects of dalliance," since "civilized society depends on the sentiments and manners, on the talents and acquirements, on the knowledge and general habits, on the estimation and influence of Women."⁷⁴ Chirol's philosophy attests to the centrality of rhetoric about pleasure-seeking women in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century discourse on women's education reform. This discourse was defined by a paradox: according to the dictates of patriarchy, a woman's education was meant to help her serve men through her roles as wife and mother, yet she risked grave dangers by achieving this very goal: pleasing men too well (or worse, pleasing herself) through her domestic labors.

⁷² *The Holy Bible Containing Old and New Testaments* (National Publishing Co., 1978) 720.

⁷³ J. L. Chirol, *An Enquiry into the Best System of Female Education: or, Boarding School and Home Education Attentively Considered* (T Cadell and W. Davies: 1809) 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

New England novelist Hannah Foster challenges rhetoric like Chirol's in her conduct manual/epistolary novel *The Boarding School* (1798), which gently questions the role men play in the perceived threat of the boarding school girl of pleasure. In one letter, Foster's fictional female student Julia Greenfield writes to a classmate to inform her of a "most melancholy and distressing event" that has "spread a gloom over the face of the metropolis."⁷⁵ Greenfield is referring to the death of Bostonian Reverend John Clarke, whose powerful sermon from I Timothy inspired young women, according to Greenfield, by "paint[ing] those allurements of pleasure which surround the young and gay; more especially of our sex, in just and lively colours exhibit[ing], with all their attractions, the native charms of virtue, and portrayed vice in its true deformity" (307). But, rather than dwelling on the "deformity" of "those allurements of pleasure," Greenfield explains that Clarke's sermon inspired "a number of young ladies" with "united sentiments" to send Clarke an anonymous letter in which they asked, "does not such conduct in ladies too often receive the most flattering encouragement from the gentlemen?" (307). Greenfield ends her letter by lamenting the fact that Clarke's "literary labours" are not available in print, for they contain "instruction and advice of which no person in pursuit of a *public education* ought to be ignorant" (my emphasis, 309). By asserting this wish, Greenfield returns not to the pleasure problem, but instead, emphasizes the value of expanded networks of knowledge for all "person[s]"—male and female—who want "a public education."

⁷⁵ Hannah Foster, *The Coquette/The Boarding School* ed. Jennifer Desiderio and Angela Vietto (Broadview Press, 2011) 306. This second, semi-fictional work has only recently become the subject of critical attention. Bruce Burgett discusses *The Boarding-School* as an extension of Foster's emphasis on letter-writing in the context of a sentimental tradition and the emergence of the modern sex-gender system. See Desiderio and Vietto's introduction, which explains connections between the two texts; See also, Claire C. Pettengill, "Sisterhood in a Separate Sphere: Female Friendship in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* and *Boarding School* in *Early American Literature* 27 (1992): 185-203 outlines the complex and contradictory role of female friendships; Janet Carey Eldred and Peter Mortenson, "Gender and Writing Instruction in Early America: Lessons from Didactic Fiction" in *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Autumn 1993), 25-53.

The Timothian rhetoric found in Chisolm's exposé and Foster's fictional letter illuminates intersecting figures in early U.S. gender- and race-based politics. Namely, women of pleasure, American Indians, and African Americans all threatened, in different ways, the nation's ambitions for extending settler colonialism—ambitions characterized by the intellectual and rhetorical trappings of white patriarchy. Through the Timothian rhetoric of the desiring woman who “is dead while she liveth,” we can discern similarities between the sermons and treatises that excoriated white female subjects and early U.S. descriptions of American Indians and African Americans, which range from condemnations of ignorance to brute savagery. The behaviors of these non-citizens could not always be explained by Western, white, male-configured models of conduct and sexuality and, as a result, white male writers in particular often depicted them as blurring the lines between the living and the dead, the bodied and the disembodied, the ideal and the abject. These three groups had a representational kinship under a settler colonial regime defined by the prospects of replacing a people who would haunt the regime, by living peoples who were wished dead, or by peoples figured as alien to the nation or in decline yet clearly very much present in the country. Securing a strong national settlement meant eradicating or reforming the unsettled or unsettling types of people living on U.S. soil.

The late eighteenth century saw the rise of separate, selective schools primarily for upper class and upper middle class white women, which emerged against the backdrop of a culture of regional reforms designed to align instruction with the putative people and the polity. Aware of these alternately exclusive and democratizing developments, early U. S. women writers captured and responded to women's predicaments in the new nation by writing novels about women endangered by male and female coquettes and by their own decisions to seek alternative relationships and lifestyles. But, the works of women writers such as Hannah Foster and Sukey

Vickery accomplished more than this: by inscribing a middle ground between instruction and entertaining romance through the novel form—a form that was suspect when written and read by women—Foster and Vickery advanced strategies for U. S. women striving to attain new experiences and new knowledge bases in a settling nation that did not value educated women. Foster’s wildly popular *The Coquette: Or the History of Eliza Wharton* (1797), her novel-primer *The Boarding School* (1798), and Vickery’s less well-known *Emily Hamilton, A Novel* (1803) narrate liminal sociopolitical spaces for women, such as the boarding school environment and the home’s of non-parental relations and friends as uniquely rich yet risky venues for educational pursuits. All three texts articulate avenues for female education that are adapted to both the rigid patriarchal strictures and the instabilities of post-revolutionary U.S. settlement.⁷⁶

This chapter analyzes a novel/primer, a seduction novel, and a novel of manners to show how early U. S. women writers proposed social and pedagogical methods for prospective students, teachers, and mothers to defy the misogynistic proposals of education reformers who, like Chirol, were enthralled by fears of the woman of pleasure. My argument draws on Annette Kolodny’s insights in “A Map for Rereading: Or, Gender and the Interpretation of Literary Texts,” her response to Harold Bloom’s antifeminist influence theory, in which she argues that American women writers in particular had a “strong sense of writing out of non-dominant or subcultural traditions, coupled with an acute sensitivity to the fact that, since women and men learn to read different worlds, different groups of texts are available to their reading and writing

⁷⁶ Hannah Foster, *The Coquette/The Boarding School* ed. Jennifer Desiderio and Angela Vietto (Broadview Press, 2011). Sukey Vickery, *Emily Hamilton & Other Writings* ed. Scott Slawinski (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). References to each of these works are taken from these two editions and listed parenthetically in the body of the chapter with the letters C and E, respectively.

strategies.”⁷⁷ What Kolodny identifies as the sex-based nature of knowledge production and cultural expression is evident in Foster’s and Vickery’s novels, which embrace female-female educational relationships while necessarily grappling with the woman-of-pleasure rhetoric found in male-authored reform writings. What is perhaps less evident for early Americanists is the intersection of this sense of writing out of a non-dominant tradition and the epistemological strategies to which Kolodny refers. This chapter explains the connections among these three novels, enduring settler colonialism, and education reform platforms in a region in which writers associated the health of Western civilization and the formative U.S. polity with the fate of women’s education. Keenly aware of this preoccupation, Foster and Vickery explicitly address northern education reforms, which focused special attention on New England as the perceived site of successful formal education models. In the process, they show women how to resist their subjection as idealized mothers or scorned women of pleasure by becoming entrepreneurs, companions, and parents, offering a new set of possibilities for a settler colonial education in place of home or ornamental instruction.

The first section of this chapter analyzes the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century discourse on women’s education reform and illuminates how the rhetoric of the woman of pleasure shapes this discourse. Contributors to debates across the Atlantic include Jean Jacques Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, Judith Sargent Murray, Benjamin Rush, Anne Negus, Samuel Harrison Smith, Robert Coram, and Joseph Pilmore. The second section turns to Hannah Foster’s *The Boarding School*, in which Foster’s letter writers grapple in detail with the standards of social deportment women both inside and outside boarding school were expected to meet.

⁷⁷Annette Kolodny, “A Map for Rereading: Or, Gender and the Interpretation of Literary Texts” *New Literary History*, Vol. 11, No. 3. On Narrative and Narratives (Spring, 1980) 451-467.

Foster's novel-primer proposes that women embrace the pleasures of female-female bonds and employ self-knowledge and critical thinking as modes of building and using their boarding school educations. The chapter's third section explores how Foster's *The Coquette* responds to this early national culture of reform, in which the monitoring of women and their potentially illicit desires was a dominant feature of women's lives. Through Eliza's efforts to heed or defy the "reforms" proposed by her social circle, Foster suggests ways that her female readers might use the liminal spaces outside of marriage to play more pragmatic and productive rather than tragic roles in the new nation. In *The Coquette*, as in *The Boarding School*, Foster challenges reductive definitions of the woman of pleasure with a character whose pleasures constitute and enable new knowledges. In the final section, I turn to *Emily Hamilton* to explore how Vickery refashions the seduction novel into a novel of manners in order to make manifest the type of settler colonial education only suggested in Foster's novel.

Women's Education Reform

In the late 1790s, U.S. citizens and non-citizens experienced circum-Atlantic conflict, frontier and Caribbean uprisings, and polarizing partisan politics. These developments fueled concerns over who might make up the nation and what its citizens and non-citizens might become under the strictures of a new government. Northern education reformers worked with enlightenment-informed theories of human development and inchoate state and federal policies to begin addressing these concerns and shaping post-revolutionary demands for freedom and inequality. While some federalists believed education reforms wrongly directed the focus away from more pressing political matters, such as improving military strength or developing

commerce, antifederalists argued that such reforms could resolve early national challenges by creating a populace that was knowledgeable about history and diplomacy.⁷⁸ These debates coincided with administrative changes in formal education, which historian Nancy Beadie outlines in *Education and the Creation of Capital in the Early American Republic* (2011). Beadie explains how education in the pre-revolutionary northern colonies typically involved community leaders competing for students, masters, and funds; however, by the 1790s, school founders no longer sought funding through divines and prominent families. Instead, they worked within partisan networks and regional markets to acclimate families to the demands of the capitalist nation-state. However, questions of capitalist market relations did not dominate the discourse on education reform, particularly for the writers who proposed changes to women's schooling. The discourse on women's education was characterized by discussions of women's familial and domestic duties and the forms of "improvement"—to use Asa Lyman's term—that would help young women best fulfill their roles as wives, mothers, and managers of the home.

Arguments for women's education reform included treatises focused on how women could best serve the patriarchal institution of marriage and feminist critiques of unequal access to resources. In "On the Equality of the Sexes," a tract published in 1790 in *Massachusetts Magazine*, Judith Sargent Murray opposes the view that "the judgment of a male of two years old is more sage than that of a female's of the same age" (132).⁷⁹ She explains that, if a difference in intelligence exists, it is because "the one is taught to aspire, and the other is early confined and limited." And, she adds,

⁷⁸ For an example, see the discussion of Benjamin Rush in chapter 1.

⁷⁹ Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes," *Massachusetts Magazine*, 2:3-4 (March-April 1790) 132-35, 223-26.

every requisite in female economy is easily attained; and when once attained, they require no further mental attention...while we are pursuing the needle, or the superintendency of the family, our minds are at full liberty for reflection and that if a just foundation is early laid, our ideas will then be worthy of rational beings (133).

Murray contests women's inequity by arguing for an education that gives girls a "just foundation," which will strengthen their "superintendency of the family." Yet, rather than emphasizing the domestic purposes of this foundation, she emphasizes the "ideas...worthy of rational beings" that women could generate *while* (rather than *for*) their pursuit of "the needle, or the superintendency of the family." Her call for women's legal equality and for a female education that supplements domestic duties is characteristic yet not simply derivative of English and French pedagogical philosophies.⁸⁰ Most famously, Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (published two years later than Murray's "On the Equality of the Sexes") argues that "If marriage be the cement of society, mankind should all be educated after the same model."⁸¹ Wollstonecraft believed that this model should include the establishment of "domestic affectations" followed by the "direction of reason." Thus, whereas Murray turns to domestic

⁸⁰ French and English models devoted to women's education found their way into the country at a moment when northerners were trying to shed dependence on these two countries. French ideas lost much of their appeal during the French Revolution, but when it came to educational material, clergymen and elite Bostonians published innovative French ideas on education in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century U.S. Consider Fenelon's *Treatise On the Education of Daughters* Translation from the French By Rev. T. F. D'Alibidin, B.A.; F.A.S (Albany: 1806). Eliza Lee Cabot Follen translated Fenelon's work including a memoir of his life. Arguments from Letter to M. D'Alembert on Spectacles (1758) and *Emile, or Treatise on Education* (1762), appeared without attribution—a sign that they were being integrated into discussions of northern education reform. See for example works by Samuel Harrison Smith, N. Webster, and Judith Murray Sargent cited in this project.

⁸¹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures on Moral and Political Subjects* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1792). Wollstonecraft claims, "So convinced am I of this truth, that I will venture to predict that virtue will never prevail in society till the virtues of both sexes are founded on reason; and, till the affections common to both are allowed to gain their due strength by the discharge of mutual duties." She argues that education reform must become a "grand national concern.": True taste is ever the work of the understanding employed in observing natural effects; and till women have more understanding, it is vain to expect them to possess domestic taste. It is the want of domestic taste, and not the acquirement of knowledge, that takes women out of their families, and tears the smiling babe from the breast that ought to afford it nourishment. Women have been allowed to remain in ignorance, and slavish dependence, many, very many years, and still we hear of nothing but their fondness of pleasure and sway, their preference of rakes and soldiers, their childish attachment to toys, and the vanity that makes them value accomplishments more than virtues" 21.

practices and Wollstonecraft to the institution of marriage, both do so in order to argue for the necessity of women's education. Their treatises similarly underscore the capacity for and importance of women pursuing "rational[ity]" and "reason."

Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Émile, or Treatise on Education* (1762) proposes an argument that contains the efficacy of women's knowledge to the sphere of the home, but takes an antifeminist perspective oriented explicitly toward how women can benefit men.⁸² *Émile* concludes with a relatively long chapter in which he explains how to properly educate women using the fictional character Sophie as his example. He explains that Sophie must be educated in order to be a good wife and mother for men. Failure to give her this education imperils the family, or the "little community," as he calls it, which in turn imperils the country. According to Rousseau, France is vulnerable to the dangers of a bad education system because the French approach women's education incorrectly: "In France girls live in convents and women travel the world over. Among the ancients it was just the contrary: girls, as I have said, indulged in sports and public festivals, while the women lived in retirement" (354). For Rousseau, the French think that young women need little life experience, whereas he believes that giving them more freedom, as the ancients did, ultimately "better maintain[s] the public morals" (354).⁸³ Knowledge of the world and (relative) freedom to move within it will make women better wives and mothers.

⁸² Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Émile; or Treatise on Education* Trans. William H. Payne (New York: D. Appleton, 1896).

⁸³ Rousseau poses a series of questions to a potential husband: "Does it follow that she ought to be brought up in complete ignorance, and restricted solely to the duties of the household? Shall he deprive himself of the greatest charm of society? The better to reduce her to servitude, shall he prevent her from feeling anything or knowing anything? Shall he make of her a real automaton?" (356).

While Murray, Wollstonecraft, and Rousseau do not explicitly discuss the threat of the woman of pleasure, she haunts a discourse in which women can only be conceived as, or in relation to, the ideals of the dutiful wife and mother. Rousseau, for example, illuminates the centrality of the woman-of-pleasure stigma in that his philosophy seemingly focuses on Sophie's necessary world-traveling freedoms, yet, in doing so, slips into a discussion of her role as an "agreeable and sweet" source of pleasure to her husband. For Rousseau, giving young girls knowledge of the world outside the home will, once they become wives and mothers, make them more inclined to "*please* [men], to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, and make life agreeable and sweet to them" (my emphasis, 353). In this way, the theme of pleasure persistently entered into reform discourses that grappled with the question: For whom and for what should a woman be educated?

Hannah More directly addresses the problem of the woman of pleasure in "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education" (1799).⁸⁴ In contrast to Rousseau, More laments the fact that England's women's education system gives women excessive liberties and the result, in her eyes, is that women become mere mediums of pleasure. England, she claims, is preparing

⁸⁴ More's writings appealed to late-eighteenth century New Englanders. She wrote "Considerations on Religion and Public education" and "Brief Reflections Relative to the Emigrant French Clergy" (1793), popular tales and fables, as well as a novel focused on marriage. Her novel, *Colebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), sold more than 30,000 copies in the US. More's ideas circulated among upper and middle class and northeastern coastal readers and as far west as the mid-west by early nineteenth century Ojibwa poet Jane Johnson Schoolcraft who cited them. My citations from More's "Strictures" come from *The Works Of Hannah More, Including Several Pieces Never Before Published* Vol. IV (Philadelphia: 1818). More uses Rome's last days to emphasize the problem: "the luxurious dissipation [was] brought in by their Asiatic conquests; after which the females were soon taught a complete change of character.... instructed to accommodate their talents of pleasing to the more vitiated tastes of the other sex; and began to study every grace and every art, which might captivate the exhausted hearts, and excite the wearied and capricious inclinations of the men; till by a rapid and at length complete enervation, the Roman character lost its signature, and through a quick succession of slavery, effeminacy, and vice, sunk into that degeneracy of which some of the modern Italian states serve to furnish a too just specimen." Foreign distractions, she adds, have made "hired teachers... under a disadvantage resembling tenants at rack-rent."

women “for a crowd, forgetting that they are to live at home. For the world, and not for themselves. For show, and not for use. For time, and not for eternity....erect[ing] the whole sex into artists” (44). For More, as for Rousseau, modern women’s formal instruction endangers “domestic happiness” and, in turn, endangers the country. Whereas Rousseau proposes a travel-filled education system based on what he believes to be natural traits and tendencies possessed by women, More proposes a constraining education based on her Calvinism and her view that women should serve as helpful companions, rather than artists or objects of pleasure. However, More’s perspective on the role of the arts in women’s education was contingent upon the state of England: that is, had England been conquered or in a “state of barbarism,” an “excessive cultivation of the arts” would be essential (45). But, in its current state, she argued, the women of England had to be taught to “direct her exertions to the art of governing mankind in equity and peace, of showing mercy to the submissive, and of abashing the proud among surrounding nations” (45).⁸⁵ In this formulation, More attempts to remove the word “art” from the realm of pleasure and instead to place it firmly within the realm of politics: women, she argues, must be taught “the art of governing mankind in equity and peace.”

A number of northern U. S. education reformers in the 1790s promoted giving young women greater liberties and educational opportunities, which were conceived in relation to

⁸⁵ More’s remedy is the sanctity and security of marriage summarized by her epigraph from poet William Cowper: “Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss/Of Paradise that has surviv’d the Fall!/Thou art not known where Pleasure is ador’d,/That reeling Goddess with the zoneless waist./Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made/Of honour, dignity and fair renown!” She claims “When a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion he wants and not an artist.” She emphasizes, “Piety maintains no naturel war with elegance, and Christianity would be no gainer by making her disciples unamiable.” More also claims, “Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify?” Educators cannot just “know the world, as it is called, that is to know its local manners, temporary usages, and evanescent fashions.” They must have “a strong impression of the corruption of our nature, as should insure a disposition to counteract it; together with a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as should be necessary for developing and controlling its most secret and complicated workings” (44-45).

progressive and misogynistic definitions of the “female mind” and to how women’s mental aptitudes could benefit the country. In “Remarks on Education” (1798), for example, Samuel Harrison Smith optimistically observes, “the improvement of women is marked by a rapid progress and a prospect opens equal to their most ambitious desires” (217).⁸⁶ He adds, “Some years elapse before the mind seems capable of being impressed with true or false knowledge in a degree sufficient to influence its future expansion”; for this reason, “it is fortunate that we have not occasion to regret the unenlightened state of the female mind” (205). Benjamin Rush, seeking to distinguish U.S. modes of instruction from the unequal strictures and privileges associated with life under an English monarchy, proposes a new women’s curriculum based on the unstable “state of property” in the early U.S (26).⁸⁷ He believes that, given the state of the republic, where it is “necessary for the greatest part of our citizens to employ themselves in different occupations for the advancement of their fortunes,” women “must [learn to] be stewards and guardians of their husbands’ property,” to oversee “a principal share of the instruction of children,” and be “qualified to a certain degree, by a peculiar and suitable education, to concur in instructing their sons in the principles of liberty and government” (34).⁸⁸ While Smith and Rush did not share Judith Sargent Murray’s investment in women’s rightful equality, all three propose reforms using agrarian language to indicate an education shaped by scientific truth, logic, and

⁸⁶ Samuel Harrison Smith, “Remarks on Education: Illustrating the Close Connection Between Virtue and Wisdom. To Which is Annexed a System of Liberal Education. Which, Having Received the Premium Awarded by the American Philosophical Society, December 15th, 1797, Is Now Published by Their Order (Philadelphia, 1798) cited from *Essays on Education in the Early Republic* ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) 167-224.

⁸⁷ Benjamin Rush, “Thoughts Upon Female Education, Accomodated to the Present State of Society, Manners, and Government in the United States of America” cited from *Essays on Education in the Early Republic* ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) 25-40.

⁸⁸ Rush adds, “servants in this country possess less knowledge and subordination than are required from them: and hence our ladies are obliged to attend more to the private affairs of their families than ladies generally do of the same rank in Great Britain” (37).

pedagogy “suitable” for a settler economy and a representative democracy. They write about students as rational and useful “plants” and describe parents and teachers as gentle “lords of the soil” who must tend to their crops if they hope to foster “permanent value, and continued fruitfulness.” Such agrarian rhetoric reinforced the goal of women’s equality as well as the need for inculcating civic priorities.

Yet, the language of plants and “lords of the soil” often concealed an erotic male gaze directed at an objectified female student. These rhetorical practices illuminate a different facet of the woman-of-pleasure problem: reform discourses that sexualize women. In Reverend Joseph Pilmore’s “Address on the Importance of Female Education,” for example, Pilmore writes of “schools of wisdom as in watered gardens” where “daughters, like pleasant plants shall sweetly grow.”⁸⁹ He then elaborates on this conceit: “Each tender bud shall gently unfold its fragrant blossoms, display its rising glories, and kindly ripen into golden fruit.” His “pleasing hope” for these graduates constitutes a sentimental rhetoric that undoes any appeals for women’s rights and civic obligations by turning women’s instruction into an ornamental, sexualized formal process. Pilmore assumes that women naturally possess the sensual, “pleasant” disposition that female proponents of new women’s education sought to combat for the sake of achieving equal rights and obligations.

Within U. S. education reform debates and changing pedagogical practices for both men and women, New England played a charged role as the nation’s perceived model for parenting and teaching. Education reformers treasured New England as the exemplary possessor of a

⁸⁹ For signs of a shift in rhetoric see the recent introduction to *The Boarding School/The Coquette*. Desiderio and Vietto note that when Oliver Wendell Holmes witnessed John Foster at the pulpit, he was “so cheerful that he could not maintain the stern expressions expected of a minister” (9).

system in which enlightenment-informed pedagogical philosophies had been effectively integrated with state and national policies. As Delaware reformer and teacher Robert Coram put it when he excoriated other state strategies for formal instruction, “I know of no modern governments, except perhaps the New England states, in which education is incorporated with the government or regulated by it” (82).⁹⁰ Samuel Harrison Smith saw Philadelphia as a distant second to New Haven for generating a “vigorous spirit of research” circumscribed by the “public good” (167).⁹¹ Ever the optimist, Benjamin Rush argued that if other states could adopt the equivalent of a New England education they could get rid of murder and petty crimes throughout the nation.⁹² According to these leading citizens, New England succeeded in inculcating civic sensibilities and practices. The region had proved, in their eyes, that a city on the hill could still permanently be established in the U.S. wilderness and that other citizens and non-citizens in the nation should be instructed like New Englanders, rather than given latitude to pursue what Rush critiques as “a course of free and generous self-culture” or an “excessive education in the arts” (25).

Given this widely held approbation of New England, the region’s new women’s boarding schools represented a controversial institutional development for advocates and opponents of education reform. As indicated by R. L. Chirol’s Timothian invective against the boarding school as a place that harbors women of pleasure who are “dead while they liveth,” these schools

⁹⁰ Robert Coram, “Political Inquiries; to Which is Added, a Plan for the General Establishment of Schools throughout the United States” in Rudolph Frederick (ed.), *Essays on Education and the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) 82.

⁹¹ Smith, 167.

⁹² To wit: “there are 600 schools in the small state of Connecticut which have in them, at this time, 25000 scholars. Only two natives of this state have been executed in the course of the last twenty five years” (7). From Benjamin Rush, “Thoughts on a Mode of Education Proper for a Republican Government” in Rudolph Frederick (ed.), *Essays on Education and the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) 24.

challenged patriarchal binaries, such as the gendered binary between public and private spheres. At the same time, new women's schools were perceived as essential for an early republic in which women's proper social conduct, especially within the institution of marriage, was routinely said to determine the nation's security and prosperity. Historians, such as Mary Kelley, have shown the impact of these new academies and seminaries by studying schoolbooks, student writings, and post-graduate reflections. Kelley examines how female teachers and students "simultaneously deployed and dismantled binaries (private and public, feminine and masculine, household and marketplace) as they linked them to the reciprocal rights and obligations of citizenship inscribed in the nation's Constitution" (5).⁹³ In the New England boarding school in particular, upper and middle-class white women could act as Kelley indicates. In defiance of the heteronormative terms of Chiról's critique, for example, boarding schools enabled for women new forms of desire and pleasure outside the heterosexual confines of marriage or romance with men.

In contrast to other women's schools, boarding schools bore transparent features of the household *and* the marketplace: they were typically homes as well as schools, and their curriculum was both for the home and for the world, for the private and public spheres. By blending these spaces and structures, boarding schools called attention to the seams of New England's political settlements, even as they provided a practical remedy for implementing ideas about women's nature, domestic imperatives, and state and federal policy. It is unsurprising, then, that northern education reformers who were critical of boarding schools believed that such

⁹³ Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 5. See also Lucy McMahon, *Mere Equals: The Paradox of Educated Women in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Margaret Nash Smith, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

schools offered, at best, purely frivolous instruction and, at worst, encouraged women's non-maternal desires for pleasure, thereby jeopardizing the entire social order of a settler colonial society. In contrast, writers such as Hannah Foster, who supported new forms of women's education, believed that boarding schools were helping diminish women's inequality while providing instruction commensurate with the ethos and economy of the nation.

The Boarding School

As both a teacher and a writer, Hannah Foster held a vested interest in the workings and outcomes of late-eighteenth-century women's boarding schools. She and Susannah Rowson penned the first popular U.S. novels and some of the first pedagogical works designed for use in both homes and schools. Foster wrote *The Coquette* (1797) and *The Boarding School* (1798) and Rowson wrote *Charlotte Temple* (1797) and a reader for women, *Young Mentorina* (1791). Together, Foster and Rowson helped develop a local print market and established the practice of blending the content and form of novels with primers and readers.⁹⁴ *The Boarding School* best illustrates this generic overlapping: the text is both a primer and an epistolary novel. The first volume describes the schedule and curriculum of a school in rural Massachusetts called Harmony-Grove, including its lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, music and dancing, dress, amusement, filial and fraternal affection, friendship, love, and religion. The second volume contains forty-three letters from classmates to each other and to their preceptress, Mrs. Williams,

⁹⁴ Foster published with Boston bookstore owner and reformer Caleb Bingham who was starting to make a name for himself by editing the first post-revolutionary textbooks, including the popular *Columbian Orator* and *The Young Ladies Accident*. Foster's work as an anonymous author of magazine and newspaper articles or her founding of the first women's club in Massachusetts may have fostered connections with Boston publishers. See Desiderio and Vietto's introduction to the Broadview edition of *The Coquette*. Bingham's *Columbian Orator* is the book that Frederick Douglass would later claim taught him to read.

composed after they have graduated. *The Boarding School* functioned as a model of women's education through which Foster showed her female readers how to make use of their education once they graduated. Her fictional letters suggest that a boarding school education enables productive self-knowledge, acute critical thinking about deportment as a sociopolitical issue, and strong female-female bonds and pleasures—all of which defy the rigid categories of wife and whore.

The Boarding School was designed to be used primarily by women teachers and students, but Foster tacitly addresses both critics and users in her dedication “to the young ladies of America”:

Convinced of the many advantages of a good education, and the importance of improving those advantages; or of counterbalancing the want of them by exerting the mental powers which nature has bestowed; sensible, too, that the foundation of a useful and happy life must be laid in youth, and that much depends on the early infusion of virtuous principles into the docile mind, the author has employed a part of her leisure hours in collecting and arranging her ideas on the subject of female deportment. (179)

Foster's dedication implies that *The Boarding School* is not necessarily intended to give young women new liberties, but rather, to encourage the “exert[ion] [of] the mental powers which nature has [already] bestowed.” Her emphasis on methods for shaping the “docile mind” shows that her book has been informed by Lockean pedagogical philosophy. But, by referring to women's natural “mental powers” and by “collecting and arranging her [own] ideas,” she counters claims that women possess uncontrollable passions and superficial minds easily “captivated by the glare and splendor of show” (179, 209). Foster's deliberate reference to the fact that she gathered these insights during “her leisure hours” suggests the strain that early U. S. women experienced between cultivating social relationships and participating in sociopolitical discourses on subjects such as “female deportment.” The school name, Harmony-Grove,

reinforces the tension between a woman's search for intellectual growth and the expectation that she fulfill social concord or "harmony." Similarly, the school's location on the "delightful margin" of the Merrimac River evokes the book's challenges to conventional boundaries. The school's founding occurs because Mrs. Williams has an "eye, no less to the social pleasure, than to the pecuniary profit of the undertaking" and thus insists on the relationship among women's education, civic sociality, and financial markets.

