

STEREOTYPICAL ENEMIES: AMERICAN FRONTIERSMEN AND
MEXICAN CARICATURES IN THE LITERATURE OF AN
EXPANDING WHITE NATION

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
December, 1975

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PREFACE

"Yo no soy ya americano, pero comprendo al inglés": I am no longer an American, but I do understand English. This ever-popular ranchero, the "Ballad of Joaquin Murretta," is a defiant assertion of the Mexican's dignity as well as a justification for blood revenge. The Mexican, the Mexican-American, the Spanish-American, or the Chicano has always been self-assured of his cultural identity. But in American popular literature the Spanish-speaking have not fared well. Fiction and non-fiction written by Anglo-Saxons for Anglo-Saxons has traditionally shut out the Mexican, except as a knife-toting, over-emotional, happy-go-lucky thief. In other words, students of American popular culture know the Mexican only as a negative stereotype.

Assured of his positive identity as a superior person, the white American is given little reason to question the validity of traditional race and national character types. Such was my case in 1967, when I was employed by the Community Action Agency in a small Colorado town. Typical of that group of rational, fair-minded social workers, I was conscious of the obvious ramifications of abusive race codifications--Mex, spic, greaser, etc. However, I remained unconscious of just how complete my Anglo-Saxon racist conditioning had been until that day my employer, Mr. Orlando Salazar, spoke out against the then popular Frito-Lay television commercial--The Frito Bandito.

I thought the commercial "cute," and said as much. Salazar angrily retorted that there was nothing "cute" about dramatizing the Mexican as an inept, comical thief--especially as his children were being "kindly" identified as little Frito Banditos. Salazar was right. Lo, the poor Anglo whose reason dictates one set of values and whose cultural conditioning dictates quite another.

This investigation of the historical and literary antecedents of the stereotypical "superior" Anglo-Saxon and the "inferior" Mexican was largely motivated by my desire to comprehend the nature of the stereotypes and to understand how and why they have been preserved to plague the twentieth-century American with paradox and conflict.

My special appreciation and thanks go to Dr. Peter C. Rollins who has contributed much of his time to both directing my program and criticizing my writings. I also wish to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Clinton C. Keeler, Dr. Joseph A. Stout, Jr., and Dr. Michael M. Smith for their encouragement and direction.

I can attribute much of my success to my wife, Nancy M. Sena-Smith, whose enthusiasm for my subject has been equal to my own.

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INTRODUCTION

The frontiersman stood out. During the first half of the nineteenth century, he symbolized American nationalism, Protestantism, and egalitarianism. He was the American expansionist who led the way as a conqueror and settler at the time of the Mexican War. As an American hero--history's darling--he represented national solidarity during an era when the country was threatening to tear itself apart over abolitionism, nativism and the "common man's" rejection of deferential politics. In fact, the only phenomenon uniting Americans was their pervasive spirit of optimism, an optimism that demanded the restatement of the country's national purpose.

The buckskin knight-errant, as American as the buffalo, was the ideal image for expansionist America's Manifest Destiny. He was the hero of the War of 1812 and the Texas Revolution. He was the backbone of America's defensive aggression on the frontier. As a Protestant Anglo-Saxon the frontiersman was superior to the Mexican antagonist who blocked the frontiersman's course of empire.

Mexican caricatures appearing in nineteenth-century American literature were the result of the Anglo-Saxon racist's need to identify all people who were not Anglo-Saxon Protestants as inferiors. Simplified, the frontiersman's virtues were in direct contrast with the Mexican's inferiority. As Anglo-Saxon projections, both the frontiersman and the Mexican were stereotyped in American literature.¹ The

Mexican caricatures that developed were emotional statements having little to do with the Mexican's psyche or cultural milieu. The Mexican's Spanish heritage condemned him. He was heir to the cruel history of the Black Legend of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition. As an Aztec offspring, the Mexican was divested of the leadership which at one time identified him as a member of the most advanced civilization in the Americas. His fall was attributed to the frenzy associated with the blood-lust cruelty of human sacrifice. Of the eight million Mexicans at the time of the Mexican War there were few pure Spanish hidalgos. The majority of Mexico's population were mestizos and Indian peones. The mestizo was an abhorrence to Anglo-Saxon Americans who were fearful for their own Anglo-Saxon purity. The half-breed was stereotyped as a bandido--a highly intelligent criminal whose savagery surpassed that of the Indians. Besides the indolent hidalgo and the bandido, other Mexican stereotypes included the Spanish Venus, the corrupt Catholic priest, and the stupid, lazy peon.

These stereotypes were common to all types of nineteenth-century American literature. A description and analysis of the positive and the negative stereotypes utilized by selected representative American writers will indicate the varied social and political orientations of these literary men. But Anglo-Saxonism was their common denominator. Chapter I, "Prescott's Conquistadores: The Hispanic Phase of Manifest Destiny," will investigate Cortés as an American hero, the harbinger who introduced Christianity, commerce, and other European institutions to the New World. A romantic knight-errant and an exceptional leader, he was dramatized differently than the archetypically cruel Spaniard. Chapter II, "The Frontiersman: The Image of an Expanding White Nation,"

will trace the development of the frontiersman as an American symbol. The social and political acceptance of the frontiersman during the age of Jackson will be compared to the ideal literary frontiersman, Natty Bumppo, hero of James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Saga*. Chapter III, "The Darker Side: Racism and Manifest Destiny," will investigate the rhetoric of anti-Catholic propaganda, the xenophobia of American nativism, and the expansionist diatribes against Mexico. Specific works to be analyzed are Walt Whitman's The Inebriate, Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures, Francis Parkman's The Oregon Trail, and selected essays from The Democratic Review. Chapter IV, "Mexican Stereotypes: Ned Buntline's Contribution to the Mexican War," will explicate the highly simplified, negative stereotypes of Spanish-speaking people dramatized in his dime novel Mexican War pot boilers and sea yarns. As an American nativist Buntline fought the war on fictional battlefields and solidly reinforced Mexican stereotypes to the point that they became American clichés. Especially because of Buntline's popularity, the Mexican became a nonentity in the literature of an expanding white nation.

ENDNOTES

¹For the purpose of this study the term stereotype should be viewed as a rhetorical device which facilitated nineteenth-century writers' characterizations of national types. Walter Lippmann observed that stereotypes were born out of "our social philosophies and political agitations." See Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 84. Lippmann's social theory has been modified by James W. Vander Zanden who stated: "A stereotype is a category that singles out an individual as sharing certain assumed characteristics on the basis of his group membership." See James W. Vander Zanden, American Minority Relations, 2nd ed. (New York: Ronald Press, 1966), pp. 80-81. Rosemary Gordon concluded that the stereotype was a social construct, "rigid and change-resisting and tends to represent the fact with which it is concerned in an over-simplified form. . . . It is true that where society offers a variety of constructs and ideologies, as a modern society, the stereotypes of the individual may in fact reflect his personality and its problems rather more than in cases where only one stereotype prevails. However, even here the contribution of personality factors is decidedly less than in the case of personal constructs. For though such stereotypes may lack the sanction of the whole society, yet they are likely to possess the approval of certain subgroups and acceptance by an integration with these may constitute a powerful incentive to the individual. Moreover, the acceptance of a ready-made cognitive pattern involves less self-expression than does the creation of a new one." See Rosemary Gordon, "Stereotypy of Imagery and Belief as an Ego Defense," British Journal of Psychology, 34 (1962), 18.

Defending the artist's use of stereotypical characters, Maurice Yacowar stated that the stereotype is a form of "artistic shorthand." See Maurice Yacowar, "Aspects of the Familiar: A Defense of Minority Group Stereotyping in Popular Film," Film-Literature Quarterly, 2 (Spring, 1974), 136. Although Yacowar addressed himself to a twentieth-century genre, his argument was suggestive of a more universal function of stereotypes. Warren J. Barker speculated about the stereotypical western figures and their perennial popularity: "One suspects that the ostensible historic struggle to bring law and order to the geographical frontier serves as a relatively unimportant facade behind which a far more ancient and universal battle rages, the battle of every child to master the dark forces that would bar expansion and a tolerable peace on its own emotional frontier." See Warren J. Barker, "The Stereotyped Western Story: Its Latent Meaning and Psychoeconomic Function," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 24 (1955), 271.

Prescott, Cooper, Whitman, Maria Monk, Francis Parkman, writers for the Democratic Review, and Ned Buntline all used both positive and negative stereotypes to portray different nationalities. Superficially, these authors were using an "artistic shorthand"; however, considering the issues that they thematically developed--particularly those relating to the Mexican War--I am inclined to believe that the negative stereotypes of Spanish-speaking people were both a rhetorical justification for the war of expansion and a psychological defense mechanism to preserve their needed belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority.

CHAPTER I

PRESCOTT'S CONQUISTADORES: THE HISPANIC

PHASE OF MANIFEST DESTINY

Cortes was a conqueror like other conquerors. . . . What his hand touched went down in spite of him.¹

William Carlos Williams, The American Grain

William Hickling Prescott's histories, the Conquest of Mexico (1843) and the Conquest of Peru (1847), may be interpreted as nineteenth-century social documents. Inspired by both nineteenth-century American thought and by Spain's sixteenth-century conquests in the New World, Prescott's analysis of the chronicles of Cortés' and Pizarro's adventures included thematic treatments of American expansionism, popular theories of racial and national types, and Protestant revivalism. Cortés (and Pizarro to a lesser degree) was portrayed as an American hero: a hero who possessed all the virtues and prowess of a romantic cavalier straight out of a Sir Walter Scott novel. Prescott Americanized some of the conquistadores, attributing their successes to characteristics and values especial to nineteenth-century American ideologies.

Like many Harvard educated ministers, politicians, and historians, Prescott's view of the development of Western man was eudaemonistic. Civilization was progressing toward perfection, and older, more primitive orders were logically subjugated by more advanced civilizations.

The conquest of Mexico and the conquest of Peru were justified as the advancement of western man. To reinforce his contention that Cortés and Pizarro were harbingers of the new dispensation, Prescott provided numerous asides comparing the Spaniards' superior science and religion to the more primitive Aztecs'. The Spaniards, in turn, were negatively contrasted to nineteenth-century Americans who would supplant them in a second wave of inexorable, westward expansion.

Hidalgos: Knights and Bandits

Cortés at this time was thirty-three, or perhaps thirty-four years of age. In stature he was rather above the middle size. His complexion was pale; and his countenance, not to have been expected in one of his cheerful temperament. His figure was slender, at least until later life; but his chest was deep, his shoulders broad, his frame muscular and well proportioned. It presented the union of agility and vigor which qualified him to excel in fencing, horsemanship, and the other generous exercises of chivalry. In diet he was temperate, careless of what he ate, and drinking little; while to toil and privation he seemed perfectly indifferent. His dress, for he did not disdain the impression produced by such adventitious aids, was such as to set off his handsome person to advantage; neither gaudy nor striking, but rich. He wore few ornaments, and usually the same; but those were of great price. His manners, frank and soldierlike, concealed a most cool and calculating spirit. With his gayest humor there mingled a settled air of resolution, which made those who approached him feel they must obey; and which infused something like awe into the attachment of his most devoted followers. Such a combination, in which love was tempered by authority, was the one problem best calculated to inspire devotion in the rough and turbulent spirits among whom his lot was cast.²

Prescott, the Conquest of Mexico

In the Conquest of Mexico Prescott's sympathies were definitely with the Spaniards, at least with those Spaniards identified as knights-errant. What better subject could an American romantic find than Cortés? Here was Spanish chivalry pitted against exotic Aztec grandeur

and might. Prescott vivified the battles, the intrigues and betrayals, the sublimity of the Mexican landscape, and the nobility of Aztec and Spanish heroes. The history was written for lovers of adventure. Prescott wrote, "Omit no trait which can display the character of Cortés, the hero of the piece, round whom the interest is to concentrate. The narrative is a beautiful epic. It has all the interest which daring, chivalrous enterprise, stupendous achievements, worthy of an age of knight-errantry, a magical country, the splendors of a rich barbaric court, and extraordinary personal qualities in the hero--can . . . Cortés . . . is, in truth, not merely the soul, but the body, of the enterprise, present everywhere in person."³

How one man conquered Mexico, this was Prescott's history. It was Cortés leaving Cuba, landing at Vera Cruz, and leading his conquistadores into Tenochtitlan. It was Cortés the great captain, the peace maker, the civil leader. The Spaniards who comprised his force were little more than extensions of his person. Even the Aztec antagonists, epitomized by the opulent Montezuma and by his fierce warrior successor Cuauhtemoc, contributed to the dramatization of Cortés' heroic character. Prescott developed Cortés' character by providing mini portraits of his subordinate officers and noble adversaries. Interest was created and sustained by providing a variety of exciting action, incidents that were unified in that they contributed to the understanding of Cortés' person and psyche. Cortés' successes were "almost incredible."⁴ In effect, Cortés was cast as a true hidalgo. As a hidalgo he was a member of Spain's minor nobility. The title was venerated by its possessor and respected by all. The title was usually granted for some service rendered to the monarchy. As landed gentry, the hidalgo's

privileges included a formal academic and social education. Don Hernando Cortés was given the choice of two professions at the age of fourteen. He began the study of law at the University of Salamanca. This study would probably have led him to the priesthood. As a troublesome student, however, "he showed an inclination for the military profession."⁵ This facet of Cortés' character identified him as a young knight who was prepared to go out into the world to seek fortune, glory, danger for the sake of adventure, and romance. The hidalgo character type typically evoked two different responses from nineteenth-century Americans: first, the inept dreamer who had neither profession nor property and second, the proud adventurer whose exciting quest brought personal and national honor and wealth.

Romantic historians considered character types to be useful literary devices. The knight-errant's "'national character'" was illustrated through minor characters' abstracted traits: "'remarkable resolution,' 'intrepidity' . . . and chivalric generosity.'"⁵ Prescott developed Cortés' character on three mythic levels. First, Cortés was the medieval knight-errant; second, he was Quetzalcoatl returning to the Aztecs; and third, he was a nineteenth-century American hero who introduced Christianity, elected government, and mercantile commercial shipping into the New World.

The histories, Conquest of Mexico and Conquest of Peru, were respectively a prose epic and a chronicle of knight-errantry. Cortés' and Pizarro's fantastic adventures were vehicles that carried Prescott's peculiar, double judgment of the conquistadores.⁶ More exactly, Prescott's flattering portraits of Cortés and Pizarro were offset by contrasting negative descriptions. These antithetical character

evaluations enabled the narrator to moralize on the characters of Cortes and Pizarro and their (temporary) divine right to conquer barbarian empires.

With the absence of "true" Anglo-Saxons in the New World, Prescott invested Cortés with Anglo-Saxon virtues. He explained his kindly attitude toward Cortés and other Spanish heroes: "discussing the deeds & misdeeds of the conquerors . . . never call hard names. . . . It is unhistorical, unphilosophical-ungentlemenlike."⁷ Prescott's rousing, optimistic tone was largely attributed to his single-minded exploration of those characteristics which would bring honor to his heroes.

In Cortés' funeral obsequies Prescott delineated these special attributes: Cortés was a "natural" leader; he destroyed only to rebuild; he was committed to commerce; he was less cruel than his contemporaries; and he was a religious bigot, "the failing of the age."⁸ This description emphasized virtues dear to the American middle class. Robust, healthy, and noble, Cortés posed a striking figure of a man: muscular and well proportioned . . . temperate . . . handsome . . . air of resolution . . . love was tempered with authority."⁹ Morally and physically he stood above the rank and file: "His power over the minds of his soldiers was a natural result of their confidence in his abilities. But it is also to be attributed to his popular manners,-- that happy union of authority and companionship, which fitted him for the command of a band of roving adventurers. . . . He was embarked with his men in a common adventure, and nearly on terms of equality, since he held his commission by no legal warrant. But while he indulged this freedom and familiarity with his soldiers, he never allowed it to interfere with their strict obedience, nor to impair the

severity of discipline."¹⁰ His comradeship, then, was an indulgence, a convention whereby he organized a polity from his rabble of soldiers.

The one attribute which distinguished Cortés from his fellow men-at-arms was his adeptness in "exercises of chivalry."¹¹ To Prescott's way of thinking the masses were not capable of true chivalry. This was explicitly stated in the Conquest of Peru. Before the Battle of Huarina, Centenos' troops urged their commander to engage Gasca's force. Prescott described the soldiers' courage as a "bastard sort of chivalry, belonging to undisciplined troops."¹² Thus, the chivalry of the heroes--particularly in the Conquest of Mexico--was that feature that identified them as being uncommon.

Cortés' noble lineage foreshadowed his greatness. Prescott stated that the task set before Cortés "called forth qualities which before lay dormant in his bosom."¹³ From the rascally boy arose the knight-errant, the hero of the Conquest of Mexico.

Prescott's continuous amazement over Cortés' exploits gave the Conquest of Mexico a sensational quality. His literary efforts have been analyzed as the art of the story teller. The "pageantry of picturesque detail was calculated to feed as never before the starved imagination of the country."¹⁴ Arbitrarily selecting detail from his primary authorities, Prescott exhumed Hernando Cortés from Mexican and Spanish repositories and revived him as a mythic-historical character.

Prescott wove an unusual fabric from his two principal primary sources to reconstruct Cortés' character. Francisco López de Gómara's Cortés: the Life of the Conqueror and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's La verdadera historia de la conquista de Nueva España. Prescott avoided the unreasonably flattering attitude exhibited by Cortés' private

secretary, Francisco López de Gómara. At the same time, he moderated the bitterness of the disgruntled old soldier, Díaz. Prescott made no attempt, however, to strike a reasonable medium between the two. He merely excluded negative descriptions which would contradict the hero of his epic.

In Prescott's initial portrait of Cortés he stated that the conquistador was a good soldier: well proportioned, temperate, cheerful, a strict disciplinarian, intelligent, quick to action, cool in dangerous situations, and intrepid. Prescott ostensibly understated Cortés' worldliness and overstated those virtues which would inflate his heroic character. Gómara's description of Cortés was redolent with unflattering characteristics. Gómara stated that although Cortés drank little, "he did not stint himself."¹⁵ Nor did Prescott mention the many lawsuits brought against Cortés: "more than was proper to his station."¹⁶ And rather than commanding the undivided loyalty or respect of his officers and soldiers long after the conquest, Gómara noted Cortés had the poor taste to behave like the "new rich" and to act the "libertine" in other men's homes.

Although Bernal Díaz criticized Gómara's history, Díaz agreed with Gómara's evaluation of Cortés' worldliness.¹⁷ Cortés did not dress like a simple man. Díaz wrote, "se comenzo de pulir e abellidar en su persona mucho mas que le parecia muy bien."¹⁸ Díaz's description of Cortés' dress differed from Prescott's in that Díaz suggested that Cortés' costume was sumptuous beyond his means. Cortés was poor in spite of his Indian slaves and gold mine. He lived too lavishly: "mas todo lo gustaba en su persona y en atavios de su mujer, que era recién casado."¹⁹ In sum, an examination of sources available to Prescott

showed that he did not misinterpret the historical incidents of the conquest of Mexico. He did, however, embellish its central figure.

Prescott never compromised Cortés' honor as both Díaz and Gómara did. Cortés was the atypical Spaniard. Indeed, Cortés' nationality was subordinated in order that he emerge a champion of an early Manifest Destiny. Prescott reinforced this notion many times in the text. Cortés had originally planned to accompany Nicuesa's ill-fated expedition. Because of his accident and subsequent illness that kept him from it, Prescott wrote: "Providence reserved him for higher ends."²⁰ The nineteenth-century American's concept of Providence was that fate guided the great men of history. Such a providential theory could obviously have contemporary as well as historic applications.

Prescott's portrait of Cortés as a great man was insulated against the character flaws depicted by Gómara and Díaz. A good example contrasting Prescott's point of view with that of his principle authorities was his explanation of the altercation following the division of Montezuma's and Axayacatl's treasures. The royal fifth was deducted for the crown. Cortés received his fifth plus a generous sum to compensate him and the Cuban governor for the cost of the expedition. The remaining hidalgos received generous shares. The poor soldiers, however, received less than one hundred pesos gold apiece less than it had originally cost them to outfit themselves for the expedition. The angry soldiers accused "their leaders of appropriating to themselves several of the richest ornaments, before the partition had been made." A fight erupted between "Mexía, the treasurer for the Crown, and Velásquez de León." Placing his officers under arrest, Cortés placated his irate men.²¹

With "honeyed word," Cortés admonished, "He was sorry . . . to see them so unmindful of the duty of loyal soldiers, and cavaliers of the Cross, as to brawl like the common banditti over their booty."²²

Prescott reinforced Cortés' superior nature and natural leadership abilities by concluding the altercation with this analysis: "This was one of those critical conjunctures which taxed all the address and personal authority of Cortés. He never shrank from them, but on such occasion was true to himself."²³ At the expense of adulterating his primary source, Prescott assured the reader that Cortés' self-reliance was a natural fact.

Prescott relied on Bernal Díaz's account of the dispute over the division of the spoils. His translation of Díaz was reasonable up to a point. He quoted Díaz out of context. Prescott stated that Cortés possessed an exceptional power of persuasion. This was in general agreement with Díaz's history. However, in this instance Díaz clearly recorded that Cortés' well-placed words were lost on his angry soldiers. Prescott made no mention of how Cortés was forced to bribe individual soldiers with gold and promises to quell the disturbance. Díaz thought this act worthy of mention. It was a comment on the lengths Cortés had to go in order to preserve discipline. Díaz's account read: "a ciertos soldados secretamente daba joyas de oro, y á otros hacía grandes promesas."²⁴ While Prescott did investigate some of Cortés' moral failings, he never equated Cortés' weaknesses with the failings of his common soldiers. Prescott would have his readers believe that Cortés was noteworthy because he rose above the offensive characteristics of the typed Spanish caricature--that arrogant noble who was cowed by a tradition of aristocratic indolence, by inept kings,

and by vicious priests. The Spanish national type was cruel, was avaricious, and was excessively passionate in love and war. With more than a taint of prejudice in his tone, Prescott described this literary type:

The period which we are reviewing was still the age of chivalry; that stirring and adventurous age, of which we can form little conception in the present day of sober, practical reality. The Spaniard, with his nice point of honor, high romance, and proud, vainglorious vaunt, was the true representative of the age. The Europeans, generally, had not yet learned to accommodate themselves to a life of literary toil, or to the drudgery of trade, or the patient tillage of soil. They left those to the hooded inmate of the cloister, the humble burgher, and the miserable serf. Arms was the only profession worthy of gentle blood.²⁵

For Prescott, Cortés was more than the typical aristocratic Spanish knight-errant. He was a military scientist, a builder, and a civil leader as well.

The future of civilization in the New World was indicated by Cortés' conquest of the Aztecs and by his rebuilding the city that he had destroyed. Prescott invited his readers to compare Cortés' accomplishments with that of Puritans' a century later: "our own Puritan fathers, with the true Anglo-Saxon spirit, left their pleasant homes across the waters, and pitched their tents in the howling wilderness, that they might enjoy the sweets of civil and religious freedom."²⁶ Cortés' mission was similar to the Puritans'. Not just a soldier, Cortés was an organizer of communities. Prescott stressed the significance of Cortés' relinquishment of his military commission to become Captain General and Chief Justice of Villa Rica de Vera Cruz. Prescott speculated:

Cortés was not backward in exerting his authority. . . . By this ingenious transformation of a military into a civil community, he had secured a new and effectual basis for

future operations. He might now go forward without fear of check or control from a superior,--at least from any other superior than the Crown, under which alone he held his commission. In accomplishing this, instead of incurring the charge of usurpation, or of transcending his legitimate powers, he had transferred the responsibility, in a great measure, to those who had imposed on him the necessity of action. By this step, moreover, he had linked the fortunes of his followers indissolubly with his own. . . . He was no longer limited to the narrow concerns of a sordid traffic, but, sure of their cooperation, might now boldly meditate, and gradually disclose, those lofty schemes which he had formed in his own bosom for the conquest of an empire.²⁷

Antedating the Puritans, Cortés pitched his tent in the New World. Traditionally, Americans have thought of themselves as the chosen people. During Prescott's time, the era of Manifest Destiny, this Moses metaphor was widely used by Americans to justify westward expansion. Cortés' notion of empire--explained by Prescott--was not significantly different from the rationalization that Anglo-Saxons possessed the unalienable right to conquer the West and establish their "American Israel."²⁸

American expansionists, however, were reluctant to accept Prescott's contention that the Spaniards had prepared the way for the latter-day American conquerors. His gentle treatment of the Spaniards in the Conquest of Mexico was severely criticized in the Democratic Review (1844). The reviewer wrote that the history of the Spanish conquests "ought to be written in these days in the spirit of peace; the dark background of the infernal picture ought to be distinctly painted; and the actors who occupy the front should be shown as they were, in their debauched, cruel, perfidious, wretched, and precarious lives. Cortés as he appears in Mr. Prescott's pages, will leave on the minds of many readers, an impression of admiration; a sort of

feeling that he is a model to be imitated; and so indeed, in one respect he is; but in only one."²⁹ The reviewer praised Cortes' powers that made him "vastly superior . . . to the masses of mankind."³⁰ But he also pointed out the juggernaut of Cortés' heroic character: "but what avails the talent of a leader with the instincts of a slave."³¹ Cortés, the slave, trembled at the name of Charles V. Why else, the reviewer asked, did not Cortés seize the opportunity to create an empire for himself. Because he rejected the appeal of his loyal junta to establish a republic in the New World, the reviewer scorned, "And for that rejection, we submit to the nineteenth century, he himself merits for his name and memory the scorn and hatred of mankind."³² Cortés did not take Mexico as his empire. The reviewer judged that it was Cortés' fault that nineteenth-century Mexicans were unregenerate, not fit for American, nineteenth-century freedom: "The print of slavery is now deep on the character and habits of the people; there is a want of enterprise, a contempt for improvement, an inefficiency in labor, which have been transmitted for ages, and which ages only time can probably efface."³³ The Democratic Review seized one facet of Prescott's history and ignored its larger purpose and import. In the absence of Anglo-Saxon heroes, Prescott elevated Cortés by giving him an American heroic character. The Democratic Review, the principle organ for American expansionism, was not willing to admit that a Spaniard had the capacity to possess American virtues. Considering the publication date of the Conquest of Mexico (1843), it should not be surprising that the editors of the Democratic Review should use Prescott's history as a vehicle to expound their cause, belittling Spanish character and valor.

The reviewer for the Spectator (1843) said of Prescott's portrait of Cortés: he "infused into his work a discriminating spirit, not shrinking from exposing and censuring the crimes of the conquerors, yet not indulging in vulgar invective."³⁴ This was not to imply that Prescott did not explore themes of racial bigotry in the Conquest of Mexico. The essayist's epithetical attack in the Democratic Review was not in character with the authorial attitude expressed in Prescott's history. The racist substance of the review, however, had its counterpart in the Conquest of Mexico. Although Prescott did not refer to the conquistadores as Charles V's slaves, he did criticize the Spaniards for their lack of industry. In a negative comparison of the Aztec's work ethic and the hidalgo's aversion for manual labor, he quoted an Indian maxim which admonished the young nobles to pursue some trade so that they could support their families. Prescott humorously jibed "that must have sounded somewhat strange in the ear of a Spanish hidalgo."³⁵ Cortés was not exempt from the sting of this barb. As a character-typed Spaniard, Cortés was generally once removed from the negative implications associated with the characteristics of the type.

Prescott exploited themes of the Black Legend of Spain by describing the hideous acts perpetrated by Cortés' subordinates. Cortés was not as "cruel as compared with most of those who followed his iron trade. The path of the conqueror is necessarily marked with blood."³⁶ Prescott depicted the Spaniards' cruelty by focusing on the mean, greedy acts of Cortés' lieutenant, Pedro de Alvarado. The villainous Alvarado's positive traits were contrasted with those that damned him. He was "a cavalier of high family, gallant and chivalrous, and his [Cortés'] warm personal friend. He had talents for action, was

possessed of firmness and intrepidity. . . . But underneath this showy exterior . . . concealed a heart rash, rapacious, and cruel. He was altogether destitute of that moderation, which in the delicate position he occupied, was a quality of more worth than all the rest."³⁷

Alvarado's cruelty was vividly portrayed in the subterfuge and subsequent slaughter of the Aztec nobility during their annual May festival dedicated to the war god Huitzilipochtli. When the unarmed Mexicans gathered, Alvarado and his men cut them "down without resistance" for the gold they were wearing. From 600 to 2,000 Aztecs were slain by "the ruthless soldiery."³⁸ Cortés was absent at the time of the slaughter, campaigning against Pánfilo de Narváez. Prescott indicated that Cortés had to assume ultimate responsibility for the massacre as he had left Alvarado in command: "he made a wrong selection for this important post."³⁹ Since Cortés was the omnipresent force in the Conquest of Mexico, he shared the honor and shame for his subordinates' acts. Cortés was both head and heart of the company.