Foster's natural history phrases, such as "teach them how to shoot" and "flowery paths of science," invoke idyllic, group experiences while gesturing toward individual distinction through entrepreneurial and empirical endeavors. These phrases also allude to the agrarian rhetoric of treatises such as Reverend Joseph Pilmore's "Address on the Importance of Female Education." However, Foster revises Pilmore's erotic male gaze by shifting the identification of flowers from women's bodies to the "flowery paths of science." Rather than describing the students of Harmony-Grove as growing "plants," Foster focuses on individual female characters who practice and discuss different models of social deportment. Students are not enrolled in the school to get an ornamental education. They have, as Foster puts it, already "received the first rudiments of learning, been initiated into the polite accomplishments, which embellish virtue and soften the cares of human life," and are now placed in Mrs. Williams care in order to learn knowledge and social skills that will be "useful through life" (179).

As Janet Carey Eldred and Peter Mortenson observe, Foster's Harmony-Grove is "less about finishing and more about beginning."⁹⁵ What graduating students must begin, among other

⁹⁵ Janet Carey Eldred and Peter Mortenson, "Gender and Writing Instruction in Early America: Lessons in Didactic Fiction" *Rhetoric Review* 12.1 (1993) 27. See also Elred and Mortenson, *Imagining Rhetoric: Composing Women of the Early United States* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2002).

things, is a life of self-scrutiny. As Mrs. Williams puts it, she is “polish[ing] the mental part, to call forth the dormant virtues, to unite and arrange the charms of person and mind, to inspire a due sense of decorum and propriety and to instill such principles of piety, morality, benevolence, prudence and economy” (180). This process involves becoming meticulously self-conscious: “know[ing] yourselves in every particular must be your constant endeavor” through “repeated inspection of your various passions, affections, and propensities” and remembering “that your emancipation from schools” does not “give you liberty to neglect the advantages which you have received from them” (188, 182). In this way, Foster combats antifeminist forms of, and arguments for, male scrutiny and control of women by proposing that women instead turn their eyes toward themselves, using their boarding school education as a platform for practicing lifelong self-consciousness.

The second volume of *The Boarding School* narrates the various effects of this fastidious (self-) education through the epistolary reflections of ten different women. Sophia Manchester, for example, complains of Boston society: if “this be the beauty and wit of polished society, restore again the native simplicity and sincerity of Harmony-Grove!” (178). Harriet Henly notes that she spends her first days away from the boarding school “listening, now and then, for some judicious observation from my preceptress; and frequently cast[ing] my eyes around in search of some of the amiable companions, among whom I used to unbend every thought” (189). Henly observes that by following Mrs. Williams’s advice to eschew gossip and embellishment, she has made a dull friendship “void of flattery.” Similarly, Henly worries, “Were I to proceed with every new occurrence, through the year, and subjoin my remarks, I must write volumes instead of letters” (237). Matilda Fielding questions, “Mrs. Williams used to say, that dress was indicative of the mind. If this observation be just, what opinion am I to form of the gay

multitudes who trip along the streets, and through the places of public resort in this metropolis; the lightness and gaudiness of whose appearance, bespeak a sickly taste, to say no more!” (239). Such passages exhibit the women’s eagerness to use their schooling and the moral uprightness of that schooling (e.g. Matilda Fielding discerns the “sickly taste” of the “multitudes”), but these reflections also demonstrate women’s capacity for critical analysis gained from their education and the necessity of that analysis for fulfilling the very objectives of patriarchal society—i.e. dressing and behaving appropriately.

Foster’s letter writers do not see their instruction as misguided. Rather, they take their lessons seriously and, in the process, deal with a sociopolitical problem: their insights are not rewarded in a society that does not value educated women. Letter writer Caroline Littleton alludes to this problem when she laments the fact that society punishes women for lacking an education before they have been able to obtain it:

This, Mrs. Williams used to say, is owing to the want of self-knowledge; which, if once possessed, will enable us properly to estimate our own characters, and to ascertain with precision wherein we are defective, as well as wherein we excel. But it is the misfortune, of *us*, young people, that we seldom attain this valuable science, till we have experienced many of the ills which result from the want of it. (221)

But Littleton’s complaint about “the ills which result from the want of [self-knowledge]” does not explicitly blame political or social structures for young women’s suffering; rather, her character’s reflection suggests to Foster’s readers that a formal education is a fundamental requirement—a “valuable science”—for the maturation of all “young people” and not just girls.

The problem of early U. S. society’s failure to value educated women does not, however, prevent Mrs. Williams’s students from taking stances on timely social and political issues. Caroline Littleton observes, for example, that the “votaries and inventors of the most fantastical fashions are found in the ranks of, what is called, refined and polished society; from whom we

might hope for examples of elegance and propriety, both in dress and behavior. By these, luxuries and extravagance are sanctioned” (245). Here Littleton shares her insights about the contradictory standard whereby women are expected to be elegant in dress and behavior, but not *too* elegant as to sanction “luxuries and extravagance.” Maria and Anna Williams discuss the irony of a Harvard commencement in which “dress was a classical study” and “female garb seem[ed] to claim particular attention” (253). Maria reflects that she “could not but think that those scholars who employ their time in studying, investigating, and criticizing the ladies’ dresses, might as well be occupied in the business of a friseur or man-milliner” (253). Anna concurs and adds,

We simple country-folks must not presume to arraign *their* taste, whose learning and abilities render them conspicuous on the literary stage. They, doubtless, write on subjects best adapted to their capacities. As for the follies of fashion, I think the gentlemen are under obligations to the ladies for adopting them; since it gives exercise to their genius and pens (253).

The ladies make these pronouncements with the understanding that by cultivating these views they will not only improve themselves, but also “convince the world, that the American fair are enlightened, generous, and liberal” (257). At the same time, Anna Williams’s commentary satirizes the ways men exploit women—in this case, by borrowing women’s fashion ideas and portraying fashionable women under the name of their own “genius and pens.” While Maria and Anna do not explicitly discuss the woman of pleasure in this exchange, she represents an implicit presence, for the men who “exercise...their genius and pens” on the subject of fashion do so by depicting female characters with fine tastes and dress who indulge in luxurious pleasures; Foster’s characters thus discern a double standard whereby real women were discouraged from displaying the knowledge and practices that they themselves produce, yet for which men take credit on the “literary stage.”

While Mrs. Williams emphasizes the merits of married life, several letter writers propose alternative social arrangements to marriage based on female-female bonds, which revise the heterosexual dynamics of the woman of pleasure. In response to her pessimistic view of married life, for instance, Cleora Partridge suggests to Harriet Henly that we “devote ourselves to celibacy” with the assumption that we should “make a couple of very clever old maids” (219). In a dramatic re-working of the female seduction plot, Julia Greenfield observes to Caroline Littlefield, “You have left—you have forsaken me, Caroline! But I will haunt you with my letters; obtrude myself upon your remembrance; and extort from you the continuance of your friendship!” (241). Later, Greenfield insists on the pleasures of society, but one composed only of a few “select” members: “I wish not to abandon society, nor to resign the pleasures which it affords; but it is a select number of friends, not a promiscuous crowd which I prefer” (251). Maria Williams laments Matilda’s absence at Harmony-Grove with less restrained, arguably erotic verse: “may pleasures in succession shine, / and every heart-felt bliss be thine, / Without the least allay” (247). Together, these passages take the threat of the pleasure-seeking, heterosexual woman and depict her instead as a female friend deeply devoted, whether platonically or erotically, to a female companion. Foster keeps the possibilities of female sexual desire within the bounds of same-sex friendship, but she maintains—rather than condemns—the importance for young women of enjoying “the pleasures of society.”

Foster’s letter writers explicitly contend with the woman of pleasure when discussing the effects of destructive versus instructive literature. In the first volume, Mrs. Williams observes that “commonly captivating” novels “pervert the judgment, mislead the affections, and blind the understanding” (188). To illustrate the effects of this error, she tells the story of Juliana, “a woman of pleasure” whose excessive novel-reading leads to her downfall and poignant

realization: “I have lost my sensibility with my fortune. My only luxury is now imagination” (189). Mrs. Williams does not insist that young women avoid novels altogether, only that they read books “sanctioned by the general voice of delicacy and refinement” and recognize that they have to “enter into the spirit of the subject, and feel interested in the matter, before you can profit by the exercise” (187, 185). While, in the second volume, Mrs. Williams’s students follow their teacher’s recommendation, they also begin to critically determine what should constitute *their* canon of moral, just, and useful literature. In one letter, an acquaintance known as Amelia Parr, whose name suggests her character’s inability to view America on par with Europe, enables Foster’s satirical critique of arguments against the value of domestic cultural expression. Parr claims, “We, in this country are too much in a state of nature to write good novels yet. An American novel is such a moral, sentimental thing, that it is enough to give any body the vapours to read one” (260). Parr is outspoken about her love of pleasure and the “plots and counter-plots” of European romances and she scoffs at the prose of the unsophisticated U.S. Two Harmony-Grove graduates critique Parr’s view and present their own counter-readings of English, French, and American prose with a keen patriotic sense of the aesthetic and practical values of each tradition. These characters critique European satirists and novelists, such as Swift and Sterne, and celebrate Edward Young, James Thomson, and Sarah Wentworth Morton. By staging this debate among her characters, Foster once again models critical debate as a skill (one not restricted to the domestic realm) that boarding school students should cultivate and employ after graduation.

At the same time, Foster’s letter writers demonstrate their capacity to serve as arbiters of taste: they evaluate and recommend specific texts, but they also harshly judge their own writing. For example, Maria Williams remarks, “my head is so full of the subject, I have no disposition to

write upon any thing else, I will put an end to this incoherent scroll” (302).⁹⁶ This sensitivity about the quality of their writing shows their appreciation of aesthetics and cultural expressions writ large, but also shows their appreciation of the materials to which they have access. Many letter writers, that is, emphasize how they come to possess and share certain books. Occasionally, this pattern causes the missives to sound like advertisements for histories, geographies, advice guides, and literary works. For example, when Harriet Henley writes to Mrs. Williams for advice about marriage, Mrs. Williams refers her to *The American Spectator, or Matrimonial Preceptor*: “The judicious compiler has collected and arranged his materials with admirable skill and address. Peruse this book, and you will be at no loss for counsels to direct, and cautions to guard you through the intricate cares and duties of connubial life. The essays are, chiefly, extracted from the most approved English writers” (265). Similar recommendations pass between ex-students who reference texts only recently made available in print, including Sarah Wentworth Morton’s poetry, Jeremy Belknap’s *History of New Hampshire and American Biography*, and Jedidiah Morse’s *The American Universal Geography*.

In the second volume of *The Boarding School*, the different women begin their missives in frustration and with a sense of obligation, and they end by crafting and sharing their opinions and their knowledge. Rarely does that knowledge focus on the two alternatives to which many eighteenth-century education reformers feared or hoped a woman’s education would lead: a whore or a good wife. We learn of only one former student’s marriage (Harriot Henly) and the remaining writers either discuss marriage only in theory or neglect the question in favor of other

⁹⁶ Maria’s remark underscores a tension between women’s education and new cultural expression: 1) for all its emphasis on the dramatic effect of moral lessons, the politics of conduct and taste was commonly debated among educated women who already knew what they were supposed to make of their lessons 2) while rural and metropolitan life generated romantic verse and social critique, the pervasive force of conduct threatened to render these settings generative of little other than pat moralism 3) writers fretted their letters possessed an incoherence that could not be remedied unless they personally stepped outside domestic strictures and into boundless and capricious pleasure.

social and political issues. They heed Mrs. Williams' teachings, but they also react against many of her lessons, exploring typically unsanctioned sociality and sexuality and developing new social critiques and literary insights. As a collection of post-graduate reflections, the content and structure of the text illustrates that a woman's boarding school education could lead to unexpected consequences in the early republic.

By drawing women away from their parental homes and making them fit uneasily back into their post-graduate settings, boarding school unsettled the social order in two prominent ways: the institution disrupted progressive colonial settlement by providing women with new social and intellectual networks outside the home and it complicated relationships between mothers and daughters who newly held competing expectations and knowledge bases. We see this uneasiness through the lamentations of female characters who discover the limited or altogether rejected use-value of their education in the context of the home. Together, Foster's two volumes expose women's educational experiences, possibilities, and reactions during a historical moment when the U.S. state and federal government was formulating articulations of sociopolitical equality for incipient middle-class white citizens and noncitizens. Foster's thoughtful letter writers challenge theories that women did not need a formal education, or that they needed only an education within the home. At the same time, her characters confront detractors of the women's boarding school with narratives that show how boarding schools inspired both experimentation and critique.

Foster's Seduction Novel

In *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), Ian Watt explains that Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) had a broad readership in England because the "increasing concealment of what our culture, with eloquent misdirection, calls 'the facts of life', produced needs in the public which had to be gratified" (157).⁹⁷ This dynamic helps explain why seduction novels became popular in the early U.S during the 1790s: censorship of sexual material fueled a desire to read about prohibited behavior, creating a new national market for the genre. The seduction novel satisfied fomented interest in reading about the fate of a woman at risk of losing her reputation. Much like popular jeremiads preached from pulpits and lecterns, seduction novels made tantalizing public spectacles of women's private desires, and they were often framed as cautionary tales intended to warn women against bad behavior.⁹⁸ In this way, the genre embodied the cultural and material intersection between the *rhetorical* woman of pleasure and the *actual* education of women. Cathy Davidson identifies the paradox exposed by the seduction novel when she explains that the genre simultaneously affirmed "the need to educate women and the uselessness of any such education in a society that has no place for educated women" (27).⁹⁹ During the early national period, the U. S. genre encouraged social reform initiatives through its

⁹⁷ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957) 157. Interestingly, Watt concludes in his last chapter that most European novels written between 1770 and 1800 "had little intrinsic merits" because of booksellers efforts to "meeting the reading public's uncritical demand for easy vicarious indulgence in sentiment and romance" (290).

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Dillon makes a similar point in *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004). See also Katherine Henry's lucid summary of Dillon: "If the structure of the literary public sphere places women in a prominent position because of their association with private subjectivity, it also opens them up to such charges as hypocrisy—charges that arise not from what they say or do, but from the very fact of their presence. Privacy's conflicted public significance generates values that are rhetorically compelling but also apolitical and unavailable to critique. Katherine Henry, *Liberalism and the Rhetoric of Protection: Reading in the Nineteenth Century Literature of Public Speech* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011) 18-19.

⁹⁹ Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 27.

melodramatic exposure of sociopolitical inadequacies. But seduction novels did more to meet popular demand for stories about sensual women than to assuage public concerns about social problems, for they almost invariably end tragically. A typical narrative concludes with a victim's death after she has given birth to a child out of wedlock. These depressing endings created the impression that neither the community nor the individual could prevent the deadly outcomes of the social stigma of women's illicit sexual acts. The form seemed to illustrate the inability of reform initiatives to protect citizens and non-citizens from the destructive effects of the very possibility of women's illicit sexuality. Reconsidering Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* through the lens of education illuminates the ways early U. S. women's education reform, articulated and enacted in both narrative fiction and non-fictional treatises, was inescapably caught up in the sociopolitical problem of the woman of pleasure.

A year before she penned *The Boarding School*, Foster published one of the country's most popular seduction novels, *The Coquette*, which tells the story of Eliza Wharton, a newly unbetrothed New England woman managing her freedom from marriage, the desires of two competing suitors, and the concerns of friends and her mother. The novel is based on the life of Elizabeth Whitman, a Connecticut poet and socialite whose death received tremendous attention from the 1780s into the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁰ Foster presents Eliza Wharton, her fictional version of Whitman, as a protagonist and an antagonist, a rebellious woman justifiably seeking equal rights and fruitful, loving relationships and a woman whose conduct contributes to her tragic fate. Foster's complex characterization of Eliza has provoked scholars since Cathy Davidson's 1986 re-publication of the novel to proffer a variety of readings, explaining how

¹⁰⁰ See Bryan Waterman's "Elizabeth Whitman's Disappearance and her Disappointment," *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 2009) 325-364. Waterman illustrates the importance of reading *The Coquette* in relation to the printed responses to Elizabeth Whitman's death.

prevailing ideologies and practices shape Foster's presentation of the "facts" and thereby confirm the book's important political commentary.¹⁰¹ The recent spatial turn in early American literary studies has yielded fewer readings of this important seduction novel, excepting Stephen Shapiro's oblique reference to it in his study of the rise of the novel in relation to the waning Anglo-French world-system, in which he suggests that *The Coquette* "codifies [male] bourgeois fears" about the fate of a rising merchant class.¹⁰² The primary reason for this recent lack of interest in Foster's novel is that it contains no West Indian references, no long-lost Italian cousin or seductive French preceptor, no comparisons between its female protagonist and white, West African captives, and no signs of American Indians—in short, no signs of the different Atlantic and continental influences motivating these studies. It is a meticulously Anglo-American seduction novel.

¹⁰¹ Sharon M. Harris argues that *The Coquette* "satiriz[es], the political systems that create women's social realisms, and the language used to convey those systems to the broader culture." See Harris's *Redefining the Political Novel* (1995). Julia Stern claims that Eliza represents a powerful strain of liberal individualism, whereas Ivy Schweitzer sees Eliza as "the champion of an inclusive, even feminist 'civic republicanism'" with her male and female interlocutors belonging to "the female 'chorus' [that] presages the more rigid separation of the sexes and women's exile from the social to the domestic sphere ushered in by liberalism." See Stern's *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (1997) and Schweitzer's *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006) 109. Turning to print culture, Bruce Burgett argues that Foster prescribes strict domestic conduct while also emphasizing "the costs of the reduction of the literary to the political public sphere or...the reduction of a republican citizenship to republican womanhood," whereas Jared Gardner claims that she displays the acumen of a seasoned editor, "seek[ing] not to privilege Eliza's version, but to suggest the possibility of multiple interpretations cohabiting the literary-political space of the seduction plot and of the nation." Burgett situates *The Coquette* in a sentimental tradition in which "abstraction of the body from its social and political environment establishes the terrain upon which anatomy could become (sexual and racial) destiny.... But it also sets forth the promise of an uncompromisingly democratic politics grounded in the autonomy of every body's sensations." See Burgett's *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic* (1999): 16 and Gardner's "The Literary Museum and the Unsettling of the Early American Novel," *English Literary History* 67 (2000): 743-771.

¹⁰² Stephen Shapiro, *Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic-World System* (State Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007). A world-systems reading of early U.S. literature, Shapiro's study discusses early U.S. women's sentimental novels: "The sentimental narrative's fulsome calls for emotional response, even despite the sheer boredom caused by reading repetitive and artless narratives, especially of the epistolary variety, is purposively created to incite and then channel the reader's response" (94). How did works supposedly so tedious to their original audience stimulate and channel emotion? Why are sentimental and seduction tales primarily understood as the remedy for male market anxiety rather than as a response to that anxiety, among other things?

However, in light of recent transatlantic and transnational cultural studies, Foster's novel deserves new critical consideration precisely because of its Anglo-American homogeneity and insularity. The globalizing of early American literary studies reveals the importance of looking to *The Coquette* to understand subjects that were highly Anglo-centric in their North American philosophical and rhetorical conception: settler colonialism and education reform. The Atlantic and frontier strife discussed in studies of these subjects fostered a persistent concern about who was and who should be committed to staying in America. As I have argued, the figure of the woman of pleasure haunted northern education reform and defied the early national imperative for secure settlement as she was, by definition, *unsettled*. In *The Coquette*, Foster embraces this aspect of the pleasure-seeking woman who refuses to settle and, in doing so, illustrates how women could respond to northern education reforms: the chronicle of Eliza Wharton's life is one of a woman who resists her friends' judgments and her ties to the home and instead seeks to move between houses and across space in search of greater pleasures, i.e. new experiences and new forms of knowledge.

The novel begins by drawing a parallel between the country's recent freedom from English tyranny and Eliza Wharton's recent freedom from marriage and motherhood and her gravitation toward a life filled with pleasure. Eliza explains to Lucy Freeman an "unusual sensation" "possess[ing] my breast; a sensation, which I once thought could never pervade it on any occasion whatever. It is *pleasure*; pleasure, my dear Lucy, on leaving my paternal roof!" (37). What she refers to as her dour "paternal roof" calls to mind popular revolutionary rhetoric in which dissatisfied American "children" revolted from their stern and unjust English "fathers," turning Eliza into a patriot liberated from similar strictures. Eliza goes on to remind Lucy that her paternal roof doubles as the home of both her betrothed, Reverend Haly, who just died, and

her father who passed away “some months before him” (37). By presenting Eliza as a woman who has remained in the home of her father only to experience a lapsed patriarchal authority restored by a poorly matched lover, Foster compares her betrothal with the prompt return of poor governance. By depicting Eliza’s gleeful discovery of personal pleasure, made possible by the deaths of both her father and her fiancé, Foster aligns women’s pleasures with the creative, educational, and subversive process of altering a patriarchal political order.

Foster depicts what we might call Eliza’s educational environment, made up of the interlocutors within her changing social circle, as one deeply intertwined with and symbolically analogous to national political formation. Her release from her so-called “paternal roof” exposes the link between a woman’s experience in a patriarchal society and the emergent rhetoric of consumer culture that began to shape U. S. political discourse. Eric Slauter explains this discursive development in *The State as a Work of Art* (2011) using the U.S. Constitution as his touchstone, Slauter identifies a shift away from a colonial language of statecraft focused on maintaining the health of the body-politic toward a language focused on fulfilling consumer and spectator wants in a new government that the framers conceived of as a work of art.¹⁰³ Similarly, Eliza no longer needs to serve Haly “with all the care and assiduity of a nurse; and with all the sympathizing tenderness of a sister” (42). Instead, like the Harmony-Grove students in *The Boarding School*, she can try to cultivate her tastes and mold her interlocutors into a polity that matches her interests, needs, and pleasures. In this way, Foster establishes connections between Eliza’s feelings, her state of mind, and the remaking of a state for consuming citizens.

¹⁰³ Eric Slauter, *The State as a Work of Art: The Cultural Origins of the Constitution*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Eliza's first two letters to Lucy show the importance for a woman in the new nation to *perform* her achievement of the proper education in order to, in turn, gain access to the educational opportunities that she is repeatedly denied. Such performances could only work in the context of "society." Eliza implies to Lucy in these first two letters that she had once been "in society" when she first became betrothed to Reverend Haly because he was her friends' first "choice" for her. She explains that she "sacrificed her fancy in this affair," has been in seclusion from society since the period of Haly's declining health, and has only now been able to return to it. Three times in her letters she observes that, despite her new freedoms, she will try to live according to "the will and desires of my parents," which, she observes, both "nature and education had instilled into my mind" and remain "thoughtful to my duty and benevolent to all around me" (37). Eliza's stress upon her inclinations and obligations produces the opposite effect of their intended purpose (to reassure Lucy), creating the sense that she may once again find herself either in a poor match or duped by conniving men and women. But, because this is the second time Eliza has come into society, her responses to her relative liberties seem performed. That is, Eliza seems to attempt to stage her sensations, her dutiful nature, and her proper education for even her closest friends. Interpreted this way, she exhibits a canny capacity for shaping her own political subjectivity in order that she may expand her social possibilities. Foster's characterization of Eliza's self-performance suggests that a woman's performance of her education was a necessary means of *getting* an education, especially when "education" is broadly conceived as opportunities and pleasures outside the home. At the same time, Eliza's semi-canned expressions of defiance and dutifulness show Foster's female readers how to carefully navigate the ubiquitous imperative of interpersonal social monitoring of young women by both men and other women in the early republic.

One of Eliza's primary means of gaining educational opportunities is New England's visiting culture, which gives her an expanded social network, just as the boarding school expands the social circles of the students in Foster's fictional Harmony-Grove. Eliza writes her letters to explain her new sensations and new experiences to Lucy and her mother from her temporary residence in New Haven, Connecticut, with the Richmans, a wealthy couple (suggested by their surname) who are Eliza's family friends. Her lengthy stay with friends was typical for young, unmarried middle-class to upper-class women and men in late-eighteenth-century New England. Such young women and men often lived for extended periods among wealthier relatives and family friends to help relieve their families of some of the financial burden of supporting older children and/or to put themselves into contact with potential spouses who might otherwise be outside their geographic and socioeconomic circles. Bryan Waterman refers to this residency as a "culture of visiting," an appropriate term for a practice that created new social groups as well as cultural discourses in the form of the letters visitors exchanged to describe the travels, parties, and courtships fostered by their visits. The Richmans provide Eliza with the opportunity to change her existing social fabric and to participate in the production of a body of letters from their estates about her rippling effects upon that social fabric. The arrangement sheds light on the contradictions underlying Eliza's new liberties, perhaps best indicated by the final lines of her first letter in which she declares herself favoring friendship above marriage, then remarks, "this Letter is all egotism, I have even neglected to mention the respectable, and happy friends, with whom I reside" (38). These final lines also reveal how a woman could negotiate social contradictions in order to move in and out of places, institutions, and relationships.

Eliza's living arrangement with the Richmans reveals the insufficiency and malleability of any settlement organized around a narrowly defined home, but it also expands the network

committed to overseeing her conduct. Like Harmony-Grove, this culture of visiting allowed unmarried women to extend their limited freedoms and cultivate social networks while at the same time putting them under the care of new, extra-domestic monitors. Eliza refers defiantly to Lucy's advice as "monitorial lessons" and "lectures," and initially she conceives of Reverend John Boyer as a young cleric with "more gallantry, and address than commonly fall to the share of students" (40). For women of the new nation, gaining a social education through visits with family friends required a difficult balancing act between enjoying new experiences and suffering constant surveillance. Just as young women experienced the small freedoms afforded by the visiting culture as alternately liberating and imprisoning, female education reformers like Foster grappled with an analogous form of discipline: the scrutiny of women's conduct by male political reformers, who tied the fate of the nation to the preservation of women's social and sexual propriety. What Foster presents in *The Boarding School* as the productive possibilities of women's self-knowledge becomes in *The Coquette* an oppressive burden for Eliza, whose friends ceaselessly try to reform her behaviors and desires.

As part of their monitoring, Eliza's friends attempt to prevent her eventual disgrace by teaching her (unsuccessfully) to love a man who is just like the dead fiancé she never loved—the very man whose death sparked her declarations of newfound pleasure. Foster's narrative critiques the arguments and rhetorical strategies posed by Eliza's friends, whose advice derives from ancient English discourses that rigidly limit women's opportunities for happiness and personal development. Eliza's friends urge her to marry a man who resembles Reverend Haly, but in outlining the merits of male and female rationality, "prudent" marriage, and motherhood, they lack a convincing rationale for the benefits of marrying Boyer *or* for the dangers of associating with Sanford. Their rhetoric of reform is based on Anglo-Protestant neoclassical

thought, best illustrated by Mrs. Richman's and Reverend Boyer's allusions to John Milton, James Thomson, and the Old Testament. These characters can only conceive of Eliza's potential seduction in these traditionalistic terms, or in the terms of the salacious plots and counterplots of a foreign romance. As Lucy puts it, Eliza's story "would make a very pretty figure in a novel" (83). In this way, Foster links fears about Eliza's association with Sanford to false arguments against women who read romance novels, a debate she similarly stages in *The Boarding School*. The collective misunderstanding of Eliza by her male and female friends, who try to prevent her from making what Mrs. Richman calls a "grievous error" with Sanford, reveals women's limited opportunities as well as their limited options for openly discussing those opportunities. When read alongside *The Boarding School*, *The Coquette* seems to call for female-female environments that empower women to cultivate a non-dominant tradition of knowledge sharing, in contrast to heterosocial networks of friends, which instead reproduce old Anglo-Protestant philosophies and fears about the dangers of romance novels. These heterosexist discourses punish women for every discretion or suggestion of sexual deviancy.

The Coquette shows how women's education reform was enacted not only in the context of new women's academies, but also on the level of women's individual social experiences and through familial and extra-familial social networks that monitored and sought to reform women's behavior and knowledge. Ultimately, Foster's novel argues against a reform discourse restricted to the threat of the woman of pleasure, for Eliza's story demonstrates to her readers that both friendly arguments in favor of a joyless marriage *and* the deadly taint of extramarital love harm U. S. women striving to gain new experiences. Foster confirms her critique of the marriage argument by associating Eliza's friends' advice with a return of the British monarchical state. Lucy, for example, tells Eliza that her "system" for pursuing Boyer will yield a happiness that

will “crown your future days” and she later hopes for Eliza’s “returning empire of reason,” as if to suggest that Eliza’s attraction to Sanford represents an absence of reason (59, 107). For his part, when his prospects with Eliza improve, Boyer claims that his “reason assumes its empire” (77). Through this language, Foster equates rationality with the prompt return of the British monarchy. She suggests that, rather than democratizing their social sphere, Eliza’s friends are reinstating an older sociopolitical order. Their failure to reform Eliza illustrates the failure of reforming any individual or nation through the use of English ideologies and cultural icons, such as Thomson and Milton. For Foster, then, proposals for reform that follow patriarchal British models of thought—models hopelessly mired in the fear of sexually illicit women—threaten to reinstate a flawed system and legitimate gender and class hierarchies. The only opening for Eliza lies in the liminal spaces beyond marriage and before her fatal fall from social repute.

Eliza’s only option in the face of the antifeminist reformist commitments among her friends is to pay perfunctory heed to an English neoclassical value system while leaning in the opposite direction toward brazen economic individualism under the unsanctioned rubric of pleasure-seeking. To underscore this option for early national women, Foster provides Eliza with the bulk of the novel’s Hamiltonian, mercantile language. Eliza observes that “Fortune, indeed, has not been very liberal of her gifts to me; but I presume on a large stock in the bank of friendship” (9). When responding to Boyer’s advances she remarks, “Merit has a share in that bank” and, when responding to Sanford’s advances, she says, “I am a pensioner of friendship at present” (25, 36). Unlike her personal social reformers, however, Eliza admits her “taste for dissipation” and shows her fiscal aptitude. By presenting her as *the* entrepreneur in a seduction novel with a rake who vows never to be “confined to business” and a clerical homebody with romantic dreams of becoming a gallant, Foster suggests women’s capacity to *capitalize* on the

possibilities available to the pleasure-seeking woman (65). Openly seeking pleasure and profit, Eliza never gives up on her quest for a more egalitarian social and sexual life. Through Eliza's story, Foster begins the efforts she will continue in *The Boarding School* of attempting to revise the stigma of the woman of pleasure by insisting on the worthwhile pursuit of pleasure—the pleasure of new friends, new conversations, new travels—as a mode of educational discovery for women that cannot be dismissed as sexual and reprehensible.

In the end, however, Eliza does not discover an alternative to marriage or disgraceful seduction. At the novel's close she is pregnant and alone. While Sanford escapes the country with a tarnished reputation and a sense of shame at what he calls the “black catalogue of vices, which have stained my past life,” Eliza dies outside Boston away from friends and relatives (173). The cause of her death, like that of the real-life Elizabeth Whitman, is complications from her pregnancy. Foster's incisive response to northern education reform, then, is to recreate Eliza's (or rather, Elizabeth Whitman's) feelings of acquiring the freedom to be among like-minded, freedom-seeking souls only to realize that she is caught up in the desires and dictates of a society set about eerily rehearsing a constraining old patriarchal social order. In this way, *The Coquette* insists on the importance of women's search for independence, but paints a bleak picture of the same dilemma faced by the students in *The Boarding School*: a society that does not want women to be too desirous or too educated.

The novel proposes an austere and industrious worldview in which women, such as Eliza, can nevertheless entertain their interest in pensioning and pleasure. The final exchange between Lucy and Eliza's mother raises a final series of claims about women's moral “virtue.” In response to Eliza's death, the recently married and expecting Lucy declares, “I wish it engraved upon every heart, that virtue alone, independent of the trappings of earth, the parade of equipage,

and the adulation of gallantry, can secure lasting felicity” (175). In Lucy’s speech Foster stages the same kind of critical analysis found in *The Boarding School*, as in the letters in which Harmony-Grove students question their minister’s Timothian sermon about badly behaved women. Lucy goes on to express admiration for Eliza: “the resolution which carried this deluded wanderer thus far from her friends and supported her through her various trials is astonishing!” (174). Yet, she also expresses regret that Eliza did not devote her strength to “repelling the first attacks on her virtue.” Lucy declares her hope for the general inculcation of “virtue alone” before unfolding a feminist attack on the men who ruin young women like Eliza. The “American fair,” she contends, “must despise and for ever banish the man who can glory in the seduction of innocence and the ruin of reputation. To associate, is to approve; to approve, is to be betrayed” (175). Lucy thus uses Eliza’s story to create her own sermon—an anti-Timothian sermon—in which she suggests that the only way to prevent such tragedies is to actively shun this type of man. Foster’s recursive suggestions about “virtue” unmoor social expectations and render them subject to change, but it is the combination of the novel’s failed reformers, Eliza’s own scholastic and fiscally-framed resistance to those reforms, and Lucy’s parting comments that complete this settler colonial lesson in how to be and not be a woman of pleasure.

Vickery’s Novel of Manners

In the early nineteenth century U.S., the seduction novel did not disappear; Foster’s *The Coquette*, for example, was reprinted well into the antebellum period, as was Susannah Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple*.¹⁰⁴ However, literary tastes changed such that women and men

¹⁰⁴ See Carla Mulford’s introduction to *The Power of Sympathy and The Coquette* (New York: Penguin, 1986) xlii.

began writing narratives that can be more accurately described as “novels of manners” and understood as U.S. precursors to, and revisions of, Jane Austen’s oeuvre. As its name suggests, this genre depicted the details of everyday life, including social practices, material culture, and the passage of time. The form enabled writers to explore how different personalities and classes confronted the social trappings of everyday life. In a typical novel of manners, conflicts stem from the potential transfer of wealth accompanying marriage, which writers usually critique yet ultimately uphold through plots resolved by marriage. As Elsie Michie explains in her study of the genre’s European livelihood, “an informed reading of the novel of manners reveals stories about marriage to be the place where critics can trace fiction’s sustained engagement with the economic forces it seeks to resist but that also irrevocably shape the stories it tells” (25).¹⁰⁵ Early-nineteenth-century examples of the U.S. genre similarly engaged with money and class through marriage plots, thereby disclosing how the economic forces, which Michie discusses, precluded natural sentiments, inspired materialistic values, and essentially trapped women in a double bind. However, those same economic forces, often get the better of these novels in the end when their characters’ meditations on social justice and spiritual restitution all but disappear as members of similar classes marry and ensure the continuous, internal circulation of family money. In the following reading of Sukey Vickery’s *Emily Hamilton*, I examine how Vickery’s novel of manners engages the literary conventions of the seduction novel, the social convention of marriage, and the rhetoric of northern education reform, which, together, shaped quotidian life in the early U.S.

¹⁰⁵ Elsie Michie, *The Vulgar Question of Money: Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners from Jane Austen to Henry James* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011.) 25. For an earlier work summarizing the American tradition, which explains that Henry Hugh Brackenridge and James Fenimore Cooper are the first novel of manners writers—written before scholars recovered Vickery, Rush, Tenney’s works—see Gordon Milne, *The Sense of Society: A History of the American Novel of Manners* (Cranbury, NJ.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977).

Vickery's *Emily Hamilton* is an epistolary novel of manners with a plot that revolves around the New England friendships, courtships, and marriages of Emily Hamilton, Mary Carter, and (to a lesser extent) Eliza Anderson. Only a handful of scholars have discussed the novel and its author.¹⁰⁶ One reason for this lack of attention is that the novel did not have the broad readership of a narrative like *The Coquette* when it was first published. The other reason is that, despite the fact that many early-nineteenth-century U.S. novels were written and sold during the 1800s and 1810s, these years remain something of a black hole in American literary history—a seeming void between the 1790s novels of Rowson, Brown, and Foster and the 1820s and 1830s historical romances of Sedgwick, Child, and Cooper. The critical work on *Emily Hamilton* has been more than sufficient to illustrate the potential this novel has for revising critical views of women's writing and authorship in the early nineteenth century U.S. and the potential works from this period have for revising our understanding of American literary history. Vickery's participation in the discourse of northern education reform is apparent in her introduction to *Emily Hamilton*, where she provides readers with a largely conventional eighteenth-century theory of novel-reading after observing that this "little work" is "intended principally for the perusal of my own sex" (4). She explains that many rightly see novels "as being in the highest degree prejudicial to young minds" because they give readers "wrong ideas of the world...setting their tastes so high as to occasion a disrelish for those scenes in which they are necessitated to take a part...carrying us too far from real life, and filling the imagination with a thousand

¹⁰⁶ Cathy N. Davidson, "Female Authorship and Authority: The Case of Sukey Vickery" *Early American Literature* 21 (Spring 1986): 4-28. Mary Kelley, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth Century America*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Amy E. Winans, "Sukey Vickery." *American Women Prose Writers to 1820*. Ed. Carla Mulford, Angela Vietto, and Amy E. Winans. Vol. 200 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 380-384. John Barnard Bennett, "A Young Lady of Worcester County" Master's Thesis. (Middleton: Wesleyan University, 1942). See Scott Slawinski's introduction in his edition of *Emily Hamilton*—the first issued since its 1803 publication and the edition used here. Both Bennett and Slawinski stress the changing attitudes toward marriage reflected in the novel.

enchancing images which it is impossible ever to realize” (4). Vickery adds that novels “founded on interesting scenes in real life, may be calculated to afford moral instruction to the youthful mind in the most pleasing manner” (4). She presents her novel as one such literary work: a product of the mind, for the mind, and which eschews the dis-associative problems linked to the novel form by creating a narrative based on “incidents” from “real life.” This is how she proposes to address this formal problem and, therefore, how she addresses the settlement instability created by the disjunctive effect of 1790s revolution, rebellion, and nation-building. From wherever such curative “incidents” spring, Vickery translates them based on what she humbly refers to as her “scanty education,” and from its implications in the north at the turn of the century.

Like *The Coquette*, *Emily Hamilton* begins with death as a transformative event framing a young woman’s emergence into a social scene and overshadowing her prospects for friendship, courtship, marriage, and seduction.¹⁰⁷ Unlike Foster, however, Vickery begins by principally describing the effect of the death of a father followed by the effects of the death of a betrothed young woman as pivotal events shaping two different women’s perceptions of their emergence into society. In the first letter, Mary Carter describes how she reacted to her father’s death. In letters four through eight, Mary and Emily Hamilton reflect on the significance of their friend, Sophia Ashley, whose “confirmed consumption” leaves Emily rightly predicting that it is not long before she will be “consigned to the silent mansions of the dead” (9). While the initial death of the father (or father figure) in the first letters of seduction novels often equated the plot and its

¹⁰⁷ Ivy Schweitzer’s reading of how early U.S. writers negotiated a classical definition of friendship is certainly applicable to *Emily Hamilton* in which Mary Carter and Emily Hamilton rely heavily on the term “friend” to underscore supposedly more egalitarian relationships with elders and spouses and the memory of childhood bonds between young girls and to explore the significance of those cherished, even idealized, bonds in their present.

female protagonist with the fraught, post-revolutionary development of a new patriarchal nation, Vickery avoids placing this burden solely on one female character. Descriptions of Mary's father's death connect both Mary's and Emily's views of their prospects to a world of unstable international capital. Mary refers to her father's failed attempts to "retrieve his property abroad" and recognizes that the "distracted situation of my father's affairs" clearly "hastened his dissolution" (5). In contrast, descriptions of Sophia Ashley's illness and death put them in mind of a far-fetched ideal of femininity: "the pride of her sex" whose kindness and unconsummated marriage makes her conduct beyond reproach. Through both deaths, Vickery suggests to her female readers ways of negotiating malleable fortunes and feminine ideals. Her narrative suggestions for reform, like Foster's, embrace the possibilities afforded to women by liminal social spaces, dead fathers, and a new world of unstable international capital.

Through the women's letters, Vickery conveys how three different women navigate an early U.S. in which uncertain fortunes and rigid social expectations were equally common. While each woman reacts against the fact that, as Emily puts it directly, "the world has been too rigid, much too rigid, as respects the female sex," they respond differently to the gendered stigmas that burden women with irrevocably tarnished reputations while leaving men abundant options for "reformation." Mary Carter often excoriates catty women and looks to her grandparents for their approval of her lovers. In contrast, Eliza Anderson proves independent, outspoken, and inclined to "pleasure-seeking." As a result, she constantly feels that she must prove that she is not, as she puts it, the "thoughtless, giddy creature people take her to be" (21).¹⁰⁸ Like Foster, Vickery portrays individual women whose complex personalities challenge the simplistic binary figures

¹⁰⁸ It seems possible that Vickery found her inspiration for Eliza Anderson not from real life but from Foster's Eliza Wharton.

of the virtuous domestic laborer and the virtue-less woman of pleasure. Emily possesses some of Mary's and Eliza's traits. She expounds on the merits of women's proper conduct while delighting in "simple pleasures" (22). But she is also the romantic in the novel, the writer who provides both the most lyrical descriptions of the natural world and declares, "Not all the wealth the Indies could afford would bring one real joy, unless we could share it with those for whom we felt a particular affection" (12). Emily comes to represent the mixture of amusement and instructiveness that many early U. S. novelists claimed to strive for in their introductions and prefaces. Over the course of the novel, Emily's personality and behavior vary widely, as she shifts between being a "melancholy" self-diagnosed "wanderer in the woods" to being an urbanite, "resolved to be a lady of pleasure" (78, 113).

The resemblance between the letters in *Emily Hamilton* and the letters in the second half of Foster's *The Boarding School* illustrates how Vickery's novel blends entertainment and instruction based on a set of relationships and moral philosophies forged through a relatively private education. Mary, Emily, and Eliza each reference a shared space in which these friends and other women lived together—a "loved retreat where we have passed so many happy hours" without having to "submit to the authority of a husband" (7). The characteristics of this space are only vaguely delineated, and they never refer to specific teachers or lessons garnered therein. However, the moral lectures in several letters suggest what some lessons may have been about. In letter X, Emily speaks about the religious benefits of "pleasure" and "cheerfulness." In letter XI, Mary critiques women's gossiping and card playing; and in letter XIV, in response to concerns about a "male coquette," Emily provides a cautionary tale about a young woman seduced by an older man. Vickery's inter-textual practices also hint at the content of these lessons. She includes pieces of verse in most of the letters that might make up a curriculum.

Some excerpts come from her own oeuvre, taken primarily from the poetry she wrote for the *Massachusetts Spy*; others come from well-known sources, including Edward Young, Oliver Goldsmith, Joseph Addison, Timothy Dwight and Isaac Watts. Because they often lack citation—a typical print omission at the time—the poems create the sense that they could be either reading materials or the writer’s own written work. What the lectures and the lyric have in common is that they appear to rely on and build upon an already existing, open community based on shared moral dictates, practices, and tastes. Further demonstrating this scholastic republic of letters, Emily, Eliza, and Mary share personal conversations as well as letters addressed to them with their other friends.

A critical aspect of Vickery’s novel is the fact that its female letter writers build upon this scholastic culture. They present moralizing narratives to solve their dilemmas and proffer welcome advice to their friends, but they also do so in order to subtly expand their meanings so that they more effectively align with the realities they encounter. The abrupt shifts to poetry in the midst of their letters validate the sentiments expressed in the letters by locating them in a genre with far greater cultural authority than the novel at the time. But, they also show an unwavering commitment to improving themselves through reading, interpreting, and creating distilled cultural expressions. Set within otherwise discursive letters, which shift widely from describing events to evaluating conduct in light of sentiment and faith, the lectures and the lyrics display a balance between sensing and reasoning. Mary’s “grand mamma” might call them “rational diversions” (8). By illustrating through lectures and lyrics how the novel’s events build on a hermetic scholastic culture, Vickery shows how cultures can be limited and how women can bridge the gap between cultural expressions and actual experiences confronted by women of the new nation.

Through her characters' peregrinations, Vickery presents rural, northern towns fusing with a capitalist democracy by way of formal education. In particular, Emily's routine travels between the country and Boston highlight connections between the city and the country. But her movements reveal a lack of cultural uniformity across the state. During stays in Boston or the "metropolis," she critiques the "gaudy splendor of a city" and touts the constitutional benefits of residing in the country (122). When she resides in "rustic" New England towns, she complains that "nothing of importance takes place from one week to another" and she eagerly anticipates her return to Boston (128). Using language play common in Restoration drama and picaresque, Vickery also critiques the limited social options available in the country. For instance, Mary tells Emily that she is seeking to "sever" ties from her dull suitor, Mr. Sever, because she knows that she "never shall experience that attachment to him which he expresses towards me" (14). Similarly, Emily first repels Charles Devas's attentions because "I am conscious I never shall experience any other regard towards him" (11). His surname (an anagram for "saved") proves ironically prescient, as Devas is the only one not saved when the ship he is on founders in the Atlantic. By posing her experiences in the country against those in the city, and vice versa, Emily draws attributes of the two together. Her travels and her evaluation of her settings reflect new communicational and cultural merging between rural and urban places. Furthermore, they expose the socioeconomic effects of this recombination. For, through Emily, readers witness the degenerative consequences of metropolitan commerce, represented in the novel as a common yet risky means of pursuing new capital launched out of Boston, New York, and Baltimore. At the same time, through her travails, they experience the potential romantic tragedy of Emily's choice to either use her scholastic, cultural capital to abandon herself to the "remote regions" or to take up permanent residence in Boston and become a "lady of pleasure" (113).

Emily proposes a middle ground between a strict Calvinist view and a radical deism, which mirrors the moderate geopolitical stance she embodies, and suggests pleasure in moderation. She explains that while “our ministers” discourage “levity and dissipation...they are no enemies to mirth at proper times,” and she reminds Mary (the representative Calvinist) that pleasure should be acceptable to our authorities “in moderation” (109). She also proposes an egalitarian relationship with God whereby “with as much ease and confidence,” we “request favors of Him, as of an earthly friend, and return our grateful acknowledgements for those we have already received” (86). Emily’s philosophy shows how Vickery goes to great lengths to promote her version of the “voluntaristic” parental and spousal relationships, which, Jay Fliegelman argues, were widely touted after the American Revolution. However, in the only moment in *Emily Hamilton* in which anyone speaks of national culture at all, Vickery reveals Emily’s egalitarian philosophy to be preordained by politics. Near the end of the book, Emily laments that religion “is so little practiced; in this country especially, where we enjoy so many blessings” (133). She continues, “it is strange our citizens should be unmindful of the power who protected them, and their rights, and placed them in possession of peace, liberty and independence, and has preserved them from the horrors of a war which has involved Europe in distress” (133). Emily’s comments critique radical Republican deists who proposed neither a vengeful nor benevolent God, but a deity initiating the universe yet ultimately cut off from it, a maker no longer attuned to human supplication, much less friendly conversation. Indeed, her consternation with “citizens” “unmindful” of a deity watching over them may be a specific retort to Elihu Palmer’s *The Principles of Nature, or A Development of the Moral Causes of Happiness and Misery among the Human Species* (1801), otherwise known as the “deist bible.” Palmer had declared God’s indifference to suffering or jubilation in Europe or America.

Regardless of Vickery's opponents, evacuated in Emily's geopolitical position and her religious philosophy cum national fantasy are the sex-based restrictions Mary, Eliza, and Emily have identified in their letters and the deadly, or, at the very least, unsettling outcomes of U.S. commerce. Supporting the removal of these sex-based restrictions, *Emily Hamilton* concludes with elite marriage and measured advice rather than the tragedy, outpouring of sentiment, and moral indictment found in *The Coquette*. When she marries Mr. Belmont, both families retain their statuses. Emily marries a man who has no need of pegging his fortune entirely on the Atlantic economy and who seeks solace in country life. Belmont gets a woman who has flirted with Boston "pleasures," but has no inclinations to foreign romances like his first wife. Emily promises to become a "maternal friend" to Belmont's existing children. She recognizes that "any woman, however large her fortune might be," must "be well acquainted with all kinds of family work, and to take a part in it, for a transition from wealth to poverty is at all times possible" (143). Fittingly, Vickery gives Emily the last words of the novel. Emily ends her letter by informing Mary, I "anticipate your visit with pleasure, your presence will add to my satisfaction" (154). While continued correspondence and visiting with Mary indicate the enriching circulation of ideas, texts, and critical discussions of social and political issues, few signs intrude to show how this imminent "pleasure," or any obverse circumstance, might improve upon or radically alter the moderate social, political, or economic liberties and securities represented by her marriage.

Reading *The Coquette* and *Emily Hamilton* together illustrates how women's early U.S. novels evolved alongside the exigencies of settler colonialism through their engagement with northern education reforms. At a moment when post-revolutionary drives for reform buttressed and questioned a deeply-rooted Anglo-American ideology allowing a diverse people to replace

another, the salacious figure of the woman of pleasure distorted efforts to improve people's minds on ostensibly righteous, nationalistic terms. In this context, women writers captured rigid social expectations and misogynistic restrictions—expectations and restrictions encapsulated by the rhetorical deployment of the Timothian woman of pleasure. As one relatively convincing suitor in *Emily Hamilton* puts it, “youth was the season for pleasure.” The question was not how to preclude it or relish it, but how women might live and learn from it in the early republic.

The Coquette and *Emily Hamilton* exemplify how two early U.S. novels by women engaged with both northern education reforms and settler colonial uncertainties. Foster and Vickery penned novels when post-revolutionary reforms were simultaneously buttressing and inspiring questions about a way of thinking and acting that encouraged a diverse people to replace another diverse people. The concerted, northern efforts to improve people's minds on ostensibly national terms created educational links between federal and state governance and rural North America. While the purpose of these connections was to unify the country, initial links were profoundly unsettling and women bore much of the responsibility for the potential implications of a nation dissevered from its founding commitment to remaining in America to stay. As popular, salacious, and hellacious incarnations of Timothian women of pleasure suggest, with the fate of women's improvement so too went the fate of the nation—and civilization along with it. In *The Coquette* and *Emily Hamilton*, Foster and Vickery address the unjust burden placed on women and women's education; in doing so, their novels propose solutions that allow women to expand their sphere of influence without overhauling the commitment to settlement.

Chapter 3

“A Carefully Guarded Standard”: Spanish Studies and James Fenimore Cooper’s

The Prairie

At the end of volume three of George Ticknor’s *History of Spanish Literature* (1849), the former Harvard professor surveys the “prospects for the future” of Spanish literature in light of Ferdinand VII’s death. He predicts that if the Spanish “have been taught by the experience of the past that there is yet a loyalty to mere rank and place which degrades... and a blind submission to priestly authority, which narrows and debases the nobler faculties of the soul, their literature will flourish.” If they “have not learned this solemn lesson then their honorable history, both in civilization and letters, is closed for ever” (324). Ticknor’s investment in the future of Spanish culture was not peculiar in the early republic and antebellum periods. A number of early U.S. scholars, writers, and reformers had studied Spanish history and discussed Spain’s new political and cultural directions since the 1780s in order to understand how the American Revolution fit within the long European history of the Americas, to broaden their intellectual horizons, and to debate whether waning Spanish imperial control in the Americas was good or bad for the rapidly expanding and developing U.S.¹⁰⁹ By the 1820s, though, interest in what I call Spanish studies became more prevalent and more politically charged in a cohering northern U.S. This interest was spurred by South and Central American revolutions, inter-American warfare, and by the Monroe Doctrine, which attempted to stymie European influence in the western hemisphere. Northern U.S. scholars such as Ticknor lectured on Spanish literature and history at Harvard, and northern U.S. writers such as Washington Irving created the first widely distributed prose works

¹⁰⁹ See for example Ralph Bauer, “The Hispanic Enlightenment, Thomas Jefferson and the Birth of Hemispheric American Studies” in *Dieciocho: The Hispanic Enlightenment* 4 (Spring 2009) 49-82.

familiarizing students and readers with Spanish American and Spanish histories and cultural expressions.¹¹⁰ This scholarly and literary subject profoundly shaped how prospective settlers viewed conflict, cultural distinction, and civic restriction in the 1820s.

Because of the frontier settings in his popular Leather-Stocking tales James Fenimore Cooper's historical fiction may seem removed from urbane practices and discourses associated with 1820s Spanish studies and with the field of northern education reform. However, the author did not escape the influence of this new scholastic and literary trend. Writing on U.S. democracy and culture, Cooper stressed the value of teaching Spanish history and language to young U.S. citizens.¹¹¹ And, more importantly here, this Spanish education reform shaped his only western and southern frontier romance within this famous literary series: *The Prairie* (1827). Responding to Spanish studies helped Cooper use this novel to promote a timely Anglo-centric settlement model of conduct based on the recognition of European and Euro-American cultural differences and the use of earnest, measured rhetoric.¹¹² With this novel, as with the others in the series, the "American Scott," as many of his readers called him, staged legends and actual historical events from the North American past in order to address troubling political and economic developments in his present, including spreading American Indian dispossession, race-based slavery, and

¹¹⁰ Transnational scholars have focused on the effects of this study of Spanish culture by looking at the writings of William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Washington Irving and surveying Spanish language periodicals published in the U.S. For critical discussions of U.S. writers and their extra-national Spanish interlocutors and influences see Kristen Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writings*. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002); Doris Somner, *Foundational Fictions: National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) Debra J. Rosenthal, *Race Mixture in Nineteenth Century U.S. and Spanish American Fictions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

¹¹¹ Cited from Sandra Gustafson in "Natty in the 1820s; Creole Subjects and Democratic Aesthetics in the Early Leatherstocking Tales" in *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas* ed. Ralph Bauer and Jose Antonio Mazzotti. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009) 470 (no specific text given).

¹¹² James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987). Subsequent references to this book are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically throughout the chapter.

representative democracy. Through his fiction, Cooper intervened in the conflicts and debates created by these developments in order to reassure readers (and likely himself too) that the U.S. was simply experiencing national growing pains, which could be remedied by properly schooling citizens and non-citizens. However, his romantic and violent adventures also often indicated, through their heterogeneous characters and plots and counter-plots, that these developments were interdependent, and, therefore, difficult to resolve by relying on a single change in U.S. law or custom. With *The Prairie*—the third novel written for the series, following *The Pioneers* (1823) and *Last of the Mohicans* (1826)—Cooper effectively navigates between exposing the pitfalls of an expanding nation and reassuring readers such pitfalls were surmountable by addressing the stakes of Spanish studies in late 1820s. His novel cleverly underscores the importance as well as the deleterious consequences of the region’s shifting scholarly and political attention toward the long history of those people he calls “our southern neighbors” (3).

Historicist approaches to reading Cooper’s series have situated the early tales among prevailing U.S. national and international treaties, laws, and letters.¹¹³ Building on such analyses, this chapter demonstrates how *The Prairie* responds to regional shifts in 1820s education. Of specific interest here is the way one reform—organized attempts to share knowledge about Spanish people and their culture—informs Cooper’s intriguing novel. More or less pragmatic

¹¹³ For instance with *The Prairie*, see Jared Gardner, *Master-Plots: Race and the Founding of American Literature 1787-1845* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998). Gardner argues Cooper envisions a white future in which American Indians and African Americans vanish from the continent: Cooper left behind the problem of race in the desert by “reimagining a national identity built not on racial metaphor and fantasy but restored to what he hopes will prove the more substantial foundation of a white European inheritance” (114-115). Gustafson claims that *The Prairie* presents American Indian and Euro-American civic praxis with greater sensitivity than contemporary South American novelists and poets. She argues the young Pawnee chief Hard Heart and the “Indianized” trapper “symbolize the value and legitimacy of New World civic forms, offering a corrective to Old World structures of power.” Gardner explains the divisive national politics that made racial purity appealing to the author; Gustafson reconstructs an international context that made Cooper’s views of race seem comparatively tolerant. Other earlier readings of the novel appear in Warren Motley, *The American Abiram: James Fenimore Cooper and the Frontier Patriarch* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 105-126; John P. McWilliams, Jr. *Political Justice in a Republic: James Fenimore Cooper’s America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 238-298.

shifts to introduce formal and informal types of Spanish studies were all based on the assumption that this “foreign” knowledge could create informed and cultured Anglo-American citizens, who stood out from other citizens and non-citizens yet were not so distinctive as to appear wholly compromised by European mores and laws. Cooper seems to have accepted this premise. But in *The Prairie* he draws much attention to the potential passions and the indolence created by this subject of instruction and scholarly investigation to show readers how they could engage with representatives of Spanish cultures without losing integrity or equanimity. The message of his novel is ultimately that Spanish history, language, and culture should *not* be taught and studied pell-mell because it can have harmful effects on settlers, their families, and on the entire settler colonial project. Through representations of exchanges between diverse characters on the western Plains, Cooper demonstrates how to remedy such deleterious effects by offsetting the lessons from Spanish studies with candid rhetoric. Less a general racial appeal in the service of manifest destiny or a literary instance of unqualified praise for new world civism and diplomacy, *The Prairie* is a warning and recommendation, which derives from changing regional education in a highly class-stratified and racially-divided nation. Reading it as such not only changes how we read this novel and the early works in Cooper’s series, but also how we think about the regional culture of reform from which the novel emerged and with which it engaged.

The chapter begins by identifying the regional particularities of the narrator’s perspective in Cooper’s novel—specifically, the conception of the history the narrator presents in this fiction. I then show how that perspective complements Cooper’s representation of Spanish captivity and the encampment practices of the family of kidnapers in *The Prairie*. The second section moves from literary text to historical context to explain how the novel’s captivity episode, including the encampment practices, function as responses to 1820s education reforms and, in particular, the

kind of Spanish study advanced by men like George Ticknor. The third section returns to the novel in order to explain how Cooper problematizes this avenue for achieving person and social distinction, underscoring how it destroys settler families and leads to degeneration in nations by inspiring erratic sways between passion and indolence, aggression and unthinking dependence on foreign materials, polities, and ideas. The final section shows how Cooper's novel presents deliberate and earnest rhetoric as an essential salve for relieving the sociopolitical sores created by the new Spanish studies.

Spanish Kidnapping and Race-Based Slavery

Cooper started writing *The Prairie* in New York City in 1826 and finished it a year later in Paris where he moved for a brief stay with his family. Cooper's writing of the novel on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean distinguishes it from the other Leather-stocking legends, all of which Cooper penned while he was living in the U.S. The setting of this novel also distinguishes it from other works in the series. It is the only work not set in the mid to late-eighteenth century English and French North American colonies. Instead, events narrated in *The Prairie* take place in the early-nineteenth century on western and southern North American land that had switched hands from the Spanish to the French before finally being sold to the U.S—land that was also the home of many American Indian tribes, including the Pawnee and the Sioux. Disputes between these two tribes first come to readers' attentions as a large family of non-Anglo, Jewish outlaws, the Bushes, journeys west into land just opened up by the Louisiana Purchase. The family has gotten mired in a kidnapping scheme, and they have gone west to move away from state and federal law and to ransom their captive, a Spanish aristocrat's daughter named Inez de Certavallos. As a

result of the kidnapping and their unwillingness to recognize any man's right to possess land, the Bushes acquire numerous adversaries among tribes and outlying white settlers, while an elderly Natty Bumpo negotiates and bonds with white settlers and with the Pawnee and the Sioux in the hopes of returning liberty and honor to the prairie.