Themes of racial bigotry were more prevalent in the Conquest of Peru than in the Conquest of Mexico. Prescott's resolve to "never call hard names" failed him:

When Pizarro obtained possession of Cuzco, he found a country well advanced in the arts of civilization: institutions under which the people lived in tranquility and personal safety; the mountains and the uplands whitened with flocks; the valleys teeming with the fruits of a scientific husbandry; the granaries and warehouses filled to overflowing; the whole land rejoicing in its abundance; and the character of the nation, softened under the influence of the mildest and most innocent form of superstition, well prepared for the reception of a higher and a Christian civilization. But, far from introducing this, Pizarro delivered up the conquered races to his brutal soldiery; the sacred cloisters were abandoned to their lust; the towns and villages were given up to pillage; the wretched natives were parcelled out like slaves, to toil for their conquerors in the mines; the

flocks were scattered, and wantonly destroyed; the granaries were dissipated; the beautiful contrivances for the more perfect culture of the soil were suffered to fall into decay; the paradise was converted into a desert. Instead of profiting by the ancient forms of civilization, Pizarro preferred to efface every vestige of them from the land, and on their ruin to erect the institutions of his own country. Yet these institutions did little for the poor Indian, held in iron bondage.⁴⁰

Pizarro was Prescott's bandido. As a Spanish caricature he possessed all of the character flaws nineteenth-century Americans attributed to Spanish-speaking people.* As Cortés' alter ego, Pizarro was "bold, unscrupulous, cunning, cold, faithless, & cruel, & avaricious."⁴¹ The blatantly derisive tone of this passage was carried over in Prescott's initial portrait of the conqueror. For example, rather than objectively report that Pizarro was illegitimate, Prescott moralized why the exact date of Pizarro's birth was unknown: "He was an illegitimate child, and that his parents should not have taken pains to perpetuate the date of his birth is not surprising. Few care to make a particular record of their transgressions."⁴² Recording that Pizarro had been left in the church doorway (a foundling), Prescott vindictively relished the fact that Pizarro "would have perished, had he not been nursed by a sow."⁴³ Focusing the readers' attention on Pizarro's swinish behavior, he exaggerated Pizarro's sordid beginnings by jocularly stating that the swine's teat "is a more discreditable fountain of supply than that assigned to the infant Romulus."⁴⁴

*The bandido traditionally had impure blood. Pizarro's bastard birth condemned him much the same as the mestizo's race mixture identified him as a dangerous threat to the Anglo-Saxon whose strength was his racial purity. See the definition of the bandido stereotype in Chapter IV of this study.

There was some indication that Prescott was aware of the liberties that he had taken in his portrait of Pizarro's origin. Prescott footnoted his primary source, Gómara, who had written, "Nació en Truxillo, i echaron lo á la puerta de la Iglesia, mamó una puerca ciertos dias, no se hallando quien le quisiese dár leche."⁴⁵ The substance of the quote was that Pizarro was nursed by a pig because no one could be found who wished to give milk (a wet nurse). Prescott's loose translation and analysis was designed to impugn Pizarro's character. Gómara, however, emphasized that the baby survived. Prescott's translation was suited to his black, fiendish portrait of Pizarro--the "torpid swineherd" who "was neither taught to read nor write."⁴⁶ Pizarro was a scalawag--a vulgar imitation of Cortés. Prescott wrote, Pizarro "undoubtedly proposed to himself the example of Cortés, so contagious to the adventurous spirits of that day, and especially to Pizarro, engaged, as he was in a similar enterprise."⁴⁷ The similarity of their enterprises ends with Pizarro's uncouth destruction of the Inca's institutions.

Prescott moralized about Atahualpa's execution. Atahualpa had been held for ransom. The terms of the ransom fulfilled, Pizarro refused to free him. Holding a mock trial, he was charged with his brother's death (Huáscar), with squandering "the public revenues," with idolatry, with "adulterous practices, indulging openly in a plurality of wives," and with attempting "to excite an insurrection against the Spaniards."⁴⁸ Atahualpa was convicted and condemned to be burned at the stake. Before his execution the Inca inquired if it were true that Christians were not burned. Pizarro affirmed this, and Atahualpa was converted to Catholicism. His sentence was "commuted for the milder

form of the garrote."⁴⁹ Prescott interjected, "Thus by the death of a vile malefactor perished the last of the Incas."⁵⁰ Just as Prescott selected detail and embellished it to praise Cortés, he arranged negative incidents which malign Pizarro.

Prescott rejected Pizarro because he supposedly lacked these attributes which characterized him as a hidalgo. Overtly, Prescott stated that he wished that Pizarro had been more of a gentleman and less of a bandit."⁵¹ In the Conquest of Peru, Pizarro, suckled by a sow, was a genuine lout--"the archetype of cruelty and perfidy."⁵² Undoubtedly, the popularity of this Spanish archetype was encouraged by the American, war-conscious public.

The archetypical Spaniard in 1847 was the enemy of the United States. With confused levels of abstraction, the propaganda of the Mexican War drew slight differences between Spaniards and Mexicans. Reviewing the Conquest of Peru, a writer for the North American Review (1847) stated:

The Spanish adventurer in America in the sixteenth century was a singular compound of the bigot, the pirate, and the knight-errant. He was fierce, rapacious, and cruel; his conduct towards the natives was restrained by no sense of honor, no touch of compassion, no regard for the laws of God or man. A demon let loose from hell to wreak his spite and vengeance upon the sons of men could hardly match him in his savageness, perfidy, and debauchery, and would have appeared even less odious, because incapable of his rapacity and fanaticism. . . . The religion he professed, wicked perversion of the name and spirit of Christianity, was hardly more dignified, or at all less hateful, than most forms of paganism; for it added the fervors of bigotry to the practice of crimes so monstrous, that the natural spirit and uninstructed conscience of man would have shrunk from them with loathing and horror.⁵³

The Conquest of Peru was published during the second year of the Mexican War. The terror of the Spanish Inquisition was compared to the

Aztec's demand for human sacrifice. The parallel between the sixteenth-century Spaniard and the nineteenth-century Mexican was concisely drawn in this review: "It seems hardly too fanciful to say, that the siege of Mexico by Cortés has found its parallel and its punishment in the terrific bombardment of Vera Cruz."⁵⁴ The Conquest of Peru, written and published in an anti-Mexican environment, encouraged reviewers to castigate Spaniards rather than to criticize the text to be reviewed. Because Prescott focused on Pizarro's negative characteristics, his portraits were consistent with the negative characterizations of Spaniards popularized by the American press that supported the Mexican War. The remainder of this essay will explore these types categorically.

The Priest: a Tempest of Passion

The Protestant missionary seeks to enlighten the understanding of his convert by the pale light of reason. But the bolder Catholic, kindling the spirit by the splendor of the spectacle and by the glowing portrait of an agonized Redeemer, sweeps along his hearers in a tempest of passion, that drowns every thing like reflection. He has secured his convert, however, by the hold on his affection,--an easier and more powerful hold with the untutored savage, than reason.⁵⁵

Prescott, the Conquest of Mexico

Like many other nineteenth-century Protestants, Prescott was not a great admirer of the Catholic Church. And while it may be said that in the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru he did not indulge in excessively vicious anti-Catholic propaganda, it must also be added that the Catholic priests of his histories greatly resemble the priestly caricatures found in the fiction and non-fiction of nineteenth-century America. Prescott's religious discourses concluded that

Protestantism was a "purer [form of] Christianity" than Catholicism.⁵⁶ Prescott's moral position has been analyzed: "Anglo-Saxonism, with its derogatory view of the Latin and Catholic people . . . did not prevent Prescott from thinking it fortunate that the Western Hemisphere was discovered by the 'two races best fitted to conquer and colonize it.'"⁵⁷ In spite of Prescott's undisguised Anglo-Saxon racism and of his asides arguing the superiority of Protestantism, his histories were refreshing to the beleaguered Catholics.⁵⁸

A good example of Prescott's religious fair-mindedness was his summary of the Catholic Spaniards' right to conquer the New World and to convert the heathen. To understand the Spanish point of view, Prescott asked his readers to transport themselves "to the age when it happened."⁵⁹ Supposedly, this encouraged the reader not to condemn the Spaniards for their sincere religious convictions or for their methods of converting the savages. He rightly perceived that it would be difficult for nineteenth-century Americans to comprehend the Spanish-Catholics' cruel treatment of Indian heretics and pagans for their "religious infidelity!"⁶⁰

Under their code, the territory of the heathen, wherever found, was regarded as a religious waif, which in default of a legal proprietor, was claimed and taken possession of by the Holy See, and as such was freely given away by the head of the Church, to any temporal potentate whom he pleased, that would assume the burden of conquest. Thus, Alexander the Sixth, generously granted a large portion of the Western hemisphere to the Spaniards, and of the Eastern to the Portuguese. These lofty pretensions of the successors of the humble fisherman of Galilee, far from being nominal, were acknowledged and appealed to as conclusive in controversies between nations.⁶¹

The responsibility of the "burden of conquest" was a religious duty. Heartily, Prescott endorsed the conquest on moral grounds. He wrote,

"cannibalism under any form, or whatever sanction, cannot but have a fatal influence on the nation addicted to it. It suggests ideas so loathsome, so degrading to man, to his spiritual and immortal nature, that it is impossible the people who practice it should make any great progress in moral or intellectual culture."⁶² The conquistadores never faltered in their duty as Christians to destroy pagan idols. Neither did Prescott challenge their convictions.

With the right of conquest, thus conferred, came, also, the obligation, on which it may be said to have been founded, to retrieve the nations sitting in darkness from eternal perdition. This obligation was acknowledged by the best and the bravest, the gownsman in his closet, the missionary, and the warrior in the crusade. However much it may have been debased by temporal motives and mixed up with worldly considerations of ambition and avarice, it was still active in the mind of the Christian conqueror. . . . The concession of the Pope, then, founded on, and enforcing, the imperative duty of conversion, was the assumed basis--and in apprehension of that age, a sound one--of the right of conquest.⁶³

Prescott's objectivity was commendable for a nineteenth-century writer. Stating the fundamental Christian beliefs held by the Catholic Church and Catholic monarchs, he warned the readers of the dangers of judging the Spaniards by nineteenth-century standards. Just in case the readers did not notice the similarities between the Spaniards' justification of their conquest and the arguments put forth by the American expansionists, Prescott appended a footnote to his description of the moral justification of such expansionism.

In this equivocal argument, Prescott contrasted the ideal manner by which the Protestants acquired territory in the New World with the methods of the Spaniards: "The ground on which Protestant nations assert a natural right to the fruits of their discoveries in the New World is very different. They consider that the earth was intended

for cultivation; and that Providence never designed that hordes of wandering savages should hold a territory far more than necessary for their own maintenance, to the exclusion of civilized man."⁶⁴ He also stated that it was to the founding Puritans' credit that they "established their title to the soil by fair purchase of the Aborigines; thus forming an honorable contrast to the policy pursued by too many of the settlers on the American continents."⁶⁵ Prescott argued that the right of the United States to occupy territory beyond the present needs of the country was questionable. The Protestants' right to hold that territory was of an "indifferent tenure."⁶⁶ Finding himself embroiled in an emotional, indefensible argument supporting the Protestants' rights to dispossess Indians of their territory and implying that the Spanish Catholics were less than honorable in their dealings with the Indians, Prescott concluded by reducing his argument to absurdity. For further discussion of the law of nations, the right to occupy territory that had been discovered and conquered, Prescott referred his readers to Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York. The test of ridicule, he stated, will show "more than any reasoning . . . how much or how little" a nation's rights to conquer were worth.⁶⁷

Prescott's bogus argument was representative of the themes of religious bigotry and Anglo-Saxon racism developed in the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru. His insistence on the Protestant forefathers' fair treatment of the American aborigines was studied naivete. To make such a statement Prescott had to overlook the Colonies' and later the United States' long history of Indian wars, culminating in his own time with the wars resulting from Andrew

Jackson's Indian removal policies. Prescott's quagmire was further complicated by his moral judgment that Anglo-Saxon Protestants were more civilized than the Spanish Catholics. Honesty compelled him to state that the United States' claims to territory "exceeding what is demanded for our present or prospective support" was morally questionable.⁶⁸ The argument became circular. First, Prescott asked the reader not to judge the Spanish Catholic too harshly; he was a product of the sixteenth century. Second, he praised the conquistadores for the firmness of their convictions (however cruelly they treated the Aztec and Inca pagans). And last, he argues that the Protestants were more honorable than the Catholics. Prescott stopped just short of arguing that the purer, Protestant Christians were justified in conquering the Mexicans because the Anglo-Saxons represented a higher form of civilization. If he would have completed this argument, it would have been inconsistent with his protest of the Mexican War. Like many New England Brahmins, he was a reformer who was reluctant to involve himself in the violence of specific reform movements. He removed himself from the realities that needed reform by rationalizing them on a lofty academic plane. Prescott's inconsistent attitude toward life and history has been evaluated: "The truth seems to be that Prescott was a conservative republican who disliked Jacksonian democracy, a Hamiltonian who called himself a Whig, but who found that 'a log cabin and hard cider are indifferent qualifications for the presidency.' He believed in liberty and freedom of conscience but disliked enthusiasm in either politics or religion. He approved of the Reformation and the American Revolution, but opposed both the philosophy and the results of the French Revolution. He was an Anglophile

and something of an Anglo-Saxon racist, who thought Britain and the United States 'the only two great nations where constitutional liberty exists.'⁶⁹ Prescott's inconsistencies did not demonstrate hypocrisy to the nineteenth-century reader.

It was not incredible that in the Conquest of Mexico he should condemn Cortés as a religious bigot, "the failing of the age," and praise the "bold genius" of Cardinal Ximenes.⁷⁰ Of Cortés' arch-enemy at the court of Charles V--Bishop Fonseca, president of the Council of the Indies--Prescott stated, "Fonseca appears to have been an active efficient person, better suited to a secular than to a religious vocation. He had, indeed, little that was religious in his temper; quick to take offense and slow to forgive. His resentments seem to have been nourished and perpetuated like a part of his own nature. Unfortunately his peculiar position enabled him to display them towards some of the most illustrious men of his time."⁷¹ As a character type, the priest's positive qualities were considered apart from his religious vocation. Prescott's negative characterization of the priest, Bishop Fonseca, emphasized his lack of Christian temperament and virtue. Very subtly, Prescott avoided identifying a man as a Catholic priest, unless his priestcraft helped to identify him as a villain.

In the Conquest of Peru Prescott euphemized the heroic Pedro de la Gasca's office as a Catholic priest. He was referred to as an "ecclesiastic," whose "sacred calling" led him to receive the "degree of Master of Theology."⁷² Studiously, Prescott avoided the terms Catholic and priest, thereby drawing the reader's attention to Gasca's secular capacity as President of the Royal Audience. Gasca was a man of reason with unimpeachable virtues:

A distinguishing feature of his mind was his common sense, --the best substitute for genius in a ruler who has the destinies of his fellow-men at his disposal, and more indispensable than genius itself. In Gasca, the different qualities were blended in such harmony, that there was no room for excess. They seemed to regulate each other. While his sympathy with mankind taught him the nature of their wants, his reason suggested to what extent these were capable of relief, as well as the best mode of effecting it. He did not waste his strength on illusory schemes of benevolence, like Las Casas, on the one hand; nor did he countenance the selfish policy of the colonists, on the other. He aimed at the practicable,--the greatest good practicable.⁷³

As an extraordinary man, Gasca's pragmatic philosophy had enabled him to overcome the good or evil fanaticisms characteristic of his fellow priests. Prescott's direct reference to Las Casas' "illusory schemes of benevolence" in his struggle to free Indians from cruel peonage indicated that Prescott did not condone philandering altruism. As a man rather than a churchman, Gasca was invested with nineteenth-century virtues; therefore, he was superior to Pizarro and his bandidos.

Prescott praised Gasca by criticizing Pizarro: "After the dark and turbulent spirits with which we have been hitherto occupied, it is refreshing to dwell on a character of little moral stature. Pizarro, himself, cannot be charged with manifesting any overweening solicitude for the propagation of the Faith. He was no bigot like Cortés. Bigotry is the perversion of the religious principle; but the principle itself was wanting in Pizarro."⁷⁵ The conquerors of Peru were "the scum of her [Spain's] chivalry."⁷⁶ Gasca's moral character was proportionately high as the character of the bandidos was low: "At the close of this long array of iron warriors, we behold the poor and humble missionary coming into the land on an errand of mercy, and everywhere proclaiming the glad tidings of peace."⁷⁷

The "humble missionary" who was unafraid to fight for his convictions was Prescott's concept of an ideal religious leader. Gasca, like Father Olmedo in the Conquest of Mexico, was typed, "a rare pattern of Christian toleration in an age of intolerance."⁷⁸ More exactly, Father Olmedo "was a true disciple in the school of Las Casas. His heart was unscathed by that fiery fanaticism which sears and hardens whatever it touches. It melted with the warm glow of Christian charity. He had come out to the New World, as a missionary among the heathen, and he shrank from no sacrifice, but that of the welfare of the poor benighted flock to whom he had consecrated his days."⁷⁹ Pizarro's chaplain, Bishop Valverde, was not the gentle missionary. More like the hateful Bishop Fonseca, Valverde was described: "Trained in the severest school of monastic discipline, which too often closes the heart against the common charities of life, he could not, like the benevolent Las Cases rise so far above its fanatical tenets as to regard the heathen as his brother, while in the state of infidelity; and in the true spirit of that school, he doubtless conceived that the sanctity of the end justified the means, however revolting in themselves."⁸⁰ Valverde was the stereotyped sixteenth-century fanatic whose lack of charity contributed to the Black Legend of Spain and the hideous narratives of the auto-da-fe of the Spanish Inquisition. The fanatical Catholic priest was a favorite subject of nineteenth-century, anti-Catholic writers who associated Catholicism with Rome and monarchy, fearful enemies of American democracy.⁸¹

The power of Protestant "reason" was dramatized in Gasca's arguments. His "weapons were argument and mild persuasion. It is the reason he would conquer, not the body. He wins his way by conviction,

not by violence. It is a moral victory to which he aspires, more potent, and happily more permanent, than that of the blood-stained conqueror."⁸² We were told that it was through Gasca that "Nature works out her great changes in the material world."⁸³

By putting down Gonzalo Pizarro's rebellion, Gasca became a great revolutionary hero. Prescott compared him to George Washington.⁸⁴ Concluding his narrative biography of Gasca's exploits, Prescott reminded his readers of Gasca's ecclesiastical office. Rewarded for his successes, Gasca "was raised to the bishopric of Palencis,--a mode of acknowledgment best suited to his character and deserts. Here he remained till 1561, when he was promoted to the vacant see of Sigüenza."⁸⁵ Whatever the ecclesiastical character of Bishop Gasca, Prescott understated it, emphasizing the priest's secular accomplishments.

Prescott was not noticeably more tolerant than his contemporaries, but he was more urbane in this treatment of his Spanish-Catholic prejudices.⁸⁶ Answering criticism that he had been too "lukewarm" in his treatment of Catholics, he wrote to Pascual de Gayangos: "As to religious persecution, I think my condemnation of it might be considered strong enough by any one who reads my remarks on the Inquisition and the mischief it has caused to unhappy Spain."⁸⁷ The religious bigotry apparent in the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru was directed toward Catholicism as an institution and toward representatively poor priests. The essence of Prescott's Protestant chauvinism was summarized: the "most telling charge against the institution was that it had permitted external form to corrupt or consume the religious essence."⁸⁸ Prescott leveled Protestant diatribes against the Catholic

missionary who "sweeps along his readers in a tempest of passion, that drowns everything like reflection"; or condemned Catholicism as an institution for producing fanatics like Bishop Valverde.⁸⁹ Valverde, Prescott told us, was the product of the "severest school of monastic discipline, which too often closes the heart against the common charities of life."⁹⁰

Extracting priestly types from the histories and showing their relationships to the protagonists has indicated an ambiguity. First, in the absence of other types of Christianity, Prescott thought Catholicism superior to the Aztec religion. Second, Prescott could not have his readers believe that he was advocating priestcraft. Typically, Prescott was forced to oscillate between these two values. He avoided awkward compromises by frequently interjecting didactic Protestant arguments into his discussions of the Catholic mission in America. He was consistent in his praise of the abstract Catholic purpose and in his condemnation of priestly types. Identifying a man as a Catholic priest generally contributed to the distress of horror of a particular episode. One of Prescott's critics has enumerated themes of bigotry that regularly appear in his histories: "Passages belittling the conquistadores abound. They are the inevitable result of the historical period in which they were written. The corrupt mob, the 'licentious band of adventurers,' the conquistador wicked and capable of the most execrable villainies, the despotism, the inquisition, the violent fanaticism that destroyed the remains of the pre-hispanic past and saw them as relics of the devil--these were common phrases a century ago."⁹¹ While anti-Catholic prejudices and negative priestly types were common a century ago, Prescott's handling of this

bigotry was uncommon. As if conscious of his prejudices, he made overt attempts to objectively credit the Catholic Church with bringing Christianity to the Americas.

The Conquered

We cannot regret the fall of an empire, which did so little to promote the happiness of its subjects, or the real interests of humanity. Notwithstanding the lustre thrown over its latter days by the glorious defence of this capital, by the mild munificence of Montezuma, by the dauntless heroism of Guatemozin, the Aztecs were emphatically a fierce and brutal race, little calculated, in their best aspects to excite our sympathy and regard. The civilization, such as it was, was not their own, but reflected, perhaps imperfectly, from a race whom they had succeeded in the land. It was, in respect to the Aztecs, a generous graft on a vicious stock, and could have brought no fruit to perfection. They ruled over their wide domains with a sword, instead of a sceptre. They did nothing to ameliorate the condition, or in any way promote the progress, of their vassals. Their vassals were serfs, used only to minister to their pleasure, held in awe by armed garrisons, ground to dust by imposts in peace, by military conscriptions in war. They did not, like the Romans, whom they resembled in the nature of their conquests, extend the rights of citizenship to the conquered. They did not amalgamate them into one great nation, with common rights and interests. They held them as aliens,--even those, who in the Valley were gathered round the very walls of the capital. The Aztec metropolis, the heart of the monarch, had not a sympathy, not a pulsation, in common with the rest of the body politic. It was a stranger in its own land.⁹²

Prescott, the Conquest of Mexico

Prescott pictured the conquered Aztecs and Incas as victims of destiny. The conquistadores, as imperfect as they were, were harbingers of a higher form of civilization. The Aztecs, then, were barbarous knights. As noble enemies they admirably reflected the best and the worst traits of the conquistadores and their quasi civil-religious institutions. Prescott approached nostalgia in recording the passing

of the exotic Aztec and Inca civilized way of life. Notwithstanding, he expressed his dismay that the Spaniards did not adapt existing parallel Indian institutions with Catholic Spanish institutions and raise the Indians to a higher civilization. The conquerors annihilated the Aztec and Inca cultures, and the conquered people were allowed to sink sordidly low.

Prescott utilized a controlled pathos to dramatize the Aztec's inflexibility, heroically refusing to conform or to assimilate with the more civilized Spaniards. He wrote: "Their civilization was of the hardy character which belongs to the wilderness. The fierce virtues of the Aztec were all his own. They refused to submit to European culture,--to be engrafted on a foreign stock. His outward form, his complexion, his lineaments, are substantially the same. But the moral characteristics of the nation, all that constituted its individuality as a race, are effaced forever."⁹³ The "moral characteristics" distinguishing the Aztecs were their democratic monarchy, their legal code, their military organization, their scientific discoveries, their art and architecture, and their aristocratic bearing.

Cannibalism, slavery, serfdom, and excessive wealth were the flaws of Aztec civilization. Debauched by their luxurious way of life, the Mexican aristocrats were compared to Oriental monarchs: "we are strongly reminded of the civilization of the East . . . that semi-civilization which has distinguished the Tartar races, among whom art, and even science, have made . . . some progress in their adaptation to material wants and sensual gratification, but little in reference to the higher and more ennobling interests of humanity."⁹⁴ When Prescott wished to emphasize the Mexicans' potentialities which also focused

attention on the negative aspects of their religious and social institutions, he drew analogies between the Aztecs and the Greeks. For example, referring to their religion: "The polytheistic system of the Indians, like that of the Ancient Greeks, was of that accommodating kind which could admit within its elastic folds the deities of any other religion."⁹⁵ This, of course, implied that monotheism, even the Catholicism of the conquerors, was superior. Nevertheless, it was Prescott's intention to credit the Indians with an open-mindedness that the Spaniards did not possess.

Prescott's highest praise for the Aztecs was conveyed in a number of Greek and Roman analogs. By comparison Montezuma and Cuauhtémoc became "rude republicans."⁹⁶ Here Prescott reflected his sectional orientation as well as his views on American aristocracy. Northerners in the nineteenth century were fond of comparing their political and cultural orientation to that of England's and that of the ancient Roman Republics'. The Southerners adopted Grecian classical models and thought of themselves as latter day Norman-French aristocrats.⁹⁷ Therefore, Prescott's listing of the Aztec's moral characteristics reflected Yankee values: republicanism emphasizing English common law based on Roman antecedents, rule by an elitist oligarchy, however democratic, and a utilitarian attitude towards life and art stressing education, industry, and progress.

Prescott wrote that as a "rude republican" the Aztec monarch was elected from the brothers or nephews of the deceased prince by six electorates. Always the prince was a well educated, qualified warrior, or in Montezuma's case a priest. "Below the magistrate was a court, established in each province, and consisting of three members."⁹⁸

Subordinated to this superior court were the "inferior magistrates" elected by the citizens.⁹⁹ These were scattered throughout the country. The inferior judges controlled a body of local officers who looked to the welfare of a prescribed number of families. As suggested by this sophisticated legal hierarchy appeals were possible and laws were written in "hieroglyphical paintings."¹⁰⁰ Deeply conscious of the social and political significance of property, Prescott noted, "it must be inferred that the Aztecs were sufficiently civilized to evince a solicitude of the rights of both property and persons."¹⁰¹

In the spirit of ancient Rome, the military code was similar to the Aztec civil code: "Disobedience of orders was punished with death."¹⁰² Poorly matched against the Spaniards, "war, though a trade, is not elevated to the rank of a science. They advanced singing, and shouting their war-cries, briskly charging the enemy, as rapidly retreating, and making use of ambuscades, sudden surprises, and the light skirmish of guerilla warfare."¹⁰³ The soldier shared with the priest the highest consideration. Only accomplished warriors were allowed to wear ornaments. A commendation of Aztec chivalry followed: "Even the members of the royal family were not excepted from this law, which reminds one of the occasioned practice of Christian knights, to wear plain armor, or shields without device, till they had achieved some doughty feat of chivalry."¹⁰⁴ The height that the Aztec's civilization had reached was "not much short of that enjoyed by our Saxon ancestors, under Alfred." Contrary to evoking pity for the Aztecs, Prescott emphasized the heroic age of the Aztecs. But the Aztecs' "true spirit of chivalry" was dampened by their Indian

"cunning."¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, they were formidable opponents for the Spaniards. By portraying the Aztec nobles as admirable warriors, the excitement of the conflict was heightened. Prescott endeavored to show his readers that even though the Indians were inevitable victims of Spanish chivalry and military science, the conquest was ennobling to both Spaniards and Aztecs. After the long siege and ultimate defeat of Cuauhtémoc, Prescott said, "Cortés was filled with admiration . . . of the young barbarian, showing in his reverses a spirit worthy of an ancient Roman."¹⁰⁶

Other than the civil and the military organizations, Prescott elevated the Aztecs by a laudatory description of their arts and sciences. Manuscripts indicated that children were formally educated, official records were kept, literature and songs were recorded, and that their study of mathematics was advanced; not the least of which was the famed Aztec calendar exhibiting their peculiar astrology and sophisticated knowledge of astronomy. Other sciences that the Aztecs were proficient in were agriculture, metallurgy--although the use of iron was unknown to them--and masonry.