Cooper begins *The Prairie* by conceptualizing U.S. expansion as a natural phenomenon governed by the northern, liberal values with which the author was well versed. The narrator explains that the fictional events described in the legend are based on migrations following the Louisiana Purchase. Retrospectively surveying this southern and western movement of people, he claims that even though "much was said and written" at the time about the intelligence of adding land to the "already immense and but half-tenanted territories of the United States," the "warmth of controversy" quickly subsided, as even the "meanest capacity" recognized the value of making the U.S. "master of a belt of fertile country, which in the revolutions of the day, might have become property of a rival nation" (9). He adds that this movement of people "placed countless tribes entirely within our control;" it "reconciled conflicting rights and quieted national distrusts" and "opened a thousand avenues to the inland trade" and promised "a neighbor that will possess our language, our religion, our institutions, and it is also to be hoped, our sense of political justice" (9). Cooper's narrator speaks about annexation, migration, and resettlement from a temporal and a geographical distance. His explanation of a lively discourse and waning discord in view of the benefits of territorial control, commerce, and sociopolitical stability is not an on-the-ground assessment of expansion. Rather, it is a progressive version of this history—a version in which Cooper tacitly presents the northern states as a homogenous expression of a national ethos ("our sense of political justice"), and, therefore, a natural indicator of the country's reaction to changes in national geography and cultural composition. Individual

property rights (“master of a belt of fertile land”), enlightenment reform (“meanest capacity”), and hyperbolic political and commercial language (“countless tribes,” “a thousand avenues”) authorize this perspective and the eventuality it advertises.

Cooper’s narrator also draws a parallel between conflicts resulting from migration and the temporary fits of a newborn to firm up the authority and conclusiveness of his speaker’s view of this post-Louisiana Purchase history: “time was necessary to blend the numerous and affluent colonists of the lower province with their new compatriots” in the meantime “the thinner and more humble population above...a race long trained in adventure and nurtured in difficulties” would be subsumed by their “southern neighbors” until the territories were “received into the bosom of the national Union on terms of political equality” (10-11). Cooper equates federally organized annexation and settlement with the coddling of a showy and unruly infant who must be comforted so that he/she does not overtake “thinner and more humble population” (northern Anglo-Americans). Through this figurative language, “southern neighbors” (Spanish Americans) are infantilized and contrasted with more mature northerners. American Revolution rhetoric (separation from British fathers) works with post-revolutionary rhetoric (republican motherhood) to script the break from colonial authorities occurring across the Americas as a break that is ineluctably followed by the gentle assimilation of new peoples into a young but established U.S. nation, reinforcing the position that the outcome of expansion would ultimately be defined and controlled by northerners.

By describing early U.S. contention followed by progressive assimilation and settlement, Cooper’s narrator follows fellow Americanists from Thomas Jefferson to Alexis de Tocqueville who declared that the U.S. would become a country in which American Indians would likely vanish and Anglo-Americans would hitch their view of equality, industry, and democracy to all

the wagons heading west across the continent, even the hemisphere, thereby bringing other Euro-Americans into the American fold. Much like these Americanists, the narrator also addresses the allegedly reprehensible conduct of white migrants who complicated progressive northern conceptions of Anglo American assimilation and settlement. Unlike the “greater portion of emigrants satisfied to establish themselves along the margins of the larger water-courses, content with the rich returns that the generous alluvial bottoms of the rivers never fail to bestow on the desultory industry”, this individual or group, “ambitious of sudden affluence,” search for “the mines of virgin territory” or “the Eldorado of the West.” Cooper refers to the underside of northern progress, the greed for resources issuing from within this Anglo American fold rather than an external threat pacified by it. As this passage suggests, such disruptive and lawless practices of colonialist accumulation were often associated with Spanish conquest by way of El Dorado or the lost city of Gold to differentiate them from the forms of theft and dispossession practiced by Anglo Americans.

What makes *The Prairie* particularly expressive of, and responsive to, sociopolitical dynamics in the 1820s northern states is that Cooper substitutes the search for El Dorado with the kidnapping of Inez de Certavallos, a young Spanish woman who represents rewarding “virgin territory.” Through this substitution, Cooper creates a jeopardized figure who addresses concerns in the period that the north was losing control over the expanding union. She justifies U.S. annexation (to protect her) yet also illustrates how to migrate without losing the regionalized and racialized morality or culture signified by such phrases as “our sense of political justice” (9). By using Inez’s kidnapping to encapsulate modern American conquest, Cooper extends a colonial pattern of literary and visual representation Annette Kolodny describes in which Euro-American male travelers conflated women’s bodies with lands and lands with women’s bodies to indicate

their worth and potential domestication.¹¹⁴ Inez's kidnapping builds on such descriptive strategies, for Inez is an objectified woman taken to aggrandize her abductors and an objectified woman who provides kidnappers and liberators with a settler colonial lesson in how to handle the vagaries of expansion. The male, Bush family leaders take her from the "lower provinces" and bring her out toward the nation's western borders rather than discovering her on the fringes and bringing her directly "into the bosom of the National union." This complication serves to draw northerners into the discourse surrounding expansion without sinking to a level that would render them indistinguishable from emigrant and migrant men and women who already inhabited the "lower provinces" and the far less settled western states and territories.

Northern expansionist rhetoric also shapes initial representations of unsettlement and settlement in *The Prairie*. More specifically, the Bush families' decamping and fortification, which occurs as they flee from pursuers and defend themselves, addresses apprehensions about the status of the settler colonial project in the northern epicenters of social reform where, after the issuance of the Missouri Compromise and the Monroe doctrine, international and continental Indian warfare and race-based slavery became heavily intertwined political issues. The prairie's resemblance to such distant cities becomes evident as readers first encounter different Indian tribes and white settler types on what initially appears to be a "desert" inhabited by the Bush wagon train alone and the solitary Natty Bumpo. Through their conflicts, these people embody the warring and fretful viewpoints within the supposedly homogenous and egalitarian northern republic. And their attempts to arm themselves for contention and to resolve disorder, uncertainty, and inequity likewise draw upon strategies available to reformers to improve their conduct and knowledge base. For this latter point, the Bushes serve as a prime example insofar

¹¹⁴ See Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

as their botched attempt to establish a fortified camp in the early scenes of the novel correlates with failed efforts to build settlement infrastructure that might enable northerners to successfully exert influence from a distance across a vast continental and transnational landscape, at once foreign to, and part of, the nation.

The most compelling and unnoticed (in criticism) metaphor in *The Prairie* for a region unprepared for, and willfully ignorant of, how to best sustain political influence in a widening country with imbricating reform discourses is the Bushes' elaborate, makeshift camp. As they settle for the second time (after their first attempt fails when their livestock is stolen), the Bushes construct a "ragged fortress" with a "little tenement of cloth...crown[ing] the summit," or a "white beacon" clandestinely housing their Spanish captive. Cooper describes the camp or "tenements" reflective of the "infancy of architecture" as follows:

Seen from beneath, there were visible a breast-work of logs and stones, intermingled in such a manner as to save all unnecessary labour, a few low roofs made of bark and boughs of trees, an occasional barrier, constructed like the defences of the summit, and placed on such points of the acclivity as were easier of approach than the general face of the eminence, and a little dwelling of cloth, perched on the apex of a small pyramid that shot up, on one angle of the rock, the white covering of which glimmered from a distance like a spot of snow, or to make the simile more suitable to the rest of the subject, like a spotless and carefully guarded standard, which was to be protected by the dearest blood of those who defended the citadel beneath (86).

What Cooper calls a "fortress," albeit a "ragged" one, is, in fact, a motley collection of rough inter-linking structures laid out to avoid "unnecessary labor." The camp's levels indicate that the Bush family architects' and builders' have created a graded defense—associated with the purple trappings of old world aristocracy—rather than a circle of wagons—associated with new world democracy—and, that such a decision has left them more vulnerable to attack than an egalitarian fortification would have. To further underscore the camp's weak spots, Cooper presents this picture "from below," which, rather than concealing irregularities, as is often the

case when structures and subjects appear raised above us, instead exposes all of them, suggesting that the problems with the camp are apparent to any who look upon it. Cooper's meandering syntax in this passage also reinforces the camp's sprawling, provisional components. These disordered elements of the camp reflect initial reform efforts to secure northern authority in 1820s using sloppy, hierarchical structural rearrangements and uneven access to knowledge and power.

A key symbol of this northern failure is the most elevated element in the camp—its “carefully guarded standard.” The so-called standard is a “little dwelling of cloth,” which the family protects and which signals their identification, like a flag on a sailing ship. Inside the house is the kidnapped Spanish aristocrat, Inez de Certavallos, who remains concealed from view as well as from Bush family protectors who lounge around below and do not even know she is held in the tent (they believe they are protecting a new species of beast). Together, figured as a “carefully guarded standard,” the hidden Spanish tenant and visible “tenement,” match the description of the family's faulty settlement practices as feudal and aristocratic. However, their attempt to refashion themselves, in view of new space and new social and political influence, by holding Inez in a cloth dwelling at the apex of their camp, also resonates with 1820s northern reforms. Regional, early national pushes for social change were likewise not overt re-inscriptions of aristocracy, tyranny, slavery, and dispossession during a period of dramatic nation-building and expansion. Rather, they were egalitarian proposals masking the extension of hierarchy and power behind humble, white as snow veneers defined by Anglo-American stability and progress. Inez and her dwelling are meant function similarly for the Bush family. They are supposed to buttress the Bushes presentation as champions of universal equality and victims of exploitation by furnishing them with a symbol for their cause.

However, as Cooper's "carefully guarded standard" demonstrates, this symbol is a racial signifier of regionalism qua aggressive nationalism. It is a "spotless," white entity used to justify and advance the violent social and political U.S. practices exemplified by Inez's kidnapping. Importantly, the problem *The Prairie* raises is not with the kind of racialized, expansionist bait and switch per se symbolized here. Instead, the problem lies in the manner in which the Bushes go about carrying out their mission. They are too overt and disorganized, and their camp is too haphazardly engineered. As mentioned, in the passage cited above describing the camp, there is no mistaking the fact that this effort to protect the family and keep Inez captive will fail. The camp is hastily thrown together, the Bushes do not understand this part of the country at all, and only three members of the party actually know who/what they are supposed to be defending. All these errors, Cooper's novel indicates, are symptomatic of problematic strategies for addressing imperiled northern influence. They are not fortifiable, seamless measures; and, therefore, they expose those who attempt them to external and internal threats. Before shifting from general allusions to the field of northern reform to specific education reform discourses and practices that inform Cooper's representation of the Bush's as models of bad settlement practices, it is helpful to situate the description of the camp in relation to one of the author's previous descriptions of settlement.

Cooper created a precursor to the provisional Bush camp—a far more extensive one—in his earlier novel, *The Pioneers* (1823) in the form of the frontier town of Templeton. The first Leather-stocking novel, *The Pioneers* is set in this upstate New York settlement inhabited by Anglo-American, French, German, American Indian, and African Americans and governed by the law of the town leader, Judge Temple, who seeks to restrict the diverse practices of those living within, and on the fringes of, its borders. The Bush camp is similar to a microcosm of

Templeton, and “the carefully guarded standard is similar to a microcosm of the town’s most elaborate structure: Judge Temple’s home. These resemblances are not readily apparent as the camp’s sluggish and itinerant builders and framers are not upholders of U.S. law, like Judge Temple. Instead, the Bush family members are outspoken opponents of that law, and they show their defiance of it by “squatting” on any land they choose. As Ishmael Bush puts it in one of his initial quarrels with the aged Natty Bumppo, “The air, the water, and the ground are free gifts to man, and no one has the power to portion them out in parcels. Man must drink, and breathe, and walk, and therefore each has a right to share of ‘arth” (82). Ishmael voices the kind of staunch anti-legal and anti-settlement position advanced by Natty and Chingachgook in *The Pioneers* when they react to the partial hunting laws passed by Judge Temple. In contrast, Natty in *The Prairie* exhibits a new-found regard for the law in his old age: “the law—‘Tis bad to have it, but, I sometimes think, it is worse to be entirely without it... Yes—yes, the law is needed, when such as have not the gifts of strength and wisdom are to be taken care of” (27). He still prides himself on his knowledge of the wilderness and of American Indian mores, but he sees a need for strictures, which he critiqued at a younger age, and from which, he was always fleeing. In place of his waning, libertarian commitment, Cooper presents Ishmael and the Bush family. They engage in practices resembling preliminary settlement, setting up their camp to protect and constrain their members. In this capacity, what they construct on the prairie, and the race-inflected problems created by that construction, do resemble what we witness in *The Pioneers*.

In *Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism* (2005), Andy Doolen argues convincingly that in *The Pioneers* Temple’s house serves as an “allegory for a republic under construction.” He explains Cooper’s symbol thusly: “the house appears fraternal and orderly, but it is actually wracked by internal racial divisions” and “haunted by its true foundation in the

global slave economy,” alluded to in the novel by reference to slaves “snug stored below” in the basement.¹¹⁵ Doolen underscores how the racial divisions within the Temple’s house applies to Templeton proper as well with its Euro-American inhabitants seeking to differentiate themselves from African American characters and to suppress their ties with race-based slavery. The only emblem of the Bush camp, which seems fraternal and orderly, is the “carefully guarded standard.” With its connotations of chivalry, coded by plain, white cloth, it reflects in miniature the pretense of republican order symbolized by Temple’s house. The rest of the Bush camp, like Templeton, is hierarchical and disorderly. Its leveled yet shambolic structure easily exposes the country’s inveterate ties with race-based slavery, in much the same way Doolen identifies in his reading of *The Pioneers*.¹¹⁶

This troubling revelation of the slave trade’s central place in even provisional forms of settlement becomes apparent in *The Prairie* after Ishmael and his family settle for the second time. At this moment of more grounded encampment, those members not privy to the kidnapping discover that the white dwelling contains Inez de Certavallos. They learn that Abiram White, Ishmael Bush’s brother-in-law, has convinced Ishmael to take Inez from her southern estate the night before her wedding and cart her out west.¹¹⁷ While Ishmael Bush has no stated experience

¹¹⁵Andy Doolen, *Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 120.

¹¹⁶ Scholars since Dorothy Waples have discussed Cooper’s views on slavery. One suggestive example, critics rarely cite is from *The American Democrat* (1838). Cooper tries to resolve threats of disunion by downplaying slavery’s effect on slaves, arguing that “American slavery is mild, in its general features, and physical suffering cannot properly be enumerated among its evils” because men do not “feel very keenly, if at all, privations of the amount of which they know nothing” (222).

¹¹⁷ It is worth noting that this representation of the Bush family shares some affinities with the representations of Jews in antebellum popular fiction and juvenalia that David Anthony is working with in his book project. However, it is a more complicated example since here Cooper represents a family that can be construed as Jewish who are not uniformly committed to being the mediators—through their connections associations with slavery—between what Anthony terms the Old World and modernity.

with race-based slavery, the appropriately named Abiram White is, readers learn, a slave robber or, as one character puts it, a “regulator translator of the human body from one state to the next”, a “humanity-hunter”, providing the “wholly heads” with the “pleasures of variety, at least, by changing the scene for them” (165).¹¹⁸ To keep the kidnapping a secret, they tell the rest of the family they have captured a new type of “beast” that will serve as a decoy to help them trap other beasts. To legitimate their secret, they bring along an eccentric naturalist, Dr. Obadiah Battius, who travels intermittently with the Bushes.¹¹⁹ The plot is not so absurd in light of common nineteenth language used to compare slaves with animals to justify and address their status as sub-human property. Working off of that language, Cooper illustrates how all acts of settlement surface white U.S. families’ witting and unwitting connection with race-based slavery. His message is not, first and foremost, a warning for *western* migrants who sought to free themselves from U.S. restrictions and rise dramatically in class at the expense of the land and its peoples. Rather the lesson is principally for *northern* citizens wary of their uncertain, limited authority and knowledge in view of complex international wars with and within Spanish America and spreading race-based slavery. For such a bewildered, enfranchised regional constituency of readers, the Bushes camp, their leaders’ faulty machinations, and their members’ complicity demonstrate how to avoid becoming unmeshed with reform projects that too boldly recreate hierarchies and give rise to unimaginative and torpid social engineers and dupes.

¹¹⁸ For a recent study of the commonness of White’s occupation Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780-1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2009).

¹¹⁹ Battius presumes he has made a “compactum” with Ishmael allowing him to classify the supposed beast. The naturalist is similar to other Leather-stocking characters: the sea captain, Charles Cap, in *The Pathfinder* and the psalmist, David Gamut, in *LOM*. These characters inhabit a strange world where complicated identification reveals the magnitude of diversity within what they take to be simple place. We might read these figures as students and their education as a kind of induction into this “civilization”, with Natty and American Indians as their teachers. For a reading of *The Prairie* focusing on Battius see Matthew Sivils reading. Cited earlier.

The Bush family's reaction to the news about their involvement in slavery helps advance this settler colonial lesson, which was oriented toward northerners. When the Bush male children discover the kidnapping plot, they are not concerned with being viewed as similar to slaves. They are only worried about being associated with the slave trade. As the eldest son, Asa Bush, puts it upon discovering Inez and realizing White's role in the scheme, "The news-papers of Kentuck have called you a dealer in black flesh a hundred times, but little did they reckon that you drove the trade into white families" (92). According to *The Prairie*, Ishmael and his family despise the slave trade because it violates the natural law their patriarch holds dear: everything belongs to everyone. As Ishmael explains when defending his family's honor, "If the hounds of the law have put their [my family's] bills on the trees and stumps of the clearings, it was for no act of dishonesty, as you know, but because we maintain the rule that 'arth is common property'" (91). They abhor the individual property rights that race-based slavery advocates champion since they believe such rights leave one man (under the authority of the law) with "a section, or a town or perhaps a county, to his use, and another to beg for 'arth to make his grave in" (61). The Bushes are not worried their connection to slavery will diminish their social standing, for they have little faith in how the U.S. defines social status and worth. They are instead worried that they have been unwittingly defending a supposedly humble, white republic condoning African American slavery and Spanish American annexation and exploitation. Through their indignation, Cooper underscores the deleterious effects of imperialist aggression for northern readers who experienced their effects primarily in mediated form. Such readers were not usually Abiram Whites, but were rather more like Asa and Ishmael Bushes—citizens who found themselves troubled by their associations with imperialist schemes they could not, or did not want to see, despite, or perhaps because of, their distance from them.

Spanish Studies in the Era of “Good Feelings”

How did Cooper come to think of Inez as a figure who could teach northerners to handle their often indirect dealings with expanding race-based slavery and U.S. expansionism in the 1820s? What cultural influences inspired him to think of a captive Spanish woman hidden at the apex of a makeshift “fortress” as the means for displaying a lesson in how to and how not behave in the contentious arena of international politics and social reform? Put in the terms of the progressive, historical narrative structuring *The Prairie*, how did the white encased, Spanish monument come to represent destructive desires to bypass steps in nation-building by moving from emigrant to nobility without first being frontiersmen and farmers for a burgeoning U.S. empire? Unsatisfying answers to these three questions can be found by referring to English, Dutch, and French accounts of Spanish violence, often termed by scholars the black legend.¹²⁰ These accounts highlighted Spain’s colonialist violence and inquisitorial torture tactics and their role in instituting new world race-based slavery to distinguish Spanish conquest from other European accumulation and settlement endeavors in the Americas. However, these legends have less direct bearing on Cooper’s description of the captivity, which is a less brutal, bowdlerized representation than the gothic old legends and many of their modern deployments in nineteenth century American fiction.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Friedrich Edelmayr, “The ‘Leyenda Negra’ and the Circulation of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Spanish Prejudices” *European History Online* (2011); Julián Judieras *La leyenda negra: Estudios Acerca del Concepto de España en el Extranjero*, Salamanca 2003 (first edition Madrid 1914).

¹²¹ For examples of studies connecting nineteenth century U.S. literature to the black legend see Eric Sundquist’s reading of *Benito Cereno* in *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998). Sandra Gustafson makes a similar argument about *The Prairie* tacitly invoking the black legend: “White’s capture of Inez, Middleton’s newly Americanized Mexican bride, and his association with the slave

Instead, with Inez's dwelling figuring ironically as a "carefully guarded standard," the captivity scenes fit into Cooper's historical fiction in a manner that draws heavily upon trends in northern education reform, including the new curriculum I referred to earlier as Spanish studies. In the 1810s and 1820s, a reform discourse of humanization appeared along with formal lessons in Spanish history across northern schools and colleges causing knowledge about the people of the so-called black legend to become part of an elite mode of *affiliation* as opposed to simply a means of *dis-affiliation* or negative projection for northern U.S. citizens in particular. Charged with a powerful yet esoteric neoclassicist language and waning focus on proving the depth and distinctiveness of American history by studying American Indians and South America alone, northern education reformers, scholars and teachers turned to old world Spain. They anticipated that such a shift would help turn Anglo-American male youth into worldly citizens or convert these privileged new world animals into men, rendering them separate from yet also committed to understanding and holding sway over the western hemisphere. This new, early-nineteenth century course in regional education reform, as we will see, puts Inez's kidnapping in a new and important light for readers in the 1820s, a light only visible to readers today against the dynamic backdrop of education history.

Historians often call the decade and a half that saw this regional shift in education toward Spanish studies as the "era of good feelings." Sean Wilentz, however, has argued that this nickname is certainly a misnomer since U.S. expansionism left the dispossessed, exploited, and

trade link him to the imperial vision of the Spanish South as a land-hungry slave power" (120). Sandra Gustafson, "Histories of Democracy and Empire" in *American Quarterly* (March 2007) 59.1 107-124. I am more interested in how the particular connection to slavery is rendered in tempered and tangential form for a specific sociological purpose, not how it follows a general pattern of representation.

enslaved with anything but good feelings.¹²² The moniker also wrongly implies that the era was prosperous for all citizens who profited from nation-building and expansion. This was far from true. During the financial panic in 1819, even the wealthiest citizens felt a depression that did not abate until the early 1820s.¹²³ Despite these inaccuracies, however, it is fitting to think of this as a period of “good feelings” from one point of view: the lens of northern education reform. From this line of sight, one can observe a consistent effort to inculcate skills and traits deemed “good” in the moral sense of the word, and, to foster positive emotions about the nation. This pattern began in the 1790s when a regional program to connect formal education to the polity resulted in the proliferation of locally-produced readers and primers specifically for young boys and girls and men and ladies that were meant to address the culture gap in the new nation. Schoolbooks then dominated by English oratory and Classical verse began to include excerpts from Joel Barlow’s *Vision of Columbus*, Dr. Timothy Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill*, and Susanna Rowson’s oeuvre in order to create positive feelings about the nation and about the prospects of seeking a settled life within that nation. 1810s and 1820s schoolbooks further advanced this nationalizing pedagogical project by including hagiographic sketches of explorers and short patriotic histories of North American colonial and Revolutionary battles in prose by Washington Irving, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, and Cooper.¹²⁴ Along with the schoolbook market and its rapidly nationalizing curriculum, northern education reform began to generate preliminary constellations of regional

¹²² Wilentz argues for the merits of renaming this the “era of bad feelings” on account of its imperialist politics. See Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005) 182.

¹²³ Murray Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

¹²⁴ These writers appeared in John Pierpont’s *The American First Class Book; or Exercises in Reading and Recitation: Selected Principally from Modern Authors of Great Britain and America and Designed for the Use of The Highest Class in Publick and Private Schools* (1824), his *National Reader Designed to fill the same place in the Schools of the United States that is held in Those of Great Britain* (1827) and John Frost’s *The Class Book of American Literature—From the Best Writers of Our own Country* (1826).

institutionalization, creating an initial sense that, as Richard Broadhead puts it, school was “*the place*, not one among many where a young person’s education happened.”¹²⁵ This institutionalization further helped codify and spread good feelings about the country’s colonial and early national history and its future.

At the same time, elite schools and colleges proposed that wealthy and talented young white boys and men receive supplemental learning to distinguish themselves from the widening pool of common school students as well as from the other worldly pool of European scholars. These reformers wanted to create gentlemen-citizens: men with good feelings about the country who were neither so uncouth as their compatriots nor so languid as their European equivalents were both supposed to be. Noah Webster, for instance, proposed a reform right after the U.S. Constitution was ratified that was designed to afford relative, tempered distinction for this class of prospective citizens. He argues, “let gentlemen spend twelve or eighteen months in examining the local situation of the different States . . . with an attention to the spirit and manners of the inhabitants, their laws, social customs and institutions.”¹²⁶ While Webster’s proposal helped keep citizens at home in the U.S. and, indeed broadened their conception of the nation as well as their experiential knowledge, it also left them without a foundational understanding of other European histories that had heavily shaped the states and the countries south and west of Webster’s own regional home base. By the early nineteenth century, however, an even more potentially settling

¹²⁵ Richard Broadhead, *The Culture of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 26.

¹²⁶ Noah Webster outlined a study abroad program in the pages of his *American Magazine* in the months following the Constitutional Convention: “A tour thro [sic] the United States ought now to be considered as a necessary part of a liberal education. He begins, “While these States were a part of the British Empire . . . [w]e little thought of any national interest in America--and while our commerce and governments were in the hands of our parent country, and we had no common interest, we little thought of “improving our acquaintance, with each other or of removing prejudices, & reconciling the discordant feelings of the inhabitants of different Provinces.” Cited from Jennifer Greeson, *Geographic Fantasy and the Rise of National Literature* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010).

solution to the problem of white male distinction in U.S. education became popular: studies of old world Spanish history. This formal and informal study allowed entitled students to garner this missing knowledge and to participate in a European grand tour, of sorts, without actually travelling abroad. Spanish studies also productively extended a focus on Spanish American history, which had been a familiar component of serious scholarly study since the American Revolution, giving prospective citizens the opportunity to learn about the *long* history of the people who Cooper refers to as our “southern neighbors” at a time when national liberation spread across Central and South America. In this way, it gave them an edge to participate in efforts to secure and expand U.S. territory and allies in the Western hemisphere.

The study of Spanish history caught on in northern colleges. Harvard took the lead in 1817 when it appointed George Ticknor as chaired professor of French and Spanish languages. During his short tenure, he lectured on Cervantes, the Hapsburg dynasty, and on early modern Spanish literature. His lectures were a central part of a college-wide campaign, which Nicola Nixon calls a “programmatically quest for refinement”—a campaign designed to improve upper-class, young, Anglo-American men while tempering their desires to leave the U.S. settlements in search of fortunes across the Atlantic.¹²⁷ Such a campaign may seem paradoxical given the fact that the U.S. recently broke from the colonial Old World and given the powerful, nationalist sentiment encouraged during the period. However, in her recent study of the curious antebellum devotion to Englishness, Elisa Tamarkin discusses how U.S. democratization—perhaps best

¹²⁷ Nicola Nixon describes the effect of Ticknor at Harvard including his impact on the culture of the school and Emerson’s response to it in “Men and Coats; Or the Politics of the Dandiacal Body in Herman Melville’s *Benito Cereno*” *PMLA* 114 (May 1999) 359-372. Harvard instituted the Abiel Smith professorship in French and Spanish languages in 1816. Ticknor held the position from 1817-1835. He turned his lectures into his widely regarded three-volume *History of Spanish Literature* (1849). He also published *Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on the History and Criticism of Spanish Literature* (1823); *Remarks on Changes Lately Proposed or Adopted in Harvard University* (1825) and *Lecture on the Best Methods of Teaching the Living Languages*, delivered, in 1832, before the American Institute of Education. Longfellow was Ticknor’s successor.

signaled by formal education—occurred alongside rituals, environments, and writings in which citizens and non-citizens expressed their undying “love of other nations.”¹²⁸ This devotion to other nations, as Tamarkin notes, typically arose, not because of a conservative commitment to the old settler colonial order, but rather from a desire for freedom from restrictions that persisted and developed in the U.S. A similar protocol to the one that inspired what Tamarkin identifies as Anglophilia fostered this turn toward the formal study of Spanish history and culture: it was a way of properly getting to know and affiliating with cherished and admired difference in order for individual to imagine greater latitude for themselves, not a way of delineating the aristocratic and monarchic fixtures of the old world in order to celebrate the democratic fluidity of the new one.

The 1820s admiration for, and formal study of, Spanish history and culture as well as English and other European cultures had explicit detractors who voiced their opinions in the 1830s. Most famous among these was Ralph Waldo Emerson who critiqued U.S. universities and their students for their reliance on European ideas and practices in his famous Harvard address, “The American Scholar” (1837). Emerson encouraged students to reject old world ideas and to think independently: to become “*Man Thinking*” rather than “a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking”, “the victim of society”, and “the sluggard intellect of this continent.”¹²⁹ Emerson was not addressing a group of Anglo-American men who had been instructed with such intense rote instruction that they lacked independent thought. Instead, he was responding to an academic culture, which, as Tamarkin puts it, had come to prize “a casualness toward learning that rejected the pursuits of disciplinary knowledge for the

¹²⁸ Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) xxxiv.

¹²⁹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar” (1837)

sentimental education of dilettantes” with “the proper judgment of what [students] gained indistinguishable from their feeling for it.”¹³⁰ This culture had, as he saw it, abandoned critical thinking in favor of deference and feigned scholarliness conveyed through affect.

In *The Prairie*, one experiences an earlier Emerson-like critique of U.S. academic life, and Spanish studies, in particular, as schooling, which created citizens whose excessive feelings betrayed their conformity and inspired their indolence. The introductory historical framework of the novel sets readers up to recognize that incorporating Spanish studies into formal education could help facilitate an unruly annexation process by encouraging our “southern neighbors” to “possess our language, our religion, our institutions and it is also to be hoped our sense of political justice” (9). Learning more about their long history might help citizens bring Spanish subjects into the “bosom of the national Union” on their terms of national equality. However, the Bush family’s ad hoc camp—with Inez de Certavallos imprisoned at its apex—exposes degenerating consequences of this focus on studying Spanish history and culture. Her captivity illustrates the demoralizing effect of Spanish studies, indeed any campaign to improve U.S. minds to a certain degree by relying on extra-national subjects. She is, after all, first presented to readers as a beast who must be studied and as a figure whose abduction exposes her abductors indirectly to race-based slavery creating friction and ultimately tragedy within the Bush family. In this way, her inclusion and containment in the camp stages the dark underside of propriety, regional efforts to transform young, upper-class Anglo-American boys into proper gentlemen.