As jewelers they excelled in gold and silver work; "The Spanish goldsmiths admitted their superiority over themselves in these ingenious works."¹⁰⁷ Other fine arts included poetry, sculpting, painting, weaving, and featherwork.

The Aztecs were attuned to their environment. Prescott stated that Mexico (their adopted homeland) was as picturesque and as sublime as the Aztecs themselves. Their semi-civilized terrain ranged from the virgin jungle and snow-capped, volcanic peaks to the well-husbanded fields of corn and Maguey. As Prescott phrased it, the scenery was

"grand, even terrible."¹⁰⁸ The Aztecs, a fierce, warrior race, migrated into the Valley of Mexico during the 13th century and established indisputable control over the territory immediately surrounding their city Tenochtitlán. The uncivilized became semi-civilized assimilating Toltec culture and institutions. Ruled by a succession of able princes, the Aztecs conquered the neighboring principalities and ruled all the territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific and as far south as Guatemala and Nicaragua. So rich became the Aztec princes, Prescott explained, that they "lived in a barbaric pomp, truly Oriental."¹⁰⁹ Prescott's brief history of the origin of the Aztec empire was organized so that the reader sensed the progressive march of civilization.¹¹⁰

The predetermined fate of the Mexicans was foretold by Aztec legends of their god Quetzalcóatl. Prescott capitalized on these legends and dramatized Cortés' presence in Mexico from the Indian point of view. The knight-errant, epic hero was transformed into a Mexican myth. Cortés as Quetzalcóatl provided further moral justification for the conquest. He reasoned that the Mexicans destroyed their own civilization. The Spaniards provided only the means, fulfilling the Manifest Destiny of both the Aztecs and the Spaniards.

In his analysis of Montezuma's character Prescott intimated that Montezuma's weakness lay in his belief that the return of Quetzalcóatl spelled out the termination of his dynasty. Prescott wrote:

"Montezuma's fate seemed to be announced before the arrival of the white man, and he yielded to it with an unresisting weakness that forms an affecting contrast with his naturally bold and somewhat cruel character."¹¹¹ Similarly in the Conquest of Mexico, Prescott told us

Montezuma's innermost thoughts when he heard the news that the conquistadores had entered the Valley of Mexico:

the last spark of hope died away in his bosom. Like one who suddenly finds himself on the brink of some dark and yawning gulf, he was too much bewildered to be able to rally his thought, or even to comprehend his situation. He was the victim of an absolute destiny; against which no foresight or precautions could have availed. It was as if the strange beings, who had thus invaded his shores, had dropped from some distant planet, so different were they from all they had ever seen, in appearance and manners; so superior-- though a mere handful, in numbers--to the banded nations of Anahuac in strength and science, and all the fearful accompaniments of war! . . . It seemed like some terrible dream, --from which he was now, alas! to awake to a still more terrible reality.¹¹²

The conqueror ushered in a new dispensation. Cortés the virile aggressive hidalgo was recognized by both the Spaniards and the Aztecs as the manifestation of the superior power of Catholic Spain. Montezuma's indecisiveness indicated that the Aztec monarchy had disintegrated at the time of the conquest. When Cortés arrived, he found the Indians loitering away their "hours in idle pastime, under the shadow of . . . [their] bananas."¹¹³ Here, Prescott capsulated his theory why the Indians were conquered. Condemned by their idleness, the Aztecs were destined to be sacrificed to the higher civilization of the Spaniards.

Generally speaking, for the nineteenth-century New Englander, indolence was a disreputable character trait. An adherent to the Protestant work ethic, Prescott (severely handicapped though he was) could neither consent to a life of indolent leisure for himself nor condone the sloth of the Aztecs. The moral significance of the nineteenth-century work ethic has been stated: "commercial people [who are] . . . agents for the 'spirit of commerce' . . . defend other natural principles . . . Protestantism, nationality, free thought,

republicanism--or the natural economic principle of free trade, 'enterprise' or industry, and self-reliance."¹¹⁴

Contrasting the Aztecs, Montezuma and Cuauhtémoc, Cortés was given a recommendation that any nineteenth-century businessman might admire. One of Cortés' outstanding characteristics was his image as a tireless worker and a man of commerce: "If he was greedy for gold . . . it was . . . to secure funds for prospecting his glorious discoveries."¹¹⁵ And showing "a respect for the interests of science," Cortés' shipping enterprises (although they nearly bankrupted him) "added important contributions."¹¹⁶ These virtues provided a special solution to the moral problem Prescott confronted. How could he justify the destruction of one of the highest civilizations of prehispanic times? The answer was that the Indians lacked Cortés' commercial spirit. The Aztecs were dramatized, exploiting "their 'Oriental' characteristics --their 'sensual' religion, their 'despotic' government, their effeminate' rulers."¹¹⁷

Montezuma, the poet king, was no match for the business-like, iron knight Cortés.¹¹⁸ The sumptuous splendor of the Halls of Montezuma attested to his refined character. This opulence, however, was also a comment on his soft, effeminate character. It was curious that Prescott should malign Montezuma in this fashion. James Fenimore Cooper condemned the hidalgo, Don Agustín, similarly. Agustín was made ineffectual because of his soft, luxurious aristocratic way of life. (See the discussion of The Prairie in Chapter II of this study.) Prescott, in effect, indicted Montezuma as an aristocrat who had been corrupted by luxury. Nineteenth-century Americans who were chauvinistic about their democratic orientation commonly charged European

aristocrats of being indolent, undeserving rulers whose only recommendation was the title that he had inherited. Although Cortés was a hidalgo, his accomplishments commended him as a man, as a leader, and as an aristocrat. Prescott's disaffection with Montezuma's weak, aristocratic character was dramatized: "When a common soldier once spoke to him angrily, the tears came into the monarch's eyes, as if it made him feel the true character of his impotent condition."¹¹⁹ This was Montezuma. He found "a puerile pleasure in a dazzling and ostentatious pageantry; [he made] show for substance; vain pomp for power; [hedged] round the throne itself with a barren and burdensome ceremonial, the counterfeit of real majesty."¹²⁰ Even as an effeminate king, Montezuma was worthy of pity; however, Prescott was steadfast, depicting Montezuma as a weak barbarian.

Cuauhtémoc, who succeeded Cuitláhuac, was dramatized as a warrior-knight worthy of respect. Prescott said that unlike his predecessor, "He did not shrink from the perilous post that was offered to him; and, as he saw the tempest gathering darkly around, he prepared to meet it like a man."¹²¹ In the end, the reconquest of Mexico honored both Cuauhtémoc and Cortés. Cortés was glorified because of his tenacity, courage, and intelligence. Cuauhtémoc's manliness was celebrated by dramatizing his inflexible, aristocratic spirit and his unwillingness to admit defeat.

Cuauhtémoc's Peruvian counterpart, Inca Manco Capac, ennobled Pizarro's conquistadores in much the same way as Cuauhtémoc inspired chivalry in the knight-errant who conquered Mexico. The Pizarros were not confronted with an Indian civilization which possessed the military prowess of the Aztec's. The Spaniards in the Peruvian conquest did not

suffer the ruinous setbacks suffered by Cortés in Mexico. Portraying the Incas, as innocent children, Prescott wrote that the Spaniards' treatment of the Indians was "as wanton as it was wicked."¹²² The fierce Manco Capac redeemed the Indians for their previous lack of resistance by waging a successful guerrilla war against Pizarro. Prescott reported that Pizarro was forced to send a sizable contingent, led by Pizarro's younger brother, Gonzalo, against Manco's band. The conquistadores were unsuccessful in their campaign: "The hardy Indian encountered his enemy several times in the rough passes of the Cordilleras. He was usually beaten, and sometimes with heavy loss, which he repaired with astonishing facility; for he always contrived to make his escape, and so true were his followers, that, in defiance of pursuit and ambushade, he found safe shelter in the secret haunts of the sierra."¹²³ Proving himself an able foe, Manco's successes in battle effectively contrasted the Spaniards' chivalry on the battlefield with their treacherous peace overtures.

After Juan Pizarro was killed in the Spaniards' first serious confrontation with Manco, Prescott wrote: "He had served in the conquest of Peru from the first, and no name on the roll of its conquerors is less tarnished by the reproach of cruelty, or stands higher in all the attributes of a true and valiant knight."¹²⁴ In this instance, the Inca defenders of the fortress that Juan Pizarro was assaulting were referred to as "miserable defenders."¹²⁵ By contrast, Francisco Pizarro was capable of more outrageous atrocities than were committed by Manco. One instance occurred when Pizarro executed one of Manco's favorite wives as a reprisal for the Indians' execution of Pizarro's peace envoy. The execution was dramatized: "The governor ordered her

to be stripped naked, bound to a tree, and in presence of the camp, to be scourged with rods, and then shot to death with arrows. The wretched victim bore the execution of the sentence with surprising fortitude. She did not beg for mercy, where none was to be found."¹²⁶ The cruelty of the Spaniards indicated in this instance that the Indians were victims who heroically bore Spanish indignities with admirable fortitude.

Prescott's portrayal of Aztec and Inca aristocrats was one of the more interesting features of the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru. He skillfully dramatized Montezuma, Cuauhtémoc, and Inca Manco as no less heroic than the conquistadores. The difference between the Indians' heroism and that of the Spaniards was cultural. Cortés' and Pizarro's presence in the New World represented the higher civilization of Catholic Spain. The Aztecs and the Incas were admirable in that they had built a civilization--as barbaric as it was--second to none in the Western hemisphere. In their glory the Indians deservedly could be compared to the ancient Greeks, Romans, Oriental monarchies, and to the old Saxons. They excelled in science, agriculture, art, politics, wealth, etc. At their best they were a promising but undeveloped civilization. At their worst their nobility was flawed by pagan cannibalism, a too luxurious and indolent life style, and a stubborn resistance to change.

Prescott utilized the same formula in developing the Indians' characters as he did the Spaniards'. Contrasting their negative and positive qualities, his subjects were either diminished in stature or inflated to suit his purpose. Montezuma's opulence and aristocratic bearing was deflated by what appeared to be his cowardly indecision. Cuauhtémoc's chivalric bravery was enhanced by his relentless spirit

and willingness to fight as long as he could muster his forces. Even the Aztec's bloody sacrifices during the siege of Mexico did not diminish his noble character. Likewise, Manco was an admirable hero. His fortitude outshone his Indian cunning.

By dramatizing the positive characteristics of the Aztecs and the Incas, the Indian aristocrats appeared as heroes. But the negative aspects of these Indians' portraits foreshadowed their failures. Montezuma's weakness, Cuauhtémoc's inflexibility, and Manco's cunning guerrilla tactics and insignificant force intimated throughout the histories that the Spaniards would ultimately be the conquerors. Because the Aztecs and the Incas were heroes, their passing was sad. These aristocrats were the last free spirits of the barbaric civilizations in the New World. The destruction of their civilizations was saddening because it appeared to be necessary if the Spaniards were to clear the way for the advance of Western civilization.¹²⁶

The Unregenerate

Those familiar with the modern Mexican will find it difficult to conceive that the nation should ever have been capable of devising the enlightened polity which we have been considering. But they should remember that in the Mexicans of our day they see only a conquered race; as different from their ancestors as are the modern Egyptians from those who built,--I will not say, the tasteless Pyramids,--but the temples and palaces, whose magnificent wrecks strew the borders of the Nile, at Luxor and Karnac. The difference is not so great as between the ancient Greek, and his degenerate descendant, lounging among the masterpieces of art which he has scarcely taste enough to admire,--speaking the language of those still more imperishable monuments of literature which he has hardly capacity to comprehend. Yet he breathes the same atmosphere, is warmed by the same sun, nourished by the same scenes, as those who fell at Marathon, and won the trophies

of Olympic Pisa. The same blood flows in his veins that flowed in theirs. But ages of tyranny have passed over him; he belongs to a conquered race.¹²⁷

Prescott, Conquest of Mexico

With the passing of the last aristocratic Aztecs and Incas, all that remained of these great civilizations were their inanimate monuments and the miserable, defeated, and unregenerated serfs. Prescott's low opinion of the common Aztecs and Incas was typical of the nineteenth century.

Prescott asked his readers to sympathize with the natural aristocrats Atahualpa, Montezuma, Cuauhtémoc, and Manco. But he argued that noble Aztec princes should not be compared with their degenerated descendants: "Those familiar with the modern Mexican will find it difficult to conceive that the nation would ever have been capable of devising the enlightened polity which we have been considering. But they should remember that in the Mexicans of our day they see only a conquered race."¹²⁸ Prescott's visceral prejudices were many. The common Mexican in his history was "motley" and "ignorant."¹²⁷ His description of Mexican women was "pretty, unlike their unfortunate descendants, of the present day."¹³⁰ As lovers the Aztecs were attributed with the same characteristics as those "national types" from southern climates which stimulated "the sensibilities to the more violent expression of passion."¹³¹ Relating a love story analogous to the biblical story of David and Uriah, Prescott emphasized that the Tezcucan prince and "the youthful Hebe" were comparable to Mediterranean lovers, for the king "had all the amorous temperament of the South . . . and conceived a violent passion for her."¹³²

Characteristic of a time when the American gentleman could make only polite reference to the fair sex's physical charms, Prescott's portrait of Cortés' interpreter and mistress was in good taste. These characteristics that may be considered offensive were summarily dealt with. That Marina had been mistress to others before Cortés received only the most indirect affirmation. Her affair with Cortés and the bastard children that resulted from this union received this brief report: "Cortés, who appreciated the value of her services from the first, made her his interpreter, then his secretary, and won by her charm, his mistress. She had a son by him, Don Martín Cortés, Comendador of the Military Order of Saint James."¹³³ Neither Cortés' adultery nor Marina's concupiscence evoked a moral judgment. Quite the opposite was true. Since Cortés was a man away from home, and since Marina was beautiful and useful, their relationship was condoned. Prescott's portrait emphasized her charm and her intelligence:

Marina was at this time in the morning of life. She is said to have possessed uncommon personal attractions, and her open, expressive features indicated her generous temper. She always remained faithful to the countrymen of her adoption; and her knowledge of the language and customs of the Mexicans, and often of their designs, enabled her to extricate the Spaniards, more than once, from the most embarrassing and perilous situations. She had her errors, as we have seen. But they should be rather charged to the defects of early education, and to the evil influence of him to whom in the darkness of her spirit, she looked with simple confidence for the light to guide her. All agree that she was full of excellent qualities, and the important services which she rendered the Spaniards have made her memory deservedly dear to them; while the name of Malinche--the name by which she is still known in Mexico--was pronounced with kindness by the conquered races, with whose misfortunes she showed an invariable sympathy.¹³⁴

Malinche was a Venus figure--easily loved. Prescott did not feel that Cortés had morally compromised his honor by taking her as his mistress.

Nor was he considered callous when he "gave Marina away to a Castillian knight, Don Juan Xamarillo."¹³⁵ When she was wed, Cortes did the right thing by providing estates for her "in her native province."¹³⁶

Marina's "uncommon personal attractions" provided just enough libidinous spice to Prescott's epic history to heighten interest. The conquistadores found more than gold in Mexico. Marina was a right-thinking Indian.

Of all the Indians described the Tlascalans in the Conquest of Mexico were the most virtuous. They were unlike the "spoiled child of Nature, who derives such facilities of subsistence from her too prodigal hand, as supersede the necessity of exertion on his own part, the Tlascalan earned his bread . . . by the sweat of his brow. Cut off by his long wars with the Aztecs from commercial intercourse, he was driven chiefly to agricultural labor, the occupation most propitious to purity of morals and sinewy strength of constitution."¹³⁷ Imbued with Jeffersonian agrarianism, the Tlascalans became Cortés' allies. Popular thinking in the nineteenth century reflected a reverence for the husbandman and the yeoman farmer. Just as Prescott condoned the alliance between Tlascalans and conquistadores in their struggle against the "spoiled [children] of Nature," the Aztecs, Prescott's contemporaries were using the same argument to support American claims for Mexican territory. American expansionist sentiment has been described: "The theory that a use of the soil was ordained by God or morality figured not only in the entire history of Indian relations but also in all issues in which Americans found themselves desiring soil occupied by an 'inferior' race."¹³⁸ It is ironic that Prescott should have historically justified the Spaniards' and the Tlascalans' conquest of

the Aztecs and rejected nineteenth-century America's similar arguments on the "principle of utilization" as one of the justifications for the Mexican War.¹³⁹ (The principle of utilization argued that the American yeoman farmer was justified in grasping Mexican territory because Mexicans were not using the soil and mineral deposits as efficiently as Americans could.)

Drawing an analogy between his history, the Conquest of Mexico and Mexico's surrender in 1848, Prescott wrote to General Caleb Cushing:

You have closed a campaign as brilliant as that of the great conquistador himself, though the Spaniards have hardly maintained the reputation of their hardy ancestors. The second conquest would seem a priori to be a matter of as much difficulty as the first, considering the higher civilization and military science of the races who now occupy the country, but it has not proved so,--and my readers, I am afraid, will think I have been bragging too much of the valor of the old Spaniard.

. . .

I trust that your military duties and dangers are now at an end, and that Mexico will accept our propositions for peace. It has been a war most honorable to our arms, as all must admit, whatever we may think of the wisdom of the counsels that rushed us into it.¹⁴⁰

The bigotry communicated in this letter was essentially the same as that expressed in the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru. The Spaniards with their Christianity and their military science were superior to the Indians. The Spaniards fulfilled the first stage of Manifest Destiny by conquering the Aztecs and the Incas. In this congratulatory letter, Prescott praised General Cushing for his part in the American stage of Manifest Destiny with "a campaign as brilliant as that of the great conquistador himself."

Prescott's letter to Cushing further suggested that Prescott was not entirely opposed to a second conquest of Mexico. He merely disagreed with the justification offered for it. An analysis of Prescott's "regrets" for not paying his personal respects to President Polk in 1846 indicated that Prescott was inflexible in his abolitionist and anti-Mexican War sentiments. Prescott "had done what his gentlemanly nature required of him. Politically he had opposed Polk, voting for Clay in 1844, and in his opposition to the war with Mexico. WPH would roundly denounce it as 'Mr. Polk's War.'" ¹⁴¹ Prescott's continued friendship with Caleb Cushing was paradoxical.

Prescott's sentiments being what they were, why did he refuse to see President Polk, yet maintain his friendship with Caleb Cushing? Fellow abolitionist James Russell Lowell satirically protested Cushing's enthusiasm for the Mexican War in The Biglow Papers (1848). Lowell wrote:

That Mexicans war n't human beans,--an ou-
rang outang nation,
A sort o' folks a chap could kill an never dream
on't arter,
No more'n a feller'd dream o' pigs that he had
hed to slarter;
I'd an idee that they were built arter the darkie
fashion all,
An' here we air-ascrougin' 'em out o' thir own
dominions.
Ashelterin' 'em es Caleb sez, under our eagle's
pinions. ¹⁴²

The difference between Lowell's and Prescott's political orientation lay in Lowell's active commitment to the abolition of slavery. Prescott, too, was in sympathy with the abolitionist movement. However, like many other Federalists he was willing to entertain reforms as abstractions or as rhetorical questions. He was aloof from any

practical involvement which might implicate him politically, economically, or socially. Therefore, he could write to his friend that he disagreed with "the wisdom of the counsels that rushed us into" the Mexican War. And at the same time express his thrill at seeing another Federalist-Unitarian distinguishing the "race," no matter what the activity. Actively involved with the writing of anti-Mexican War propaganda, Lowell attacked Cushing. His speaker, Hosea Biglow, pleaded for the Mexican's and the Negro's human rights. At the same time, he had Hosea pointing out that political opportunists like Caleb Cushing were hypocritically abusing the Mexicans in the name of American democracy.

As early as 1837 Prescott wrote to William Ellery Channing that he would rather see the slave states make a "peaceable separation" from the Union than condone "The enlargement of our territory, for the criminal purpose of extending and indefinitely perpetuating slavery."¹⁴³ Unlike Lowell, Prescott saw slavery only as an evil institution. In this letter he did not concern himself with the human rights of either Negroes or Mexicans. He only questioned the legality of annexing Texas. He wrote, "The unwarranted recognition of the independence of a handful of greedy and lawless adventurers from the United States who had seized on Texas, it is to be feared will provide the first step in the process. It is in itself but little better than making our government accessory after the fact, in legal phrase, to the robbery of a territory for half a dozen states."¹⁴⁴

His ardor for abolitionism seemed to have cooled by 1847. In a letter to R. C. Winthrop, Prescott communicated a degree of patriotic pride in the military successes of United States' forces in Mexico:

"We ride on conquering and to conquer . . . up to the very Halls of Montezuma, and many, I should think from the positive manner they speak of them, expect to find the palace of the old Aztec still standing."¹⁴⁵ Praising the "brilliant" campaign executed by the United States Army and revelling in the popular talk of the recent conquest, Prescott no longer seemed concerned with the danger of the South's hope to acquire new slave territory. Perhaps the heated debate of the Wilmot Proviso had settled in his mind his early fear that the Mexican War was a southern conspiracy to extend their slave territory.

In his letter to Winthrop, Prescott questioned the value of the United States' acquisition of Mexican territory as a war indemnity. He wrote, "the capital and seaports seem destined to come into our hands. But what shall we do with them? It will be a heavy drag on our republican car, and the creole blood will not mix well with the Anglo-Saxon."¹⁴⁶ Prescott's racial bias appeared to be in direct opposition to Lowell's humanitarian sentiments. However, the Anglo-Saxon superiority expressed in Prescott's letters was consistent with his negative views of ignoble Indians and cruel, avaricious Spanish soldiery.

Prescott's lack of detachment from his subjects led the reader to believe that his purpose for writing these histories went beyond the mere recording of history and offering an objective analysis of it. His subjective approach to his topic facilitated his nostalgic description of Spanish aristocrats and their achievement in the New World. At the same time his approach enabled him to compare nineteenth-century phenomena with similar sixteenth-century developments. Protestantism, self-reliance, commercial progress, racial superiority, and Manifest Destiny were given interesting parallels in the Conquest of Mexico and

the Conquest of Peru. In the end, Prescott's readers were assured that Americans were heirs apparent to the conquistadores whose mission was to bring civilization to America.

Retrieving Hernando Cortés and Francisco Pizarro from Spanish and Mexican archives, Prescott embellished their characters and gave them the mission to advance civilization in the New World. This mission as interpreted by Prescott might be called the first phase of Manifest Destiny--the second obviously belong to the United States in the 1840's. Prescott indicated that the Spaniards were justified in their conquests; their roles as triumphant conquerors were predetermined by the course of history and the progress of Western civilization.

In his dramatization of the conquest of the Aztecs and the Incas, Prescott emphasized the dynamic, positive qualities of his Spanish heroes, particularly Cortés. Cortés' leadership qualities were atypical of the stereotyped Spanish aristocrat. He was a true hidalgo, a great captain who held his command through the respect and obedience freely given by his followers. As a man of action, his aristocratic bearing served him well. He was a bigoted Christian. Prescott minimized this flaw and inflated his heroic character by accentuating as many interesting characteristics as possible. Cortés was the moving spirit of the conquest. In the absence of a true Anglo-Saxon, Cortés was attributed virtues that were cherished by the American middle class. He was a romantic knight-errant, a conqueror, a builder, a businessman, a governor, and an expansionist. His negative characteristics were subordinated in such a fashion that his positive characteristics made him appear as a universal man--an admirable character no matter the century. While the other conquistadores were

mere adventurers and explorers, Cortés was more. He was a model for future ambitious men and nations.

Prescott resolved when writing his histories to avoid calling hard names. But his dislike of Pizarro overwhelmed him and he put his promise aside. Pizarro was not a gentleman. He was a bastard and behaved accordingly. He was an ambitious, illiterate self-made man. Prescott dramatized Pizarro as a stereotyped bandido in the Conquest of Peru. He was excessively ambitious, committed to gaining power and wealth at the expense of both his fellow conquistadores and the trusting Incas. He, too, was a conqueror. But he was not a builder. Neither did he develop commerce. He was a poor governor and allowed his brothers to pitch Peru into civil war. Pizarro was cruel, morally lax, avaricious. He was everything Cortés was not.

Although Prescott asked his readers to take little notice of Cortés' bigotry, Prescott like other nineteenth-century Americans believed Catholicism to be an imperfect form of Christianity. He did not doubt the Spaniards' Christian sentiment, and emphasized the importance of their introducing Christianity into the New World. He accused the Spanish Catholics of being unreasonably cruel in their attempt to convert the Indians. Roundly condemning Catholic fanaticism, he indulged in Protestant versus Catholic debates and concluded that the Protestants were more reasonable and more logical than the Catholics. He feared that Protestant reasoning would not have been effective in converting pagan Indians. Since the Catholics offered emotional arguments, icons of saints, and a violent eucharist that emphasized redemption through the blood of Christ, the barbarians

would be drawn to a form of Christianity that had such a visual appeal --not to mention blood sacrifice parallels.

Prescott lamented that the Spanish Catholics did not take advantage of the parallel Indian and Spanish institutions. He criticized priests for being unreasonably cruel and for being impractically sentimental and benevolent in their treatment of the Indians. The most admirable religious leader in his histories was Archbishop Gasca in the Conquest of Peru. Gasca had been elected by Charles V to resolve the civil war in Peru. According to Prescott, Gasca arrived in the New World with little to recommend him besides his Protestant-like reason. Gasca gained public support for his mission, raised an army, and defeated and punished the rebels. Gasca personified the power of reason. His priestcraft was understated; emphasis was thrown on his secular accomplishments. Most of Prescott's priest characters resemble those found in nineteenth-century popular fiction and non-fiction. The villainous priest was identified by his fanaticism and by his Catholic status--like Bishop Fonseca of the Conquest of Mexico and Bishop Valverde in the Conquest of Peru. Good priests were known by their good acts or heroicism as were Gasca and Las Casas.

The Black Legend of Spain was dramatized by the conquerors un-Christian, Catholic fanaticism. When Alahualpa learned that Christians could not be burned at the stake, he allowed himself to be baptized. Under the penalty of death on trumped-up charges, Pizarro commuted his sentence and allowed the Indian to die by the garrote. In the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru the aristocratic Aztecs and Incas were portrayed as victims of destiny--the prehispanic phase of Manifest Destiny. Montezuma, Cuauhtémoc, and Inca Manco were tragic

heroes. They were dignified enemies, representatives of the highest civilization in the New World prior to the coming of the Spaniards. Their outstanding features were their buildings, their art, their science, their chivalry, their government, and their wealth. Their flaws, however, doomed them. Their paganism, cannibalism, and their resistance to change were offered as justifications for the conquest. The passing of noble civilization saddened Prescott, but he admitted that the destruction of their power and empires was manifest to the inflexible march of civilization.

Aztec and Inca nobility declined with the demise of Montezuma, Cuauhtémoc, and Manco. Without leadership the Indians deteriorated and became unattractive. Nineteenth-century Mexicans were the unfortunate descendants of a once proud empire. They somehow lacked Marina's ability to change with the new course of empire. Prescott suggested that it was their too easy existence that corrupted them. Unlike the hard-working Tlascalans who became the allies of the conquerors, the Aztecs were not inured to hard work and the spirit of independence.

Prescott contrasted the sixteenth-century Spanish culture with the nineteenth-century, American Anglo-Saxon culture in the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru. Cortés was portrayed as a transitional figure, possessing both the positive characteristics of the hidalgo or Spanish chivalry and the positive qualities endeared to nineteenth-century Americans. Prescott contrasted the negative aspects of the Spanish character, inviting a comparison of Spanish faults and Anglo-Saxon virtues. In essence, Anglo-Saxons were portrayed as superior to the Spaniards as the Indians were inferior to the

conquistadores. With other American expansionists, Prescott believed that it was incumbent on the superior race to advance civilization.