Admittedly, the Bushes are unlikely characters to represent students and scholars of the new Spanish studies. They are not northern Anglo-American boys and young men. They are a

¹³⁰ Tamarkin, 320.

large family of marginalized and racialized, itinerant western outlaws who do not abide by U.S. settlement laws. Less outspoken in the novel than Natty about the uselessness and artificiality of formal education, they are, nevertheless, scarcely strong candidates for improvement through early-nineteenth century formal schooling in Spanish history and culture. They do, however, make sense as Cooper's examples of northern education reforms degenerating effects. That is, they are less generic projections of racial otherness (figured as Jewishness) than characters who bear resemblance to the privileged Anglo-Americans in the moral heart of the union in order to work out the consequences of their faddish new means of reinventing themselves. When Ishmael Bush first appears on the prairie, Cooper invokes this unlikely relationship between the roguish Bushes and intellectuals schooled in the new Spanish studies. The narrator explains that Ishmael has a countenance whose "nobler parts were low, receding and mean"—the kind of physiognomy often associated with criminals and non-white, non-Anglo-American figures in the early nineteenth century (12).¹³¹ His clothing, however, is another matter entirely:

The dress of this individual was a mixture of a husbandman with the leathern garments that fashion as well as use had in some degree rendered necessary to one engaged in his present pursuits. There was, however, a singular and wild display of prodigal and ill-judged ornaments blended with his motley attire. In place of the usual deerskin belt, he wore around his body a tarnished silken sash of the most gaudy colors; the buckhorn haft of his knife was profusely decorated with plates of silver; the marten's fur of his cap was of a fineness and shadowing that a queen might covet; the buttons of his rude and soiled blanket-coat were of the glittering coinage of Mexico.... and the trinkets of no less than three worthless watches dangled from different parts of his person" (13).

In part, Ishmael wears the costume 1820s readers associated with Natty Bumppo— that style of dress allowing Anglo-American male farmers to be American Indian-like without becoming American Indians. He has on a combination of "husbandman" attire and durable, "leathern

¹³¹ For a classic example of this critical discourse see George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan Press, 1987). For a relevant study, which underscores this similar point about criminality and craniums across the Atlantic see Sharrona Pearl *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

garments” allowing their wearer to express his allegiance to expansion and frontier engagement with American Indians while still showing his commitment to farming and to Western settlement life. The remainder of Ishmael’s description, though, offsets the rugged individualism signified by his primary garments. The description includes a garishness that suggests the patriarch’s role in recent wars with Mexico and with western and southern American Indians as well his itinerant lifestyle “squatting” on new U.S. land previously under Spanish control. There is, however, something meticulous about his “ill-judged” appearance. With his “rude and soiled blanket-coat,” offset by “gaudy colors,” and his profile luminous against the austere, prairie “desert”, he resembles an effete northern gentleman whose display of Old World aristocracy promised cultural capital in a stern and competitive New England environment. With polished “ornaments” and “worthless watches” at his sides, he looks as though he might keep company not with outlaws, but with a group of young and older settler boys with whom Cooper would have been intimately familiar: Anglo-American professors, school-instructors, and students who were improving themselves in the early-nineteenth century northern U.S. by studying, or figuratively donning the trappings of Spanish culture.

Ishmael’s behaviors in *The Prairie* reinforce the impression created by his attire, further indicating that Cooper has created a new literary frontier type—the western outlaw—not contra Anglo American literary and natural historical traditions, but rather one based on regional education reforms shaping those traditions.¹³² Ishmael’s indifferent mobility, his “sluggish nature”, and “ignorance of the application of any other intelligence, than such as met the senses” all resemble the “casualness toward learning,” to which Elisa Tamarkin refers when she

¹³² For a reading of *The Prairie* and its refutation of Buffon’s theories of new world degeneration see Matthew Sivils, “Dr. Bat’s Ass: Buffon, American Degeneracy, and Cooper’s *The Prairie*” in *Western American Literature* Vol. 44 No. 4 (Winter 2010) 342-361.

describes antebellum U.S. academic culture as well as the “sluggard intellect of the continent” Emerson critiques in his Harvard speech (66). Ishmael’s sons possess similar attributes, as illustrated by their languid behavior and their opposition to any “unnecessary labor” when setting up camp, that is, their penchant for lounging around in the face of mandated civic responsibility and conflict. They are “very similarly attired” to their father, and they have, like him, adopted an identical mode of conduct and a phlegmatic disposition (12). Cooper gestures toward the similarity between the men of the Bush family and northern proto-aesthetes through the Shakespearean epigraph to chapter seven: “He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.” The male referent for these lines from *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is Don Amado, a character, who, while pretending to be Spanish royalty, is signaled out by a pedantic, English scholar of Latin who declares him unfit for a journey on account of this ruse. The allusion prefigures the role Dr. Battius, the pedantic naturalist, will play in helping to reveal the identity of Ishmael’s captive. But, more importantly, it attests to the fraught, northern conjunction of Anglo-American scholarliness and new Spanish study, which underwrites *The Prairie*’s representation of the Bush men and their capture of Inez in the era of so-called good feelings.

Holding Up the Fort

The Prairie’s critique of Spanish studies and its ties to northern education reform are apparent not just through the novel’s representation of the Bushes’ patterns, habits and dress. They are also evident when the Bushes try to defend their camp from external threats. These threats appear first in the form of Natty Bumpo who, after helping the Bushes find a settlement

location, tries to “examine more closely into the nature of the contents of the tent,” piqued by the fact that, “men seldom bring any thing to be concealed into these deserts” (20). For his curiosity, he receives a warning from Ishmael, who seeks to keep secret what he and his brother-in-law have concealed under the tent. The second external threat to the camp appears in the form of a Sioux war party led by chief Mahtoree who “worms” his way into the slumbering camp to survey its inhabitants and plunder its resources. In the process of seeking to infiltrate the camp, he scrutinizes the “solitary hut” protected by a “slothful sentinel”: “examining the whole of its exterior...rais[ing] the cloth at the bottom, and thrust[ing] his dark visage beneath” then “brooding over his discovery, for many moments, in rigid inaction” before “project[ing] his visage beyond the covering of the tent” for a “second visit to the interior longer and, if possible, more ominous than the first.” (52-53). In yet another instance of the novel’s blurring of the line between the human and the non-human, Mahtoree deliberates between taking Inez as his prize or stealing the Bushes’ “beasts of burden.” Eventually, he decides to take the latter. The third threat comes from Paul Hover, an Anglo American Kentucky bee-hunter who is pursuing the Bush family in order to spark the interests of Ellen Wade, a distant relative of the Bushes travelling with the family. The fourth threat comes from Duncan Uncas Middleton, Inez de Certavallos’ intended husband, who seeks to reclaim his Spanish bride under the authority of the U.S. government. Both men are figured as potential “knights” who might reclaim “damsels” from villainous captors if they were not so opposed to getting assistance from Natty.

Anglo-American male characters (Natty, Paul, and Duncan) and Sioux characters (Mahtoree and Weucha) never partner to infiltrate the ragged Bush fortress. But both groups do try to unveil and/or remove Inez from the camp—a process threatening to expose the “carefully-guarded standard” and render the fortress indistinguishable from the otherwise “sterile,” austere,

and undifferentiated prairie. As a result, even though they have different motivations, they represent discursive social and political forces trying to usher and guide Spanish peoples into a capitalist representative democracy where these new citizens and non-citizens might serve less ostentatious, restrictive, and esoteric purposes, and as Cooper's narrator puts it, be welcome into the "bosom of the state" on "terms of political equality." If Cooper imagines the Bushes as examples of Spanish studies' deleterious consequences, the American Indian and Anglo-American male cohort represent social forces capable of bringing her and themselves into less unsettling and enervating relations in the new nation. Mahtoree and Weucha's interest in her would, according to the events in the novel, lead her too far in the American wild. The male Anglo-American characters, however, could, again according to the novel, provide her with that pliable yet tame place in a hierarchical republic defined by Anglo-American values.

While such outside threats compromise the fortresses' integrity and the Bush family's security, it is the people inside this fortress and the slipshod design of the fortress, which make this an untenable settlement model and, indeed, demonstrate Cooper's full critique of Spanish studies and his contribution to northern education reform. For the first third of the novel, Inez's identity remains concealed. Dr. Battius and the unwitting Bushes know something important is hidden behind that "white cloth," but they believe it is a beast, and they do not openly question the motives of its male captors. This misperception, and the social and physical hierarchy creating it, though, starts to change in a truly remarkable scene in which Inez first escapes from her white dwelling with the help of Ellen Wade. The scene begins with Ellen Wade fulfilling her duty as a "sentinel" at the top of the "tenements" (88). She becomes "rapt on an object," which no one else can see, and no one is able to reach her as they call out; then she disappears from view, and the men presume she has fallen to her death. But Ishmael is quick to point out that she

is “moving about the tent,” an action that “relieve[s] more than one sluggish nature from its unwonted excitement” (89). When she reappears, she seems “to speak in an eager and rapid voice to some invisible auditor”; then, all of a sudden, Inez appears, as “in a vision,” above the Bushes as the “beau ideal of feminine loveliness” (91). This revealing scene discloses Ishmael Bush’s and Abiram White’s limited control over the interior of the camp they are supposed to govern. Even though Inez ultimately returns to her dwelling, Ellen’s actions and Inez’s escape initiate a breakdown in patriarchal authority from within the family and the camp. They cause Ishmael to fire a warning shot above Ellen’s head, which his children find unnecessary and contest, and they cause Asa Bush to lash out violently against Abiram White for getting them involved in Inez’s kidnapping. In *The Prairie* and in much of his other fiction, Cooper generally represents women as innocents, ravishing beauties, or nagging spouses (as with Ester Bush). However, here in this scene he does disclose the powerful, subversive work women can accomplish by acting within a patriarchal familial and social order, particularly a lackadaisical yet defensive order in which the support to render them subservient to men and committed to restraining women who break out of socially-proscribed roles is more apparent and less well reinforced.

By representing these two women acting together across class, racial, cultural lines, Cooper indexes the influential role northern antebellum women activists and advocates were starting to play in such causes as abolition, Indian removal, and women’s rights. He shows that such powerful alliances were possible particularly for middle-class, Anglo-American women like Ellen because of their socially and legally-prescribed positions as arbiters of feminine beauty and as monitors of household servants and slaves. The primary purpose of presenting Ellen’s and Inez’s subversive behavior, however, is to demonstrate the dangers of adopting Ishmael and

Abiram's behaviors. As Cooper suggests, their efforts to maintain control over a stratified group result in internal settlement instability and violence. The vertical structure of the camp and its enclosed spaces, while meant to enable their defense against outside forces, actually prevents them from understanding what occurs within their own perimeter. Inez's dramatic transformation from supposed beast to classical heroine forces Ishmael and Abiram and the other young Bush children to confront their supposed captive object as a captivating subject. This transformation further underscores the fact that their learned behavior—in particular their proposed study of Inez—fails to prepare them for being independently-minded political and civil engineers in an expanding nation that highly prized such male architects.

Rhetoric on the Prairie

In different critical works, early Americanists, Anne Myles and Nicola Nixon, have stressed the importance of a pattern in American letters from Puritanism to Transcendentalism in which writers treat rhetoric as the dress of speech.¹³³ By comparing persuasive speech with dress, they argue, American and U.S. writers have emphasized rhetoric's classical double valence as a civically conscious act and a deceptive, self-indulgent performance. Cooper follows this pattern when he poses the garishly dressed and "sluggish" Ishmael Bush and his sons against the plainly dressed and levelheaded Natty Bumpo and his entourage of young white and American Indian male protégés. The contrast between these two groups illustrates *The Prairie's* debt to this trope. But it also reveals that strengths and failings in rhetoric were, like fashion, relative to historical

¹³³ See Nixon's aforementioned article on *Benito Cereno* and Anne Myles, "Dissent and the Frontier of Translation: Roger Williams's A Key into the Language of America" In *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Cornell University Press, 2000).

context. In this case, what Cooper presents as poor dress and bad rhetoric and what he presents as good dress and good rhetoric reflect institutionalizing common education and Spanish studies.

Connections between rhetoric and northern education reform surface through the resemblances Cooper draws between the conduct and lifestyle represented on the prairie and partisan views and practices in the U.S. settlements. For instance, Cooper critiques the Sioux chief Mahtoree by presenting him as a Jacksonian democrat, if not as Jackson himself. After Mahtoree takes the Natty-led group of white settlers, who have rescued Inez from the Bushes, back to his camp, we learn the chief is “much in advance of his people, in those acquirements which announce the dawns of civilization,” but, “like a thousand more enlightened beings who fancy they are able to go through the trials of human existence without any other support than their own resolutions, his morals were accommodating, and his motives, selfish” (288) He conveys an image of oneself as one of the people, and his home reflects this populist endeavor: “Nothing could be more simple and republican than the form of living that the ambitious and powerful Teton chose to exhibit to the eyes of his people...It abounded in neither venison, nor the wild beef of the Prairies, its crafty owner, having well understood that the liberality of a single individual, would be abundantly rewarded by the daily contributions of a band” (289).¹³⁴ Mahtoree relies on symbols as well as speech patterns to ingratiate himself with his people. By tacitly linking his behavior with early U.S. politicians and political parties, Cooper causes readers to assess the foundational institutions and institutional conditions that foster settlement political behaviors and generate volatile and apathetic responses to those behaviors, to schools,

¹³⁴ For a later short story using American Indian customs to demonstrate the similarities between settlers and Indians and to underscore the problems with Jacksonian populism and demagoguery see “The Lake Gun” in *The Parthenon* (New York: George E. Wood, 1850).

that is, which give rise to cunning populists and appear to generate undisciplined bouts of expression or complete and total indifference.¹³⁵

As *The Prairie* stresses the failings of characters as public speakers and debaters, it indicates that certain failings are endemic to particular tribes, classes, ages and occupations of peoples. On the one hand, the Sioux characters are “crafty” statesmen, but they are not always able to restrain themselves, thereby disclosing the difference between their nature and the public persona they present to their foes and their tribe. Mahtoree is not the only one who falls prey to his emotions, Weucha, the wily Sioux warrior, also forgets in his anger at Natty to “maintain the character [he] had assumed” (45). While the Bush family follow no such cleverly arranged, social or political pretenses as populists, they nevertheless fall prey to similar fits of anger when they are forced to shed their “sluggish” dispositions and awaken from nearly stultifying comas in order to engage with opposing family members and outsiders. This failing applies to the Bush matriarch, Ester, who the narrator repeatedly refers to as a “shrill toned termagant.” In addition to these unstable speakers and interlocutors, the young, Anglo-American settlers in the novel, Paul Hover, Ellen Wade, and Duncan Uncas Middleton, also rarely speak and act with propriety and confidence. Paul’s “thoughtless and buoyant temperament,” keeps him from tempering his feelings or his thoughts and using foresight, despite the fact that vision is a key part of his job as a bee-hunter (287). Similarly, Duncan acts and speaks rashly toward Natty when he suspects that

¹³⁵ Chris Castiglia speaks to this latter point when he talks about how antebellum institutions began encouraging citizens and non-citizens to consider politics “impartial, without conflict or passion” rendering “the interiority of citizens as intrinsically ‘passionate’ and hence anti-political and conversely conceive[d] politics as a realm without conflict.” He argues that the romance offered a “particularly fantastic refusal of both reformist interiority and middle-class institutionalism,” yet it ultimately “fall[s] short of revolution” with “the allure of private civility overcoming the demand for structural justice.” See Chris Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) 9,15.

Inez's life is in danger. Ellen demonstrates more than her share of "kindness and wit", but she is also unable to "remember her native speech" when she boldly helps Inez escape (86).

In contrast, Natty Bumpo and the young Pawnee chief, Hard Heart, model proper rhetoric, or what Sandra Gustafson terms, in her reading of the novel, new world "political conduct." They live according to classical republican principles, and they also convey those principles clearly, calmly, and cogently through debate with strangers, friends, elders, and foes. Both Natty and Heart's principles, and their presentation of them, appear to be natural products of their frontier lifestyles since they both explicitly oppose and seek to distance themselves from settlement mores and restrictions, with Natty, for instance, reminding readers, "I never willingly passed a day within reach of a spelling book" (192).¹³⁶ The fact that Hard Heart is in his prime and Natty in his dotage further underscores the natural expression of their rhetorical abilities. Because of his youth Hard Heart could easily betray the balance stoicism and emotion implied by his name. But he does not. With death looming, Hard Heart remains "much more tempered and dignified than that of his Christian acquaintances...[who] felt the tremors which shook the persons of their dependent companions, thrilling through their own quickened blood, the glowing eye of the Indian rolled from one to another as if it could never quail, before the rudest assaults" (257). Natty likewise could become bitter and frustrated in his old age as he comes face to face again with "man's wish, and pride, and waste, and sinfulness" (83). Instead, the frontiersmen relishes the prospects of sparring verbally with other characters with whom he disagrees, and he insightfully counters their positions without becoming disturbed or dismayed by their views or their actions. The only time Natty's communication breaks down is when he nostalgically recalls

¹³⁶ Ivy Schweitzer observes that Natty, "although a self-professed bibliophobe, outlines the precise characteristics of the classical ideal of perfect friendship most famously articulated by Aristotle: sharing values (journeying in the same path), living together (sleeping side by side), risking lives for one another (fighting side by side)" See Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) 139.

past figures and events from his adventurous youth (and from the other early Leather-stocking tales). In these instances, though, he is not endangering himself or others, but rather reaffirming the unfortunate necessity of early national proto-settlement warfare and strife.¹³⁷

Cooper's narrator indirectly contributes to these models of rhetoric by tempering disruptions, which can threaten to sidetrack the linear progress of the narrative. For instance, when the narrator elaborates on the natural humility of Anglo settlers, he is quick to note, "But as this is a subject which belongs rather to the politician and historian than to the humble narrator of the homebred incidents we are about to reveal, we must confine our reflections to such matters as have an immediate relation to the subject of the tale" (68). By returning to "matters as have an immediate relation", the narrator follows a contemporary pedagogical philosophy summarized by a college president in a popular tract, entitled "A Help to Young Writers" (1827). He advises, "That the younger and more backward each scholar is, the more unfit will he be for abstract speculations, and the less remote must be the subject proposed, from those individual objects and occurrences which always form the first beginning of the furniture of the youthful mind" (12).¹³⁸ Because historical romances typically depict events, which are temporally and geographically removed from readers' minds, they risk drawing them away from present "objects and occurrences" and into confusing abstraction as well as into disorienting relationship with distant referents, concepts and places. Cooper tries to avoid "fatiguing the reader" with speculation by turning the novel into a primer for readers who need help handling diversion and speculation.

¹³⁷ For a reading of Cooper's *The Prairie* and masculinity based on transatlantic literary history see Juliet Shields "Savage and Scottish Masculinity In *Last of the Mohicans* and *The Prairie*: James Fenimore Cooper and the Diasporic Origins of American Identity" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* Vol. 64. No. 2 (September 2009) 137-162.

¹³⁸ The author also offers the following definition of the distinction between the novel and the romance: "A novel is a fictitious work, either founded upon the events of real life, or at least bearing some resemblance to them; while a romance is a work of a similar kind, having something wild and unnatural in it; and if not purely imaginary, resting upon some extravagant tradition, and extending far beyond the limits of probability."

The Prairie highlights Paul, Duncan, and Ellen's progress as rhetoricians. And by the novel's end they have all moderately improved because of their frontier experiences and their willingness to learn from the examples of measured emotion and clear expression set by Hard Heart and Natty. In contrast to the "cunning" Sioux who are defeated by the Pawnee, and the Bush family "principals, who "were never heard of more," these three Anglo-American settlers witness and internalize classical republican values and discover how to effectively display those values. They also learn how to handle representatives of an ostensibly mystical and hierarchical foreign culture while still remaining committed to the nation. A measured and eloquent Duncan returns to the settlements and, because of his new diplomatic skills and his reclamation of Inez, he receives a respectable position in a "far higher branch of Legislative authority" (376). Duncan marries Inez on his Anglo cultural terms rather than the stringent Spanish terms required of him prior to her kidnapping. Their marriage signals the waning power of Spain's cultural values in the U.S. exemplified by the "embarrassment of the worthy Father Ignatius," the Certavallos family priest, who must concede when she returns to the settlements that her abduction was not divine intervention (375). With Duncan's help, Paul finds a position as a "member of the lower branch of the legislature of the state" where he "becomes notorious for making speeches that have a tendency to the put the deliberative body in good humor and which, as they are based on great practical knowledge suited to the condition of the country, possess a merit that is much wanted in many more subtle and fine-spun theories that are daily heard in similar assemblies to issue from the lips of certain instinctive politicians" (376). Ellen leaves behind the Bush family and chooses to marry Paul, devoting her newfound confidence and existing loyalties to Inez to those "extraordinary preventives" that "prove necessary to keep one of so erratic a temper as her partner within the proper matrimonial boundaries" (377). In short, she finds that her social

energies ought to be directed toward a separate domestic sphere from which she will “work a great and beneficial change in Paul’s character” and shore up the stability of their home and the safety of their children lest they “return to that state from which their parents had issued” (377).

The Prairie, however, does not end solely with class-based marriage, family, and civic conduct. The novel soldiers on for a final chapter in which Cooper describes the final somber moments of Natty Bumppo’s life. The legendary figure of the Leather-stocking series passes away in a remote Pawnee village accompanied by Hard Heart, Duncan, Paul and his dog Hector, who expires just moments before his wizened friend. While the white settlement characters return east after his death rather than remaining west, and the Pawnee appear to live on (thereby refuting Cooper’s prefatory claim: “Prairie will be the final resting place of the Red Men”), this final scene establishes a new compact between frontier-schooled representatives of the U.S. settlements and the Pawnee. The compact is based on another highly symbolic monument: Natty’s grave. With his death, the “man without a cross” can no longer escape from constraining settlement laws and mores thereby encouraging what Doolen calls an “expanding imperial consciousness.”¹³⁹ After his interment, though, he serves perennially as an honorary “just chief of the Pale-faces” whose willingness to die as he lived, inspires Heart Hart to give his people an ultimatum: either live to watch over him or follow his path: “Go... and clear your own tracks from briars” (386). To ensure a U.S. presence governing the commitment to expansionism invoked by the second half of this stirring ultimatum, Middleton adds an inscription to Natty’s tombstone: “*May no wanton hand ever disturb his remains*” (386). This line suggests that Natty should indeed be resurrected in frontier sequels and prequels to come, but only if he is disinterred by the proper hands.

¹³⁹ Doolen, 137.

As *The Prairie* depicts lamentable and laudable activities on the “skirts of society” to pave the way for the “seating” of moderate wealth and the arts in the “bosoms of the State”, it supports U.S. expansionism under the guise of what the narrator calls the “intellectual progress of nations” (2). But it also exposes that guise. It accomplishes the latter by drawing on current trends in northern education reform in order to represent riotous race and class-based conflicts resulting from expansion, migration, and assimilation. Such reforms brought citizens and non-citizens into a common pool of nationalized learning while reorienting a select male group toward a new *body* of Spanish knowledge. It is no coincidence that the Bushes abduct Inez and set up their preliminary settlement to defend themselves and to contain her at a moment when Inez’s ancestors and their culture were figuring prominently as scholastic solutions that would ward off accusations of white male provincialism. Their failure to defend their “fortress” and keep Inez hidden discloses the dehumanizing and destructive effects of this reformist initiative for all involved. In this way, *The Prairie* keeps to the enlightenment-inspired tracks paved by earlier, early U.S. novels by illustrating how difficult, if not impossible, it was to reform formal education without deeply disrupting the purported stability of settlements. With this eventually shaping the drama of this historical romance, Cooper demonstrates how to avoid such pitfalls and how to use rhetoric to brook persistent settler colonialism in a representative, capitalist democracy.

Chapter 4

Common Schooling Lydia Maria Child's *Philothea* and *Romance of the Republic*

It is good for us to keep near our childhood. In leaving it, we wander from the gods.-Lydia Maria Child, *Philothea: A Grecian Romance*, 1836¹⁴⁰

He said it impossible to exaggerate the importance of social institutions. -Lydia Maria Child, *A Romance of the Republic*, 1867¹⁴¹

These passages from two of Lydia Maria Child's historical romances draw our attention to the fact that the powerful investment in childhood in the mid-nineteenth U.S. at once spurred *and* obstructed U.S. settler colonialism. Across a period characterized by rising regional disunion and eventually by bloody Civil War, the focus on caring for children facilitated nation building and expansion by indicating that the first steps toward establishing the defenses and institutions of settlement were necessary to protect vulnerable children. At the same time, this emphasis on caring for children also denaturalized conjunctions of national progress and race and sex-based violence and inequity. It drew adults into more elaborate relationships with childhood thereby muddling the socially-constructed distinctions between feminized and racialized conceptions of childhood and masculinized and racialized conception of adulthood that justified such violence and inequity. Fixating on childhood helped the U.S. consolidate power and reconfigure social, political, and economic relations to open new avenues for political critique. More specifically, such antebellum recommendations to keep one's own and everyone else's childhood in mind (as

¹⁴⁰ Lydia Maria Child, *Philothea: A Grecian Romance* (New York: C.S. Francis & CO., 1845) 34. All references to this work throughout the chapter will be made parenthetically.

¹⁴¹ Lydia Maria Child, *Romance of the Republic* (Sioux Falls, SD: NuVision Publications, 2008) 4. All references to this work throughout the chapter will be made parenthetically.

expressed above) were inseparable from a powerful and vigorous regional initiative known as common schooling, which drew citizens and non-citizens together under the liberal, Anglo-Protestant aim of educating children from those social classes previously barred from formal education. This initiative helped foster urgent expansion, dispossession, and social stratification, but it also created new internal outlets for contestation and further reform.

This chapter explains how as well as why, in these two novels, *Philothea: A Grecian Romance* (1836) and *A Romance of the Republic* (1867), Child revises the prevailing, northern common school narratives about removing lower-class white boys and girls from fraught homes and teaching them sentimental, Anglo-Protestant values.¹⁴² I argue here that she builds creatively upon these familiar narratives in order to expose the complex relationship in the antebellum U.S. among women's domestic roles, race-based slavery, and representative democracy and to show settler women how they might expand their legally-limited social and political influence through cosmopolitan cultural exchange. Certainly one of the more important and prolific U.S. writers in the nineteenth century, Child began creating and publishing fiction in the mid-1820s when common schooling was gaining popularity, and she continued writing till her death in 1880. She wrote novels, short stories, and children's literature, as well as non-fictional sketches, domestic guidebooks, and extensive tracts and editorials on antislavery, American Indian removal and a range of other political issues. Her historical romances demonstrate a broad and deep knowledge of the distant and recent past. They range in period and setting from ancient Greece (*Philothea*), to early and late colonial New England (*Hobomok*, *The Rebels*), to the mid-nineteenth century

¹⁴² For approaches to antebellum U.S. literature, which are similar to the one pursued here see Anna Mae Duane, "Like a Motherless Child": Racial Education at the New York African Free School and in *My Bondage, My Freedom*. *American Literature* 82(3): 461-488 (2010) from her last chapter in *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Violence, Race and the Making of the Child Victim* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

southern and northern states (*A Romance of the Republic*). Like the other antebellum romancers of her day, Child sought to create faithful, lyrical representations of historical events that would have significant and useful bearing on her reader's present. Unlike contemporary writers, such as Cooper, Byrd, and Simms, though, Child devoted great attention to women's social roles as she brought events from history to life in her fiction. As she depicted the past in her fiction, she found ways of critiquing the limited roles allotted to settler women in her lifetime and presenting ways through which women could contest those roles and expand their influence.

Child wrote *Philothea* over two decades before the Civil War, and she wrote *A Romance of the Republic* right after the war concluded. The former is a subtle representation of modern race-based slavery and representative democracy heavily veiled by its luminous, ancient Greek setting while *A Romance of the Republic* is an explicit and highly selective representation of southern race-based slavery and northern abolitionism during the late-antebellum and immediate-post-bellum periods. Despite these differences in setting and critical orientation, her novels share one crucial similarity: both works chronicle the forced uprooting of two young, orphaned women whose idealization and subjugation divulges how a venerated republic sustains its sense of moral authority and coherence. This shared, central plotline demonstrates Child's discrepant efforts across the two novels to convert common school accounts of rescue, moral reconfiguration, and inculcated life-long political allegiance into troubling, civic missions predicated on the deep-seated fears and allurements of educated women, the persistence of race-based slavery, and the spread of populism.

First, the chapter describes the aims and outcomes of antebellum common schooling as they were outlined by Horace Mann and explained by subsequent education historians. Then I illustrate how those aims and outcomes intersect with a burgeoning print market for children's

literature with which a number of nineteenth century women writers like Child were intimately involved. The second section looks to one children's story that Child wrote in particular ("The Poor Child and the Christ Child") to identify a recurring narrative framework of social uplift that, I argue, she adapts and reworks in her novels. The remaining sections in the chapter show how Child fashions each of these novels to call attention to common schooling's sex, class, and race-based assumptions and political ramifications. And the sections, which conclude the analysis of each novel, underscore how Child models a form of settlement conduct for women in which they act as responsible wives and mothers, but, above all else, as responsible social workers who push for a polity governed less by monarchical stricture, populism, or hierarchical uplift and more by cosmopolitan, cultural exchange.

Common School, Children's Literature, and Antebellum Women's Literature

Common schools were primary schools that taught children basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills as well as elementary geography and history. During the late 1820s and early 1830s, they grew in popularity, particularly in the north. The mission of their supporters was to standardize U.S. primary education by furnishing models for separate schools, distinct grades, and set curricular requirement for those grades.¹⁴³ To achieve this end, their proponents sought organized means of achieving state and federal support through political appeals and lectures and through a common school journal that shared teaching methods and general news. Horace Mann was one of the more active speakers on behalf of common schooling. He toured the country speaking publically about the need for a systematic approach to primary education in the U.S. In

¹⁴³ See Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980).