ENDNOTES

¹William Carlos Williams, The American Grain (New York: Albert and Carlos Boni, 1925), p. 27.

²History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), pp. 142-43. All other references to the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru will be to this edition and hereafter cited as either the Conquest of Mexico or the Conquest of Peru.

³William H. Prescott, The Literary Memoranda of William Hickling Prescott, ed. C. Harvey Gardiner, Vol. 2 (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 29-30.

⁴Harry Thurston Peck, William Hickling Prescott (New York: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 134-35. See also The Literary Memoranda of William Hickling Prescott, Vol. 2, p. 30. Prescott stated that Cortés was "not merely the soul, but the body, of the enterprise, present everywhere in person."

⁵David Levin, History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 15.

⁶David Levin, "History as Romantic Art: Structure, Characterization and Style in The Conquest of Mexico," William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, eds. Howard F. Cline, C. Harvey Gardiner, and Charles Gibson (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1959), p. 36.

⁷The Literary Memoranda of William H. Prescott, Vol. 2, p. 145.

⁸Conquest of Mexico, pp. 681-86. For a discussion of how the romantic historians generally handled themes of religious bigotry in their histories, see David Levin, History as Romantic Art, pp. 93-125.

⁹Conquest of Mexico, pp. 142-43.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 682.

¹¹Ibid., p. 143.

¹²Conquest of Peru, p. 1190.

¹³Conquest of Mexico, p. 143.

¹⁴Van Wyck Brooks, The Flowering of New England: 1815-1865 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1936), p. 137.

¹⁵Francisco López de Gómara, Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1964), pp. 409-10.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Bernal Díaz del Castillo, La Conquista de Nueva España, Vol. 1 (Paris: Librería de la Vda de Ch. Fouret, 1936), p. 79. Díaz wrote his history to celebrate the unsung heroes of the conquest, the common soldiers. He took exception to Gómara's history, saying, "Francisco López de Gómara escribió tanto barrones e cosas que no son verdades." Although the old soldier wrote that he was distressed with the poor treatment that he and others received, he did not criticize Cortés for being an inept leader. Often his praise of Cortés was more celebratory than Gómara's.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Conquest of Mexico, p. 131.

²¹Ibid., p. 366.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid. It is of interest to note that Cortés had been invested with all of the leadership qualities that the old Federalists felt themselves to be losing or to have lost since the debacle of the Hartford Convention in 1815.

²⁴La Conquista de Nueva España, Vol. 2, p. 104.

²⁵Conquest of Mexico, p. 537.

²⁶Ibid., p. 537.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 183-84.

²⁸For a description of the popular Promised Land metaphor, see Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American Thought (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 39.

²⁹The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review, New Series, Vol. 14 (1844), reprinted in William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, p. 165.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 166.

³³Ibid., pp. 168-69.

³⁴Spectator (Nov. 4, 1843), reprinted in William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, p. 153.

³⁵Conquest of Mexico, p. 85.

³⁶Ibid., p. 684.

³⁷Ibid., p. 407.

³⁸Ibid., p. 404.

³⁹Ibid., p. 407.

⁴⁰Conquest of Peru, p. 1095.

⁴¹The Literary Memoranda of William Hickling Prescott, Vol. 2, p. 166.

⁴²Conquest of Peru, p. 834.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Gómara, Hist. de las Ind., cap. 144. As quoted by William Hickling Prescott, Conquest of Peru, n. 3, p. 834.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 835.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 1094.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 793.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 975.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 976.

⁵¹Prescott to Pascual de Gayangos, 28 Sept. 1845, Wolcott, Correspondence, p. 553, reprinted in R. A. Humphreys, "William Hickling Prescott: The Man and the Historian," William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, p. 10.

⁵²Guillermo Lohmann Villena, "Notes on Prescott's Interpretation of the Conquest of Peru," William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, p. 79.

⁵³North American Review, 65 (1847), reprinted in William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, pp. 174-75.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 174.

⁵⁵Conquest of Mexico, p. 195.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 685.

⁵⁷Mason Wade, "The Literary Historians: The Brahmins Contemplate the Past," American Classics Reconsidered: A Christian Appraisal, ed. Harold S. Gardiner, S. J. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 271. Prescott was an adherent to what has been called the Teutonic Germ Theory of history. It has been commonly referred to as Anglo-Saxonism. The nineteenth-century American viewed the past in light of its evolutionary impact on the present. Romantic historians isolated a particular period in history or isolated a specific historical figure and translated the significance of that period or figure in light of nineteenth-century optimism. Justification for this unusually subjective approach to the interpretation of history was explained by Emerson. See Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Uses of Great Men," Representative Men: Seven Lectures (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1876), pp. 19, 22. Emerson argued that every great man was a composite of the great men of the past--more specifically, he was indebted to the universal ideas behind the great men:

We touch and go, and sip the foam of many lives. Rotation is the law of nature. When nature removes a great man, people explore the horizon for a successor; but none comes,

and none will. His class is extinguished with him. In some other and quite different field the next man will appear; not Jefferson, not Franklin, but now a great salesman, then a road-contractor, then a student of fishes, then a buffalo-hunting explorer, or a semi-savage Western general. Thus we make a stand against our rougher masters; but against the best there is a finer remedy. The power which they communicate is not theirs. When we are exalted by ideas, we do not owe this to Plato, but to the idea, to which also Plato was debtor.

Emerson stated that the ideas behind the great man are Anglo-Saxon ideas because every "child of the Saxon race is educated to wish to be first." This is the essence of the Teutonic Germ Theory.

See George Bancroft, History of the United States of America from the Discovery of the Continent, Vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton, 1892), p. 131. Speculating on the origin of the North American Indians, Bancroft stated that the mystery of the Indians' beginnings was lost to history just as the Anglo-Saxons' origin was moot: "We cannot tell the origin of the Goths and Celts; proud as we are of our lineage, we cannot trace our own descent. . . . Humanity has a common character." Bancroft's notion of the common character of humanity parallels Emerson's concept of the germinal idea behind all great men.

Prescott's heroes, Cortes and Pizarro, were heroic because they possessed the characteristics that make men great. These characteristics were not specifically articulated. The two general categories were Individuality and Genius. The great man's actual accomplishments were attributed to these two abstract values. Cortes' individuality was exhibited by his self-reliance and by his power to instinctively reason. His genius was exhibited by his ability to lead and by the efficient execution of his plans. Cortes intuitively derived his genius or reason from Nature. In this respect, he shared a universality with nineteenth-century American heroes. Prescott's rationale was that even though Cortes and Pizarro were not Anglo-Saxons, they had these Anglo-Saxon traits which enabled them to unwittingly introduce democratic principles in the New World. See David Levin, History as Romantic Art, pp. 74-92.

See Richard Hofstadter, The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), pp. 65-66. It remained for Herbert Baxter Adams to formulate the Teutonic Germ Theory into an American school of thought. Introducing the German seminar at Johns Hopkins University in the 1880's, Adams' principles were summarized:

The method to be used in such studies was supposed to be rigorously scientific--a comparative method inspired in the first instance by Darwinism and intended to win for history some of the prestige of evolutionary science . . . institutional historians believed that human development takes place more or less according to a single, unilinear pattern, and

that it is the business of the investigator to trace out the stages in the development of institutions.

The development of American democracy as an institution was explained:

But the germ theory of democracy, as it has been called, also suggested that democracy had always been present, like the homonucleus in the ancient view of human generation, within the political plasm of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, that it would unfold more or less automatically, or organically, wherever the Anglo-Saxon "race" predominated.

Prescott shared with his contemporaries a matter-of-fact belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. His Spanish heroes were not praised for their accomplishments so much as they were praised for introducing democratic ideology in a world reserved for Anglo-Saxon conquest and exploitation.

⁵⁸See Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism (New York: Macmillan, 1938), pp. 296-99, for a discussion of Archbishop Hughes' struggles against the anti-Catholic American Nativists. See also Mason Wade, "The Literary Historians: The Brahmins Contemplate the Past," American Classics Reconsidered: A Christian Appraisal, pp. 273-74. Referring to George Ticknor's Life of William Hickling Prescott (1860), Wade wrote that Prescott was pleased when he found out that Archbishop Hughes of New York praised his work for its fair treatment of Catholics. It must be remembered that Archbishop Hughes at this time was involved in heated debates defending American Catholics against the American Nativists' violent denunciations of the Catholics' civil and religious rights.

⁵⁹Conquest of Mexico, p. 275.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 276-77.

⁶²Ibid., p. 51.

⁶³Ibid., p. 276.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 277.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 276.

⁶⁹Wade, p. 272. Prescott's dilemma was representative of the Federalist who had been disenfranchised from American politics after the 1815 Hartford Convention. Unable to take an active part in American politics, Prescott and others turned to academic criticism of social and political movements. In a sense they served as both the intellectual leaders and the moral conscience of the country.

⁷⁰Conquest of Mexico, p. 544.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 373-374.

⁷²Conquest of Peru, pp. 1164-1165.

⁷³Ibid., p. 1231.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 1232.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 1095.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 1232.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸The Literary Memoranda of William Hickling Prescott, Vol. 2, p. 31.

⁷⁹Conquest of Mexico, p. 257.

⁸⁰Conquest of Peru, p. 1101.

⁸¹Specific examples of anti-Catholic American literature will be discussed in Chapters III and IV.

⁸²Ibid., p. 1232.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 1231.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 1229.

⁸⁶In spite of his insistence on the superiority of Protestant Anglo-Saxons, Prescott's portrayal of the Spanish Catholics was less sensationally gruesome than many of his contemporaries. For example, see Francis Parkman's treatment in Pioneers of France in the New World, 1 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1897), p. 127. In his analysis of the Spaniard's attack on the French Huguenot colony at St. Augustine, Parkman said of the Spaniard's victory, "The ferocious soldiery, maddened with victory and drunk with blood, crowded to the water's edge, shouting insults to those on board, mangling the corpses, tearing out their eyes, and throwing them towards the vessel from the points of their daggers. Thus did the Most Catholic Philip champion the cause of Heaven in the New World." By contrast, Prescott seldom indulged in such sensationalism.

⁸⁷Prescott to Gayangos, August 16, 1856, printed in Penny, ed. Prescott, pp. 120-25; reprinted in William Hickling Prescott: A Memorial, p. 179.

⁸⁸Levin, History as Romantic Art, p. 100.

⁸⁹Conquest of Mexico, p. 195.

⁹⁰Conquest of Peru, p. 1101.

⁹¹Guillermo Lohmann Villena, pp. 78-79.

⁹²Conquest of Mexico, p. 612.

⁹³Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 325.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 256.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 307.

⁹⁷For an excellent discussion of the values that Americans placed on Greek and Roman classical models, see William R. Taylor, Cavalier & Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), pp. xxii-xxv.

⁹⁸Conquest of Mexico, p. 23.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 225-26.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 607.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹⁰See David Levin, History as Romantic Art. One of the key themes of Levin's study is his analysis of the romantic historians' conception of the germ theory and the progress of civilization.

¹¹¹The Literary Memoranda of William Hickling Prescott, Vol. 2, p. 31.

¹¹²Conquest of Mexico, p. 289.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 36.

¹¹⁴Levin, History as Romantic Art, p. 41.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 648.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 673.

¹¹⁷Levin, "History as Romantic Art: Structure, Characterization, and Style in The Conquest of Mexico," p. 21.

¹¹⁸Cortés was portrayed much like a character from one of Sir Walter Scott's romances. Like Rob Roy, Cortés was impoverished. At the same time he had a rich, aristocratic past--mysteriously grand. As a young,

gay caballero, Cortes was given as much education as his rash fighting and womanizing temperament could stand. Both Rob Roy and Cortes were born to lead. Their noble bearing destined them to become exceptional leaders. Aristocratic outlaws.

The point at which Sir Walter Scott's characters and Prescott's departed was their national character. Walter Scott's characters often fight against royal injustice; however, they remain loyal monarchists. Hernando Cortes and Francisco Pizarro both remain loyal to their king, but they both died Americans. More than Spanish heroes, they became American heroes.

¹¹⁹Conquest of Mexico, p. 354.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 325.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 490.

¹²²Conquest of Peru, p. 978.

¹²³Ibid., p. 1068.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 1027.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 1069. See Washington Irving, The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. (New York: Signet, 1961), p. 14. Prescott's search for culture was similar to Irving's. Both writers sought out cultures that had ancient traditions, a history replete with myths, ruins, and heroes. America was too new to have a history that compared with those of Europe. Hungry for a culture that the United States did not possess, disappointed cosmopolitan Americans reveled in the chivalric past. The substance of this enthusiasm was stated by Irving:

Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement--to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity, to loiter about the ruined castle, to meditate on the falling tower, to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past.

Prescott too "escaped" from the present. His preoccupation with fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain amounted to an exploration of ruins--ruins made by the hidalgos' conquest of the Aztecs and the Incas in America. Chivalric knights-errant making war on equally noble, chivalrous Indian monarchs. Glorifying in the mysteries of the half-hidden past, the stimulation was sensationally sublime to the culture-starved American.

¹²⁷Conquest of Mexico, pp. 33-34.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 33.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 165.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 88. The distinctions that Prescott drew between Mexican men and women were similar to those drawn by Francis Parkman in The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life, Vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1898), pp. 141-42. Parkman too describes the men as being degenerate and the women as pretty.

¹³¹Conquest of Mexico, p. 493.

¹³²Ibid., p. 106. See Harry Thurston Peck, William Hickling Prescott (New York: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 143-45. Peck explained that it was because of Prescott's genteel nature that he could not bring himself to call hard names--particularly in the case of his heroine, Mariana. He wrote: "No one would gather from Prescott's pages that Mariana had been the mistress of other men before Cortés. Nor do we get any hint from him that Cortés wearied of her in the end, and thrust her off upon one of his captains whom he made drunk in order to render him willing to go through the forms of marriage with her. In Prescott's narrative she is lovely, graceful, generous, and true." Peck apologized for Prescott, saying that "There were some things, therefore, from which Prescott shrank instinctively and in which he allowed his sensitive modesty to soften and refine upon the truth."

¹³³Ibid., p. 163.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 651.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 255.

¹³⁸Weinberg, p. 73.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁴⁰Prescott to C. Cushing, April 3, 1848, printed in Rollo Ogden, William Hickling Prescott (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904), pp. 205-07.

¹⁴¹Prescott to President James K. Polk, April, 1846, n. 1, reprinted in The Papers of William Hickling Prescott, ed. C. Harvey Gardiner (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 263.

¹⁴²James Russell Lowell, The Biglow Papers (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1898), p. 79. See also Arthur Voss, "Backgrounds of Lowell's Satire in 'The Biglow Papers,'" NEQ, Vol. 23 (1950), p. 50. Voss stated that this satire was principally directed against "the appeals of the jingoistic orators to the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and the necessity of extending its supremacy."

¹⁴³Prescott to W. B. Channing, Sept. 5, 1837, printed in "Letters to Dr. Channing on Slavery and the Annexation of Texas, 1837," eds. Fulmer Mood and Granville Hicks, NEQ, Vol. 5 (1932), pp. 600-01.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 601.

¹⁴⁵Prescott to R. C. Winthrop, May 30, 1847, printed in Rollo Ogden, William Hickling Prescott, p. 204.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE FRONTIERSMAN: THE IMAGE OF AN EXPANDING WHITE NATION

But to return to our back settlers. I must tell you, that there is something in the proximity of the woods, which is very insular. It is with men as it is with the plants and animals that grow and live in the forests; they are entirely different from those that live in the plains. . . . By living in or near the woods, their actions are regulated by the wilderness of the neighborhood. The deer often come to eat their grain, the wolves to destroy the sheep, the bears to kill their hogs, the foxes to catch their poultry. This surrounding hostility immediately puts the gun into their hands; they watch these animals, they kill some; and thus by defending their property, they soon become professed hunters: this is the progress; once hunters, farewell to the plough. The chase renders them ferocious, gloomy and unsociable; a hunter wants no neighbor, he rather hates them, because he dreads their competition. . . . That new mode of life brings along with it a new set of manners, which I cannot easily describe. These new manners being grafted on the old stock, produce a strange sort of lawless profligacy, the impressions of which are indelible. The manners of the Indian natives are respectable, compared with this European medley. Their wives and children live in sloth and inactivity; and having no proper pursuits, you may judge what education the latter receives. Their tender minds have nothing else to contemplate but the example of their parents, like them they grow up a mongrel breed, half civilized, half savage, except nature stamps on them some constitutional propensities.¹

Crevecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer.

The popular image of the American frontiersman in the nineteenth-century was that of the model soldier. Often referred to as a sculptor's model, he invariably stood six feet--as tall and as strong as an American maple. Having little formal education, he was wise. Educated in the wilds of the American forests, he was intuitively intelligent.

He was equipped with rough but utilitarian clothing and weapons. His most prized possession was his rifle--an extension of his marvelous person. A phenomenally accurate shot, he killed wild game, Indians, and Mexicans without miss. The frontiersman was the ideological personification of Manifest Destiny and American expansionism. Winning the West was his moral responsibility. The frontiersman was conscious that posterity was depending upon his territorial acquisitions.

Since the territory in question belonged to Mexico, the frontiersman became a Protestant missionary soldier. He was to create an American Israel, regenerating all natural resources and some deserving Mexicans. The deserving Mexicans were Spanish aristocrats who had not been contaminated by the racially "inferior" mestizos. The mestizo with his impure blood was the superior frontiersman's antagonist. At the time of the Mexican War, America pursued her imperialistic course as a holy quest. The frontiersman was the advance guard to be followed by American settlers who were to create a democratic utopia. The heroic frontiersman developed curiously.² When the frontier was the perimeter of Plymouth Plantation (1620), William Bradford and his fellow Separatists looked upon the wilderness as an ominous place inhabited only by devils and Indians. Those who left the community and sought the freedom of the wilderness were condemned as was Thomas Morton's Merrymount revellers. Bradford recorded that those at Merrymount had fallen into great licentiousness, leading "a dissolute life, pouring out themselves into all profaneness . . . inviting Indian women as consorts."³ The Puritans "sought to replace the wilderness with a garden."⁴ But the wild elements of nature were to be brought into the community and civilized. It was thought to be spiritually and

physically dangerous for the civilized man to venture out of the community. From the Puritans' point of view, Morton's presence at Merrymount threatened not only the moral fiber of their community but also the social cohesion necessary for the Colony's survival. In the end Captain Miles Standish was ordered to evict these first frontiersmen.

The frontiersman gained stature during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Engaged in incessant warfare with the French, the Spanish, the Indians, or alliances thereof, the frontiersman became the soldier-hero. He subdued Indians and foiled both Spanish and French machinations to gain control of the territory--territory which the Colonies needed for future growth.⁵ But it was a begrudging respect. The frontiersman was considered a lawless individual compared to the man of commerce or the civilized farmer who contributed to the community.

Reflecting the temper of the time (1782), J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur analyzed American character types, categorizing them by their environments and professions. The least respected was the frontiersman. His categories in "What is an American" were: first, those devoted to commerce and business resided near the sea. Second, the most admired Americans were those "who inhabit the middle settlements . . . the simple cultivation of the earth purifies them, but the indulgences of the government, the soft remonstrances of religion, the rank of free holders, must necessarily inspire them with sentiments . . . as freemen they will be litigious . . . as farmers they will be careful and anxious to get as much as they can, because what they get is their own. . . . Industry, good living, selfishness, litigiousness, country

politics, the pride of freemen, religious indifference, are their characteristics."⁶ Last, Crèvecoeur was as suspicious of the frontiersman as the Puritans were. He wrote that the "great woods" was a place too far beyond the reach of good government. The frontiersman was an undesirable person because he and others like him were "half-cultivators and half-hunters; and the worst of them are those who have degenerated altogether into the hunting state."⁷ The degenerated hunter was too much of an anarchist and therefore a threat to polite society.

For Crèvecoeur and Americans of his era, the frontiersman was a contradictory figure. As a "bad" American he chose not to live in a civilized center. But as a soldier and patriot he was held in high esteem. He pushed back the frontier and defended his newly gained property. In his letter, "The Distresses of a Frontier Man," Crèvecoeur portrayed the frontiersman as a romantic dreamer whose search for utopia was confounded by the horrors of the wilderness. The frontier farmer's life and property were in constant danger because of numerous Indian raids and wars. Surviving on a day to day basis, he remained on guard, prepared to fight:

We never sit down either to dinner to supper, but the least noise immediately spreads a general alarm and prevents us from enjoying the comfort of our meals . . . our sleep is disturbed by the most frightful dreams; sometimes I start awake, as if the great hour of danger was come; at other times the howling of our dog seems to announce the arrival of the enemy: we leap out of bed and run to arms; my poor wife with panting bosom and silent tears, takes leave of me, as if we were to see each other no more; she snatches the youngest children from their beds . . . to hide them in the cellar . . . I place all my servants at the door, where I am determined to perish. Fear industriously increases every sound; we all listen; each communicates to the other ideas and conjectures; we remain thus sometimes for whole

hours, our hearts and our minds racked by the most anxious suspense; what a dreadful situation, a thousand times worse than that of a soldier engaged in the midst of the most severe conflict.⁸

Communicating a sense of pity for the frontiersman, Crèvecoeur indicated that life on the frontier was only for the most hearty and courageous men and women. The ideal life for the frontiersman would have been to establish a utopian community, combining the best Anglo-Saxon traits with the most noble that the Indians possessed. Proposing this experiment, he argued that living with the Indians "cannot be, therefore, so bad as we generally conceive it to be; there must be in their social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us; for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those aborigines having from choice become Europeans! There must be something more congenial to our native dispositions, that the fictitious society in which we live; or else why should children, and even grown persons, become in a short time so invincibly attached to it? There must be something very bewitching in their manners, something very indelible and marked by the very hands of nature."⁹ Invoking the God of nature, the writer prays that he and his family may find peace among the Indians, a "mild hospitable people, strangers to our political disputes, and having none among themselves; on the shores of a fine river, surrounded with woods, abounding with game; our little society united in perfect harmony with the new adoptive one, in which we shall be incorporated, shall rest I hope from all fatigues, from all apprehensions, from our perfect terrors, and from our long watchings."¹⁰ Rather than portraying the frontiersman as a degenerate, Crèvecoeur suggested that the dream of

the frontiersman living harmoniously with Indians in the wilderness was a distinct possibility. From this point of view the frontiersman became an American Adam and an expansionist. As an expansionist he would improve upon the Indians' civilization by contributing his sound Yankee business sense: "I will keep an exact account of all that shall be gathered, and give each of them a regular credit for the amount of it to be paid them in real property at the return of peace."¹¹ By establishing his Anglo-Saxon superiority over the Indians, and by regenerating them enough so that they accept Anglo-Saxon ways, this frontiersman will have established the United States' title to the territory by initiating among the savages and settlers American economic institutions based on the ownership of property.

The positive, nineteenth-century image of the frontiersman was based on Daniel Boone's adventures and exploits (1734-1820). The myths and the realities built around this man's history were as flattering and as negative as those characteristics Crèvecoeur attributed to the frontiersman. The dark aspects of Boone's nature stemmed from his supposedly anti-social character which made him seek the frontier in order to escape the confines of the civilized community. Contrasting Boone's negative, frontiersman characteristics were his positive assets. He was a fascinating adventurer who "blazed trails" that permanent settlers followed.¹² He was a beacon showing Americans how to roll back the frontier.

As the frontiersman became an American myth his stature proportionally increased. He was at once a savage innocent who gained his knowledge of life directly from Nature and a rugged misfit and misanthrope who was unable to abide the laws of the civilized community. Nature

was no longer hostile to the frontiersman's spiritual and physical well being. The Indians were the hostiles. The admirable frontiersman developed enough Indian lore and woodcraft to survive. Although he was characterized as being more at home among the Indians than among the whites, it was he who always scouted ahead leading the settlers into the virgin woods. After the settlements were securely established the frontiersman, who always needed "elbow room," scouted farther West.

Jacksonian Democracy and the Frontiersman

We are a hardy, free-born race,
 Each man to fear a stranger;
 Whate'er the game we join in chase,
 Despising toil and danger,
 And if a daring foe annoys,
 Whate'er his strength and forces,
 We'll show him that Kentucky Boys
 Are alligator horses.¹³

Samuel Woodward,
 "The Hunters of Kentucky"

The esteem for the frontiersman had never been so great as it was during the first half of the nineteenth century. He had become the self-reliant, American citizen soldier--modeled after the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. To him was attributed many of the ennobling traits of the yeoman farmer, the embodiment of Jeffersonian agrarianism. The Puritan fear of the wilderness had dissipated, and the frontier farmer was beginning to be recognized as an industrious American rather than the unbridled, anti-social hunter.

Much of the change in attitude toward the frontiersman was due to the propaganda designed especially for Old Hickory's Presidential campaigns. The Old Hero's political charisma was purposely made to coincide with the rhetoric of white, manhood suffrage.¹⁴ Analyzing the

political temperament of this period, historians have concurred that the frontiersman image projected by Andrew Jackson became the democratic ideal for the common man. It was "a favorable atmosphere for new idols, and . . . the newly enfranchized and chauvinistic masses regarded the military hero with wild enthusiasm."¹⁵ They had newly discovered that politics had "an intimate relation to their welfare."¹⁶ The new voter rejected the Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian tradition of deferential politics.

Jacksonian America was a rude republic. Democracy was in the making. In their search for truth the American literati focused on the individual, the common. Americans pursued national themes and symbols. As if to direct his readers' attention away from Brahmin disgrace and the treason perpetrated at the Hartford Convention, Emerson wrote, "I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into today, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news from the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and gait of the body."¹⁷ Andrew Jackson would have liked to hang the Hartford secessionists. The Federalist Party died of embarrassment and public shame. Distrusting Eastern politics, Americans optimistically seized upon the seemingly egalitarian politics found in rural America--particularly the West. The "meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan" imagery was translated by middle-class moralists as the need to return to fundamental, natural values. It was in this atmosphere that utopian experiments at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and New Harmony were attempted.

The search for fundamental natural values was pervasive throughout the nineteenth-century American culture. American artists, like American writers, rejected European models and concentrated on American themes and subjects, especially natural themes. The paintings of William S. Mount and George C. Bingham were representative of the moral temperament of the period. Mount's philosophy was concise: "Paint pictures that will take with the public--never paint for the few, but for the many."¹⁸ His classic, "The Power of Music" lent dignity to rustic America. Framed in the doorway of a much-used barn, two men were seated. One man was standing. Immediately outside the door a Negro, hat in hand, was leaning against the door. The foremost seated figure was a young man drawing a bow across his violin. The two white men and the Negro listened with rapt attention. Their facial expressions were warm and affectionate. The violinist, a country student, was not the virtuoso of the concert circuit. Looking down his instrument with peaceful concentration, he was probably playing some country tune, appropriate to Mount's rustic setting. The detail of the abundant hay in the loft, the harness, the tools, the loose straw on the floor and the ground, the weathered boards of the building, and the uncemented, loose rock foundation of the barn suggested that this was an honest portrait. The figures belonged to the locality--maybe farmers, maybe livery stable personnel. Their informal dress and posture suggested a work break. Agrarian industry was symbolized by the hay fork and the ax and water jug behind the Negro. Besides the universal truth of the beauty of music, Mount's painting communicated the wholesome virtue of country life. As opposed to the decadence

found in the metropolitan centers, these men were posed naturally--not stereotyped bumpkins with their "darkie."

George C. Bingham's painting, "The County Election," portrayed a hierarchy of individuals gathered before touring politicians. The social gradations emphasized the humanity and dignity of each type of individual; however, the more prominent were elevated on the right side of the canvas. Looking down the main street of what must be a rural community, a crowd of men were congregated in the foreground. The background was composed of summer sky, green trees, houses, and a white, steepled church. The crowd from left to right indicated the different types of human response at a rural political meeting. In the lower left corner, a cider barrel with two attendants was set up. Seated by the barrel a happy, fat man, who was obviously in his cups, lifted his hand to receive a glass. To his rear and further right, men were gathered buzzing over the issues of the meeting. To the far right, ascending the stairs of a porticoed, public building were the more prominent people of the community and the politicians. Dividing the two groups of men, were two boys seated on the ground playing in the dirt. Immediately behind the boys was a dog. The men in the left half of the canvas were more informally dressed: soft hats and rustic clothing. There were more silk hats and suits among the elevated section of the crowd to the right. In spite of his humorous drunk figure, Bingham was painting a serious political meeting. The scene was democratic; every man was equal insofar as each had a vote. The social hierarchy indicated that the most able members of the community were the candidates. Like the moral in Mount's painting, Bingham reinforced the optimism of western egalitarianism.

With this emphasis on the low and the common, the mood was right for the emergence of a national hero from the frontier. During the Presidential elections of 1824 and 1828, Americans did not forget Andrew Jackson, the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. Used as an electioneering song, Samuel Woodward's ballad, "The Hunters of Kentucky," typified the new morality. America's new self-image was that of the tough-minded backwoodsman who shared the country people's and the westerner's distrust of Eastern manners and politics. This rejection of eastern ways was directly related to Federalist treason perpetrated at the Hartford Convention. The half-horse, half-alligator frontier farmer was a substantial, patriotic image reassuring Americans of their country's physical and moral strength. The solidarity of the United States was insured by frontier leaders like Andrew Jackson.¹⁹

As dramatized in Woodward's broadside:

I s'pose you've read in the prints,
 How Packenham attempted
 To make Old Hickory Jackson wince,
 But soon his scheme repented;
 For we with rifles ready cock'd
 Thought such occasion lucky
 And soon around the gen'ral flock'd
 The Hunters of Kentucky.²⁰

First printed in 1822 this ballad quickly became very popular with the American people: "The song was sung at theater after theater in the South and the West, sometimes half a dozen times in an evening. Sweeping eastward, it reached fame in New York with 'symphonies' and accompaniments and elaborations."²¹ Any man who supported Andrew Jackson could become a Kentucky hunter, an American defender who threatened:

And now if danger e'er annoys,
 Remember what our trade is,
 Just send for us Kentucky boys,²²
 And we'll protect ye, ladies.

Besides Woodward's ballad, President Andrew Jackson's frontiersman identity stemmed from his active support of the frontier farmers' desire to remove the menacing Indians in order to open up and develop new territory. Jackson, himself, was substantial Tennessee planter with considerable property and slaves. As the lyrics of "The Hunters of Kentucky" suggested, Jackson's relationship with the frontiersmen was indicative of the political coalition that had been developing between southern and western expansionists. Supporting this alliance, Jackson had made his position clear on the eve of the War of 1812. To justify the declaration of war, he spoke out asking for vengeance for "our murdered countrymen" who had fallen at the Battle of Tippecanoe (1811).²³ It was an accepted fact that William Henry Harrison's campaign against Tecumseh had been made difficult by the British. Anticipating the War of 1812, English spies had generously provided their Indian allies with arms and ammunition. Jackson agreed with the frontier farmers who believed that the Indians "must be destroyed."²⁴ This attitude placed him in the war camp with Hawks like the speaker of the House Henry Clay, with legislators "from the frontier sections of the northern states," with most of the representatives from "the western states," with a "fair proportion of the members from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina," and with a very able and aggressive group of young men from South Carolina and Georgia.²⁵ Coveting Indian lands, Canada, the Spanish Floridas--Spain was England's ally--and the Mexican Gulf, the War Hawks generated a tremendous appeal to the

western farmer who had nothing to lose and everything to gain from American expansionism.

Andrew Jackson was characterized as a happy combination of the yeoman farmer and the frontiersman who had the intuition and the self-survival skills once attributed to the irresponsible hunter. Jackson's political image has been attributed to the rejection of both the corrupt Federalists and the Old World. Formulating "a philosophy of nature," Jackson was presented to the common man "as a child of the forest and the major incidents of his career were explained in terms of his untutored genius."²⁶ The myths growing out of this new notion of the frontier farmer became the characteristics of the archetypical hero--the same character that often has been referred to as the "American Adam." The American Adam was the unfallen or regenerated frontier farmer who preserved his innocence in the Garden of the West. Summarized, the Adam's characteristics included "the ritualistic trials of the young innocent, liberated from family and social history or bereft of them; advancing hopefully into a complex world and radically affected by it . . . but leaving his mark upon the world, and a sign in which conquest may later become possible for" those that survive him.²⁷ The nineteenth-century frontiersman-farmer, like the Puritan before him, believed himself destined to carve a new Eden out of the virgin continent. This was not the wilderness that Crèvecoeur disdained, but the West that attracted industrious settlers.

Andrew Jackson, the frontiersman, led the way, conquered America's enemies, and opened up new territory.²⁸ Jackson became a spiritual leader whose powers were derived from Nature. The liberties that Jackson had taken with United States law and international law when a

general in the Seminole campaign of 1818 were justified by what he had intuitively felt was morally right. From the beginning of the campaign to its end Jackson had exceeded his authority. Without orders Jackson had raised an army and had taken the field against the Indians. The governor of Tennessee later approved his actions. Typical of his Florida campaign, he acted first, "and let the legal rationalization catch up with the deed. He swept through Florida, crushed the Indians, executed the Englishmen, Arbuthnot and Ambrister, and occupied the main Spanish towns in Florida."²⁹ Laws and lawmakers were unimportant forces when confronted by the frontiersman who intuitively knew what was right. Some attempt was made to censure him for taking the law into his own hands. But the public wouldn't tolerate it. Old Hickory --the name that he had earned during this campaign--became a popular champion standing up to eastern politicians and European monarchs.

The symbolic appeal of the frontiersman was related to the popularly held conviction that egalitarian democracy was possible. Ideally, the frontier represented the opportunity for the have-nots to participate in the dream of American success. Success or the good life was often interpreted as the possession of real property. The egalitarian thesis was predicated on the assumption that "society was dominated by the great mass of people, who composed the middling orders."³⁰ Men of this station were economically and socially equal. Great wealth could be aspired to by all. All men were self-made: "Flux ruled this dynamic society; riches and poverty were ephemeral states in this kaleidoscopic milieu."³¹ The self-made man, a facet of the popularized philosophy of Nature, turned West. The frontiersman sought confirmation of this promise of success in the undeveloped territory.

Surprisingly, Jackson was not sympathetic to the frontiersman's need for land. Alexis de Tocqueville debunked Jackson's frontiersman image with this analysis of his political orientation: "General Jackson appears to me . . . to be a Federalist by taste and a Republican by calculation."³² Gentleman from the Cane and frontiersman extraordinary, Davy Crockett, became quickly disillusioned with Jackson's indifference to the frontiersman need for land. In the Tennessee Legislature and later as a member of the United States Congress, Crockett was the frontier farmers' spokesman. Single-mindedly he led the fight for free title to the lands that frontiersmen had developed. The Jacksonians, however, frustrated his designs and continually blocked the passage of his Land Bill. Forced to admit that Jackson was a "Republican by calculation," Crockett became monomaniacal in his split with Andrew Jackson and the Democratic political machine.

Capitalizing on his image as a frontiersman, Crockett used it to his political advantage. But he was altruistic in pleading his constituents' case. He argued that the squatters on the frontier were developing this new territory, making it more valuable to the United States. In return for this national service, the farmers should be given free title to the property that they had developed. If these frontiersmen were to be dispossessed of their homes, and the land sold at public auction, few could afford to match the price of the highest bidder. Jacksonians were interested in developing the land, but not at the expense of recognizing these squatters' rights. The frontiersman's claim was an insignificant political minority.³³ Crockett reduced the

land issue to its lowest denominator and became inflexible in his support of the frontiersman.

Crockett split with the Democratic Party and became one of the first Whig frontiersmen, but not the last. The frontiersman as a Democratic political image "had given Americans a new political vocabulary with the harsh accents of the boisterous West--the language of coonskin equalitarianism. Davy Crockett . . . first translated the chaste terminology of Whiggery into the vernacular of the canebrake, and by 1840 even some of the antediluvians reluctantly adopted democratic methods rather than suffer the continued trials of Van Burenism."³⁴ The Davy Crockett line was whole-heartedly adopted. The Whigs effectively used plain-speakers like John W. Bear, "The Buckeye Blacksmith," who left his bellows and anvil in south Bloomfield, Ohio, "to emit stirring blasts and strike hard blows for Harrison and Tyler. In a tour which took him to eight states and the District of Columbia, Bear made 331 speeches."³⁵ The most exalted Whig of them all, Webster, made a public showing of eating his dinner from a shingle with the Green Mountain Boys.

With the Whigs "taking to the woods," the political development of the frontiersman myth and image was complete. The government appeared to be in the hands of the common man. At least, the ideology of white manhood suffrage was universally accepted by mid-nineteenth century: "The political ideology of the 1830's and 1840's assumed that the common man had risen to dominate, or at least to share control of the government without ceasing to be the common man; it was the process whereby power in the state passed from one class to another."³⁶ However, when the common man category included everyone except European

aristocrats and non-Anglo-Saxons (from Daniel Webster and Andrew Jackson to Davy Crockett), it became immediately apparent that political ideologies had changed, but no significant changes had occurred as far as deferential politics were concerned. Nevertheless, the legend of the American frontiersman was popularly accepted as the ideal, representative American, possessing all those national characteristics which typified reform in government and national growth.

The Ideal American and the Spanish Hidalgo

in James Fenimore Cooper's Novel

The Prairie (1827)

Deerslayer, as Hurry called his companion, was a very different person in appearance, as well as in character. In stature he stood about six feet in his moccasins, but his frame was comparatively light and slender, showing muscles, however, that promised unusual agility, if not unusual strength. His face would have had little to recommend it except youth, were it not for an expression that seldom failed to win upon those who had leisure to examine it, and to yield to the feeling of confidence it created. This expression was simply that of guileless truth, sustained by earnestness of purpose, and a sincerity of feeling, that rendered it remarkable. At times this air of integrity seemed to be so simple as to awaken the suspicion of a want of the usual means to discriminate between artifice and truth; but few came in serious contact with the man, without losing his distrust in respect for his opinions and motives. . . . His rifle was in perfect condition, his powder horn was ornamented with suitable devices lightly cut into the material, and his shot pouch was decorated with wampum.³⁷

Cooper, The Deerslayer

It remained for James Fenimore Cooper to popularize in American fiction the archetypical frontiersman--Natty Bumppo. He was the poetized, ideal man. He was free as other Americans could never be. Cooper defined liberty: "Perfect and absolute liberty is incompatible

with the existence of society, as equality of condition. It is impracticable in a state of nature even, since, without the protection of the law, the strong would oppress and enslave the weak. We are then to understand by liberty, merely such a state of social compact as permits the members of a community to lay no more restraints on themselves, than are required by their real necessities, and obvious interests."³⁸ Hawkeye, the supreme iconoclast and individualist, lived outside both American society and Indian society. His only restraints were those that he imposed upon himself. He was a moralist. He had no use for law; however, he did not condemn laws necessary to govern lesser men. As an old man he was forced to remove himself from civilization because he could not abide the law. Leatherstocking followed the higher laws dictated by the God of Nature. In The Deerslayer (1841) he capsulated his legalistic philosophy of nature: "Laws don't all come from the same quarter. God has given us his'n, and some come from the colony, and others come from the King and Parliament. When the colony's laws, or even the King's laws, run ag'in the laws of God, they get to be unlawful, and ought not to be obeyed. I hold to a white man's respecting white laws, so long as they do not cross the track of a law comin' from a higher authority; and for a red man to obey his own redskin usages under the same privilege."³⁹ But as the ideal frontiersman and hunter, Hawkeye had little need for property, social status, and other refinements valued by civilized people. Cooper, writing "On American Equality," stated that men were born unequal--in spite of the Constitution of the United States--and both civil and social rights were equated with the "rights of property which are inseparable from the rights themselves."⁴⁰ As a romantic ideal,

Natty Bumppo was a superior man. His high status was not based on the conventions of property, money, or family name. He was neither impoverished by his lack of property nor condemned for his indifference to it. Leatherstocking has been often described as an "idealized . . . philosopher of the wilderness . . . as natural as he is noble."⁴¹

To Cooper's way of thinking, Hawkeye was the only Anglo-Saxon who could have been free in the wilderness. Thus, the main theme of The Prairie was an exemplification of why law was needed to keep normal men civilized. One critic summed up the different kinds of law that Cooper's characters encountered in the Great American Desert: "Prairie or Indian law vs. American law, and then both vs. divine law."⁴² Without law the civilized Anglo-Saxon could not protect his property--the foundation of the community. He explained, "Property is desirable as the ground work of moral independence, as a means of improving the facilities, and of doing good to others, and as the agent in all that distinguishes the civilized man from the savage."⁴³ The outstanding conflicts in The Prairie were legal questions: who should govern, who should be governed, and what property and social status should be allocated to whom.

Class distinctions figured importantly in the legal hierarchy presented in The Prairie. The pinnacle of perfection was nature's nobleman figure, Natty Bumppo. Bumppo possessed a political and social autonomy. As Nature's spokesman, he moralized on the clearing that Ishmael Bush and his family had made: "'I might have know'd it! Often have I seen the same fever; and yet I brought them to the spot myself, and have now sent them to the only neighborhood of their kind within many long leagues of the spot where I stand. This is man's wish, and

pride, and waste, and sinfulness! He tames the beasts of the field to feed his idle wants; and having robbed the brutes of their natural food, he teaches them to strip the 'arth of its trees to quiet their hunger.'"⁴⁴ Bumpo was superintendent and game keeper of God's estate.

Representing order, the keeper of man's estate was the American gentlemen who had the ability to assume "the public trust in the duties of political or public station."⁴⁵ Captain Duncan Uncas Middleton was an American gentleman after the fashion of the defunct Federalists. A little biographical information on Cooper himself will clarify his concept of the American gentleman. Cooper saw himself as a good example of American gentility. Throughout his life he enjoyed decidedly upper-class surroundings. He "grew up in circumstances which were as near to being manorial as the age and place could afford."⁴⁶ Cooper's "country gentleman" and "old money" social status kept him aloof from the masses and the need to earn a living. Bearing this in mind, The Prairie should be interpreted as a social commentary which advocated that gentlemen of merit, such as Captain Middleton, be allowed to govern the rabble.

Captain Middleton and Natty Bumpo, the frontiersman, shared positive characteristics and some history. When the old trapper learned that Middleton was the grandson of his long lost friend and compatriot in arms, Natty did honor to the young man by admitting the greatness of his family history: "'I know'd it! son or grandson, it is all the same; it is the blood, and 'tis the look! Tell me, is he they call'd Duncan, without the Uncas--is he living?'"⁴⁷ By joining the two social and political forces personified by Middleton and Bumpo, Cooper established the top echelon of American society.

Middle-class America was represented by the plebian Whigs, Ellen Wade and Paul Hover. Paul, who was an industrious Bee Hunter and lover of nature, was infatuated with Ellen, who as Paul noted was a superior person to her Uncle Ishmael Bush. Disdainfully, Paul said that he would tell her "uncle, if uncle you can call one who I'll swear is no relation" of his desire to marry her.⁴⁸ Paul and Ellen survived in the wilderness because of Natty's leadership. And their love affair succeeded as a harmonious counterpart to the more sophisticated love affair between Middleton and his Spanish bride.

The dregs of American society were the Jacksonian Democrats, the anarchistic Bush family. As a character type Ishmael Bush was similar to another of Cooper's repulsive Jacksonian Democrats, Seneca Newcome, the leader of the New York Anti-Rent Rebellion in The Red Skins (1846). Seneca rejected the laws that protected the American gentleman's property and organized a body of violent, greedy farmers, who no longer wished to pay rent on the land. Dressing up as Indians, these rowdies killed or beat those who tried to collect the rents. Seneca's argument for a change in the laws protecting the property of the affluent was simply, "'the privileged classes in this country are your patroons and your landlords; men that's not satisfied with a reasonable quantity of land, but who wish to hold more than the rest of their fellow-creatur's.'"⁴⁹ In The Prairie, Ishmael Bush's attitude toward the laws controlling ownership of property were identical with Newcome's. When Natty Bumppo reminded Bush that the Indians were the owners of the land, Ishmael retorted: "'I have come, old man, into these districts, because I found the law sitting too tight upon me, and am not over fond of neighbors who can't settle a dispute without troubling a

justice and twelve men. . . . I am as rightful owner of the land I stand on, as any governor of the States! Can you tell me, stranger, where the law or the reason is to be found, which says that one man shall have a section, or a town, or perhaps a county to his use, and another have to bet for earth to make his grave in? This is not nature, and I deny that it is law. That is, your legal law."⁵⁰

Natty Bumppo found the Bush family consternating; however, as mundane hunters and rude Jacksonians they had the ability to survive on the prairie. But they did not have the grace necessary to bring civilization to it. Like the barn-burning rabble portrayed in The Red Skins, the Bush family represented one of the dangerous weaknesses of American Democracy, the power of the majority--right or wrong.

Because the majority of the voters were either Jacksonians or in sympathy with the Democratic Party, they had dispossessed the Federalist gentleman of his rightful place as the most qualified democratic leaders. Possessing the power to legislate against what the masses felt were aristocratic impositions, Cooper saw a rise in demagoguery in the United States. The demagogue was defined as unusually "sly, a detractor of others, a professor of humility and disinterestedness, a great stickler for equality as respects all above him, a man who acts in corners, and avoids open and manly expositions of his course, calls blackguards gentlemen, and gentleman folks, appeals to passions and prejudices rather than to reason, and is in all respects, a man of intrigue and deception, of sly cunning and management, instead of manifesting the frank, peerless qualities of the democracy he so prodigally professes."⁵¹ Overwhelmed by the numbers of these demagogues or Jacksonian Democrats, Cooper admonished politicians who

courted favor from the Jacksonians to secure office: "Most of the political men of the day belong to this class of moralist, who mistaking a healthful rule, which admonishes us that even truth ought not to be too offensively urged, in their desire to be moderate, lend themselves to the side of error."⁵²

One of the facets of the politically-oriented class struggle in The Prairie was Cooper's ambivalence toward the United States' westward expansion. The novel's setting was in the wilds of the (1803) Louisiana Purchase, the Great American Desert.⁵³ Natty Bumppo was the defender of the plains. As he indicated in his conversation with Ishmael Bush he would like to keep the prairie from being defiled by the frontier farmer and to see it remain "the final gathering place of the red men."⁵⁴ Natty the realist indicated that it was not likely to remain a refuge, for as a pathfinder he had, himself, led settlers West. He said to Bush, "yet I brought them to the spot myself."⁵⁵ In fact, Natty's life was indicative of the development of civilization on the frontier. Westward expansion had increased so rapidly that the old frontiersman noted that the day of the trapper was over, and the era of the settler begun. Natty's dying statement was symbolic of America's growth. The old trapper told Middleton, "when I am gone there will be an end of my race. We have never been chiefs; but honest, and useful in our way I hope it cannot be denied we have always proved ourselves. My father lies buried near the sea, and the bones of his son will whiten on the prairies."⁵⁶ Natty had proven himself useful. He had been true to himself and true to Nature. He was the one man who could not be corrupted by the violence to be found in the

wilderness. Because Leatherstocking had scouted the frontier, settlers followed and established civilized communities and good government.

Cooper's strong rejection of the Jacksonian settler appeared to contradict Natty's useful function as a frontiersman. Representative of a class of American expansionists, Ishmael Bush was characterized as an unattractive personality:

Like causes are well known to produce like effects. . . . The march of civilization with us, has a strong analogy to that of all coming events, which are known 'to cast their shadows before.' The gradations of society, from that state which is called refined to that which approaches as near barbarity as connection with an intelligent people will readily allow, are to be traced from the bosom of the States, where wealth, luxury and the arts are beginning to seat themselves, to those distant and ever-receding borders which mark the skirts and announce the approach of the nation. . . . Here, and here only, is to be found that widely spread, though far from numerous class, which may be at all likened to those who have paved the way for the intellectual progress of nations, in the old world. The resemblance between the American borderer and his European prototype is singular, though not always uniform. Both might be called without restraint, the one being above, the other beyond the reach of the law--brave, brave, because they were inured to danger--proud, because they were independent--and vindictive, because each was the avenger of his own wrongs. It would be unjust to the borderer to pursue the parallel much farther.⁵⁷

Cooper's specific description of Bush was parallel to his analysis of Bush's class.

Ishmael Bush had passed the whole of a life of more than fifty years on the skirts of society. He boasted that he had never dwelt where he might not safely fell every tree he could view from his own threshold; that the law had rarely been known to enter his clearing; and that his ears had never willingly admitted the sound of a church bell. His exertions seldom exceeded his wants, which were peculiar to his class, and rarely failed of being supplied. He had no respect for any learning, except that of the leech; because he was ignorant of the application of any other intelligence than such as met his senses.⁵⁸

Rather than a builder, Bush and his family were spoilers. He lived off Nature without contributing anything to it. Freedom to him meant cutting down all the trees if he so desired. He had no spiritual affinity with Nature. His lawlessness encouraged disorder.

In the resolution of The Prairie Cooper's opinions on geographic expansionism were subtly but clearly stated. As one critic has noted: "the taming of the wilderness is the prerogative of those who have tamed themselves."⁵⁹ But I differ with this critic who added that those who "tamed themselves" had "paradoxically, neither wish nor need to tame it."⁶⁰ True, Cooper was possessed with the Federalist's fear of the West, and he did return all his characters to the East, except Natty Bumppo who was dying. But just how far East did they go? Middleton's military responsibilities took him back to his wife's family in Louisiana. Bush returned to the border. Hover returned with Middleton, and both according to their status acquired political office in time--Middleton "a seat in a higher branch of legislative authority . . . [and Hover] a member of the lower branch of the legislature."⁶¹ Note that Cooper did not return Middleton and Hover to some Eastern metropolitan center, but they both returned to civilization in the newly purchased territory and played instrumental roles in establishing American democratic institutions in Louisiana. In the era of Manifest Destiny Cooper distrusted Jacksonian Democrats; however, his gentlemen characters proved to be expansionists insofar as it was they who provided the leadership to advance frontier civilization. The Bush family were unworthy in that they did not know how to use property to civilization's advantage. Ultimately, they desired property to guarantee their barbaric way of life. They were not allowed to wrest

for their use any private property from the frontier. Both Middleton and Hover became land owners and assumed the responsibilities that community-minded men must. In his essay "On Property" Cooper wrote, "property is an instrument of working most of the good that society enjoys. It elevates a national character, by affording the means of cultivating knowledge and the tastes; it introduces all above barbarism into society; and it encourages and sustains laudable and useful efforts in individuals."⁶² Cooper was not ambivalent at all toward Manifest Destiny. He merely distrusted Jacksonian Democrats. He gave the new property of the Louisiana Purchase to the American gentleman whom he knew had the capacity to civilize it.

Captain Middleton's courtship and subsequent marriage to Inez de Certavallos thematically explored some of the outstanding issues that concerned America when the United States almost doubled her territory with the Louisiana Purchase. Democratic, Protestant institutions were contrasted with those of the aristocratic Catholic Spaniards. Don Agustín and his daughter Inez were European aristocrats, the highest society in Louisiana. Don Agustín was caricaturized as a weak but inoffensive member of "one of those ancient colonial families which had been content to slumber for ages amid the ease, indolence, and wealth of the Spanish provinces."⁶³ Supercilious as he was, Don Agustín "found a secret pleasure . . . in pointing . . . [his heraldry] out in large scrolls of musty documents . . . enrolled among the former heroes and grandees of Old and New Spain."⁶⁴ Don Agustín was a decadent aristocrat; he had been in a position of authority but had been incapable of any achievement besides preserving his social status as a hidalgo. Speaking out against this type of aristocracy--decayed aristocracy--

Cooper wrote, "Aristocracies wound the sense of natural justice, and consequently unsettle principles, by placing men, altogether unworthy of trust, in high hereditary situations, a circumstance that not only offends morals, but sometimes . . . inflicts serious injuries on a state."⁶⁵ By dramatizing the old hidalgo as a decadent aristocrat, Cooper intimated that Don Agustín needed to be supplanted by a rational, Protestant, American gentleman.

Of the troops that had been sent to occupy Louisiana, Captain Middleton was among the most admirable. Don Agustín had been a cordial host and had regularly invited the young officers to his home. Middleton's orders were to dispatch his duties without offending the indolent, Catholic Spaniards who had previously been "the compliant minions of absolute power."⁶⁶ Middleton was such a charming young man that both Inez and her father were immediately taken with him. He smoothly overwhelmed the "sensitive mind of a romantic, warm-hearted, and secluded girl of sixteen."⁶⁷ Whatever Don Agustín's objections, he proved no match for Middleton who "prevailed with some facility over the scruples of the maiden, and . . . the objections of her father."⁶⁸ Captain Middleton and his troop were liberators and saviors.

Nineteenth-century Americans like Cooper believed that aristocrats had been corrupted by their property: "In modern aristocracies, the controlling principle is property, an influence the most corrupting to which men submit, and which, when its ordinary temptations are found united to those of political patronage and power, is much too strong for human virtue. Direct bribery, therefore, has been found to be the bane of aristocracies, the influence of individuals supplying the place of merit, services and public virtue."⁶⁹ Only time was needed for

Americans to regenerate the debauched Spanish aristocrats. In The Prairie Cooper provided this solution: "the catholic and the protestant, the active and the indolent, some little time was necessary to blend the discrepant elements of society. In attaining so desirable an end, woman was made to perform her accustomed and grateful office. The barriers of prejudice and religion were broken through by the irresistible power of the master-passion; and family unions, ere long, began to cement the political tie which had made a forced conjunction between people so opposite in their habits, their education, and their opinions."⁷⁰ In essence, the marriage between the typical American gentleman and the archetypical Spanish virgin was a political convenience for all concerned. This statement also reflected Cooper's begrudging respect for all aristocrats. Cooper obviously wanted all of his aristocratic characters to have the benefits of that status without the repugnant drawbacks he attributed to European aristocrats. To this end Don Agustín surrendered his daughter to Middleton so that she could be morally regenerated and assimilated into the democratic culture of the United States, "the temple of American freedom."⁷¹

Don Agustín and Inez were given the opportunity to free themselves from their harsh master, Spain. Here, Cooper's message was in keeping with what some historians have referred to as "the spiritual ramifications of Manifest Destiny." Part of Middleton's labor was to free Inez and the other denizens of Louisiana of their old world Catholicism.

The American Protestant, with his cool reason, antagonized the Spanish Catholics. American religious prejudices stemmed from "the exaggerated religious opinions of the different sects which were so instrumental in establishing the colonies."⁷² In Middleton's suit to

win Inez he was compelled to submit himself to the teachings of the Agustin family priest, Father Ignatius. Middleton's debates with Father Ignatius took on the proportions of a missionary service. Father Ignatius was a professor of dubious miracles: the typical "gownsmen within the pale of Rome."⁷³ The foolish priest was lacking the astute Yankee's common sense.

Captain Middleton's ardor for Inez was not cooled by the Agustin family's Catholicism. In effect he might be termed open-minded. To satisfy the family he subjected himself "to a formidable essay which Father Ignatius was deputed to make in order to convert him to the true faith. . . . A dozen times . . . the good father fancied he was on the eve of a glorious triumph over infidelity; but all his hopes were frustrated by some unlooked-for opposition on the part of the subject of his pious labors. So long as the assault on his faith was distant and feeble, Middleton, who was no great proficient in polemics, submitted to its effects with the patience and humility of a martyr."⁷⁴ Self-possessed and secure in his convictions, Middleton was academically entertained as any good Unitarian might be. It would almost appear that Middleton was in agreement with Cooper's essay, "On Prejudice." One of the major arguments appropriate to the Middleton-Ignatius religious debate emphasized this need to keep an open mind: "Another motive peculiar to the country, for freeing the mind from prejudice, is the mixed character of the population. Natives of different sections of the United States, and of various parts of Europe are brought in close contact, and without a disposition to bear with each other's habits, association becomes unpleasant, and enmities are engendered. The main result is to liberalize the mind."⁷⁵ Essentially,

Middleton benefited academically from his Catholic catechizer's instructions. But he remained unconverted.