“Lecture on Education,” for example, he spoke about the need for school boards to have a “voice by which they can make themselves heard, in the distant villages and hamlets of this land, where those juvenile habits are now forming, where those processes of thought and feeling are, now, today, maturing, which some twenty of thirty years hence, will find an arm, and become resistless might, and will uphold, or rend asunder, our social fabric.”¹⁴⁴ Mann believed school boards could create like-minded citizens and non-citizens by “collect[ing] such information, on the great subject of education, as now lies scattered, buried and dormant;” and “after systematizing and perfecting send it forth again to the extremest borders of the State, so that all improvements which are local, may be enlarged into universal; so that what is now transitory and evanescent may be established in permanency.”¹⁴⁵ He tried to spread enlightenment from New England cities to the nation’s western borders through an enduring system that would help “uphold the social fabric.”

In a statistical survey of Massachusetts’ common schooling, historians Carl Kaestle and Maris Vinovski emphasize social and political forces, which intersected with common schooling in order to underscore that the movement aimed to provide lower-class students with more opportunities for social mobility.¹⁴⁶ Other historians, such as Michael Katz have stressed its aspirations as a singular, socializing force in order to illustrate its classist aims in a forming U.S.

¹⁴⁴ Horace Mann, “Lecture on Education” in *Thoughts Selected From the Writings of Horace Mann* (Ulan Press, 2012) 42. See Perry Miller’s reading of Mann’s “Lecture,” “Education Under Crossfire” in *The Responsibility of Mind in a Civilization of Machines* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979).

¹⁴⁵ Mann, 45.

¹⁴⁶ Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A Vinovskis, *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). They observe, “education itself is so complex that cannot be treated as a single variable and then pegged to a single historical development out of which all other concerns flow” 233.

bureaucracy.¹⁴⁷ Katz argues that common schooling sought to cater primarily to Anglo-Protestant students. He reminds us that what Mann and other reformers had in mind when they strove for a common education was a form of class-based colonization, and it only applied to a small portion of the population. Those barred from access to common schools belonged to highly marginalized groups of people, whom reformers believed were incapable of learning.¹⁴⁸ Other historians and cultural critics have also observed that the focus on the common school as a cure for children follows a broader antebellum effort to use institutions to temper and control political desires and practices. For instance, Bob Taylor argues that the pedagogical philosophies of Horace Mann and Ralph Waldo Emerson urge us to believe “education must in some important sense help us transcend politics, that democratic life will not itself generate sufficient citizen virtue or desirable political outcomes.”¹⁴⁹ For Taylor as well as for Katz, in its missions, common schooling confirms Pierre Bourdieu’s insightful point that formal education could be “the royal road to the democratization of culture if it did not consecrate cultural inequalities by ignoring them.”¹⁵⁰ And it suggests how antebellum institutions shaped thought and action, thereby seeking to ensure the

¹⁴⁷ Michael Katz, *Reconstructing American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1987). He argues against Kaestle and Vinovskis that “interdependence is an interpretive strategy that signals a retreat from any attempt to find a principal or core within a social system (140). See also Micheal Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (Praeger, New York, 1975); Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980) Bob Pepperman Taylor, *Horace Mann’s Troubling Legacy: The Education of Democratic Citizens* (Normal: University of Kansas Press, 2011).

¹⁴⁸ As Mann puts it, “correct views, on this all-important subject, may be multiplied by the number of minds capable of understanding them” (52).

¹⁴⁹ Taylor, 21. Here Taylor cites Ralph Waldo Emerson who in his essay, “Culture” explains “We shall one day learn to supersede politics by education What we call our root-and-branch reforms of slavery, war, gambling, is only medicating the symptoms. We must begin higher up, namely, in Education.” For cultural studies work that offers insightful readings of the mid-nineteenth century institutional trend see Chris Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, and Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) ch. 3-5.

¹⁵⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York City: New Press, 1999) 21.

staying power of the dominant habitus by encouraging students and families to accept how, in Bourdieu terms, to “make a virtue of necessity.”¹⁵¹

Focused more on the effects of common schooling than its aims, Barbara Finkelstein observes in *Governing the Young: Teaching Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in the Nineteenth Century United States* (1989) that the institutional cordoning off and centralizing of education through the common school movement altered the family dynamics of lower and middle class Americans.¹⁵² Whereas after the American Revolution, schools helped connect the new government and rural parents and children to familiarize them with market-oriented partisan values, common schools urged the separation of parents from their children, as Finkelstein puts it, to “reconstruct their children’s moral lives.” They emphasized the dangerous provinciality and ignorance of parents, homes, and communities and promoted a distinct school-culture defined by the gentle supervision of and by children to set them apart from their roots and to draw out their inherent benevolence, their industriousness, and their fidelity to the movement. As Michael Katz puts it, the supporters believed that common school institutions, “rather than supplying an alternative to families,” would “become surrogate families for the mentally ill, the criminal, the delinquent, and the schoolchild.”¹⁵³ Often acting with the authority of the state or the federal government, principals and proponents of these institutions asserted control over the care of young subjects, which they deemed in need of assistance by acting as if their schools and schoolhouses were a functional family unit.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 11.

¹⁵² Barbara Finkelstein, *Governing the Young: Teaching Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in the Nineteenth Century United States* (1984) 4.

¹⁵³ Katz, 9.

The common school rhetoric provincializing the family, the poor community, and the unruly and oppositional politics of the American wilderness helped justify this shift in family dynamics (the replacing of one family with a common school-sanctioned surrogate). Such rhetoric organized and fueled the movement allowing reformers to justify extending their influence to any area of the U.S. that could, as Horace Mann phrased it, “rend asunder our social fabric.” But it also created inter-regional tension and conflict. In the 1840s, southern reformers reacted vociferously against the common school movement on the grounds that its materials and institutions were encroaching on their children’s growth and development. *The Southern Reader and Speaker* (1848), for instance, sought to fulfill the “wants of the South” and to avoid “the impropriety of placing in the hands of our children, such school books as contain matter inimical to, or misrepresenting our social relations—faults which the prejudices of our Northern neighbors do not always allow them to wholly guard against, when compiling Readers and Speakers for the youth of the whole country.”¹⁵⁴ Similarly, the author of *The Southern First Class Book* (1846), M.M Mason, asserts, “Foreign or Northern” schoolbooks are “opposed to our peculiar views and institutions, and all together exclusive of those interests, the endearment of which, should constitute an essential part of the instruction of our youth.”¹⁵⁵ Mason believes his reader reflects southern culture and combats the colonizing aims of “Northern” and “Foreign”

¹⁵⁴ This text was published by William Babcock and printed in Charleston, Richmond, and Mobile. The editor presumes that “elementary books” in particular are not fit for southern “domestic institutions”, and that their lessons about America, “misrepresent” southern culture.

¹⁵⁵ Macon continues: Although designed more especially for the atmosphere of the South, a National tone pervades so generally the selections, as to make it acceptable to all sections, for what American youth is there who does not desire an acquaintance with the gifted minds of those American Patriots, who though removed by distance, still breathe in the language of Washington, the sentiments his character inculcated.” The full title is *The Southern First Class Book; Reading and Declamation, Selected principally from American Authors, and Designed for the Use of Schools and Academies in the Southern and Western States* By M.M. Mason Principal of Vineville Academy, Supposedly published in Macon, GA. but the press says New York: Pratt, Woodford, Co. 1846

readers, and, for this reason it should serve as a new national primer. Avoiding “our inglorious dependence upon others” and “that citizenship of the world, which extinguish[s] our partialities for our own country, or swallow[s] up the individuality of our affections, in the feeling of an enlarged brotherhood” he concludes, “We believe it [our reader] will not be confined to Southern schools, but will soon be found in those of the North, for the lucid minds of their orators and poets essentially contribute to enrich its pages.” This inter-regional controversy illustrates the cohering of common schooling as well as the questionable viability of its reforms as national solutions.

Contestation surrounding common schooling was apparent not only across regions, but also within the north as well where the movement sparked numerous religious debates. These debates arose in great part because of the conception of the child as she/he appeared in rhetoric that encouraged the class-based shift in family dynamics, which Barbara Finkelstein identifies. In this popular rhetoric, reformers presented social influence (parents, communities) as fraught with dangers, whereas the child was figured as asocial, Christ-like, and capable of expressing inherent goodness if only she/he could be put under the care of proper instructors and students. As one common school supporter writes in the *Common School Journal*, “Almost all children are as pure as Eve was; but the tempting apples are left hanging so thickly around, that it would be a marvel if they did not eat.”¹⁵⁶ Opponents of common schooling, such as Reverend Matthew Hale, saw this rhetoric as a sign of national apostasy. Any social reform predicated on the notion that the child was not, by nature, fallen, they reasoned, broke with a foundational Protestant tenet, and encouraged itinerancy and licentiousness rather than moral and civic behavior

¹⁵⁶ Anonymous, *The Common School Journal* (1835) 12-14.

conducive to settlement. It created godless “intellectual men” and immoral women rather than “moral men” and devoted mothers and wives.¹⁵⁷

The religious and cross-regional factionalism inspired by the common school movement indicates the pivotal place of the figure of the child in the mid-nineteenth century U.S. as a highly-charged symbol of national futurity. She/he was explicitly or implicitly at the center of this debate, for how the people educated her/him was said to determine the course of the U.S, to confirm the country’s international moral prominence and to facilitate its national unification. While this view of education as a global and local imperative had roots as far back as ancient Greece, this understanding of the child as the primary recipient of that education was a more modern development. As Caroline Levander explains, through the influence of enlightenment-pedagogical philosophy, the child came into being as a fully distinct category of identity only in the late eighteenth century.¹⁵⁸ During this period, the child represented the new nation, helping to indicate its youth and innocence as well as to codify race and gender differences and legitimate the barriers between citizens and non-citizens. In this way, representations of children became intertwined with progressive national growth *and* government-sanctioned injustice and inequity. By the mid-nineteenth century, through common schooling, those representations became less abstract because they became more connected to schools where they served as unsettling and settling signs of future U.S. political and cultural authority and national unity.

¹⁵⁷ Mann’s response to Matthew Hale in *The Common School Journal* (1845) 78.

¹⁵⁸ Caroline Levander, *Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child and National Belonging from Thomas Jefferson to W.E.B du Bois* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) and Anna Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood: Violence, Race, and the Making of the Child Victim* (Athen: University of Georgia Press, 2010) Duane situates the figure of the child in a longer colonial American history, but stresses that descriptions and images of suffering children were effective strategies for justifying the privileging of early U.S. difference claims and for dealing with the effects of colonialist violence.

In contrast to the late-eighteenth century abstract discourse around the figure of the child, the mid-nineteenth century common school inflected-child discourse resulted in a separate, niche print market: locally-produced and circulated children's literature.¹⁵⁹ This literature helped meet the putative needs of children while at the same time clarifying who counted as a child as well as what could be justified on his/her behalf. Initial studies of the rise of this separate genre tended to focus on the cultural significance of this first aim: meeting children's needs. Jacqueline Rose, for instance, in *The Case of Peter Pan: or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984) claims that children's literature is an "impossible" genre because it imagines the figure of the child through the simultaneous describing and hailing of a category that it is in fact creating. She argues that children's literature is based on a dynamic in which an empowered "adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the disempowered or colonized child comes after (reader, product, receiver), but...neither of them enter the space in between."¹⁶⁰ Recent nineteenth century studies have complicated Rose's findings by addressing the ambivalent attitude children's literature writers held toward prized Romantic and Victorian models of childhood.¹⁶¹ Authors of these studies are also analyzing writings by nineteenth century children and examining the rituals through which adults engaged with children in the process of reading and writing children's stories—two

¹⁵⁹ Criticism on children's literature has created debate about its meaning as a genre. I tend to define this literature in terms of its marketing and its readers. Similarly, Marah Gubar recently argues it is fruitless to try to universally define or to abandon the category entirely we simply need to contextualize it based on market and on the definitions of childhood at the time. Marah Gubar, "On Note Defining Childhood" *PMLA* 126:1 (January 2011) 209-216.

¹⁶⁰ Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan: or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984) 13.

¹⁶¹ See Marah Gubar, *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

practices allowing children and adults to inhabit both identity categories.¹⁶² What is emerging is a messier picture of the literary relationship between children and adults at this historical moment when the divisions between the two were being dramatically altered by common schooling.

Children's literature was just one of several new niche print markets developing in the antebellum U.S.¹⁶³ Rising, consumer capitalism fostered textual specialization during this period, as evidenced by the mass publication of local schoolbooks, domestic guides, and readers. These works created a disorienting sense that, as cultural expression diversified, the country was getting further away from ascertaining the differences between the audiences for those markets. Speaking to this point, Michael Warner observes that these new markets disturbed the viability of the representative individual model that had dominated eighteenth-century print culture, with expanding markets "ma[king] available an endlessly differentiable subject" in contrast to "the subject of the public sphere proper [who] cannot be differentiated."¹⁶⁴ With a widening range of different types of cultural expressions circulating fresh representations of cultural and racial difference, there was a decline in the cultural and political authority of a fiction of an abstract republic based on a single, representative subject. At the same time, new print genres promised

¹⁶² For the latter, see Karen Sanchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁶³ For a reading of regional identity and print culture see Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation-Building, 1770-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) in which she argues the nation became aware of their startling regional differences not during the American revolution, but during the 1830s and 40s when inter-regional print networks actually developed.

¹⁶⁴ Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991). For discussions of a similar subject but focused on women and on gender see Laura Berlant *The Anatomy of National Fantasy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Sensationalism, and Victorian Mass Culture* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

greater specificity to satisfy consumer needs—needs that would be frustrated and refueled by subsequent qualifications in print.

As this literary, public sphere ramified, nineteenth-century U.S. white women writers were commonly either barred from it or heavily monitored within it. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, they published anonymously, or, under the representative billing, “an American.”¹⁶⁵ By the middle of the century, though, it became more common to see these women writers identified by their surnames and by their popular, published works, if they had a name for themselves already. Feminist scholars have explored the challenges different women authors faced in this burgeoning market, and they have shown how they used sentiment and narrative conventions in their novels to critique patriarchy and envision cross-cultural and cross-racial bonds.¹⁶⁶ Such work now enables younger feminist scholars to examine the relationship among different genres created by prolific writers, who—following the path cleared by writers such as Hannah Foster, Susannah Rowson, and Rebecca Rush—wrote novels *and* works geared

¹⁶⁵ This is evident in how publishers marketed Child’s first novel (*Hobomok*, written by “an American”) as opposed to her literary work in the 1830s and 40s, which they attributed to her through her surname, and authorized by referencing the other works she had written (as with *Philothea*: “by Mrs. Child, the author of *Flowers for Children* and *Letters from New York*”).

¹⁶⁶ See Nina Baym, *Women’s Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); Mary Kelley, *Private Women, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Susan K. Harris, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Novels: Interpretive Strategies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) Ann Boyd, *Writing for Immortality: Women and the Emergence of High Literary Culture* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004). Also *Wielding the Pen: Writings on Authorship by American Women of the Nineteenth Century* ed. Anne Boyd (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009). Ivy Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Dana D. Nelson’s *The Word in Black and White: Reading ‘Race’ in American Literature, 1638-1837* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) for a discussion of the critical rethinking of sentimentalism in relation to Catherine Maria Sedgwick’s and Child’s work; See also Shirley Samuels, *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). And Kathleen Lawrence “Soul Sisters and the Sister Arts: Margaret Fuller, Caroline Sturgis, and Their Private World of Love and Art” in *ESQ* ed. Jana Argensinger and Phillis Cole Vol. 57 No. 1-2 2011 for a reading of the way sentimentalism was eschewed by antebellum women writers based on its pejorative association with a lack of seriousness *depending on* the type of Art.

toward domestic and children's education. Particularly revealing for such studies are the relations between novels and common school-rooted children's literature. Antebellum children's literature has more than its fair share of sentimentalism and aestheticism. It contains the kinds of abundant feelings male critics (then and today) often critiqued in women's novels to disqualify them from high culture or suggest that they glossed over social issues and reconciled readers to their thoughts, instead of inspiring them to act across class, race, and gender on behalf of others.¹⁶⁷ Antebellum children's literature also emerged as a genre with the help of a powerful yet divisive regional common-school culture, which sought to unify the nation along sentimental scholastic lines. For this reason, recognizing how mid-nineteenth century women's novelists such as Lydia Maria Child revised popular children's stories and common school missions helps us see how their novels offered new models of conduct for women that would help them extend their social *and* political influence within U.S. settlements.

Child's Childishness

Lydia Maria Child is most well known today by literary scholars and historians for her historical romances, *Hobomok: Or, A Tale of Early Times* (1824) and *A Romance of the Republic* (1867) and for her publication of *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833).¹⁶⁸ However, after she published *Hobomok* and before she began working as the editor of

¹⁶⁷ Helpful for my thinking here was Russ Castronovo's entry "Aesthetics" in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* ed. Bruce Burgett and Glen Handler (New York: New York University Press, 2007) 10-12.

¹⁶⁸ *Hobomok: Or a Tale of Early Times*, (1824) is a historical romance set in seventeenth century New England. The novel includes an instance of what her antebellum contemporaries called "amalgamation," but it excludes a future for the Wampanoag-Puritan family she imagines, transforming the marriage of two cultures into a beautiful and haunting-because transient affair. For another historical romance, see also, *The Rebels: Or Boston before the Revolution* (1825).

National Anti-Slavery Standard (1840-1843), Child founded and taught in a school, and helped create and publish literature for the common-school inspired market of children's literature. She edited *The Juvenile Miscellany* (1826-1834), the country's first children's magazine, and, she later imported poems and stories from this publication and from other new children's journals into the popular two-volume collection, *Flowers for Children* (1844).¹⁶⁹ The first volume (ages 3-5) contains sketches and poems, including the Thanksgiving verse, "Over the River and through the Woods." The second volume (ages 6-8) contains short stories and less poetry, indicative of her attempt to tailor their materials to specific age groups. Carolyn Karcher and Dana Nelson both emphasize that Child risked jeopardizing the circulation of her writing and the royalties she received when she moved from producing more acceptable subject matter for women writers to more controversial material, such as her abolitionist writing.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, in Karcher's biography, *The First Woman in the Republic* (1994), she notes that Child was troubled by the difference between her brother's elite education and her experience at the "dame school" where she learned her letters, the "common town school where Tom, Dick and Harry, everybody's boys and girls, went as a matter of course," and her year at Miss Swan's Female Academy.¹⁷¹ With Child's publication history and her view of sex-based inequity in antebellum formal education in mind, I turn to one of her children's stories to outline a critical framework for understanding the sociological work of *Philothea* and *A Romance of the Republic*.

¹⁷⁰ Carolyn Karcher, "Censorship, American Style: The Case of Lydia Maria Child." *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1986) 283-303; Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading 'Race' in Early American Literature. 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 78-79.

¹⁷¹ Carolyn Karcher, *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994) 46.

One popular story first included in the *Juvenile Miscellany* and later in *Flowers for Children* illustrates distinct roots for the literary types and narrative arcs Child revised and redeployed in her later career as an author: “The Poor Child and the Christ Child.” In *Flowers for Children*, Child prefaces this short tale with a note that her plot was “suggested by the account of the Redemption Institute at Hamburg, by Horace Mann, in his late admirable Report on Education.” She urges readers who like her version to also seek out Mann’s version, noting that, “it would be well for all parents, teachers, and magistrates, to read that account, and receive deeply into their hearts the lesson it conveys” (viii). Her reference to Mann during a period when it was common to borrow and recirculate works without attribution indicates her investment in extending common school aims, but it also illustrates that this primary school engine of northern education reform inspired authors to revise its foundational stories and missions.

The story describes the difficult childhood of Heinrich Ludwig of Hamburg, Germany who grew up “hearing cursing and swearing, but never the warbling of birds or the ringing laughter of the innocent and happy” (11).¹⁷² His family “live[d] like wild beasts, in that dark, dirty court” where “No one had ever taught them that there was a better way to conquer enemies, than by fighting and scolding.” Only when a generous benefactor removes Heinrich and his sister from their “wretched” parents and brings them to live in “the Father House and Mother House” do they begin to learn the model afforded by the ideal Christ child, and with it, the ability to behave properly, as they discover that “work is play—each boy does what he can do best, and he likes to do it” (30-31). Work at the Father and Mother House does not correspond with the division of labor suggested by the names of the houses.¹⁷³ Instead, for boys and girls, labor and

¹⁷² Child’s *The Mother’s Book* (1831) had been reprinted in England and Germany. Cited from Karcher (171).

¹⁷³ An additional example: “Oh, it is a great deal pleasanter to work for a thing, than it is to have it bought for you.”

the fruits of labor spring from rural aestheticism and intellectualism: “selling flower baskets” and “earning something toward the library, or the music-room, or the garden, or the play-ground” (32). Initially Heinrich rejects his new life at the Father and Mother house, choosing to be lazy or going to the market to sell other children’s flower baskets; then using the profits to buy “delicate treats” for himself (32). However, he eventually realizes it is more worthwhile to be like a good, productive boy in his new home.

The moral of “The Poor Child and the Christ-Child” is transparent: conduct is highly determined by the social, and charity should be bestowed with this social philosophy in mind. Even as the story advances this moral by telling readers that “The sweet sounds (of the piano) will teach far gentler lessons, than the cursing and swearing in that dark alley,” though, it retains the possibility that the child’s original cursing and swearing springs from inherent, “dark and evil passions inside” the child’s mind (38). As antebellum clergymen might have put it, the story does not remove Apostle Paul’s reminder, “they are by nature children of wrath.”¹⁷⁴ Also, the houses to which the Father removes Heinrich and his sister foster a new allegiance which they explain thusly: “every one of us love Father and Mother so much, that we had rather cut off a finger than do anything to grieve them” (32). With this dramatic, self-sacrificial bond forged at the story’s end, Child’s children’s story carries out to an extreme the popular common school missions to take a child out of his/her circumstances so his/her moral life can be reconstructed.

¹⁷⁴ Debate over the nature of children was renewed by New England preachers who saw more secular and tolerant antebellum common school reforms geared toward the health and beauty of the child as a sign of the end times rather than spiritual rejuvenation. Angelic descriptions of children in sentimental literature unmoored the association of the child with post-Fall inherent depravity, leading divines and even some progressive reformers to remind others that not only was there corruption out there in the cities that had to be addressed but an internal damnation, hence Paul’s declaration from Ephesians 2:3: “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

This brief explanation of “The Poor Child and the Christ Child” indicates Child’s interest in depicting equalitarian and aesthetic spaces while revealing the challenges maintaining their integrity. Her story critiques, or, at least works to exclude from vision, certain kinds of parents and “filthy” communities for the sake of needy children. At the same time, she suggests that focusing entirely on reforming children can imperil the children’s new “pleasing” community or make it impossible for the childish subjects ushered into this new social reality to conceive of a moral world beyond the ideology of the mother and father house. The ambiguously construed, surrogate mother and father represent influential models of private charity as well as state and federal aid, and suggest the rewards and repercussions of ostensibly beneficent aims. When we read “The Poor Child and the Christ Child” as a creative response to the northern education reforms proposed by the common school movement we can see how the story tries to shore up the unsettled authorities and communities created by this movement while also providing fodder for its failures. Because of its flexibility Child’s children’s story is a helpful narrative informant for her subsequent historical novels.

Classics Antebellum Style

Before Child began her tenure as editor of the *National Anti-slavery Standard*, and following her stint as the editor of the *Juvenile Miscellany*, she penned and published *Philothea: A Grecian Romance* (1836). The novel is set in classical Greece and focuses on the lives of Philothea and Eudora, two young orphans who grow up in Athens under the dutiful care of the philosopher, Anaxgoras, and the sculptor, Phidias, respectively. Philothea’s parents were free; Eudora’s parents were slaves. Child places the two young friends’ quarrels and diverging fates

after they are exiled from Athens in the foreground of her novel. She presents their life stories against the shifting backdrop of an Athenian polity wracked by representative democracy and by diverse threats to political and cultural preeminence. In order to paint this backdrop, Child introduces well-known historical figures, such as Plato and Pericles, and elaborate descriptions of ancient Greek thought, custom, and geography. Carolyn Karcher claims that her philosophical and historical accuracy in this novel demonstrates Child's investment in showing scholars like her brother that she knew the classics.¹⁷⁵ However, they also demonstrate Child's abiding interest as an established novelist, in making full use of romanticized history to show readers how to handle social, political, and economic challenges in the present. Through her story of two young female orphans removed from their birthplaces and raised in an idyllic state only to come of age and witness that state imperiled she sought to help readers handle unsettling regional politics in the antebellum U.S.

Child's understanding that *Philothea* could inspire contemporary readers to confront their current social realities derive from classical and modern Christian thought: Plato's proposition in "Allegory of the Cave" that the truth does not lie in evidence directly available to the senses; and the English Romantics and New England Transcendentalists emphasis on nature as a source of divine revelation.¹⁷⁶ Through Plato (the character's) words and the words of other Plato-inspired

¹⁷⁵ Karcher, 18.

¹⁷⁶ For a convincing article on the connection between *Philothea*, Lydia Maria Child, and Transcendentalism see Robert E. Streeter, "Mrs. Child's *Philothea* a Transcendentalist Novel?" in *New England Quarterly* Vol. 16 No. 4 (Dec. 1943) 648-654. Streeter makes important connections, but he is not an enthusiast of the novel. He describes Child as writing a work with a "rare indifference to the exigencies of narrative pace" and reminds us "although one cannot conceive of *Philothea* without Transcendentalism one can conceive of Transcendentalism without *Philothea*" (650, 654). For a positive reading see the original review C. Felton, "Philothea, a Romance by Child" in *The North American Review* Vol. 44, No. 94 (Jan. 1837), 77-90. See also Edgar A. Poe, "Philothea: A Romance" in *Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (September 1836) 259-262. Poe reprinted the review in *Broadway Journal* when the *Philothea* edition used in this chapter appeared in print. *Broadway Journal* 1 (May 31, 1845): 342-345. Here he recommended

characters, Child makes it evident that his philosophy guides the novel. Before the novel begins, selected passages from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's and William Wordsworth's poetry appear in her novel's epigraphs and its preface, pre-affirming the Greek philosopher's tenets. One epigraph on *Philothea*'s title page from Coleridge's "Piccolomini" describes the seeming absence of "intelligible forms of ancient poets,/The fair humanities of old religion" which appear to "live no longer in the faith of reason," by explaining that antiquated forms and humanities actually survive because "the heart doth need a language," and this language "brings back the old names" (6). Another title-page epigraph from Wordsworth's "The Excursion" describes how "a Spirit hung,/ Beautiful region! O'er thy towns and farms,/ Statues, and temples, and memorial tombs;/ And emanations were perceived" (6). Together, these verses present engagement with the ancient past as a reminder of the power of what Child, in her short preface, calls "romance of the wildest kind," ghostliness in the present, which a "few kindred spirits prone to people space 'with life and mystical predominance'" are able to see (8).¹⁷⁷ Those able to perceive, Child suggests, serve as models for those more easily swayed by social forces. They do not just demystify illusions, but rather, through their guidance and conduct, they reveal existing, fundamental truths obscured by the tumult and restrictions that cloud one's vision.

Child introduces Philothea as a visionary, a young Platonic character, who can "hear the music of the stars," and who bears resemblance to the literary types and figures popular in the antebellum U.S. (12). By contrasting her with Eudora, a capricious and "unenlightened" young woman who is "frightened by what Philothea hears", she builds on the two opposing character

the novel "to the attention of teachers who might introduce it advantageously into our female academies." Cited from William S. Osborne, *Lydia Maria Child* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980) 61.

¹⁷⁷ The inner quotation also belongs to Coleridge. The 1845 New York edition cites only part of the text as actually belonging to this English Romantic.

types from her popular children's story, "The Christ Child and the Poor Child" (13). Philothea is a paragon of unflagging, sentimental, Protestant moral certainty and generosity while Eudora is uncertain about morality and is unappreciative and self-centered. Child also makes her two protagonists legible to readers through familiar, antebellum literary markers of race and class based difference. Philothea's "golden hair," "complexion fair even to transparency," and her expression which "had the innocence of infancy, but was tinged with something elevated and holy" link her with mid-nineteenth century stereotypes of virtuous, middle-class white women (10). In contrast, Eudora's "sparkling eyes, lips more richly colored, a form more slender and flexile" and swarthy "complexion [that] might have seemed dark, had it not been relieved by a profusion of glossy black hair connect her with constructions of the non-white women who bears in her physical appearance and dress traces of upper and lower class identity, signs of the luxury and slavery associated with monarchism and aristocracy. The meaning of Philothea's name (love of God) and her description as a "model for the seraphs of Christian faith" confirm her strong resemblance to the stereotype of the morally unflappable and unpretentious middle-class white woman. Eudora's passions and her description as "an Olympian deity" confirm her resemblance to the disruptive "poor child" and the non-white woman (10).

Just as the two main characters in the novel resemble the types in the antebellum period, Child establishes parallels between her version of ancient Greece and the U.S. in the 1840s. Her Athens resembles the northern U.S. insofar as the former struggles to uphold moral, political, and economic stability as foreign influences and democratic institutions alter their ethos and their customs. Philosophers and artists in Child's novel resist these changes. They see "new teachers, misnamed philosophers rapidly hastening the decay of a state whose diseases produced them," and they think "the grove of Academus" is "one of the few places now remaining where virtue is

really taught and encouraged” (107). For instance, Anaxagoras warns against “demagogues, who now try to surfeit them with flattery, as nurses seek to pacify noisy children with sponges dipped in honey” and cautions that “ministering to that love of change allows nothing to remain sacred and established” while the politician, Pericles, argues that “respect for permanent institutions makes you blind to the love of change, inherent and active in the human mind” (52-53, 113-114). The discourse on representative democracy in *Philothea* resembles the discourse in the antebellum north where citizens and non-citizens worried that the U.S. had, as Anaxagoras puts it, replaced a “hereditary idol [monarchy] with a popular one [democracy]” thereby letting “idle demagogues control the revenues of industrious citizens.”

Much like the antebellum U.S., Child’s Greece is also divided along a north-south axis over slavery.¹⁷⁸ Athenians maintain tempered opposition to slavery—best exemplified by the fact that Phidias raises Eudora as a “free” woman. Spartans, however, “approve the law forbidding masters to bestow freedom on their slaves; and like the custom which permits boys to whip them, merely to remind them of their bondage.” According to Philaemon, an Athenian whose “foreign [Corinthian] blood” leads to his exile, claims that Spartans think “the sun of liberty shines bright with the dark atmosphere of slavery around it; as temperance seems more lovely to the Spartan youth, after they have seen [slaves] made beastly drunk for their amusement.” Unlike Athenians who discuss the uncertain state of their culture and their political system, Spartans, “make it a rule never to speak of danger from their slaves,” keeping quiet about the state of their polity, choosing to presume that, in contrast to their northern neighbors, they are above sociopolitical declension (117). Opposing Athens to Sparta defamiliarizes the U.S. regions in Child’s present

¹⁷⁸ For the only other critical reading available on Child’s *Philothea* other than Karcher and Streeter see Bruce Mills *Cultural Reformations: Lydia Maria Child and the Literature of Reform* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994). Mills discusses the relationship between the novel and race-based slavery in the 1830s.

while revealing the connection between political discourse and race-based slavery across those regions.

“Mere Domestic Slaves”

By drawing on a common school narrative in *Philothea*, Child shows how women’s objectification and race-based slavery co-contribute to social and political declension. More specifically, Philothea’s and Eudora’s stories disclose how fears of the unruly consequences of “satisfying the requirements of a restless people” are endemic to a polity denigrating women and a nation supporting slavery (52-53). Despite the fact that they are removed from the “benighted outer provinces” and raised as neighbors amidst the “beautiful variety” of Athens, in the beginning of the novel, Philothea and Eudora have different views about women’s conduct, which result from their status and free and un-free persons under the law (12). Philothea supports mutual respect between men and women expressed through courtship and marriage as well as a notion of romantic love predicated on an unequal relationship between the lover and the beloved. Eudora supports the latter but not the former. She believes women can achieve equality only through their beauty. Child construes Philothea’s philosophy as an a priori, divine principle that results in the esteem of elite Athenian men and women, best demonstrated by her nomination to embroider baskets for a ceremony known as the “grand procession of the Panathenea.” In contrast, Eudora’s philosophy is a posteriori, deriving from the young woman’s experience with current trends in Athenian society. She keeps company with Aspasia who Philothea calls a “dangerous woman” who “invest[s] vice with all the allurements of beauty and eloquence” (16). Eudora believes that by following Aspasia’s lessons women can “prove they are fit for

something better than mere domestic slaves,” allowing women to participate equally in public festivals without veils rather than simply making decorations for these festivals (16). Attempting to dissuade Eudora from the hubris Aspasia’s conduct encourages, Philothea tells her that women like her “will never raise women out of the bondage in which they are placed by the impurity and selfishness of man” because they use their bodies rather than their hearts and minds to contest their subjugation.

In *Philothea* Aspasia’s home doubles as a literal school for women’s ornamental education and a metaphor for a polity struggling to maintain the homogenous framework its architects and philosophers first used for its models. Applying to Philothea to get her to join her school, Aspasia refers to her home as a space where “ambitious women come to learn how to be distinguished; and the vain come to study the fashion of my garments and the newest braid of my hair” (31). At the same time, when Child describes the banquet held in Aspasia’s home it is apparent that they are not just entrées into a diverse, stratified, and contentious society. They reflect that society. For instance, Child limns the contrast between “the graceful simplicity of Grecian costume” and “the gorgeous apparel of the Asiatic and African guests” and distinction within Greek culture between those women with dresses embroidered with grasshoppers who are of “unmixed Athenian blood” and those, like Philothea, who display their mixed and middling statuses through “plain dress” (36). Disagreements over foreign and domestic cultural authority and politics at Aspasia’s school/banquet, and claims, for instance, that “Grecians import new divinities from other countries, as freely as slaves or papyrus, or marble” underscore the overlap between the perception of women’s conduct and rising civic instability created by slavery (45).

Child’s novel tends to promote the platonic wisdom for women proffered by its eponymous protagonist. Philothea warns Eudora to stay away from Aspasia, reminding her that

“a passion for distinction” is not “another name for love of the good, the true and the beautiful” (30). Her warnings to Eudora to avoid Aspasia and to be wary of Alcibiades advances prove necessary rather than overcautious when Alcibiades nearly ruins her reputation. However, Child also problematizes Philothea’s philosophy for women, first by reminding readers that it springs not from the heavens, but from education and socialization connected to the polity, and second, by illustrating that it applies unequally to “mere domestic slaves.” Eudora reminds Philothea that they both have been taught to be proper “Athenian maidens,” but the “spirit and gifts of freedom ill assort with the condition of a slave,” and she adds that “it would be better for me to have a slave’s mind with a slave’s destiny.” (66). Philothea reassures her, “I have no doubt that Phidias continues to be your master merely that he may retain lawful power to protect you, until you are the wife of Philaemon.” She then shifts from discussing Eudora’s prolonged lawful enslavement to discussing her friend’s jeopardized betrothal, reminding her that, “the fetters of love are a flowery bondage. Blossoms do not more easily unfold themselves to the sunshine, than woman obeys the object of her affections” (67). Deploying sentimental paternalism and the rhetoric of romantic love, Philothea seeks to calm and correct Eudora. Through Philothea’s two-tiered response, Child indicates that polities treating women as “mere domestic slaves” decline because they blur line between women and slaves. And they stabilize in part through the efforts of women, who, under the rubrics of their pious servitude, dilute structures of oppression that might otherwise unite them.

Exile to Settlement

By shifting in *Philothea* from scenes of women's domestic empowerment and disempowerment to scenes of democratic unrest, Child demonstrates that one cannot judge the success or failure to reconstruct the moral lives of its orphaned protagonists outside of political and economic development. In the novel, neither Philothea nor Eudora cause the declension Child depicts in the Athenian tribunals and ruined rural Greek landscapes in the novel's second half. Instead, her narrator identifies the interrelated causes for this declension: Aspasia's immoral social and political influence, representative democracy, slavery, war, and the plague. However, she primarily explores how Anaxagoras and Phidias, the two older moral and artistic authorities in the polity who have worked to ensure the security of these two young women, and the two young women, deal with the effects of the declining state. Shift in power from the high court (Areopagus) to local assemblies—through Pericles's attempt to “please the populace”—brings Anaxagoras and Phidias and their wards (Philothea and Eudora) to trial for “introduce[ing] new opinions about celestial things” (123). They face an unruly crowd who resemble in spirit what Alexis de Tocqueville terms the “moral empire of the majority,” that group disposition he sees in America, which “obliges legislators to submit not only to the general views, but even to the daily passions of their constituents.”¹⁷⁹ Each of them accepts mandated exile as further validation of the destructive consequences of this representative democracy's wayward directions.

While Philothea's and Eudora's platonic visions during their exile and its immediate aftermath underscore the two orphan's uncanny ability to see beyond the instability that inspired their exile, these visions also lead them to confront the history of their upbringing. Thus, on the

¹⁷⁹ Tocqueville, 237.

one hand, Philothea's dream of Eudora's seduction before it happens, confirming Philothea's claim to Aspasia that "the public voice is your oracle; I listen to the whispering of the gods in the stillness of my own heart; and never yet, dear lady, have those two oracles spoken the same language" (32). On the other hand, her vision bespeaks her acute understanding of that "public voice" based on a kinship between orphans who know what the other is thinking. Similarly, Philothea returns to Athens after Anaxagoras' death and marries Pericles' son, Paralus, who has been left an "invalid" who "breathes and moves, but is apparently unconscious of existence in this world" (147). His visions draw Philothea out of the plague-ridden city and into "the groves of Academus" where "a green meadow in the midst, on which rests a broad belt of sunshine. Above it, are floating little children with wings; and they throw down garlands to little children without wings, who are looking upward with joyful faces." (149). Yet it also draws her into her history as child who received garlands from these same groves. Lastly, in the midst of her escape from being held captive by Alcibiades, Eudora sees a vision of the now deceased Paralus and Philothea who tell her who she must go to for help. The vision leads her to see beyond an Athens full of men "with whom nothing is sacred" (245) and to discover and reunite with her Persian father and diplomat, Artaphernes, learn of her early history, and escape from Athenian laws holding her in captivity.

On the heels of such historicizing visions, Child's novel ends by advancing a family settlement model based on mutual respect between men and women, the abolition of slavery, tempered trade, and a cosmopolitan scholasticism divorced from political culture. Eudora's marriage to Philaemon rejects the recommendations of the Persian King and Eudora's father, privileging love and affection over rank. The Athenian and Persian men learn that men like Alcibiades, and the political systems and laws empowering them, are responsible for women's

supposed scandals. As a sign of this realization, Eudora's escape from Alcibiades and her father's negotiation of her freedom coincides with the freeing of other slaves and servants in the novel. As Child points out, however, these equalities and liberties are relative for women. Eudora leaves a corrupt Greece and enters Persia "recollect[ing] how her lively spirit had sometimes rebelled against the restraints imposed on Grecian women, and sigh[ing] to think of all she had heard concerning the far more rigid customs of Persia." Naturally, she finds it difficult to remain "enveloped in a long, thick veil, that descended to her feet, with two small openings of net-work for the eyes" (267). While escaping Athens where "everything in that country was in a troubled and unsettled state" she encounters rigid restrictions in the culture of her own people.

Child suggests that Eudora and Philaemon's relocation is preferable to the disorder and immorality in Athens and the royal strictures and rituals that come with living in proximity to the Persian King. They find what she indicates is the most palatable balance for women in "situated in a fertile valley, called the Queen's girdle, because of its revenues were appropriated to that costly article of the royal wardrobe" and near a "plain obelisk" rather than "the temples or altars; objects to which her eye had always been accustomed" (268). The city "afford[s] a convenient harbor for Tyrian merchants, and this brought in the luxuries of Phoenicia," but also provides "opportunities for literary communication between the East and the West" and "celebrated schools under the direction of the Magii, frequently visited by learned men from Greece, Ethiopia, and Egypt." (282-283). Here Philaemon "devote[s] himself to the quiet pursuits of literature; and Eudora, happy in her father, husband and children thankfully acknowledge[s] the blessings of her lot." If the novel relegates Eudora to the role of mother rather than merchant or scholar, her decision to name her daughter, Philothea, suggests that the new "gentle maiden with plaintive voice and earnest eyes" may find in her resolve a means of resisting the sex-based

constraints that accompany social, political and economic development. Read as a revision of a basic narrative about raising orphans imperiled by a fraught backdrop, Child illustrates that this version of settlement, while certainly not perfect, is a cultural imperative for a U.S. empire if it wishes to survive the transition from settler colonial supported monarchy to settler colonial representative democracy.

Reading *A Romance of the Republic*

A Romance of the Republic (1867) is a historical romance based on a history that is far more recent than the one depicted in lavish detail in *Philothea*. The story begins in the 1840s, the later events of the novel cover the Civil War years, and the concluding chapters occur during early reconstruction. The novel is primarily about Rosa and Flora Royal, two “octoroon” sisters who are the daughters of a northern U.S. white merchant and a “West Indian” woman. Their mother has died and her daughters live in their father’s New Orleans home. He succeeds in concealing his daughters from the public but not in freeing either his former wife or his daughters from slavery. In their attempt to escape the legal strictures of U.S. slavery after their father’s sudden death, the two sisters flee from New Orleans to an island off the coast of Savannah, Georgia with Gerald Fitzgerald, a man who tricks them into thinking that he is Rosa’s legal husband and Flora’s benevolent protector. Because first Flora and then Rosa discover Gerald’s intentions, the two sisters must separate, the first escaping to Boston, the second to Italy, both through the help of family friends. The sister’s remarkable journeys, their aid, and their reaction to both, frame women’s struggle to escape from race-based slavery and deal with misogyny and racism in the antebellum U.S.

Carolyn Karcher argues that even though Child's decision to write a post-bellum romance at the height of her popularity as a polemicist seems paradoxical, it fits with her desire to "step symbolically into her mother's role and offer a generation of young readers the mothering she had not received." Karcher argues that while trying to imagine an equalitarian, interracial nation, Child was also influenced by a race, sex, and class-based paternalism "mar[ring] the prescription for reform."¹⁸⁰ Her reading explains why Child saw her scathing critique of the white, Johnsonian networks hijacking reconstruction and her writing of this novel as complementary social justice endeavors. However, *A Romance of the Republic's* adherence to white, bourgeois family values also stems from common school missions and the children's narratives that convey them. Such missions and narratives inform how we should read Child's representation of unequal, liberal racial taxonomies and her subversion of patriarchal tradition. Appreciating the way the common school focus on reconstructing the moral life of the child informs *A Romance of the Republic* requires looking beneath the direct connections between the novel and abolition, which appear everywhere starting with the dedication to "the mother and father of Col. R.G. Shaw, early and ever-faithful friends of freedom and equal rights."¹⁸¹ In fact, it means temporarily adopting the perspective of initial reviewers of the novel who, likely in an effort to downplay the memory of race-based slavery after emancipation, chose to make no explicit remark about Child's literary representation of slaves, abolitionists, slave owners, and auctioneers. For instance, one periodical cryptically claims the book was ideal for readers "fond of war fictions" who will "find here one that is quite spirited and strongly in the interest of the well-known views of the author"; another notes that *A Romance of the Republic* rivaled Harriet

¹⁸⁰ Karcher, 526.

¹⁸¹ C.R.G. Shaw commanded the first northern black regiment in the Civil War.

Beecher Stowe's famous "book of mark."¹⁸² What these reviewers do not make explicit—the novel's commentary on slavery and on women's rights—can be recovered by considering how the novel engages with northern education reforms achieved through the common school movement.

The Stupor of Alfred King

A Romance of the Republic opens in medias res with the elderly New Orleans merchant, Alfred Royal, asking the young, Bostonian, Alfred Royal King, what he plans to "do with himself" while he is in the "Crescent City" on business. He then excuses himself for not calling Alfred "Mr. King," on the grounds that he was close friends with King's father: "It used to be a joke with us that we must be cousins, since he was a King and I was of the Royal family" (7). This exchange indicates with near absurdity the white fraternal political and economic networks linking the north and the south and the uncanny semblances between the two regions. These ties and semblances ironize the bildungsroman-like narrative Child also chooses to nestle into this first chapter through her description of Alfred's trip down south as a continental tour on which he can experience "the attractions of a foreign land" (8). In relation to the Kings and Royals being bandied about here, Alfred's trip seems less like a proud step forward into the broader world and more like a step back, less like progress toward adulthood and more like reversion into childhood memory. Child was likely influenced in her decision to ironize King's perspective by an editorial against European and continental tours, which she published the same year as her

¹⁸² Anonymous, *The Independent* (Philadelphia: Aug 1, 1867) vol 9, issue 7, p 191.

novel.¹⁸³ Regardless of her influences, from the moment Royal invites King to meet his daughters, explaining “I thought there was nothing better worth seeing than my daughters” (7) Child has already created the sense that this is ideologically, if not geographically, a place King has already been.

Through Alfred’s reaction to the Royal home and the Royal sisters, Child continues to indicate the ironic commonness of the novel’s northern King. He enters the house, meets the Royal sisters for the first time, and they proceed to put on a musical show for King, Royal, and the unexpected houseguest, Gerald Fitzgerald. During the evening, King, “forgets that I am a stranger...entirely before I had been in the house ten minutes” (10). He gets ensconced in, what is, for him, not an uncomfortable “foreign” place at all. Child suggests that his comfort stems from his view of the inseparability of the sisters from their surroundings, which allows King to indulge his evident desires (for Rosa) by sublimating them into a more acceptable vision (the home). In this first encounter with them, that is, he is never at risk of becoming much of a lover because he is already spent on artistic and domestic things, including books, musical instruments, and furniture all of which “would forevermore be a prominent feature in the landscape of his life” (11). His safe investment becomes apparent when he returns the morning after:

[He] was again shown into that parlor every feature of which was so indelibly impressed upon his memory. Portions of the music of *Cerentola* lay open on the piano, and the leaves fluttered softly in a gentle breeze laden with perfumes from the garden. Nearby was swinging the beaded tassel of a bookmark between the pages of a half-opened volume. He looked at the title and saw that it was *Lalla Rookh*. He smiled, as he glanced round the room on the flowery festoons, the graceful tangle of bright arabesque on the walls, the Dancing Girl, and the Sleeping Cupid. ‘All is in harmony with Canova, and

¹⁸³ Child wrote a short sketch entitled “Illustrations of Human Progress” in which she critiques European travel and elitist education for their ability to maintain class hierarchies. *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Econ...* Oct 10, 1867; 19, 984; American Periodicals Series Online pg. 2

Moore, and Rossini,' thought he. 'The Lady in Milton's *Comus* has been the ideal of my imagination; and now here I am so strangely taken captive-by—'" (22).

In this scene, Alfred expresses his surprise at being enamored with a model of femininity, which counters the northern "ideal of my imagination." His attention to the home's lavish artistic details and the abrupt climax at the end of the passage, however, reinforce Child's subtle point that Alfred's desires can easily be rechanneled and used up. He can fulfill his attraction to Rosa Royal—the pliable obverse to Milton's chaste "Lady"—through her disembodied voice and, more generally, through the art consumed and produced by the Royal sisters.

As Dana Nelson points out, Child unmasks the violence of sentimental discourse by revealing how similar patriarchal traditions govern Fitzgerald's decision to "rescue" the Royal sisters and Alfred Royal's decision to keep his daughters and their mother un-manumitted.¹⁸⁴ However, just as importantly, it is through her stark contrast between Fitzgerald and King that Child addresses the complex regional ties surrounding race-based slavery. Fitzgerald asserts, of Rosa and Flora, "were I the Grand Bashaw, I would have them both in my harem" (14); King admires Rosa from a distance for "her glowing Oriental beauty and state grace" (24). Fitzgerald leaves the dinner party at the Royal House and, after he informs King that Rosa and Flora's mother was a "quadroon," and starts scheming to make his orientalist fantasy a reality; King lies awake in bed with "the panorama of the preceding evening revolv[ing] through the halls of memory with every variety of fantastic change" (16). Furthermore, when Royal explains the secret history of daughters to King the next day, he similarly turns it into a regressive, progressive tale of his father's republican grand tour:

He often used to speak of having met a number of Turkish women when he was in the environs of Constantinople. They were wrapped up like bales of cloth, with two small

¹⁸⁴ Nelson, 80-81.

openings for their eyes, mounted on camels, and escorted by the overseer of the harem. The animal sound of their chatter and giggling, as they passed him affected him painfully; for it forced upon him the ideas what different beings those women would have been if they had been brought up amid the free churches and schools of New England. He always expounded history to me in the light of that conviction; and he mourned that temporary difficulties should prevent lawgivers from checking the growth of evils that must have a blighting influence on the souls of many generations. (21).

Rather than discussing the prospect of giving the sisters their freedom, King underscores the effects of women's oppression in order to establish his distance from it, as a truly benevolent and free product of northern institutions. The fact that he and his father occupy similar positions of touristic privilege in different locations further underscores their place of refuge from the actions of "lawgivers" and law-followers.

While Fitzgerald makes plans to claim the Royal sisters for his imagined "harem", Alfred ends his visit, explaining his affection for the sisters based on family affiliation rather than on his attraction to Rosa, which he continues to suppress and sublimate on account of the "prejudices" of his mother. Child's narrator does not critique Alfred's inactions or *his* prejudices, however, one review of the novel from *The Independent* picks up on their effect, and this review helps unpack the *regional*, gendered critique at the heart of the novel:

Its sketches of character are clear, strong, natural. It was not surprising to us that Gerald was successful as a lover, for he is certainly agreeable; and Alfred, with all due respect to Boston, and his personal worth is a stick till very late in the novel. Even then his broadcloth sits a little silly on him, and one wants to shake him up somewhat vigorously in the manner of Miss. Swallowweed.¹⁸⁵

At the end here, this reviewer alludes to a character from Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) to indicate his distaste for Alfred King's blandness. According to the reviewer, King warrants a thorough shaking to give him some personality and energy. While the reference to Dickens illustrates intriguing transnational strategies for reading early U.S. novels, it also captures how

¹⁸⁵ *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Econ...* Oct 10, 1867; 19, 984; pg. 2.

Child presents King: as a bit stuffy yet also always (like Dickens' Mr. Smallweed) on the verge of reverie. By presenting King as a prudish white man with a narcoleptic tendency though, Child is not trying and failing to create a likeable character (as the reviewer suggests). She uses this characterization to reveal a regional culture gap addressed by northern education reform. A plain Yankee and a secret lover of the Arts "abroad," Alfred appears in need of a link between the two provided by common schooling at home. His trip down south and his reaction to the Royal house and the Royal sisters exposes this absent link rather than affirming the exceptional power of the northern free institutions he and his father tout. Critics then and now might wish to shake King up a bit to remedy this lack so his actions accord with his desires. However, it would be remiss for us to do so, for, as Child illustrates, fusing his dull formality and dreamy inclination make it easier to accept that common schooling will reconcile northern elitism and egalitarianism. Child returns to King's soporific reaction in the middle of the novel when Alfred meets Rosa again in Italy, and he presumptuously informs her, "I see that room as distinctly as you can see it...It has often been in my dreams, and the changing events of my life have never banished it from my memory for a single day" (175). Child also confirms his behavior in later scenes without King when Boston abolitionists abruptly drop the subject of slavery and northern freedom to discuss "the Alhambra and Washington Irving and listen to Flora "singing the Moorish ballad of 'Xarifa'" (191). This pattern begins, though, with the initial stupor of Alfred King.

The Royal Treatment

Several scenes after the dinner party with Alfred King take place in a plush and ethereal Royal house with only the sisters going about their daily routines. The house doubles as an

exoticized, southern “temple of floras” and a school. Through Child’s detailed descriptions, it appears as the strange, mystical world where Rosa and Flora grow up and a place where they receive an education characterized by common school practices, including rote learning followed by artistic and intellectual exploration for moral certainty, personal cultivation, and livelihood. Prior to their enjoying and producing music and visual art, they receive formal instruction from Madame Guirlande who teaches them “embroidery, the manufacture of artificial flowers, and other fancy work” and from Signor Papanti who gives them singing lessons (16). Signor Papanti insists Flora repeat after him and Madame Guirlande encourages them to fashion their work after the natural world while her noisy parrot implies that repetition is an integral, if bothersome, part of formal education.¹⁸⁶ What one witnesses in the Royal house is a progressive pedagogy similar to the one outlined in one of Lindley Murray’s primers, *English Exercises*: “instruction which is enlivened by pertinent examples and in which the pupil is exercised in reducing the rules to practice” creates “a more striking effect on the mind and is better adapted to fix the attention and sharpen the understanding than that which is divested of these aids and confined to bare propositions and precepts”¹⁸⁷ Rosa and Flora learn first through “bare propositions and precepts” before creating artwork based on “pertinent examples.”

The emphasis on structured training in the Arts depicted in the Royal house makes Rosa and Flora appealing, infantilized, and aestheticized “tragic quadroons” for Child’s white northern readers, as Karcher and other scholars have noted. However, it also jarringly situates the sisters’ development in the context of a common school culture that had been based on a nationalized

¹⁸⁷ Lindley Murray, *English Exercises: Adapted to the Grammar Lately Published by L. Murray: Consisting of Exemplifications of the Parts of Speech, Instances of False Orthography, Violations of the Rules of Syntax, Defects in Punctuation, and Violations of the Rules Respecting Perspicuity and Accuracy: Designed for the Benefit of Private Learners, As Well As for the Use of Schools.* (1848) 2.

regional, humanist critique of rote, harsh, and confining women's educations and a pleasure-oriented ornamental education. While readers learn in the first two chapters how Rosa and Flora are, by law, possessions of their father who has failed to manumit either them or their mother before she died, what remains unclear is whether the Royal House represents the cultured aspirations of a post-Civil war north or the embarrassing, backward ways of a southern slave-owning aristocracy. Is it, institutionally speaking, where the U.S. has been or where it is going? Similarly, the girl's and their father's playful, multilingual name-calling ("cher papa," "papita," "mignone,")—their "olla podrida," as they call it—signifies two ways. It is a general sign of the Royal women's foreign exoticism and innocence and their father's paternal misogyny and racism. But it also, more concretely, exemplifies the product of a cosmopolitan, northern scholasticism diffusing out from elite, learned academies into common schools. With its overt aestheticism, the Royal house resembles such new schools, asking northern readers in particular to consider what if anything constitutes the difference between themselves and the daughters, their region and the south. The formatting further de-stabilizes reader expectations about their subject position as consumers of this novel. All of the non-English words in *A Romance of the Republic* are italicized. In this way, the book eschews Tuthill's advice in the *Young Lady's Reader*, "it has been left in most cases for the reader to discover the rhetorical figure, or figures in each piece without the aid of italics; such assistance would be a poor compliment, both to author and reader." The novel instead suggests readers need this assistance, thereby placing them in the position of students as well as privileged observers of ostensible racial and cultural difference.

Child's use of flowers in *A Romance of the Republic* demonstrates the complexity of her novel vis-à-vis formal education. All of her female characters are named after flowers, and they

are, as Flora puts it, all too often surrounded by “Flowers everywhere! Natural flowers, artificial flowers, painted flowers, embroidered flowers, and human flowers....” (R, 13).¹⁸⁸ This flower focus does not end when Alfred Royal dies and Rosa and Flora discover they are, by law, slaves. As Rosa and Flora prepare to flee New Orleans, there is a knock at the door, and the girls think it may be Mr. Bruteman and other auctioneers coming to capture them, but it is Blumenthal with baskets adorned with flowers (44). As she contemplates escaping Fitzgerald’s plantation, Flora appears “on the threshold of the open door, with her arms full of flowers.” Mrs. Delano and Flora await the possible arrival of Fitzgerald at Delano’s Boston home: “Before they settled to their occupations, a ring at the door made Flora start, and quickened the pulses of her less excitable friend. It proved to be only a box of flowers from the country.” (114). On the one hand, flowers disclose the sexist commodification of the Royal sisters, revealing how white men vie for their possession and keep them, like “trapped flowers” (33). On the other hand, by presenting flowers as just beyond the sisters’ reach, Child anesthetizes their torturous legal bind. By aestheticizing earlier, northern education reform language in which children figured as trees or plants that had to be molded and shaped, Child reveals insidious, sex-based antebellum power dynamics, but she also bars from vision much of the brutality and labor which characterized race-based slavery.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ In several of her early short sketches and stories Child showed continued fascination with flowers. She published the novel, *Rose Marian and the Flower Fairies* in 1857. She also published the following “it-Narratives”: “The Adventures of a Dandelion,” *Evenings in New England. Intended for Juvenile Amusement and Instruction*. Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, 1824. “The History of a Pin,” *The New York Mirror and Ladies’ Literary Gazette*, 25 March 1826. “Adventures of a Bell,” *Juvenile Miscellany* 2 (March 1827): 24-30; rpt. *Massachusetts Journal* 8 March 1827: 4. “The Adventures of a Rain Drop,” *The Token* for 1828. Boston: S. G. Goodrich, 1828, 78-83; rpt. *Massachusetts Journal* 29 January 1828, 1; rpt. *The Coronal*. Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1832. 190-200.

¹⁸⁹ Child presents her floral philosophy in *The Freedmen’s Book*, a schoolbook for ex-slaves, which she wrote at the same time that she was writing *A Romance of the Republic*. She concludes the primer with the following lesson in a section entitled, “Advice from an Old Friend”: “It is a public benefit to remove everything dirty or unsightly, and to surround homes with verdure and flowers; for a succession of pretty cottages makes the whole road pleasant, and

Routes and “Root[s] o things”

In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1977), Pierre Bourdieu and Claude Passeron contend that the “controlled mobility of a limited category of individuals, carefully selected and modified by and for individual ascent, is not incompatible with the permanence of structures of relations between classes.”¹⁹⁰ They go on to discuss how formal education facilitates this highly selective mobility under the guise of dramatic social and political change. Their claim is useful for understanding how Child depicts Rosa and Flora Royal’s distinct integrations into a class stratified and racially divided north because that integration bears resemblance to narratives associated with escape from slavery and to common schooling. Mrs. Delano helps Flora escape from Fitzgerald and remain concealed from slave-catchers while they live together in Boston, calling to mind familiar antebellum slave narratives. The relationship between the two women, though, is also analogous to the connection between Heinrich and his benefactor in the “The Poor Child and the Christ Child,” and the relationship invokes common school practices as well as the driving liberal ethos of the movement. Mrs. Delano, a rich, white Boston widow aids Flora’s escape from Fitzgerald; then she seeks “to educate her after the New

cheers all passers by; while they are at the same time an advertisement, easily read by all men, that the people who live there are not lazy slovenly, or vulgar. The rich pay a great deal of money for pictures to ornament their walls but a whitewashed cabin, with flowering-shrubs and vines clustering round it, is a pretty picture freely exhibited to all men. It is a public benefaction” (272). For a recent reading focused on reparations in Child’s *A Romance of the Republic* and the *Freedmen’s Book* see Jeffrey Clymer’s *Family Money: Property, Race, and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For another influential short reading focused on slavery, violence and family dynamics see Shirley Samuels, *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) ch. 6.

¹⁹⁰ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (New York: Sage 1986) 71.

England pattern.” She realizes in Rome, however, that with Flora “one might as well try to plough with a butterfly, as to teach her ancient history,” for the “ruins...interested her less than any other features of the landscape; while their guide was telling the story of mouldering arches, she was looking through them at the clear blue sky and the soft outline of the hills” (147). Mrs. Delano’s difficulty suggests problems with this “New England pattern” when it comes to this particular type of student.