The priest lost these arguments because he "was tempted to improve his vantage ground by calling in the aid of some of the peculiar subtleties of his own creed."⁷⁶ Confronted with such obtruse mysteries, Captain Middleton became an invincible opponent. Trusting to intuition, "He came to the contest . . . with no weapons more formidable than common sense, and some little knowledge of the habits of his country as contrasted with that of his adversary; but with these home-bred implements he never failed to repulse the father with something of the power with which a nervous cudgel-player would deal with a skillful master of the rapier, setting at naught his passados by the direct and unanswerable arguments of a broken head and a shivered weapon."⁷⁷ Father Ignatius soon came to feel that Middleton's Protestant logic was contaminating his flock. And, "Like a wise commander who finds he has occupied too much ground for the amount of his force, he began to curtail his outworks. The relics were concealed from profane eyes; his people were admonished not to speak of miracles before a race that not only denied their existence, but who had even the desperate hardihood to challenge their proofs; and even the Bible itself was prohibited with terrible denunciation, for the triumphant reason that it was liable to be misinterpreted."⁷⁸ Rather than have Captain Middleton converted to Catholicism, Don Agustín and his daughter reconciled themselves to Middleton's Protestantism.

Cooper's anti-Catholic sentiments were not as vehement as were the prejudices of the American nativist groups.⁷⁹ In place of no religious institutions, Cooper advocated that the services of the

Catholic Church be utilized until spiritual guidance from a Protestant church could be obtained. For instance, in the resolution of The Prairie Helen Wade and Paul Hover were married by Father Ignatius. But after Hover transported his bride to their new home, "he took occasion to have his marriage properly solemnized by a justice of the peace."⁸⁰ Middleton's and Hover's distrust of Catholic priests truly showed them to be representatives of nineteenth-century men.

Most Catholics were looked upon as wayward Christians. The priesthood, however, was an object of derision because of its Satanic import. Inez was an undoubting Catholic and a good Christian. Middleton "well knew the religious scruples of his wife."⁸¹ The story of Inez's holy vow of silence to her captors--White and Bush--degraded Father Ignatius for his unholy control over her simple mind. Inez swore by her patron saint, but later broke her vow. Questioningly, she told Middleton, "'I even think Father Ignatius would have absolved me from the vow.'"⁸² Middleton's violent reaction to her mention of the priest was, "'If he had not,' muttered the youth between his compressed teeth, 'I would have absolved him forever from his spiritual care of your conscience!'"⁸³ Even though Middleton accepted Inez's mild rebuke for speaking so lightly of the obligations of her vow, the New England gentleman's opinion of priestcraft had been aired.

In order to comprehend the essence of the anti-Catholic themes developed in The Prairie, the extent of the intensely emotional rancor of this nineteenth-century prejudice must be evaluated. Almost all Protestants were apprehensive over the increasing political power of the masses of Catholic immigrants who were crowding the cities on the eastern seaboard. The anti-Catholic message in The Prairie was toned

down in comparison to the anti-Catholic, nativist literature that will be discussed in Chapters III and IV of this study.

If Cooper had been a promoter of Jacksonian ideals, he probably would not have allowed Captain Middleton to marry a Spanish, Catholic aristocrat. Middleton would have likely taken a bride similar to the type that was represented by Ellen Wade. But Cooper distrusted egalitarian politics. His characters were socially stratified, and they rarely married above or below their social rank. There was one exception. In The Red Skins, Hugh Littlepage, the country squire married Mary Warren, the daughter of an Episcopal minister. Although Mary was without means, Cooper assured his readers that she was a true lady. And to stop criticism of this match, Hugh's Uncle Ro settled a dowry on Mary of some fifty thousand dollars. In The Prairie Middleton's liberality was justified by tallying Inez's virtues. First, she was a Spanish lady. Second, she was a rich, Spanish lady. And third, she was an extremely beautiful, rich Spanish lady.

Cooper's portrayal of Inez was two-dimensional. Straightforwardly, he told the reader of Inez's beauty. Her figure was described as giving off "glimpses of light" whenever the "sylphlike form of Inez flitted like some fairy being" past Captain Middleton.⁸⁴ Moreover, she was described as possessing "secret impulses which are thought to distinguish the sex. Natural timidity, and that retiring and perhaps peculiar lassitude, which forms the very groundwork of female fascination in the tropical provinces of Spain."⁸⁵ The rescue of rich Spanish virgins from their aristocratic, Catholic families was a popular motif in nineteenth-century romantic literature.

Captain Middleton not only forced Inez to accept him as a self-reliant Protestant; but because he was a deserving American gentleman, he was able "to liberate" Don Agustin's fortune. As one of the justifications for Middleton's taking a Spanish bride, Cooper narrated that Inez was the "richest heiress on the banks of the Mississippi."⁸⁶

Captain Middleton, however, was no gigolo. In answer to Inez's indirect query: "'I have been told there are men so base as to perjure themselves at the altar in order to command the gold of ignorant and confiding girls,'" Middleton admonished her and affirmed his honor as a gentleman.⁸⁷ The good Captain commanded his new found wife, "'You will summon all your courage to meet the trial and prove yourself a soldier's wife,'" thereby affirming his dominant role as a husband and a provider.⁸⁸

Middleton's courtship and marriage were symbolic of the elitist Federalist's attitude toward Manifest Destiny. The American gentleman was destined to take command and to represent Protestant-American democracy to the decadent Spanish nobility that controlled Louisiana before Napoleon sold the territory to the United States. It was Middleton's right and duty to Americanize both the territory and its occupants. In effect, Middleton, who shared with Natty Bumppo the status of the natural aristocrat, was a learned, qualified leader. As a frontiersman figure, he was contrary--antagonistic--to the frontiersman figure that was popularly celebrated by the Jacksonian Democrats.

In summary, the Jacksonian frontiersman was a genius without the advantage of a formal education. What he knew of the world he had learned from Nature. His intuition was infallible. Invariably he took the right direction--whether it was a path in the forest, a plan

for a battle, or a course which would change the geographical boundaries of the nation. The frontiersman was one of the products of rising American nationalism. He was a Protestant, Anglo-Saxon American who was superior to both dark-skinned races and European aristocrats. This superiority was his justification for conquest of those nationalities he believed to be inferior. Jackson became a hero to western and southern expansionists because he dared to crush the Indians, to occupy Spanish Florida, and to execute two British subjects suspected of selling guns to the Indians. When necessary the frontiersman took the law into his own hands. Justice was on the side of the strong and the free. During the Presidential elections of 1824 and 1828 this image of the frontiersman was ideally suited to the surge of public enthusiasm for egalitarian politics. The common man could identify with a democratic leader who appeared to be antagonistic to eastern, aristocratic politicians who had recently proven themselves traitors by threatening secession at the Hartford Convention. Inherent in the image of the frontiersman was a philosophy of nature. A departure from Jeffersonian agrarianism, the frontiersman possessed both the simple virtues of the yeoman farmer and the tenacity and brute strength of the pioneer who farmed the border settlements.

In his characterization of Ishmael Bush, Cooper debunked the popular image of the Jacksonian frontiersman. Bush had the courage and strength to survive on the frontier, but he did not have the capacity to advance civilization. If anything, the Bush family was attempting to avoid the restraints of law and civilization. Cooper returned this Jacksonian frontiersman to civilization after Bush executed his brother-in-law for the murder of his son. The moral of his return implied that

no man is stronger than the law, and that all men need the protection of the law if they are to survive.

Cooper's frontiersman figure, based on the poetic myths surrounding the archetypical frontiersman Daniel Boone, was the loner who needed to stay one step in advance of civilization.⁸⁹ Natty Bumppo was neither a misanthrope nor an anarchist. He was a natural man who lived in perfect harmony with Nature. He had seen the advance of the frontier and moralized about it, lamenting the destruction of a way of life. Natty Bumppo was a noble personality; however, he was an expansionist too. Like Boone, he had blazed trails for the settlers to follow. But unlike Boone, Natty was not a settler.

Cooper's settler and frontiersman figure of note was Captain Duncan Uncas Middleton who had inherited from his grandfather his frontiersman qualities and who had inherited from his genteel family the best that civilized society had to offer. Possessing the best of two worlds he was the only leader suited to represent American democracy in the new territory of Louisiana. Middleton, too, was an expansionist.

The fundamental distinction between the Jacksonian frontiersman and Cooper's frontiersman was underscored by Cooper's Federalist orientation. Cooper advocated deferential politics. His view of American culture and society was highly structured, and there was little mobility from class to class. Bush could never aspire to achieve the status enjoyed by either Paul Hover or Captain Middleton. As Cooper stated in the resolution of The Prairie, each representative of the respective classes could improve their station within their class. By contrast, the Jacksonian Democrat who advocated egalitarian politics celebrated the frontiersman as the harbinger of civilization in the

West. Untutored democratic leaders like Andrew Jackson and Davy Crockett were representative egalitarian heroes. As leaders and as frontiersmen, these ungentlemanly figures were representative American expansionists.

James Fenimore Cooper touched off a wave of literary imitators with his creation of the Leatherstocking series. His imitators, however, did not share his view of the ideal frontiersman or his interpretation of the qualified frontier politician. The frontiersman became the aggressive American expansionist who coveted Texas and Mexican territory. The frontiersman political figure became the evident racist who figures importantly in the propaganda supporting westward, geographical expansion at the expense of the indigenous races who were believed to be inferior. In the following chapters the literary image of the American frontiersman will be analyzed as the instrument of Manifest Destiny. Nineteenth-century popular literature dealing with themes of American expansionism developed two simplistic stereotypes: first, the Anglo-Saxon, racist frontiersman whose destiny it was to conquer new territory for the United States; and second, the unregenerate Mexican who deserved to be evicted from his territory because he lacked the capacity to institute stable government or to utilize efficiently the territory's natural resources.

ENDNOTES

¹J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957), pp. 47-58.

²Crevecoeur's understanding of the influence of the frontier on the settler was articulated as one of the major themes in Frederick Jackson Turner's controversial essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in 1893. Turner's thesis stated that the American frontier environment was the decisive factor in the development of American political and economic thought and culture. Probably the best comment or explanation of spiritual and practical ramifications of the frontier and its influence on American democracy was made by Turner himself. See Frederick Jackson Turner, "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," The Frontier in American History, rpt. The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History, revised edition, ed. George Rogers Taylor (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1956), pp. 32-33. Comparing poetic interpretations of the frontier with the development of democracy on the frontier, Turner's conclusion was: "Best of all, the West gave, not only to the American, but to the unhappy and oppressed of all lands, a vision of hope, and assurance that the world held a place where were to be found high faith in man and the will and power to furnish him the opportunity to grow to the full measure of his own capacity. . . . Let us see to it that the ideals of the pioneer in his log cabin shall enlarge into the spiritual life of a democracy where civic power shall dominate and utilize individual achievement for the common good." Turner rightfully implied that the literary interpretation of the West concurred with his frontier thesis.

³William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620-1647, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 205.

⁴See Alan Heimert, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier," NEQ, 26 (Sept., 1953), 369. In his analysis of the Puritan's attitude toward the wilderness, Heimert came to the conclusion that the purpose of the Puritan settlers was to create a "city on the hill" or a new Eden in the wilds of America. Since the first colonies were self-contained communes, the cohesiveness of the colonies depended upon internal development rather than geographical expansion. The wilderness was viewed with distrust; devils and Indians threatened the existence of the community. Savage elements were to be civilized; however, missionary work took place within the confines of the community. The American Garden of Eden was viewed as an island, and all people were to physically, spiritually and economically gravitate to that point.

⁵John M. Blum et al., The National Experience: A History of the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 68. Kenneth M. Stampp discussed the significance of the expanding population in the Colonies as a cause directly relating to the numerous Indian wars that developed throughout the seventeenth century.

⁶Crevecoeur, pp. 41-42.

⁷Ibid., p. 49.

⁸Ibid., pp. 194-195.

⁹Ibid., p. 209.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 222.

¹¹Ibid., p. 219.

¹²Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 53, 58. In his analysis of the development of the Boone legend, Smith contrasted the absurdities of his archetypical primitivism as a hero of American fiction with his more realistic role as a frontier settler. Unable to separate the man from the legend, Smith concluded that "If Daniel Bryan's epic represents the limit of possible absurdity in making Boone the harbinger of civilization and refinement, this may stand as the opposite limit of absurdity in making him a cultural primitivist. The image of the Wild Western hero could serve either purpose."

¹³Samuel Woodward, "The Hunters of Kentucky," reprinted in John William Ward, Andrew Jackson--Symbol for an Age (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955), p. 217.

¹⁴For good general discussions of the "rise of the common man" see Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848 (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1949). A more objective analysis of the "democratic uprising of the masses" has been done by Richard P. McCormick in "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," American Historical Review, 65 (June, 1960), 293. McCormick tabulated the results of Presidential elections from 1828 to 1840. He concluded that the common man did not become a factor at the polls until 1840 and the election of President William Henry Harrison. Also see Robert Gray Gunderson, The Log-Cabin Campaign (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1957).

¹⁵Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson, p. 38.

¹⁶Richard Hofstadter, "The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy," Problems in American Civilization, ed. Edwin C. Rozwenc (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1963), p. 83.

¹⁷Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960), p. 78.

¹⁸See Oliver W. Larkin, Art and Life in America (New York: Rinehart, 1949), p. 217.

¹⁹See Marvin Meyers, "The Jacksonian Persuasion," The American Culture: Approaches to the Study of the United States, ed. Hennig Cohen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), p. 51. Meyers' description of Jackson's image suggested that he drew his strength from moral duty and decisive acts. His qualities were summarized: "Andrew Jackson . . . rose to national leadership on the strength of reputed personal qualities: the blunt, tough, courageous 'Old Hero' of New Orleans--Honest and plain 'Old Hickory.' 'Old' refers to age, of course, but perhaps more to 'old style.' Again, not so much to old-style ideas as to the old ways of our fathers. He could be--and was in a boy's capacity--a fit companion for the Revolutionary heroes. Jackson never figured as the speculative statesman. In his own estimate and the public's he was executor of a republican tradition which required not elaboration or revision but right action, taken from a firm moral stance." Nostalgic for a return to democratic truisms, politicians and voters alike cultivated Jackson's patriarchal image. The Jacksonian man looked to regenerate the country by establishing an Arcadia in the West. This goal was not to be construed as a return to primitivism for spiritual regeneration. As William H. Goetzmann stated in "The Mountain Man as Jacksonian Man" (The American Culture: Approaches to the Study of the United States, ed. Hennig Cohen [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968], pp. 74-75), "Not only did they see a settler's future in the West, but at least some of the Mountain Men were most eager to see to it that such a future was guaranteed by the institutions of the United States Government which must be brought West and extended over all the wild new land to protect the settler in the enjoyment of his own 'vine and fig tree.' The Mexican Government, unstable, and blown by whim or caprice, could not secure the future, and the British Government, at least in North America, was under the heel of the monopoly [Hudson Bay Fur Company]. France was frivolous and decadent. Russia was sinister and backwardly despotic. Only the free institutions of Jacksonian America would make the West safe for enterprise." Jackson's indomitable spirit and courage to act was institutionalized. Whatever the means, the ends for the frontiersman was to settle and civilize the West.

²⁰Woodward, "Hunters of Kentucky," p. 217.

²¹Constance Rourke, American Humor: A Study of the National Character (Garden City: Doubleday, 1953), p. 39.

- ²²Woodward, "Hunters of Kentucky," p. 217.
- ²³Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1812 (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), p. 48.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- ²⁶Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age, p. 77.
- ²⁷Richard Warrington Baldwin Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 127-28.
- ²⁸Ward, p. 41.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 59.
- ³⁰Edward Pessen, Riches, Class, and Power Before the Civil War (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1973), pp. 2-3.
- ³¹Ibid. Also see M. J. Heale, "The Role of the Frontier in Jacksonian Politics: David Crockett and the Myth of the Self-Made Man," Western Historical Quarterly, 4 (Oct., 1973), 413.
- ³²Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. 1, ed. Phillips Bradley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 414. See also Marvin Meyers, "The Jacksonian Persuasion," p. 52. Meyers attributed class antagonisms of the Jacksonian era to the power struggle pitting the upstarts or Jacksonian Democrats against the Whigs, a party made up of old Federalist families, Jeffersonian democrats, and the new-money industrialists. Jackson was criticized by his contemporary rivals "for appealing to class against class. . . . Beyond question, his public statements address a society divided into classes invidiously distinguished and profoundly antagonistic." Meyers' opinion was that Jackson's view of National issues was not so restricted that he overlooked the good of the country to support only the dilemmas confronting the frontier. There was "for Jackson a whole body, the sovereign people, beset with aristocratic sores." Disillusionment in Jacksonian democracy, then, became inevitable for the settler as well as for the political theorist who had hoped to see a true republic established in the West.
- ³³James Atkins Shackford, David Crockett: The Man and the Legend, ed. John B. Shackford (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1956), pp. 91-92.

³⁴Gunderson, The Log-Cabin Campaign, pp. 7-8.

³⁵*ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

³⁶Smith, Virgin Land, p. 137. As late as the 1840's white manhood suffrage was yet not a reality. The most celebrated exceptions were Mike Walsh's popular fight with New York's infamous Tammany Hall and Thomas Wilson Dorr's struggle against deferential politics in Rhode Island which culminated in the Dorr Rebellion. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson, pp. 408-416.

³⁷James Fenimore Cooper, "The Deerslayer," The Leatherstocking Saga, ed. Allan Nevins (New York: Pantheon, 1954), p. 44.

³⁸Cooper, "On Liberty," The American Democrat, eds. George Dekker and Larry Johnston (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 111. See also Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief (New York: Vintage, 1957), p. 60. Praising Cooper as a social critic, Meyers wrote: "Cooper saw American society between the 1820's and the 1830's in the course of a great moral descent. The rule of the great middle--of middling virtues, talents, possessions, aspirations--had been the last, the best hope for a just settlement between the party of the few and the commons; but only so long as the many face upward toward a natural elite. Now the American middle was feeling its power: following its uninstructed instincts democracy would make world without moral foundations." Begrudgingly, the old Federalist families relinquished their hereditary monopoly of New England political offices. After the Hartford Convention it was not unusual for Brahmins to pass down pessimistic social and political comment, in the guise of reform, from their socially unapproachable Boston and Concord Olympus.

See James Fenimore Cooper, "The Pioneers," The Leatherstocking Saga, pp. 710-736, 760. For shooting a deer out of season, Natty was tried and convicted. After his humiliation in the stocks, Natty broke jail and escaped into the wilderness. Natty's act was not criminally irresponsible for he was following the dictates of the higher laws of Nature. The law that Judge Temple represented was that of the civilized community. As a free spirit Natty could not conform to the community's civil code. His parting speech to Elizabeth and Oliver Effingham was a concise statement of his simple, inflexible commitment to the higher laws of nature: "'Don't fear the Leatherstocking, children; God will see that his days be provided for, and his end happy. I know you mean all for the best, but our ways doesn't agree. I love the woods, and ye relish the face of man; I eat when hungry, and drink when a-dry, and ye keep stated hours and rules; nay, nay, you even overfeed the dogs, lad, from pure kindness; and hounds should be gaunty to run well. The meanest of God's creators be made for some use, and I'm form'd for the wilderness; if ye love me, let me go where my soul craves to be ag'in!'"

- ³⁹Cooper, "The Deerslayer," The Leatherstocking Saga, p. 65.
- ⁴⁰Cooper, "On American Equality," The American Democrat, p. 110.
- ⁴¹Allan Nevins, "Introduction," The Leatherstocking Saga, p. 16.
- ⁴²Edwin Fussell, Frontier: American Literature and the American West (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), p. 51.
- ⁴³Cooper, "On Property," The American Democrat (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), p. 132.
- ⁴⁴Cooper, The Prairie (New York: Washington Square Press, 1964), p. 85. Hereafter cited as The Prairie.
- ⁴⁵Robert E. Spiller, Fenimore Cooper: Critic of His Times (New York: Mitton Balch, 1931), p. 250. Also see James Fenimore Cooper, "On the Duties of Publick and Private Station," The American Democrat (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), pp. 77-80.
- ⁴⁶"Cooper, James Fenimore (Sept. 15, 1789--Sept. 14, 1851)," DAB, 400.
- ⁴⁷The Prairie, p. 118.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 27.
- ⁴⁹Cooper, The Redskins: or, Indian and Injin (New York: D. Appleton, n.d.), p. 111.
- ⁵⁰The Prairie, p. 60.
- ⁵¹Cooper, "On Demagogues," The American Democrat, pp. 155-156.
- ⁵²Ibid., p. 157.
- ⁵³Cooper adhered to the belief that the prairie stretching from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains was the Great American Desert. See The Prairie, pp. 75-76. Ishmael Bush's eldest son described the arid land: "The rifle is better than the hoe in such a place as this. . . . It is good for such as they who make their dinner better on beggar's beans than on homminy. A crow would shed tears if obliged by its errand to fly across the district." Natty answered the young man's complaint: "you have passed millions of acres to get to this dreary spot, where he who loves to till the 'arth might have received bushels

in return for pints, and that too at the cost of no very grievous labor. If you have come in search of land, you have journed hundreds of miles too far, or as many leagues too little."

The myths of the Great American Desert were based on information published in the journals of early travelers and explorers--specifically those of Zebulon M. Pike in 1810 and Stephen H. Long in 1823. These and other prairie reporters were struck by the treeless expanse. The nineteenth-century man believed that there was a direct relationship between wooded lands and fertile soil. It logically followed that since the territory would not support an agricultural economy similar to that known in the East, the territory was hostile to the development of civilization. It was generally feared that men like Ishmael Bush would be made even more barbarous by life on the prairie than they already were. See Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land, pp. 174-83. The Great American Desert was believed to be an ideal Indian reservation, a repository for the displaced Indians generated by Jackson's Indian removal policy.

See Joseph A. Stout, Jr. and Odie B. Faulk, A Short History of the American West (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 82. Because it was conceded that no one except the nomadic Indian could live in the Great American Desert, "officials of the United States government would conclude that such a hostile environment would be an excellent place for the Indian. Secretary of War John Calhoun seriously suggested this to President James Monroe, and in 1825, at the President's urging, Congress officially enacted into law this concept of a great Indian reservation in the West. Not until the 1850's would Americans venture in large numbers to settle on the Great Plains." The deciding breakdown of the myths traditionally associated with the Great American Desert was "the expansion of the trading frontier," specifically the development of the Santa Fe trade. See Ray Allen Billington, The Westward Movement in the United States (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1959), pp. 49-59.

⁵⁴Cooper, "Author's Introduction," The Prairie, p. xiv.

⁵⁵The Prairie, p. 90.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 426-27.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 65.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁹Fussell, p. 49.

⁶⁰Ibid.

- ⁶¹The Prairie, p. 418.
- ⁶²Cooper, "On Property," The American Democrat, p. 190.
- ⁶³The Prairie, p. 169.
- ⁶⁴Ibid.
- ⁶⁵Cooper, "On the Disadvantages of Aristocracy," The American Desert, p. 61.
- ⁶⁶The Prairie, p. 168.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 170.
- ⁶⁸Ibid.
- ⁶⁹Cooper, "On the Disadvantages of Aristocracy," The American Democrat, p. 126.
- ⁷⁰The Prairie, p. 168.
- ⁷¹Ibid., p. 170.
- ⁷²Cooper, "On Prejudice," The American Democrat, p. 134.
- ⁷³The Prairie, p. 418.
- ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 170.
- ⁷⁵Cooper, "On Prejudice," The American Democrat, p. 143.
- ⁷⁶The Prairie, pp. 170-71.
- ⁷⁷Ibid.
- ⁷⁸Ibid.
- ⁷⁹For a discussion of American nativism see Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of American Nativism (New York: Macmillan, 1938). For an example of James Fenimore Cooper's politely condescending attitude towards foreign immigrants, see "On Universal Suffrage," The American Democrat, pp. 193-94.

⁸⁰The Prairie, p. 417.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 182.

⁸²Ibid., p. 183.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴The Prairie, p. 170.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 169. For a discussion of Cooper's chivalric attitude toward women see Robert E. Spiller, Fenimore Cooper: Critic of His Times, p. 313. See also Herbert Ross Brown, The Sentimental Novel in America 1789-1860 (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1940), p. 292. Cooper's gentlewomen managed the household, reared the children, and were always dependent on their husbands. Her strength lay in her dependence: "This seeming dependence was an incense peculiarly grateful to man's sense of superior strength." In The Prairie Inez's happiness depended upon Captain Middleton's superior status as a male who could direct her activities and who could offer her security by making her decisions.

⁸⁶The Prairie, p. 170.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 183.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 183-84.

⁸⁹See Henry Nash Smith's Virgin Land, pp. 52-53. The myths surrounding the character of Daniel Boone were of a conflicting character. The most poetic were those associated with Boone being a child of nature. By contrast, Boone was also dramatized as a social misfit who could not abide civilization and sought refuge in the wilderness in order to enjoy his barbarous life style.

CHAPTER III

THE DARKER SIDE: RACISM AND MANIFEST DESTINY

What was America in 1492 but a Loose Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waiving it for his royal master and mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose Fish.¹

Herman Melville, Moby Dick

To understand the nineteenth-century American's negative prejudices against Spaniards and Mexicans it is necessary to untangle the complex relationships of different social movements. Out of the violence of this era three distinct developments were relevant to this study. First was the Protestant revival. Passionate, radical Protestants spurred political activists to riot in the streets, supposedly rescuing American democracy from the threat of papal domination. Second, these concerned Protestants were the "common men" who were involved in American politics for the first time. As America's champions they retailed the image of the American frontiersman. Since Andrew Jackson's successful exploitation of the frontiersman as a political image, and since James Fenimore Cooper's popularization of the arch-frontiersman, Natty Bumppo, the image of the American hunter became public domain. It was as if the Paul Hovers--or worse--the Ishmael Bushes of the United States had usurped Natty Bumppo's status as the American hero. Believing himself to be a Christian soldier and a frontier savior, the common man

spiritedly identified the enemies of the United States as Catholic conspirators, European immigrants, and members of "inferior" races.

Finally, these Protestant, political frontiersmen were expansionists. The zeal with which they embraced national issues luridly defined the fundamental antagonisms dividing the country.

Looking backward to the 1820's, the major internal problem in the United States was the slavery issue. The Civil War was forestalled by the Missouri Compromise in 1820. For a time the Compromise satisfied the need to balance political power between the slave and free states. The external threat amounted to the American fear of European intervention in Latin-American revolutions against Spain and Portugal. James Monroe took a firm stand and warned other countries with his famous Doctrine in 1823. Both political assertions, however significant, indicated that Americans were looking to the West. The Missouri Compromise insured that the future of southern expansionism would not be limited to the little territory below the Mason-Dixon Line. The altruism which supposedly motivated the Monroe Doctrine was merely an attempt to discourage England and France either from coming to Spain's aid or from establishing more colonies in the New World. The Monroe Doctrine has been analyzed as a presidential statement that guaranteed that American expansionists would have no rivals in the West.

The expansionist of the 1830's and 1840's imbued himself with frontiersman virtues: fierce independence, American efficiency, and spiritual and racial superiority. He became a liberator. Land he would liberate to insure that there would be property for America's future growth. Some deserving Spaniards he would liberate and regenerate making them fit citizens to be sheltered by American democracy. Other

people indigenous to the West, the unregenerate members of "inferior" races, would have to be removed from American soil--lest they contaminate the purity of the chosen people.

Color lines firmly established by American slavery were debated by preachers and teachers alike. The issue of slavery and the inhumane treatment of the dark-skinned races was hotly but academically debated in the North. The southerners and the westerners who wished to preserve slavery as an institution and to dispossess Indians and Mexicans of territory stood firm on their Old Testament convictions of Ham's black degeneracy. Expansionists easily transferred their color-conscious prejudices against the black African to the Indian and mestizo Mexican.

Besides providing a justification for the appropriation of western lands, the nineteenth-century American's need to stereotype negatively Catholic Mexicans as spiritually misguided members of an "inferior" race stemmed from Spain's, later Mexico's, wholesale rejection of the heroic frontiersman's ideology of "America's providential mission or destiny."² From the outset Mexico had reacted negatively to the United States' concept of Manifest Destiny. A contemporary Mexican critic repudiated the history of American imperialism veiled as the act of Providence: "la democracia . . . la que sirve de punta de lanza a los monopolios industriales, la que invade y domina a las naciones pequeñas para apoderarse de sus riquezas."³ The die had been irrevocably cast for the United States' "Path of Empire." And the Mexicans, more often recognized as obstacles than enemies, defiantly stood in the path of the overwhelming wave of westward-moving, Anglo-Saxon pioneers.

Before the presidential election of 1828, the United States' belligerent confrontations with Mexico had been minimal. There was some filibustering into Spanish and Mexican territory by American adventurers such as Augustus William Magee, Henry Perry, and Dr. James Long. Except to encourage other filibusters, however, they were all unsuccessful. Although the Louisiana Purchase arrested some of the American animosity for Spain's refusal to allow free navigation of the Mississippi River, land-hungry expansionists voiced great displeasure for the Wilkinson-Herrera Agreement (1806). After the Louisiana Purchase the United States claimed Texas, stating that the boundary was the Rio Grande River. The Spaniards began to reinforce the Texas frontier. The United States had attempted to negotiate the boundary at the Sabine River--all to no avail. General James Wilkinson, negotiating with Lieutenant Colonel Simon Herrera, who commanded the Spanish force in Texas, concluded the treaty which moved United States troops east of Arroyo Hondo and Spaniards west of the Sabine.⁴ Expansionists, who believed that Texas should have been included in the Louisiana Purchase because of prior French claims, were frustrated by that boundary. Further exasperating to the American expansionists was the Adams-Onís Treaty (1819). Like the Wilkinson-Herrera Agreement before it, this treaty did not recognize the Rio Grande as the United States' "territorial nexus."⁵ In the specifications of the Adams-Onís Treaty, John Quincy Adams obliged Spain to recognize the United States' claim to East Florida, besides ceding West Florida to the United States. Particularly to southerners and westerners, the "loss of Texas [was considered] . . . a tragedy."⁶ The root of "Texas fever," which led to the inevitable breakdown of diplomatic relations between the

United States and Mexico was in the expansionists' desire for the fertile land of East Texas.⁷

President Andrew Jackson, "the new authority of the masses in National politics," overtly expressed his negative opinions of Spaniards and Mexicans.⁸ In his machinations to acquire Texas he encouraged his Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico, Colonel Anthony Butler, to bribe Mexican officials. Jackson wrote Butler (1829) that "the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Secretary of the Treasury . . . [had] obtained a large grant of land in Texas. . . . This circumstance may be made to favor the negotiation for the cession, by stipulating for the surrender of this grant to the United States, at a fair price, as a part of the five millions proposed to be given for the whole province."⁹ Dealing with dishonest Mexican politicians and opportunists, Jackson generalized: "I scarcely ever knew a Spaniard who was not a slave to avarice."¹⁰ His low opinion of the Spanish-Mexican national character type was reinforced by the non-involved interest he had shown in the incidents leading up to the Texas Revolution. In 1832 Jackson wrote Butler of the rumors he was receiving of the impending Texas Revolution. He did not foresee the involvement of United States troops; however, he added that private citizens had the right to emigrate "to that country and each soldier . . . [had] the right to take his rifle with him." As an expansionist President, Andrew Jackson adhered to what has been called the "doctrine of self-defensive aggression."¹² Democratic institutions of the United States could only be preserved by forcefully removing potential threats. Since the Mexicans were antagonistic to what was believed to be the

inevitable destiny of the United States, Americans defended themselves against contamination by a "second rate" national type.

The Mexican became an object of derision. Spinning a tall tale in the Davy Crockett tradition, the Texan, Noah Smithwick, joked about the Mexican carrion the victorious Anglo-Saxons left on the San Jacinto battlefield: "buzzards and coyotes gathered to the feast, eating the horses but refusing the Mexicans because of their peppery skins. Finally the human carcasses dried up and fell apart, and the cows chewed the bones and spoiled the milk until the people buried the Mexican remains in self-defense."¹³ Smithwick's facetious, comic description of Mexicans who were so "base" that even the coyotes refused their remains was not substantially different from Andrew Jackson's attitude toward the stereotypical Spaniard's avarice.¹⁴ The primary purpose of both writers was to diminish the Mexican as a national type.

Catholic Conspirators

The indignation of large numbers of our citizens is roused to a pitch altogether ungovernable, against the insults and absolute trampling upon American citizenship, by the Catholics and the Ignorant Irish. What conduct this indignation will exhibit itself in, it is impossible to tell. Hughes' house is much injured; and in all likelihood the cathedrals would have been attacked and sacked, if the people had not been deterred by the military.¹⁵

Walt Whitman, New York Aurora

Prior to the Texas Revolution (1836) American settlers in Mexican Texas were distressed by their lack of religious freedom. The Mexican government required empresarios and settlers to accept Catholicism as the national Mexican religion. The Texas Protestants' reluctance to

convert to Catholicism was a microcosm of the anti-Catholic sentiment expressed by the Protestant revival of the 1830's and 1840's in the United States.¹⁶ Both antagonistic Protestants and Catholics attempted to turn the Mexican War into a holy crusade.¹⁷

The background of American Protestants' fears of the Catholic Church had its beginning in the Reformation.¹⁸ The Catholic-Protestant confrontations of the 1830's-1840's, however, was the result of the tremendous influx of European Catholic immigrants. Old anti-Catholic prejudices were revived and solidly reinforced as Catholics threatened the political and social status quo of many of the eastern metropolitan centers. One historian summarized this large tally of immigrants this way: "Before 1840 the number of immigrants who came to the United States each year was almost negligible, twenty-three thousand in 1830, and eighty-four thousand in 1840, but between 1845 and 1855 the average number of newcomers admitted annually had risen to not less than three hundred thousand."¹⁹ Most of these new immigrants, who were crowding into the slums of port cities like New York, were Irish and German Roman Catholics. The Democratic Party lost little time in exploiting this new mass of voters, thereby upsetting the Whigs. But more calamitous to the native-born Americans were the slums, populated by vice-ridden, unemployed Catholics who could neither better their position in the city nor afford to migrate to the better prospects offered by the West. Journalist-editor Walt Whitman wrote of the serious problems created by the huddle of immigrants in New York:

Over two thousand persons--emigrants from Europe--landed in the metropolis from the Liverpool packets that came up yesterday. Nor is this number unusually large, for one day. A handsome city might be made out of those who come hither from abroad, in the course of a month!

The worst thing about these emigrants, and after they come hither, is, that they do not penetrate immediately into the interior--to the "far West" if possible--and settle down in an agricultural way. And yet, poor things! there are many of them, perhaps, whose means are all exhausted in their passage. For such, it strikes us, it would be well for some means to be organized, to speed them to the cheap lands of the West. We know there are one or two nominal organizations of the kind; but these are really none worth commending.

A suggestion of this sort depends as much on its promising to pay well, as on its necessity and benevolence. We believe that large tracts might be settled in this way at the West, to the advantage of all parties.²⁰

Sympathetic, but realistic, Whitman was soliciting help to alleviate an explosive metropolitan crisis. One of the most outstanding commentators on this period of American history wrote, "by 1830 the stage had been set for the nationalistic drama. Many Protestants, stirred by a wave of revivalism, had singled out Popery as their immediate enemy and were beginning to arm themselves against the threatened Romish assault."²¹ The rising nationalism of native Americans took on negative proportions as the labor markets in the industrial centers were flooded by Catholic immigrants. Further complicating the problem were the recessions caused by the Jackson-Biddle bank war leading up to the 1837 depression. As more and more Protestants felt threatened by the Catholics they joined with the American Nativist, actively harassing the increasingly powerful Catholics.²² Encouraged by American nativist organizations, riots began to occur in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and other cities. These riots were not well organized demonstrations; rather, they were social upheavals generated by the socio-economic tensions aggravated by the quantity of the poor, Catholic immigrants in those cities. Often nativists, prejudiced Protestants, and common workingmen were sparked to action by forensic

skill of evangelists like Lyman Beecher. In 1834 such a crowd burned the Ursuline Convent School in Charlestown, Massachusetts.²³

Even though the leading civic and religious leaders of Boston and Charlestown condemned the arsonists, the general public considered this type of arson to be a "decisive blow at Rome."²⁴ Protestants had been indoctrinated to believe that the newly immigrated Catholics were threatening the moral fiber of the country. For instance, it was widely believed that lecherous priests debauched young women in the confessional. Catholic schools for girls were thought to be little more than seraglios into which nuns supposedly enticed unsuspecting Protestant virgins.

Anti-Catholic prejudices were pervasive throughout the American class structure. While editor of The Brooklyn Eagle, Whitman wrote a romantic novelette, a story of adventure and betrayal. One of the tragic figures in The Half-Breed: A Tale of the Western Frontier (1846) was a recluse priest, Father Luke. When a young man Father Luke had studied for the priesthood in Ireland; however, before he was able to take his vows, he fought a duel and killed the man who ruined his sister. Fleeing to America, his adventuresome spirit took him West. There, in the wilderness he met an Indian girl. Whitman wrote, "She loved me--and I--I had nothing to interrupt the tedium of our long stay. We were both with the hot blood in our young veins. At the coming of spring, I left the place."²⁵ Four or five years later, when the Catholic seminary student returned, he found that the Indian girl had died giving birth to their son, "the monstrous abortion . . . that hunchback . . . half-idiot, half-devil, Boddo."²⁶ At some later date Father Luke took his holy vows.

Father Luke was punished for two reasons, both involved his unpriestly conduct. Of his compulsion to avenge his sister's seduction, Father Luke said, "Perhaps you may wonder that in view of the profession I intended to follow, I should have thought fit to act thus. I was blinded by my hate for my sister's betrayer, I was engrossed by no other thought than that of revenge!"²⁷ He recollected his illicit affair with the Indian girl with "the hue of shame."²⁸ To do penance for these sins Father Luke voluntarily exiled himself in the wilderness. He explained his harsh existence, "One of the rules of our religious piety is, that a full and open confession of any sins that lie upon the breast, shall be given ere a man can become one of our community. By the advice of my superior, and prompted to my own conscience, I have been aware that the least return I can make the wretched Boddo, for having been the author of his existence, is, to do my best toward opening his mind to the blessing of the True Faith."²⁹ Father Luke's piety and penitence were admirable. However, his concupiscence with the Indian maid was terrible because of his priestly orientation. The capstone of Father Luke's sordid youth was his absolution through the sacrament of confession. But the Protestant readers were shown that the priest's absolution was far from complete. The Half-Breed's malicious lies were cause for Arrow-Tip's hanging. The good Indian, Arrow-Tip, was charged with Peter Brown's murder. Brown arrived a minute too late to save the chief. Denigrated both by his religion and by the racial impurity of his half-breed son, Father Luke's tragedy proved to be a strong moral tale warning Protestant readers of Catholic lechery and the dangers of mixing Anglo-Saxon blood with that of a racial "inferior."³⁰

Whitman's novelette had all of the elements of the highly popular precautionary tale. Fiction shot through with anti-Catholic propaganda --propaganda bordering on pure pornography--was well received by Protestant American readers.³¹ The foremost historian on the Protestant crusade and American nativism wrote that the "greatest of the nativistic propaganda work, Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal was exploited as precautionary literature not only because it advanced Protestant nativist hate literature, but because it was very profitable to the Protestant ministers who recorded her confession."³² The plot of the Awful Disclosures was thin. But Maria's sexual escapades with her Mother Superior, other nuns, a hierarchy of priests, a school teacher outside of the convent, a class of young school boys, and a dirty old man whom the nuns regularly rewarded for his generous gifts to the nunnery were described in vivid language. Typical of Monk's disclosure was this condemning description of an old priest after a group frolic with the nuns: "I stared at him in disgust . . . a prince of the church. To me . . . he was just a dirty and sinful old man who had fucked between the cheeks of my arse and was now gasping for air like a fish removed from the water."³² And in a less blushing passage Maria Monk recounted how the nuns' unwanted children were murdered: "infants born to nuns as a result of their actions with the priests were baptized, then put to death and buried in a pit in the cellar with their bodies covered in lime so that they soon disappeared."³⁴ Nineteenth-century Protestant readers, who believed themselves to be morally superior to Roman Catholics, fantasized about the supposed unlicensed sexual freedom that Catholics and members of "inferior" races enjoyed. Such readers of Maria Monk could appreciate

this popular expose, justifying their interest by condemning the Catholics' moral laxity. The lascivious themes pervading the Awful Disclosures were, to tell the truth, arousing.

Such pornography suggested that American readers were painfully aware of their own unfulfilled sexual desires. The exhibition of the most fundamental passions was considered to be the mark of the "inferior animal nature."³⁵ This horror over the Catholics' freedom from puritanical guilt and "internal moral restraint," was expressed curiously.³⁶ The Protestants equated the supposed moral laxity of the Catholics with the stereotypical moral freedom enjoyed by "debased" races--particularly the black African slave. It was the Negro's sexual prerogative to give himself "over to heedless abandon."³⁷ This absurdly ironic syllogism was created by the Protestants' stereotypes of Catholics' and dark-skinned people's sexual behaviors:

All lechers are Catholic.
All dark-skinned people are lechers,
 Therefore, all Catholics are dark-skinned people.

Categorically, the argument's validity went unquestioned. Nonsense arguments may be logically expressed in the form of a syllogism, but as this argument was accepted as a reality, negative stereotypes were created and solidly reinforced.

Anglo-Saxon negative stereotypes of Mexicans at the time of the Texas Revolution and the Mexican War (1836-1848) were a composite of prejudices against the Catholic Church and prejudices against their Indian-Spanish blood mixture. Attempts were made by both the United States and by Mexico to turn the war into a holy crusade. Mexican Catholic priests "vigorously . . . denounced" the Protestant army from the North and rallied Mexican nationalists by appealing to the

"bitterness resulting from interracial and religious contests of long standing."³⁸ American propagandists exploited the fact that the Mexican War was being fought against a Catholic power. Rumors of mass desertions of American Catholic soldiers and "of popish plots to poison native American soldiers" were rampant in the press.³⁹ Americans learned from propaganda organs like the Democratic Review that the United States Army was at war with both Mexico and the Catholic Church. The two became inseparable. Villainous priests controlled all the real wealth in Mexico, the Democratic Review denounced. In this respect the Church had "become the state."⁴⁰ Using their control over the "ignorant" people, the priests were accused of prolonging the war in an attempt to break the power of the Mexican military.⁴¹ The Catholic Church had not been able to control Santa Anna. It was believed that the priests' ultimate goal was to establish "an absolute monarchy connected with the church."⁴² Such anti-Catholic propaganda was certain to arouse the desired animosity against the slavish Mexicans who were hopelessly cowed beneath the Pope's aristocratic foot. This particular editorialist reinforced the typical anti-Catholic stereotype commonly accepted by Americans before the Mexican War. Protestants were generally inclined to believe that Catholics were poor misguided Christians. The priest, however, was the real villain. Supposedly, he controlled his flock by threatening to expose their privately confessed sins.⁴³ In this essay the priests had the "ignorant" Mexicans at their whim and mercy. Thus, Mexicans were not merely wayward Christians; they were helpless ignoramuses.

Walt Whitman expressed a similar point of view in his justification of the Mexican War. Crying out for vengeance for the massacres

at the Alamo and at Goliad, he appealed to the highest authority: "Who has read the sickening story of those brutal wholesale murders, so useless for any purpose except gratifying the cowardly appetite of a nation of braves, willing to shoot down men by the hundred in cold blood--without panting for the day when the prayer of that blood should be listened to--when the vengeance of a retributive God should be meted out to those who so ruthlessly and needlessly slaughtered His image?"⁴⁴ The Protestant God of the Mexican War sought revenge--revenge on the Catholics who had murdered "the children not of the South alone, but of the North and West."⁴⁵ Americans made in "His image."

National Types at War: The American Frontiersman and the Mexican

The very virtues of the Anglo-Saxon race make their political union with the degraded Mexican-Spanish impossible.⁴⁶

Democratic Review

Responding to President James K. Polk's war message (May 11, 1846), Congress voted the declaration of war. A new type of frontiersman emerged as the hero of the Mexican War. Defined by the Democratic Review:

Our Texas Rangers and Mississippi riflemen are all marksmen. They deal out certain death at a distance of two or three hundred yards, and palsy the arm of the poor rancho long before he has a chance to poise his lance. From their habits of life and early training, they are inured to every fatigue; and though craving much more food than the Mexicans, care but little of what it consists. But above all things, they are superior to the Mexican in intelligence, quickness of perception and firmness of purpose. Here is where the qualities of the race weight fearfully in the balance. The Anglo-Saxon tree has, on this continent, struck its roots deep in the north, while its branches are over-hung with the most luxurious southern foliage.⁴⁷

The virtues that this new frontiersman shared with his predecessors were his knowledge of woodcraft, his stamina, and his natural intelligence. He was nature's nobleman. These new characteristics identified him as a superior soldier. With the Mexican being the lesser soldier, the frontiersman possessed those "qualities of the race" which made him a dangerous foe. His ability to kill was truly amazing, dealing out "death at a distance of two or three hundred yards." One of the most outstanding characteristics of this new frontiersman was that he was the representative American, rather than the American ideal. The Anglo-Saxon family tree, rooted in the United States had both northern and southern superior men.

The superior Anglo-Saxon at the time of the Mexican War was the citizen soldier. President Polk, giving his war message before the United States Congress, stated that in anticipation of hostilities with Mexico he had authorized General Zachery Taylor (August, 1845) to accept volunteer soldiers "not from Texas only, but from the states of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky."⁴⁸ Held in high esteem, volunteers principally from the South and West were praised as "beyond question more efficient than any other description of citizen soldiers."⁴⁹

Answering the British historian Archibald Alison's derogatory estimation of the United States' "backwoodsmen" Army, an editorialist for the Democratic Review quipped:

Mr. Alison says, a force composed of 1,500,000 "backwoodsmen." Does he indulge the European notion that we are all demi-savages, and suppose that all the people of the United States are backwoodsmen? The regiment of New York has, without being backwoodsmen, done immortal service at Vera Cruz, Corro Gordo, Churubusco and Chapultepec; while the field of Buena Vista has witnessed the determined valor of

the Western men, and their "offensive operations" against overwhelming force surpass all that is recorded of British valor, either on Indian or European fields.⁵⁰

The Democratic Review's definition of the frontiersman was expanded--he became a soldier-settler before whom "barbarism has vanished. . . . As territory has been overrun, numbers have increased, and free institutions have insured to all a share of the growing national wealth. It has been democratic energy and enterprise that have given vigor to the movement and sustained our rapid growth."⁵¹ Thus, the frontiersman was typed as an expansionist who had the responsibility to conquer Mexico and fulfill the United States' Manifest Destiny.

The term "Manifest Destiny" was coined by John L. O'Sullivan when he was editor of the New York Daily News.⁵² As the editor of the Democratic Review O'Sullivan codified "the democratic ideals held by the followers of Jackson."⁵³ From its conception and origin in 1838 the Democratic Review was the principle organ of American expansionists. "Manifest Destiny" as a nineteenth-century phenomenon has been analyzed:

A free, confederated, self-governed republic on a continental scale--this was Manifest Destiny. It was republicanism resting on a base of confederated states. Republicanism by definition meant freedom. It meant government by the people, or, rather, by the people's representatives popularly elected. . . . It was government of a classless society, as contrasted with that in a monarchy, which was dominated by an arrogant aristocracy and headed by a hereditary king. It meant, moreover, freedom from established churches headed by monarch. Under American Republicanism religious denominations were equals. Among equals the most worthy were, perhaps, the Protestant denominations--at least this was the view of much of rural America.⁵⁴

The frontiersman, soldier of Manifest Destiny was free--not as free as James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo, but more free under American democracy than the European Catholic of a similar class.

In comparison, the Democratic Review frontiersman was similar to the stock frontiersman that began to appear in the romantic, popular fiction of the era of Manifest Destiny. In his classic novel, Westward Ho! (1832) James Kirke Paulding created a frontiersman which appeared to be modeled after Cooper's Leatherstocking. Paulding's frontiersman differed from Natty Bumppo in that Ambrose Bushfield willingly taught the genteel Cuthbert Dangerfield how to survive and succeed in "the dark and bloody" wilderness of Kentucky. Paulding described Bushfield as, "Nurtured among the mountains of his native state, free as the air he breathed, he grew up tall and straight, and hardy as the trees of the primeval forest, where he passed most of his time in hunting and rural sports of danger and enterprise."⁵⁵ The American tree metaphor was popularly used to describe frontiersmen who had significant roles in the drama of expanding America.

Francis Parkman's description of Henry Chatillon in The Oregon Trail (1872) was an excellent example of the new frontiersman:

He was born in a little French town near St. Louis, and from the age of fifteen years had been constantly in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains, employed for the most part by the company, to supply their forts with buffalo meat. As a hunter, he had but one rival in the whole region, a man named Simoneau, with whom, to the honor of both of them, he was on terms of the closest friendship. . . . His age was about thirty; he was six feet high, and very powerfully and gracefully moulded. The prairies had been his school; he could neither read nor write, but he had a natural refinement and delicacy of mind, such as is rare even in women. His manly face was mirror of uprightness, simplicity, and kindness of heart; he had, moreover, a keen perception of character, and a tact that would preserve him from flagrant error in any society. . . . His bravery was as much celebrated in the mountains as his skill in hunting; but it is characteristic of him that in a country where the rifle is the chief arbiter between man and man, he was seldom involved in quarrels.⁵⁶

Chatillon, a mythical son of Daniel Boone and Natty Bumppo, possessed all the characteristics which supposedly made the frontier scout a typical American. He had the traditional hero's stature--height six feet. Schooled on the prairies, Chatillon had the same "natural refinement" that all frontiersmen since Cooper's prototype have possessed. He was upright, simple, kind, but dangerous. His rifle, "the chief arbiter between man and man," and his skill using it made him a very superior Anglo-Saxon. Parkman divided the population on the frontier: "The human race in this part of the world is separated into three divisions, arranged in the order of their merits: white men, Indians, and Mexicans; to the latter of whom the honorable title of 'whites' is by no means conceded."⁵⁷ Henry Chatillon's whiteness was accented--rather isolated--amid "a mongrel race . . . [with] the black snaky eye of the Indian half-breed" and the "squalid Mexicans . . . with their vile faces evergrown with hair . . . as mean and miserable as the place itself."⁵⁸ The contrast between Chatillon and the Mexicans was probably exaggerated out of Parkman's patriotic and National pride. The year was 1846, and Parkman learned of the Mexican War when he reached Pueblo (Colorado).

Parkman's pride and patriotism was apparent in his celebratory description of Doniphan's victory at the Battle of Sacramento. Of these Missouri hardies Parkman said:

At the battle of Sacramento his [Doniphan] frontiersmen fought under every disadvantage. The Mexicans had chosen their position; they were drawn up across the valley that led to their native city of Chihuahua; their whole front was covered by intrenchments and defended by batteries, and they outnumbered the invaders five to one. An eagle flew over the Americans, and a deep murmur rose along their lines. The enemy's batteries opened; long they remained under fire, but when at length the word was given, they

shouted and ran forward. In one of the divisions, when midway to the enemy a drunken officer ordered a halt, the exasperated men hesitated to obey.

'Forward, boys!' cried a private from the ranks; and the Americans rushed like tigers upon the enemy. Four hundred Mexicans were slain upon the spot, and the rest fled, scattering over the plain like sheep.⁵⁹

The frontiersman soldier replete with American eagle overhead was by 1846 a journalism cliché. The private, the typical American, had the fortitude to lead when the shirking officer failed. The sheepish Mexican, even at five to one odds, was no match for the frontiersmen who were "superior beyond measure to the ordinary rank and file of an army."⁶⁰

The Democratic Review joyfully summarized the exploits of the American frontiersman-soldier-settler and almost gleefully speculated on the helplessness of the Mexicans at the "approach of the American people. . . . They saw territory, no matter by whom owned, or by what people inhabited, swallowed up by . . . Anglo-Saxon pioneers."⁶¹ In truth, the Mexican was stereotyped as the frontiersman's major antagonist. The creation of the new frontiersman was largely the result of the southern and western expansionists' spiritual mission to extend the area of freedom and to liberate and regenerate both people and territory. Both the positive stereotype of the frontiersman and the negative stereotype of the Mexican were given impetus in the rhetoric and propaganda supporting the war. From the American point of view, they personified the two sides of the issues. Thus the heroic frontiersman expansionist could not have existed without his counterpart, the cowardly Mexican of no earthly consequence.

The nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon's attitude toward racially "inferior" Mexicans became a question of control. The white man had to

restrain himself emotionally. Physical restraints were imposed upon the Mexicans by the Anglo-Saxons. The superior man was vigilant to the point of fear of any insubordination that might compromise his sense of superiority. As one social historian phrased it: "Prejudice now was more than a means of justifying exploitation, more than a body of ideas; it was a deeply felt need."⁶² The Anglo-Saxon's power over the Mexicans was dependent on his assuming responsibility--a condescending responsibility--for the various non-Anglo-Saxon races. To isolate himself from his inferiors, he created racial stereotypes.⁶³

Negatively stereotyping Mexicans amounted to little more than Anglo-Saxon projections, rendering the Mexicans as caricatures who possessed traits decadent and degenerate from a white American's point of view. Separated by the arbitrarily assigned character deficiencies, the Mexican, like the Negro, "was a constant danger to the purity" of the Anglo-Saxon's blood.⁶⁴ The inferiority of non-Anglo-Saxons was counted in negative sums: moral laxity, criminal propensity, a rejection of Protestantism, lack of enterprise and industry, governmental instability, etc. The most disconcerting feature the Mexican possessed was his brown skin.

Both positive and negative stereotypes were used by nineteenth-century writers to "sort out individuals into knowable groups."⁶⁵ At the outbreak of the Mexican War negative stereotypes of the Mexican were exaggerated and enthusiastically reinforced, thereby encouraging the American people to identify all Mexicans as both "inferiors" and enemies. An essayist in November, 1847 issue of the Democratic Review argued that the Mexican's characteristic deficiencies were justification for the war as well as for establishing the American conquerors'

"True Title" to Mexican territory.⁶⁶ The United States' title by Manifest Destiny was a moral argument dispensing with Mexico's legal claim to the territory discovered by Spain. The manifestness of the United States' claims was supported by the fundamental belief that God Himself was author and director of the destiny of the United States.⁶⁷ Also supporting American claims was the belief that the United States was destined to use the soil.⁶⁸ The Democratic Review stated, "Had the Mexicans in any degree possessed the industrial activity of the Americans, the nation would have been in no danger of losing her territory. Not only, however, have her people been incapable of enterprise, but her insane government has by every means obstructed the progress of trade."⁶⁹ This essayist, of course, wished to see Mexico's underdeveloped agricultural and industrial economy remedied by Anglo-Saxon control and ownership of territory and resources. By stating that the Mexicans were inferior businessmen and farmers, it naturally followed that only racially superior Americans had the capacity to bring prosperity to Mexico.

Extolling the virtues of the industrial growth of the United States, the Democratic Review stated that victory in Mexico would be good for business: "Instead of impoverishing, we have enriched the country with our enterprise and wealth."⁷⁰ American capitalists grew more and more interested in Mexico's underdeveloped commercial potentialities as the war progressed. At one point, expansionists were considering taking "All Mexico" as a war indemnity. At the beginning of the Mexican War President Polk and the American people were only interested in incorporating New Mexico and California territories into the Union. These limits, however, were "predicated on the assumption

of a short war."⁷¹ Feeling that national self-respect had suffered by the prolonged war, American expansionists were crying for "All Mexico" by the end of 1846.

Unfortunately, the expansionists' clamors were inconsistent with their racism. Many Americans had supported the war as a "mission of regeneration," a religious duty to free the enemy from his servitude to the Mexican church and state. But as the Mexican War progressed, Americans became horrified at "the idea of a wholesale raising to citizenship of the mixed races in Mexico."⁷² The southerners and westerners who were initially interested in Mexican territory for the expansion of the American slave states had been rebuffed by northern abolitionist legislation, typified by the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso in 1846.⁷³ But southern fervor for the entire Mexican acquisition waned as the racial implication became apparent. Alarmed by Mexico's racial composition, northerners and southerners agreed with John C. Calhoun's pronouncement on the Mexican question: "Ours, sir, is the Government of a white race."⁷⁴ If Mexicans were to be regenerated and invited to enter the temple of American democracy, it became obvious that they would have to be light-skinned Mexicans and Spaniards. The cry for "All Mexico" soon died away as expansionists and nativists were repelled by the sheer numbers of Mexico's lower classes.