Despite these potential flaws in Mrs. Delano’s pedagogy and Flora’s constitution, Child does emphasize that this relationship is not one-directional with the wise, worldly, and white Mrs. Delano always trying to teach her callow, wayward, “octoroon” student: “with her strange history and unworldly ways she is educating me more than I can educate her”; and, “the gratified lady passed her arm round the waist of the loving-child, and they ascended to their rooms like two confidential school-girls” (71, 157). Mrs. Delano begins with a view of slaves, which is not dissimilar from Fitzgerald, who claims, “They [slaves] are nearly all musical, and wonderfully imitative....They can catch almost anything they hear,” or, from the narrator, who observes, “belonging to an imitative race, she readily adopted the language and manners of those around her” (96, 84). But she recognizes, “as for my education, I have learned to consider it in many respects false” (301). Mrs. Delano’s recognition, though, ultimately obscures Flora’s progress in critical thinking, or art, creating the sense that she is the same imitative, flighty young child she was at the start of the novel, and, paradoxically, that she commits to Mrs. Delano’s new value system.

Rosa’s integration into the north shows that while the routes into that region can differ the results are the same. Rosa escapes Fitzgerald’s clutches and travels to Italy with Madame Guirlande and Signor Papanti where she becomes an opera singer who can convey emotion

through song without becoming insipid or “tearing a passion to tatters” (92). Her decision to eschew international fame and avoid performing roles, which obscure her “noble character and pure heart,” illustrates her independent gravitation toward Mrs. Delano’s northern values.¹⁹¹ Alfred King’s help as Rosa’s “invisible guardian” further supports her chosen movement away from the public stage and toward the austerity and privacy of New England country life (118). While Rosa and Flora learn to be artistic, yet also seem to come by artistic skills naturally, their separate paths to escape from slavery and enter into a regional culture on its terms exemplify the social mobility that Bourdieu and Passeron discuss. Their successful freedom and assimilation appears to illustrate substantive change, but it never disrupts class relations or prejudices. Child’s novel does not question the implications of tacit their confirmation of a formal education founded on the values of the dominant group habitus. However, because the representation of the sisters’ journeys and their struggles is similar to common school narratives, they are legible as white youth that teachers are trying to improve as well as pleasing non-white women whose natures render them beyond reform.

Just as initial, liberal northern apprehension with rising abolitionism and the bloody Civil War get resolved over the course of *A Romance of the Republic*, so too do the novel’s romantic challenges. Alfred and Rosa and Lily and Mr. Blumenthal marry. Their burgeoning settlement—buttressed by their children, and the improvement of their former slaves—inspires Rosa to “long to sell my diamonds, and use the money to build school-houses for the freedmen...” and, causes

¹⁹¹ In representing Rosa, Child follows the philosophy laid out in *Sander’s Young Ladies Reader for higher Female Seminaries* (1858): “As in life, so in one’s studies, the most beautiful and the most humane thing is, I think so to blend the grave and the gay, that the one may not settle down into melancholy, nor the other degenerate into levity.” Because the novel follows the life of two women beyond the age of young ladies, it serves as a supplement to Sander’s instruction and a commentary on the consequences of the co-mingling of the graver and the gay—a comingling that promised to bring together north and south, black and white in a new union based primarily on northern white conceptions.

King to reflect, “If half a century of just treatment and free schools can bring them all up to this level, our battles will not be in vain, and we deserve to rank among the best benefactors of the country; to say nothing of a corresponding improvement in the white population” (295). Their desires and hopes cordon them off from the psychological and economic repercussions of the superiority underlying their benevolent rhetoric.

Rosa’s and Flora’s reunion where they “talk over news, public and private; not omitting the prospects of Tom’s children, and the progress of Tulee’s” demonstrates the ability of family to unearth violent histories, and through this history to give greater depth and meaning to current sociality and civism (297). Addressing this point, Captain Bright, a neighbor, put the issue in terms that signal reconstruction-era industrialism: “I don’t generally like to go among Boston folks. Just look at the trees on the Common. They’re dying because they’ve rolled the surface of the ground so smooth... They take so much pains to make the surface smooth, that it kills the roots o’ things. But when I come here, or go to Mr. Blumenthal’s, I feel as if the roots o’ things wa’n’t killed.” (302). Rather than just concluding with this image of the multicultural, multiracial King-Blumenthal family as a rough and rooted New England commons alone, *A Romance of the Republic* also ends with a parade and an abolitionist tableau similarly removed from the “root o’ things”:

Under festoons of the American flag, surmounted by the eagle, stood Eulalia, in ribbons of red, white and blue with a circle of stars round her head. One hand upheld the shield of the Union and in the other the scale of Justice were evenly poised. By her side stood Rosen Blumen, holding in one hand a gilded pole surmounted by a liberty-cap, while her other hand rested protectingly on the head Tulee’s Benny, who was kneeling and looking upward in Thanksgiving (302).

The tableau commemorates emancipation, the end of the Civil war and Alfred King’s birthday. It expresses allegiance to a U.S. father (signified by the singing of “Hail to the Chief”) and a

northern settler father. It is a staging, like King, which is dull and glossy, superficially conveying a history, yet also dreamily divorced from it. While the tableau is meant to convey the nation's ability to overcome prejudice and racism through overt symbolism, it lacks the mystique and emotional vitality Child depicts in the Royal house and in the orphaned sisters' floral and musical Arts. Falling to meet these aesthetic standards and convey the struggle, violence, and sexual exploitation surrounding them, it seems like a facile representation of the end of political struggle and a poor expression of a textured and layered culture. Its convenience and campiness ironically prepares readers for northern education reform's social, economic, and psychological impact on settlers seeking asylum and recognition as well as those furnishing an education, teachers and students alike.

This chapter has illustrated how common school pedagogies, and a children's narrative derived from them, serve as informative subtexts for reading Lydia Maria Child's *Philothea* and *A Romance of the Republic*. While these two novels were published in the early antebellum and post-bellum periods, respectively, and have widely different subject matter, they reflect Child's abiding interest in using history to explore the relationship among women's social roles, race-based slavery, and representative democracy. Furthermore, they reveal her consistent literary strategies for revealing this disabling and energizing relationship, specifically, her strategic use of lyricism and manifest philosophical and political content. Informing such literary strategies, I have argued, are liberal, Anglo-Protestant pedagogies shaping Child's view of the transformative possibilities and limits of social reform. Children's stories, such as "The Poor Child and the Christ Child," which best expressed the spirit of the common school movement, provided her with a narrative template through which to create histories linking women's development and empowerment to dysfunctional polities. By revising this template in *Philothea* and *A Romance of*

the Republic, Child creates alternative models of family settlement to ease the transition from monarchy to representative democracy. They were not without the exclusive, and often patronizing liberal benevolence motivating the common school movement, but they nevertheless left open the possibility that women might contest inequity through their philosophical visions, voices, and arts.

Coda

“Where We Have Been Heading All Along”:

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Manifest Destiny, and the Politics of Education

In 1845 John O. Sullivan coined the term “manifest destiny” to describe what he perceived as an obvious, pre-ordained national right to expand and annex all western territory to the Pacific Ocean. Northern education reformers who embraced this perceived right, such as Horace Mann, inspired ideals of expanded freedom even as those very ideals helped justify dispossession and hierarchical strictures. Like Sullivan and Mann over 100 years before him, Frederick Rudolph, a renowned historian of American higher education, begins his edited collection, *Essays on Education in the Early Republic* (1965), by locating an idealized realization of progressive expansion in the American West. Rudolph’s assessment of 1960s California as the symbol of “the future” illuminates the conceptual legacy of manifest destiny in U. S. education history:

Anyone who has been to California recently knows he is in the presence of the future. He may not like everything that he finds there, but he cannot escape a deep sense that this is where we have been heading all along—a world where everyone is young, including the aged and retired, and where no one works, except teachers...In the end, when affluence and automation have at last freed all men from the burden of mind and of heart, California will be indistinguishable from the University of California and all its many satellites. It almost is now, but the extent to which we are nearly everywhere becoming a nation of students and teachers has been hidden from us by our failure to recognize the sum of the parts that make this conclusion inescapable. Retirement comes earlier and lasts longer, vacations are longer and more frequent, marriage comes earlier and child-rearing days come to an end earlier, and every year we push forward the terminal year of formal education for hundreds of thousands of young men and women.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Frederick Rudolph, *Essays on Education in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965), 2.

For present-day readers, Rudolph's commentary and forecasting read like bad utopian science fiction, at least insofar as his sunny predictions have not come to pass. New immigrant and extra-national labor—not simply “automation”—have enabled luxuries, but only for the enfranchised and entitled, and our global capitalist market has not eradicated the “burdens of heart and mind.”¹⁹³ With California as his telos, Rudolph fantasizes the nation's proximity to a fabled place “where we have been heading all along”—a place without any political and economic struggle. Ubiquitous education in this “nation of students and teachers” represents both the sign (one that we have “fail[ed] to recognize”) and the cause of a more perfect, more expansive, more democratic American future.

Rudolph's logic about the inevitable democratization of education exposes a longstanding intellectual history whereby U. S. writers (particularly privileged white male reformers and academics) have conceived the democratic expansion of education in terms of a rightful, inescapable political transformation—a manifest destiny. Driven by the accepted mandates of settler colonialism and draped in idealizations of New England or California, this fantasy is characterized by a persistent failure to account for the hierarchical exclusions and oppressions that accompany bureaucratic institutional development. During the post-bellum 1870s, formal education began to cohere into a newly centralized bureaucratic system and this nascent system shifted the complex relationships among U. S. political subjects, social customs, pedagogical practices, and the function of the novel as an agent of reform.

In this Coda, I explore how the fantasies later rehearsed by Rudolph were satirized during the 1870s by novelists such as María Amparo Ruiz de Burton. I argue that Ruiz de Burton's first novel

¹⁹³ Also, the white male upper- and middle-class luxuries of retirement and vacationing have declined as more people cobble together multiple jobs to support themselves. Marriage has been occurring later rather than earlier and modern science has made it possible for child bearing and “child-rearing” to occur at older ages.

Who Would Have Thought It? (1872) represents a larger shift in U. S. fiction away from what I have interpreted as critical *proposals* for education reform and toward more exclusively critical satires or *critiques* of existing education practices in a newly institutionalized system. It is this institutional framework and its white patriarchal composition that Mann, Rudolph, and others neglect when perpetuating fantasies of manifest destiny predicated on romanticized California or New England schools. I interpret Ruiz de Burton's novel as a critique of New England's racist, fantasy-fueled political (dis)order—a critique so bleak that the narrative cannot imagine an alternative family settlement or corresponding pedagogical model within the boundaries of the U. S. For Ruiz de Burton, an improved sociopolitical model of education in the settler-colonial nation could only mean permanent *un*-settlement, or escape, for people—especially Mexican-Americans—whom the expanding nation either marginalizes or injures as the cost of legalized political corruption.

Who Would Have Thought It? (1872) is the first novel published in North America by a Mexican American.¹⁹⁴ It is a post-bellum historical romance set during the Civil War and centered around two middle-class Anglo-Protestant New England families: the Norvals and the Cackles. The Norvals come into a great fortune because the geologist father, Dr. James Norval, who is exploring in California, meets two captives held by Apache Indians: a young Mexican girl, Lola Medina, and her dying mother. Lola's mother instructs Dr. Norval to use the gold and diamonds that she has hidden to adopt Lola and raise her as a Catholic. The narrative focuses on Lola's difficult upbringing in a corrupt Anglo-Protestant New England made particularly hostile by Mrs. Norval's unwavering bigotry, envy of Lola's beauty, and successful plots to seize the treasure promised to her upon her maturation. Lola grows up alongside the Norvals' neighbors, the gossipy and cowardly Cackles, who

¹⁹⁴ María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?* Ed. Amelía Maria de La Luz Montes (New York: Penguin Classics, 2009). All references to this novel come from this edition.

rise to political prominence through misattributed military fame. Surviving the racist treatment and greedy machinations of these families, Lola falls in love with the European-educated Julian Norval, who holds patriotic views of the U. S. until he suffers wrongful character assassination in Washington. Lola eventually escapes New England and, in the final scene, reunites with Julian in Mexico, where the couple will marry and start a family.

Ruiz de Burton's title, *Who would have thought it?*, satirizes both failed *predictions* of the nation's future and failed *evaluations* of its present state, which proponents of Manifest Destiny described using a morally righteous rhetoric of exceptionalism: the United States appears as a triumphant Protestant nation destined for greatness. Ruiz de Burton's titular question thus critiques a primary feature of the discourse of manifest destiny: false visions of the relationship between imperial expansion and representative democracy, the combined efforts of which actually resulted in American Indian dispossession, patriarchal and racist exclusionism, and institutionalized corruption. In her political farce, blind fantasies of the nation's greatness were promulgated by both New England citizens *and* non-citizens, who fail to discern each other's hidden motivations and hypocritical behaviors despite their shared regional cum national affiliation. She critiques the failures of prediction (Who would have thought it?) that derive from failures to understand the very peoples and institutions that make up the new, still-divided nation. Knowing one another, Ruiz de Burton implies, requires a radically distinct system of family settlement, formal education, and intra-national political process.

Stitching together subplots with settings in the U. S., Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa, Ruiz de Burton embroils romantic and political plots to wage her critique. Together, the narrative's various transnational episodes present plot elements familiar to readers of early U. S. fiction by Crèvecoeur, Hannah Foster, and others, for the episodes involve a wayward Anglo-

American father's frontier confrontation with Indians and a young woman's encounters with male libertines and her experiences receiving bad advice and worse security from those around her. Ruiz de Burton's novel also shares with historical romances, such as *The Prairie* and *A Romance of the Republic*, a thematic interest in the question of which people would become citizens and non-citizens in the new nation and how those people ought to behave. Like her literary predecessors, she explores this theme through the story of a young woman whom other characters alternately identify as white and black, civilized and savage, royalty and peasantry. Yet, while following some of the generic conventions of earlier U. S. fiction, Ruiz de Burton diverges from her predecessors by introducing the figure of the Mexican-American. Her narrative asks how the polarized and polarizing person that is a light-skinned Mexican-American girl was to be educated in the new nation—and, in the process exposes the violent prejudice of white, New England society.

Scholars have already situated this recently recovered novel within Mexican-American literary histories, Chicana feminist studies, and trans-American cultural and political studies.¹⁹⁵ As

¹⁹⁵ José F. Aranda Jr. and Gretchen Murphy, who study Mexican American literary history and nineteenth-century trans-American cultural and political relations, respectively, emphasize how the novel draws attention to U.S. attempts to acquire Mexican land and resources in the 1840s and 1850s. Murphy identifies Norval's fortune (predicated on Lola's family money) as a symbol for the U.S. accumulation of Mexican wealth after the Mexican American War (1846-1848) José Aranda, *When We Arrive: A New Literary History of Mexican America*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003); Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); See also José F. Aranda Jr., "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies", *American Literature* (Duke University Press, 1998) 70 (3): 551–579. John-Michael Rivera, *The Emergence of Mexican America: Recovering Stories of Mexican Peoplehood in U.S. Culture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2006). Arturo Aldama and Margaret D. Jacobs connect the novel to mid-nineteenth century racial discourses, while Beth Fisher connects it to the period's theater conventions, and Ann Goldman tracks its print culture history. See Arturo Aldama, (2002), "See How I am Received: Nationalism, Race, and Gender in *Who Would Have Thought It?*," *Decolonial Voices: Chicana and Chicano Cultural Studies in the 21st Century*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008. Margaret D. Jacobs, "Mixed-Bloods, Mestizas, and Pintos: Race, Gender, and Claims to Whiteness in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*", *Western American Literature* 36 (3): 212–231 (2001). Beth Fisher, "Precarious Performances: Ruiz de Burton's Theatrical Vision of the Gilded Age Female Consumer" in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Ameila Maria de la Luz Montes and Anne Goldman, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Anne Goldman, *Continental Divides: Revisioning American Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

scholars have shown in richly biographical and critical accounts, Ruiz de Burton herself, as a teenage Californio, witnessed the brutal effects of state-sanctioned violence justified by manifest destiny, yet she depicts a patrician stance in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, which portrays upper-class Mexican characters who hope for Austrian Archduke Maximilian to rule Mexico in a constitutional monarchy.¹⁹⁶ As the daughter of a prominent Spanish Catholic family, Ruiz de Burton saw her hometown of La Paz surrender to U. S. forces during the Mexican-American war; she married white Protestant war hero, Captain Henry S. Burton; and she lived as an aristocratic yet marginalized Mexican-American woman in Washington. Heeding Ruiz de Burton's personal history, Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita argue that her first novel "favors an elitist standard, that of an intellectual 'aristocracy,' that is, of an enlightened professional class"; her political satire "is not at all populist."¹⁹⁷ My interpretation builds on such criticism, which accounts for the complexity of Ruiz de Burton's political views, by illuminating the links between her political critique and the 1870s history of New England's newly centralized education system.

In *Reconstructing American Education* (1987), Michael Katz observes that in New England in the 1870s "reformers had become disenchanted with the effects of a centralized education system," and "championed an ideal that confusedly tried to combine bureaucracy and charisma"; meanwhile, school teachers "more than they knew, had accepted bureaucratic structure, to which they now looked, ironically, for autonomy and protection."¹⁹⁸ Katz identifies a shift during early reconstruction whereby proponents of northern common schooling (reformers) traded stances on

¹⁹⁶ See José F. Aranda Jr., "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies" in *No More Separate Spheres: A Next Wave American Studies Reader*, eds. Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher (Duke UP, 2002), 121-48.

¹⁹⁷ Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, Introduction to *Who Would Have Thought It?* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1995), xlix.

¹⁹⁸ Michael Katz, *Reconstructing American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 59.

government centralization with those subjected to their reforms (teachers and students). Reformers became surprising critics of centralization, whereas students and teachers relied for greater freedom and security on the system they once had resisted. Ruiz de Burton's novel reflects a stance similar to that of New England reformers in that she satirizes the institutionalization of education in her chronicle of Lola's thwarted efforts to gain an education.

Who Would Have Thought It? illuminates the shift Katz traces among common school students and teachers through its scathing critique of New England culture. Ruiz de Burton introduces readers to this culture by way of the rakish Reverend Hackwell, minister to the Norval and Cackle families, who self-servingly proposes to bring charisma to what he sees as a boringly homogenous society that seeks to correct all deviants. "What would the good and proper people of this world do if there were no social delinquents?" Hackwell asks (1). His conclusion that "Rogues are useful" because "they sharpen our wits" justifies his desire to serve as one such "Rogue." So, when Dr. Norval returns from California with Lola Medina, it is Lola who will become the convenient target of Hackwell's schemes. In partial contrast to his character, Mrs. Norval and Mrs. Cackle represent dutiful supporters of New England common schooling. While both women prove nearly as hypocritical and self-serving as Hackwell, they take as fact the uncontested moral authority of their culture. In the opening scene, Ruiz de Burton articulates the women's defense of New England's superiority through the theme of education: Mrs. Norval and Mrs. Cackle scoff at the idea of sending a child to Europe to be educated, which is the choice Dr. Norval made for Julian. Hackwell praises Mrs. Norval for her "vast field of . . . virtues," which, so he laments, contrast the "vaster" field

of the doctor's errors, all of which have their root in the doctor's most unnatural liking for foreigners. That liking was the cause of the doctor's sending his only son Julian to be educated in Europe,—as if the best schools on earth were not in New England,—and Heaven

knows what might have become of Julian if his heroic mother had not sent for him. He might have been a Roman Catholic, for all we know (2-3).

Mrs. Norval, as José Aranda puts it, later “fears, quite correctly, that Julian will fall in love with Lola precisely because his father encouraged him to study in Europe to develop tolerance for the unfamiliar.”¹⁹⁹ The very basis of the story’s central romance thus rests on the form of education New Englanders choose to give or fail to give to their children. Mocking Dr. Norval’s decision—one that is inconceivable for Lola—Mrs. Norval and Mrs. Cackle see their “metropolis” as the last remaining U. S. haven from “sinful foreigners” (3). Their patriotism is sustained only by this pristine image of New England and its moral authorities who, like Hackwell, are “all the fashion” (2). In this way, Ruiz de Burton aligns New England’s sociopolitical failures with “fashion[able]” discourses of national greatness and European schooling with the prospect of a useful, progressive, politically recuperative education.

The sociopolitical stakes of Reverend Hackwell’s, Mrs. Norval’s, and Mrs. Cackles’ views become apparent through Lola’s difficult education, which Ruiz de Burton depicts ambiguously. That is, her satirical eye focuses on the many *conversations about* Lola’s education, repeatedly discussed by those who are fighting to control her, rather than narrating the *actual education* she receives. Lola’s movement within social circles traditionally occupied by Anglo-Americans falsifies the integrity allegedly characterizing the region and reveals the region’s ties to aggressive expansionism and endemic forms of racism, sexism, and classicism. On the one hand, Lola’s struggles, especially her struggle to evade objectification, reveal the destructive relationship between New England social reform and continental expansion. For instance, speaking of Dr. Norval’s return from California with Lola in tow, Hackwell observes of “Indians, Mexicans, or Californians,”

¹⁹⁹ Aranda, 134.

our laws and smart lawyers will soon ‘freeze them out.’ As soon as we take their lands from them they will never be heard of anymore, and then the Americans with God’s help, will have all the land that was so righteously acquired through a just war and a most liberal payment in money. (4)

Hackwell’s recommendation for rogues in our Boston accords with his conception of manifest destiny as an organized, offensive campaign against any people without an “official” U. S. settlement. Hackwell’s surname further invokes this philosophy: his nominal ability to “hack well” connotes proficiency in deforestation.

On the other hand, Lola’s upbringing among supposed aristocrats and abolitionists exposes ties between New England exceptionalism and racism. For instance, Mrs. Norval is “a lady of the strictest Garrisonian school, a devout follower of Wendell Phillips’s teachings, and a most enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Sumner,” yet she “trembles” in fear at the thought of Lola, whom she calls a “little black girl” in her home and at the supper table and she claims that no white servant in “abolitionist New England” will be willing to wait on Lola (6). In contrast, Dr. Norval, a self-defined “good-for-nothing Democrat, who don’t believe in Sambo, but...in Christian charity and human mercy,” claims to “feel pity for the little thing” (10). He tries to prevent his wife from stealing Lola’s fortune and from steering her away from a Catholic education—the promise asked of him by Lola’s dying mother—but he also objectifies her. The fact that the Norval’s European-educated son Julian is the only character who views Lola on equal terms indicates that perspectives forged outside New England are the only ones capable of confronting the destructive conjunction between expansionism and northern egalitarianism.

By shifting the novel’s family drama from Boston to Washington, where the Norval family moves, Ruiz de Burton satirizes U. S. corruption fueled by partisanship during the Civil War, illustrating how political networks between New England and Washington led to the arbitrary exile

of dissidents and detained prisoners of war. Such actions, her narrative shows, will not cease at the end of the war. These exclusions will haunt the U. S. into the gilded age. Rather than present a glossy, multicultural, post-bellum national family reunion through Julian's and Lola's marriage in Mexico, she suggests that inter-cultural and inter-faith marriage are only possible outside of the U. S. The novel addresses not *how* the U. S. might reunite through its rapid colonialist expansion and institutionalism, which contributed to the nation's fragmentation, but *whether* the nation has any business reuniting at all, given the ways corruption has become institutionalized through the process of colonization. Burton reasons that the nation continues during the post-bellum period to be mobilized by explicitly and tacitly exclusionary New England cultural values, which make it falsely appear as if the country is finally reaching the state where it has been heading all along.

Owing to the endurance of the discourse of manifest destiny, we can productively read Frederick Rudolph's 1965 fantasy of America's future alongside Ruiz de Burton's 1872 historical satire of political fantasy. Ruiz de Burton and Rudolph are both interested in the question of what, in their eyes, their contemporaries cannot see about the state of the nation—past, present, and future. Rudolph laments the failure of his fellow Americans to discern the unstoppable spread of education around them: “the extent to which we are nearly everywhere becoming a nation of students and teachers has been hidden from us by our failure to recognize the sum of the parts that make this conclusion inescapable.”²⁰⁰ In contrast, Ruiz de Burton satirizes the failure of New Englanders to perceive their own destructive ignorance, inferior education models, and institutionalized corruption. Whereas their texts are oppositional to the extent that Rudolph tacitly embraces Manifest Destiny and Ruiz de Burton demystifies it, both texts expose the challenges to understanding education—its history, its forms, its effects, and its future—faced by U. S. novelists, reformers, and academics

²⁰⁰ Rudolph, 2.

alike. If Rudolph struggles to demonstrate that education is everywhere, Ruiz de Burton struggles to show that it is anywhere but New England. However radically different, Rudolph's romanticization of California and Ruiz de Burton's satire of New England both argue for the urgent political necessity of narrating unrecognized realities about formal and informal education—*not* for the sake of its fantastical future, but for the sake of its very existence.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983.
- Bauer, Ralph. *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Beadie, Nancy. *Education and the Creation of Capital in the Early American Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York City: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- and Passeron, Jean Claude. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Sage Publications, 1990.
- Brodhead, Richard. *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Brown, Charles Brockden. *Edgar-Huntly or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. 2006.
- Burgett, Bruce. *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Castiglia, Chris. *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Child, Lydia Maria. *Romance of the Republic*. Sioux Falls, SD: NuVison Publications, 2008.
- Cook, Elizabeth Heckendorn. *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth Century Republic of Letters*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Cooper, James Fennimore. *The American Democrat* ed. George Dekker and Larry Johnston. New York: Penguin Books, 1969.
- Cooper, James Fennimore. *The Prairie*. New York City: Penguin Classics, 1987.
- Crevecoeur, J. Hector St. John de. *Letters from an American Farmer*. New York City: Penguin Press, 1985.
- Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Dillon, Elizabeth. *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Doolen, Andy. *Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Duane, Anne Mae. *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Race, Violence and the Making of the Child Victim*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010.

Fliegelman, Jay. *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Foster, Hannah W. *The Coquette, or the History of Eliza Wharton*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Goddu, Teresa. *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation*. New York City: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Goudie, Sean. *Creole America: The West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

Gustafson, Sandra. "Natty in the 1820s; Creole Subjects and Democratic Aesthetics in the Early Leatherstocking Tales" in *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas* ed. Ralph Bauer and Jose Antonio Mazzotti. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Frank, Jason. *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America*. Durham: Duke University, 2010.

Foster, Hannah. *The Coquette and The Boarding School*. Ed. Jennifer Desiderio and Angela Vietto. Toronto: Broadview editions, 2011.

Gustafson, Sandra. *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America*. Raleigh: University of North Carolina, 2000.

---"Natty in the 1820's: Creole Subjects and Democratic Aesthetics in the Early Leatherstocking Tales." *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires,*

Texts, Identities. eds. Ralph Bauer and Jose Antonia Mazzotti. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Henry, Katherine. *Liberalism and the Culture of Security: The Nineteenth Century Rhetoric of Reform.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2011.

Howell, William Huntting. "A More Perfect Copy: David Rittenhouse and the Reproduction of Republican Value" in *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d Series Vol. LXIV, No. 4 (October, 2007) 757–790.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia.* Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1829.

Jehlen, Myra. "J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur: A Monarcho-Anarchist in Revolutionary America in *American Literature* Vol. 31. No. 2 (1979) 204-222.

Looby, Christopher. *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Loughran, Trish. *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of US Nation Building, 1770-1870.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Karcher, Carolyn. *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

Katz, Micheal B. *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America.* Praegers, 1975.

Kazanjian, David. *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Kelley, Mary. *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Levander, Caroline F. *Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child, and National Belonging from Thomas Jefferson to W.E.B Du Bois*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

---. *Voices of the Nation: Women and Public Speech in Nineteenth Century American Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Locke, John. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). Pp. 111-326 in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James Axtell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Meyers, Marvin. *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief*. Stanford University Press, 1960.

Murray, Judith Sargent. *Selected Writings of Judith Sargent Murray*. Ed. Sharon M. Harris. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Nelson, Dana. "Cooper and the Tragedy of the Commons" in *What Democracy Looks Like: A New Critical Realism for a Post Seattle World* ed. Amy Shrager Lang and Cecilia Tichi. Camden: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

---. *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

---. *The Word in Black and White: Reading 'Race' in American Literature, 1638-1867*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Nixon, Nicola. "Men and Coats; Or the Politics of the Dandiacal Body in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*" *PMLA* 114 (May 1999) 359-372.

Peyer, Bernd C. *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary Writers in Antebellum America*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.

Rifkin, Mark. *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Émile: Or Treatise on Education*. Translation by William H. Payne. New York: Prometheus Books, 2003.

Ed. Rudolph, Frederick. *Essays on Education in the Early Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.

Ruiz de Burton, Maria Amparo. *Who Would Have Thought It?* New York: Penguin, 2009.

Rush, Benjamin. *The Selected Writings of Benjamin Rush*. Ramage Press, 2008.

- Ruttenberg, Nancy. *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Sanchez-Eppler, Karen. *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Schweitzer, Ivy. *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Shapiro, Stephen. *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008.
- Silver, Peter. *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America*. New York: W.W. Norton Co., 2008.
- Shields, David S. *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Slauter, Eric. *The State as a Work of Art: The Cultural Origins of the Construction*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009.
- Szasz, Margaret Connell. *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.
- Tamarkin, Eliza. *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Taylor, Bob Pepperman. *Horace Mann's Troubling Legacy: The Education of Democratic Citizens*. Normal: University of Kansas Press, 2010.
- Thompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Vickery, Sukey. *Emily Hamilton and Other Writings* ed. Scott Slawinski. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- Warner, Michael. *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Waterman, Bryan. "Elizabeth Whitman's Disappearance and her Disappointment" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series. Vol. 66, No. 2 (April, 2009) 325-364.
- Watts, Ed. *In This Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780-1860*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

---. *An American Colony: Regionalism and the Roots of Midwestern Culture*. Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2002.

---. *Writing and Postcolonialism in the Early Republic*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998.

White, Ed. *The Backcountry and the City: Colonization and Conflict in Early America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.