An example of reverse racism, the Mexican reaction to American claims about racial superiority, was expressed by General Mariano Arista in a letter to General D. Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga (1845). Arista wrote that the United States Army would "nos echa las tribus salvajes" if reinforcements were not immediately sent to Monterrey.⁷⁵ Evidenced by General Arista's choice of diction, it was apparent that

he was aware that Americans held the Mexican race in low esteem. The notion of throwing the Mexicans to the Indians--or treating them as Indians--concurred with this editorial opinion of the Democratic Review: "The Mexican race now see, in the fate of the aborigines of the north, their own inevitable destiny."⁷⁶ The threatening bellicosity of the expansionist press insured Americans that the Mexican's protests against American expansionism was bombastically absurd. Refusing to recognize the United States as a superior power confirmed suspicions that all Mexicans were full of "conceit and imbecility."⁷⁷ This Democratic Review propagandist concluded threatenly: if Mexico continued her "insolence, stupidity and folly . . . she will exhaust what remains of disposition on our part to deal generously by her."⁷⁸

The Mexican's identity as a human being had disappeared in the rhetoric of the Mexican War. Considered "non-essential," the Mexican found himself caught between hard-line, American continentalist ideology and the modern artillery of General Zachery Taylor in the North and General Winfield Scott in the South.

Contrasted to the diminished Mexican, the popular hero of the era of Manifest Destiny was the frontiersman conqueror. The frontiersman was the model common man. As such, he expressed the sentiments of his culture. Menacingly bellicose with his frontier weapons he became America's champion--an exaggerated knight-errant. His quest was to conquer the enemies of American expansionism. Specifically, the Mexicans! The Mexicans represented both real and imagined evils plaguing American society. The Mexican begrudged the United States the manifestness of their destiny to extend their geographical boundary to the Pacific Ocean. This reinforced the belief that the Mexicans were

an "inferior" people. Their Spanish ancestors were remembered for the cruelty perpetrated by their cruel treatment of the Indians--the Black Legend of Spain--and by the Spanish Inquisition, not to mention their reluctance to cede the Floridas, Mississippi River rights, and Texas to the United States. The Mexican's Indian ancestry condemned him as unregenerate barbarian. As a mixture of Spanish and Indian the Mexican was attributed the worst traits believed to characterize both groups of people. In short, he was a grotesque. But, if for no other reason, the Mexican was undesirable because of his Catholicism. He was dramatized as priest-ridden serf.

The American frontiersman who carried the banner of American democracy into Mexican territory was an amplification of everything the Mexican was not. He possessed all the positive abstractions that characterized the hero. He was handsome, strong, efficient, intelligent, loyal, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Nativists, journalists, and other writers characterized him as a racially pure, superior man.

As the Mexican War progressed, racial differences between the frontiersman and the Mexican became more and more pronounced. In spite of the conquest, expansionists' ardor for all of Mexico cooled with the publication of the fact that the majority of eight million Mexican mestizos were living in dire poverty. Americans wanted land, not Mexicans. This position was succinctly expressed in Mexican War editorial and in the popular literature produced during the war. In the fiction manufactured especially for the masses--the dime novel--both the character of the frontiersman and the character of the Mexican were simplified to the point that the frontiersman became the essence of good and the Mexican the essence of evil.

ENDNOTES

¹Herman Melville, Moby Dick (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), p. 334.

²Frederick Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 100. As the spirit of the United States' cultural advance gained momentum, the "Gospel of Manifest Destiny" became paramount to those who supported the Mexican War (p. 33). Believing in their superiority, the Protestant Anglo-Saxons assumed it was their burden or moral obligation to regenerate the backward Mexican raising him to new moral heights. But his regeneration could never be complete; his inferiority was uneradicable.

In this respect, the American frontiersman became an American Moses. See Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 128. It was incumbent on this Moses figure to create a Promised Land for free men: "the American, like the ancient Hebrew, was self-engrossed. The chosen people is indifferent to the heathen because it believes that the best material for the creation of its ideal is itself. . . . Such was the credo which encouraged American expansionists to conceive that the free rather than the meek would inherit the earth. Its logic harmonized Calvinistic pride and equalitarianism." The superior, American frontiersman believed himself to be good seed for such an enterprise.

³Fernando Alegria, Walt Whitman on Hispanoamerica (Mexico D.F.: Ediciones Studium, 1954), p. 193.

⁴For a historical summary see Odie B. Faulk, Land of Many Frontiers: A History of the American West (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), p. 85.

⁵Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, p. 53.

⁶Merk, Manifest Destiny, p. 19.

⁷Ibid., pp. 41-44.

⁸John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955), p. 50.

⁹Andrew Jackson to Colonel Anthony Butler, Washington, Oct. 10, 1829; printed in Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, ed. John Spencer Bassett, IV (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1929), p. 80.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 80.

¹¹Andrew Jackson to Colonel Anthony Butler, Washington, Feb. 25, 1832; printed in Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, p. 409. See Marquis James, Portrait of a President: Andrew Jackson (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1937), p. 411. Jackson was consistent in his desire to see Texas annexed to the Union. In 1835 he aided the fermenting Texas Revolution and Sam Houston by closing his official eyes to the "extraordinary emigration of American settlers' lugging guns rather than ploughshares" into Mexican territory.

¹²Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, p. 32.

¹³Walter Prescott Webb, The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), p. 41.

¹⁴It was quite in character for Andrew Jackson to ignore détente and vent his ire by stereotyping Spaniards for their supposed averiness. Jackson often approached problems that confronted him with a singlemindedness which could not help but insult his opponents. During the bank war he delivered scurrilous attacks on the person of Nicholas Biddle. Perhaps the best memorial to Andrew Jackson's indifference to the law and callous insults was his reply to the Supreme Court's opinion (1832) denying Georgia the right to administer control over the Indian lands. Jackson was imputed to have said, "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it." See Marquis James, Portrait of a President: Andrew Jackson, p. 304.

¹⁵Walt Whitman, Walt Whitman of the New York Aurora: Editor at Twenty-Two, eds. Joseph Jay Ruben and Charles H. Brown (Carrolltown, Penn.: Bald Eagle Press, 1950), p. 77.

¹⁶See Rupert Norval Richardson, Texas: the Lone Star State, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), pp. 63-64, 111. From the beginning Americans were recalcitrant to the demands that they assimilate into the Mexican culture. Believing themselves racially superior, they were diametrically opposed to Catholicism and to Mexico's tumultuous oscillations between aristocratic and constitutional forms of government. Having no political representation, the American settlers felt disfranchised. Their dissatisfaction was heard in Mexico City, and Manuel Mier y Teran was sent to inspect Texas.

Due to the alarm raised over the Mier y Teran Report (1830), Mexico, for a short period, "banned further migration from the United States." See also Joseph A. Stout, Jr. and Odie B. Faulk, A Short History of the American West (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 114-17.

For a description of Americans' inability to identify with the Mexican government see Ray Allen Billington, The Westward Movement in the United States (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1959), p. 54. By 1830 there were 10,000 American immigrants settled in Texas, "all of them loyal to their homeland." The attitudes of these Americans toward Mexico was typically expansionist. They migrated to Texas as spirited Anglo-Saxon, Protestant crusaders, not as pilgrims who were dissatisfied with the United States.

For a point of view sympathetic to the Mexicans, see Cary McWilliams, North From Mexico: the Spanish-Speaking People of the United States (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1949), pp. 98-105.

¹⁷See Fairfax Downey, "Tragic Story of the San Patricio Battalion," American Heritage, 6 (June, 1955), 21-23. Downey describes the San Patricio Battalion as a conglomerate made up of five or six different nationalities, deserters from almost every branch of the United States Army.

For further discussion of the religious implications of the Mexican War see Justin H. Smith, The War With Mexico, I (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), pp. 117-18; and Wildred Hardy Callcott, Church and State in Mexico 1822-1857 (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1926), p. 196.

¹⁸For a discussion of the Protestants' fears of the Black Legend of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition see Charles Gibson, Spain in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 68-89, 136-59.

As evidence as to how these prejudices against the Spanish were transported to the New World by English-speaking immigrants see William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620-1647, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 26-29. Upon preparing to embark from Leydon Bradford speculated that the colonists' potential adversaries in the New World--the Indians--would be in all likelihood less dangerous than the Spaniards who were threatening to invade Holland. He said, "The Spaniards might prove as cruel as the savages in America." The Separatists' fears of the Spanish were magnified by the effects of the Spanish attacks on the Low Countries during the Thirty Years War. See Charles Gibson, Spain in America, pp. 160-61.

¹⁹John D. Hicks and George E. Mowry, A Short History of American Democracy, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 304.

²⁰Walt Whitman, "Emigrants--Speed Them West," The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 13 July 1846; reprinted in The Gathering of the Forces:

Editorials, Literary and Dramatic Reviews and Other Material Written by Walt Whitman as Editor of The Brooklyn Daily Eagle in 1846 and 1847, I, eds. Cleveland Rodgers and John Black (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), pp. 164-65.

²¹Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism (New York: Macmillan, 1938), pp. 47-48.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 193-261. American nativism, before the organization of the American Republican Party (1843), consisted of quasi social and political local clubs. Whatever political influence they possessed was locally directed either in the cities or the areas populated by these different groups. Nativist ideology was amorphous and emotional. Its general precepts amounted to very negative responses to Catholicism and to the growing number of new immigrants settling in the United States. Besides the nativists, almost all of the Protestant Americans were distressed by the growing number of Catholic immigrants and the problems they represented. Features which distinguished nativists from other concerned Americans were their penchant to violently overreact in public demonstrations, and their limiting willingness to attribute all contemporary, nineteenth-century problems to the foreign Catholic groups. Nativist leaders were generally political opportunists who aspired to local offices. Nativist ranks were filled with the rougher, less educated elements--laborers--of American society.

Rising to national prominence during the Presidential election of 1844, the newly formed American Republican Party was courted by the Whigs. In his summary of this political coalition, Billington stated that the Whigs represented the "aristocratic elements of society" and encouraged nativism. Henry Clay was nominated for President. Theodore Frelinghuysen, the Vice Presidential nominee, appeared to have been chosen explicitly because of his appeal to nativists who were impressed with his "evangelical and Bible associations" (p. 201). To secure nativist backing, the Whigs promised the American Republicans support "in local elections in return for support for Clay" (p. 202). Although the Democrats won the election, the American Republicans were nominally successful: "In New York City the nativist ticket was completely victorious, and in Philadelphia three of the four congressmen chosen were advocates of American ideals" (p. 202).

The emotional nature of nativist politics was suggested by the platform of the American Republican Party: "In its public documents the party adhered to three major objectives: (1) to change the naturalization laws in such a way that foreigners would have to dwell in the United States twenty-one years before being naturalized, (2) to restrict authority over naturalization to the federal courts, and (3) to reform the gross abuses arising from party corruption" (p. 203).

After strong public outcry against nativist-Catholic riots in New York and Philadelphia, nativists began to lose public support. But during the years 1850-1854 Know Nothingism, another form of American

nativism, politically revived anti-Catholic sentiment. Again the nativist "witch hunters" rioted with immigrants and Catholics in the streets of American cities.

²³Ibid., p. 34. See also Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1949), pp. 136-40. Schlesinger investigated the relationship between the anti-clerical sentiment and the growth of the workingmen's political parties. Lyman Beecher, a Presbyterian minister with an energetic following of anti-Catholic workingmen, extended his clerical and Old-New England family prestige to the riots he helped to incite with his fiery, anti-Catholic sermons and public lectures.

²⁴Billington, The Protestant Crusade, p. 76.

²⁵Walt Whitman, "The Half-Breed: A Tale of the Western Frontier," The Early Poems and the Fiction, ed. Thomas L. Brasher (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1963), p. 272.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 273.

³⁰See Walter Whitman's (1842) temperance novel, Franklin Evans, or the Inebriate: A Tale of the Times (New York: Random House, 1929), pp. 173-228. Moralizing on Franklin Evans' alcoholic degeneration, Whitman concluded his temperance novel with Evans' ultimate abasement. He married the creole Margaret. The alcoholic narrated, "The certificate of manumission also was drawn out and signed, and given into Margaret's own hand. A couple of apartments in the homestead were assigned to her use--and I signalized this crowning act of all my drunken vagaries, that night, by quaffing bottle after bottle with the planter" (p. 180). Franklin Evans was not portrayed as a villain. Drink was the novel's culprit. The creoles, Margaret and her brother Louis, represented evil forces insofar as their mixed blood identified them as members of an "inferior" race. They were characteristically secretive, emotional, and insanely jealous. When Margaret murdered Mrs. Conway for alienating Evans' affections, the reader perceived that unrestrainable passion was a typical characteristic of one of Margaret's race. This description of Margaret's homicidal hate emphasized her creole blood. In the presence of the white lady, Mrs. Conway, Margaret might be mistaken for one of the household domestics: "Horrid purposes lighted up the creole's eyes as she softly put aside the curtains, and stepped into the room. With a stealthy pace she drew near

to the sick woman's bed. One moment she paused. The widow lay there, still very beautiful, and calm as a sleeping infant. As Margaret approached, the invalid turned and looked at her a moment, but it was plain she knew her not and probably thought her to be some hired attendant" (p. 210). The evil creole woman has been notorious in American literature for her inability to hold her white lover or husband. Destruction of the innocents, the creoles, and the creoles' children followed in the wake of this literary type. See William Faulkner's novel Absolom! Absolom! for a twentieth-century treatment of this typed character.

³¹See Oscar Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 120-22. In his description of the nineteenth-century American's views on the dangers of carnal pleasure and the nature of true love, Handlin stated that the common belief was: "Man was endowed with the sexual urge in order to propagate the species. Unregulated, his desires would lead him by way of lust to ruin. Taking up with vile creatures or resorting to the 'self pollution' of masturbation, he might destroy his health, weaken himself, and ultimately pass his diseases on to his progeny." The moral of Whitman's tales "The Half-Breed" and Franklin Evans--the dangers of "taking up with vile creatures" concurred with Handlin's analysis of nineteenth-century public morality.

Literature treating taboo topics such as sex and inter-racial love affairs, no matter how erogenous, was not condemned as long as it possessed the redeeming virtue of being published under the guise of precautionary writing. Handlin stated that scientific and medical tracts on the nature of sex and birth control became something of an erotic outlet for the inhibited, Anglo-Saxon Protestant. They were "books which spoke in private and in confidence and told the honest truth. Their sales mounted to the hundreds of thousands." It followed that erotic literature was popularly received as long as it was disguised as a medical tract or presented as a didactic moral lesson.

³²Billington, The Protestant Crusade, pp. 101-02.

³³Maria Monk, The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk (Wilmington: Blife, 1967), p. 131. This edition of Maria Monk appears to be an adulterated version based upon the 1836 edition of The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, Concerning the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal, also Her Visit to Nun's Island, and Disclosures Concerning that Secret Retreat. Preceded by a Reply to the Priests' Book.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 121-22.

³⁵Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life, pp. 121-22.

³⁶David Byron Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 47 (Sept., 1960); reprinted in Essays on Jacksonian America, ed. Frank Otto Gatell (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 236.

³⁷Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life, p. 124.

³⁸Callcott, Church and State in Mexico 1822-1857, p. 196.

³⁹Billington, The Protestant Crusade, p. 238.

⁴⁰"Mexico--the Church, and Peace," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 21 (Aug., 1847), 96.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 101.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³See Francis Parkman, The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky-Mountain Life, Vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1898), p. 34. Parkman paused in his 1836 narrative for a little anti-Catholic, Mexican humor. Conversing with Raymond the hunter, Parkman learned that Raymond had a "Spanish Woman." In reply to the question concerning his marital status, Raymond answered, "the priests don't marry their women, and why should I marry mine?" Parkman, like many of his contemporaries, was tolerant of individual Catholics. The innocent Raymond had never heard of the Pope. The butt of anti-Catholic prejudices was the licentious priest.

⁴⁴Walt Whitman, "War With Mexico," The Brooklyn Eagle, 11 May 1846, reprinted in The Gathering of the Forces, p. 241.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶"The War," The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review, 20 (Feb., 1847), 100.

⁴⁷"The State of the Country--Peace or War," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 20 (June, 1847), 485.

⁴⁸Journal of the Senate (May 11, 1846), p. 284.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰"Buena Vista," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 23 (Sept., 1848), 228.

⁵¹"The War," Democratic Review, p. 99.

⁵²"Annexation," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 17 (July, 1847), 5; reprinted in Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, pp. 111-12. O'Sullivan was credited with coining the phrase Manifest Destiny. And certainly, under his able editorship, the Democrat Review was foremost supporting American expansionism. O'Sullivan wrote:

Why, were other reasons wanting, in favor of now elevating this question of the reception of Texas into the Union, out of the lower region of our past party dissensions, up to its proper level of a high and broad nationality, it surely is to be found, found abundantly, in the manner in which other nations have undertaken to intrude themselves into it, between us and the proper parties to the case, in a spirit of hostile interference against us, for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.

In its manifesto, "The Democratic Principles," the Democratic Review joined Jeffersonian democratic principles with the unerudite, democratic principles of Andrew Jackson--no mean feat. The sentiment expressed in "The Democratic Principles" set the editorial tone and mood that continued throughout the life of the magazine. O'Sullivan's zealous spirit may be analyzed from this excerpt: "We feel safe under the banner of the democratic principle, which is borne onward by an unseen hand of Providence, to lead our race toward the high destinies of which every human soul contains the God-implanted germ; and of the advent of which certain, however distant--a dim prophetic presentiment has existed, in one form or another, among all nations in all ages" ("The Democratic Principles," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 1 [Jan., 1838], reprinted in The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy: Problems in American Civilization, ed. Edwin C. Rozwenc [Boston: D. C. Heath, 1963], 24).

⁵³See Edwin C. Rozwenc, introductory statement to "The Democratic Review: The Democratic Principles," The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy, p. 19.

⁵⁴Merk, Manifest Destiny, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁵James Kirke Paulding, Westward Ho! (New York: Harpers, 1832), p. 68.

⁵⁶Parkman, The Oregon Trail, Vol. 1, pp. 17-18.

⁵⁷Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 145.

⁵⁸Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 87-88, and Vol. 2, pp. 142-43.

⁵⁹Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 205-06.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 207.

⁶¹"New Territory Versus No Territory," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 21 (Oct., 1847), 291.

⁶²Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life, p. 124.

⁶³Ibid., p. 72. Since all "inferior" races were not easily identifiable by the colors of their skins, it was necessary for the nineteenth-century American to ascribe behavioral traits to those who were more difficult to recognize: the foul-mouthed, whisky-soaked Irishman; the Jewish usurer who like Shylock demanded his pound of flesh; the Mexican greaser whose sly, cruel face reflected his vicious, dishonest, cowardly nature, etc.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 117 and 126.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 72.

⁶⁶Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, p. 153.

⁶⁷The spiritual appeal of Manifest Destiny distinguished this form of American imperialism from later forms. See George Bancroft, The United States of America, from the Discovery of the Continent, Vol. 4 (New York: D. Appleton, 1893), pp. 83, 84, 88. As an expansionist and Jacksonian Democrat, George Bancroft straightforwardly maintained that the United States' course of empire was directed by God. His laudatory summation celebrating the Virginian frontiersmen's victory over the Shawnee and Cayuga Indians in 1774 reflected Bancroft's political and spiritual beliefs. The frontiersmen were "'blessed with the talents to bear all hardships of the woods; to pass weeks comfortably without bread or salt; to sleep under the open sky; to march farther in a day than any men in the world; and to use the rifle with a precision that to all but themselves was a miracle." The image of the frontiersmen dramatized in Bancroft's histories was not appropriate to his eighteenth-century subject. On the eve of the Revolutionary War the frontiersman was held in low esteem. (See the discussion of the development of the frontiersman in Chapter II of this study.)

Considering American enthusiasm for the frontiersman it was not out of character for a Jacksonian to praise the "blessed" talents of eighteenth-century frontiersmen--the antecedents of the nineteenth-century popular hero.

⁶⁸Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, p. 89.

⁶⁹"Occupation of Mexico," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 21 (Nov., 1847), 389.

⁷⁰"The State of the Country--Peace or War," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 20 (June, 1847), 484. See also "Occupation of Mexico," Democratic Review, 21 (Nov., 1847), 381-91; and, "New Territory Versus No Territory," Democratic Review, 21 (Oct., 1847), 285-94.

⁷¹Merk, Manifest Destiny, p. 112.

⁷²*Ibid.*, pp. 191-192. Merk summed up the Anglo-Americans' distress over the mixed races of Mexico: "One of the gravest of the problems was the size and the character of the population which would come with the territory. The Mexicans were estimated to number about eight millions. The greater part by far were colored. Half or more were Indian. A large fraction were mixed-bloods: mestizoes, samoboes, Negroes, and Mulattoes. Mestizoes were a union of Indian and white; samoboes, of Indian and Negro. Only a sixth of the population was white, descendants of the conquering Spanish. Could such a mixture ever be regenerated?" (p. 157).

⁷³Expansionists reacted hotly and negatively against the Wilmot Proviso. For a diatribe against the Proviso see "The Wilmot Proviso," The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review, 22 (Sept., 1848), 219. This essayist stated that the Wilmot Proviso would put "the Northern portion of our country against the Southern, and, if not immediately producing civil war, creating and engendering a bitter and undying hate--a hate that may forever destroy the unanimity of our councils, and thus enervate the energy of our government." For an overview of the effects of the Wilmot Proviso see Charles Buxton Going, David Wilmot Free-Soldier: A Biography of the Great Advocate of the Wilmot Proviso (New York: Appleton, 1924).

⁷⁴Cong. Globe, 30 Cong., 1st Sess., 98 (Jan. 4, 1848).

⁷⁵Mariane Arista to General D. Mariane Parodos y Arrillaga, Monterrey, Sept. 5, 1845; reprinted in El Pensamiento de la Reaccion Mexicana 1810-1962, ed. Gaston Garcia Cantú (Mexico D.F.: Empresas Editoriales, 1965), p. 100.

⁷⁶"The War," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 20 (Feb., 1847), 100.

⁷⁷"The Mexican Question," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 16 (May, 1845), 426.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 428.

CHAPTER IV

MEXICAN STEREOTYPES: NED BUNTLINE'S CONTRIBUTION
TO THE MEXICAN WAR

"Who the De'il Is Buntline"

I

A pale-faced, care-worn, friendless youth,
Whose trip of life is well nigh o'er,
Who sails alone across life's sea,
Nor cares how wild the breakers roar;
One who has seen as much of bliss
As will repay the present woe;
One who has smiled 'neath Pleasure's kiss,
One who has known life's deepest pain.

II

One who has loved his friends full well;
Who hates as few can hate a foe!
One who never learned the word, "dispair,"
Though dark the hour and deep the woe;
Whose heart is like the sea-grit rock
Which dasheth back the waves in spray
Nor trembles at each puny shock,
Nor heads the tempest's noisy play!

III

Who asks no favors from the world,
Who treads alone his stormy way,
Who looks above for light to guide,
And still in patience "bides his day;"
Whose love and hate are both too strong!
This, this am I, thou stranger bard,
Whose quaint and flattering song
Hath wrung from me this brief reply. 1

Ned Buntline

Ned Buntline had a personality as contradictory as Jacksonian America for which he wrote. He was at once a popular writer and a low-down liar, a temperance lecturer and a falling-down drunk, a champion of Victorian prudery and a whoremonger. Certainly, his bigamy did not trouble him as much as it bothered his numerous wives. Interspersed with these peculiarities, Buntline excelled as a blackmailer, a flim-flam man, bounty hunter, duelist, jailbird, and rabble-rouser. It was not an understatement to say that Ned Buntline lived a life that was almost as gaudy and as full of implausible adventures as his fiction. Buntline's inconsistencies are of interest because he appeared to be a representative of the popular culture of his time. His wide and varied readership indicated that he was able to anticipate and to capitalize on current trends. He was particularly successful in taking advantage of the vehement, anti-Mexican prejudices that developed during the Mexican War.

Negative portraits of Spanish-speaking people appearing in Buntline's writings were not original. His novels are redolent with the indignant, self-righteous war rhetoric that was typical of much of the American press from 1845 to 1848. Americans were being told that Mexicans were not only unable to govern themselves, but they were also at fault because they would not acknowledge the inevitable destiny of the United States' geographic expansion. In the spirit of the times, Ned Buntline's portraits of Mexican people were unique in that some of his caricatures have become literary cliches. Consistent in his handling of Mexican stereotypes, he indelibly printed them on his readers' minds. His power to reinforce these stereotypes may be more fully comprehended after a description of the extent of his readership.

Ned Buntline and His Readers

No preface, reader, nor apology here,--this is a story of thrilling scenes, daring deeds, and stirring times. We will leap the breast-works of reserve, and at once dash into its merits, as did the brave warriors who led the way and won the day at Monterey.²

Ned Buntline, The Volunteer.

It has been generally conceded that Ned Buntline created the lucrative market for such famous publishing houses as Street and Smith and Beadle and Adams.³ Semi-literate Americans consumed quantities of the popular literature mass produced just for them. These new readers were described: "Reading rooms [in New York City] were crowded with poorly dressed people who smelled, twisted, squirmed, scratched, and squinted at tattered, cheaply printed books. The new readers were not critical, but they were numerous. Their dimes and their quarters counted. Money paid for books had increased 60 percent between 1830 and 1840. It was promised to increase over 100 percent in the . . . [next] decade."⁴ The growing popularity of the Dime Novel indicated they were being read by "bankers and bootblacks, clergymen and clerks, lawyers and lawbreakers . . . in fact by almost everyone except schoolma'ns, pedants, and the illiterate."⁵

Buntline's impact on the American culture cannot be overstated. Mark Twain thought him a menace and said as much in Huckleberry Finn. It was evident that the whole country was familiar enough with Buntline's novel, The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main (1847) to grasp the import of Twain's satirical jibe. He narrated Tom Sawyer's piratical daydream: "At the zenith of his fame, how he would suddenly appear at the old village and stalk into the church, brown and weather beaten, in his black velvet doublet and trunks, his great jackboots, his crimson sash

and his belt bristling with horse pistols, his crime-rusted cutlass at his side . . . and hear with swelling ecstasy the whisperings, 'It's Tom Sawyer the Pirate!--the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main '"⁶ Tom Sawyer's fantasizing himself as the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main was a humorous foreshadowing of Huck's and Jim's adventures on the Mississippi River. But as a social commentator, Mark Twain's acid wit cynically exploited Tom's braggadocio, spelling out the dangers of the popular, heroic image of the Black Avenger--the racist fanatic who resorted to murder and robbery as a practical means to control those people who were considered to be members of an "inferior" race.⁷

Buntline's readers saw nothing humorous in Solonois, the Spaniard-hating Frenchman who vowed, "'Blood for blood;--ay, for each drop of her precious blood, rivers shall flow in revenge! Death to the Spaniards! . . . Now ye shall be pirates; ay, ye may drink blood and eat flesh if ye will, for your chieftain lives only for revenge.'"⁸ Killing hundreds of Spaniards, Solonois' revenge was not complete until the Spaniards feared the mention of his name. In 1847, the publication date of the Black Avenger, Americans were actively or vicariously involved in the Mexican War, and it was the good American's duty to destroy Spanish-speaking people on both real and fictional battlefields.

Buntline's contact with and impressions of people of Spanish origin began in 1834. Running away to sea at the age of fourteen, he signed on the "Mary C--" a West Indies fruit schooner.⁹ This first voyage took him to Cuba where Captain Fred Skinner, Buntline's commanding officer, introduced him to the Havana maidens.¹⁰ As Buntline gained experience as a sailor, he became acquainted with the Caribbean

ports, frequenting those places where sailors were wont to spend their shore leave and money.¹¹ Throughout his life Buntline remained a philanderer.

As a junior officer in the United States Navy, Buntline was given the opportunity to acquaint himself with the indigenous Spanish population of Florida. He had been assigned to the Mosquito Fleet during the height of the Seminole War. While stationed in Florida, he courted and married an older Spanish woman, Seberina, Comtesa Escudero's neice.¹² In 1842 Buntline resigned his commission in order to visit his ailing wife. At this point he began his literary career.

Buntline became a writer of adventure stories. His fiction was formularized in the sense that his plots varied little from story to story and from novel to novel. The basic conflict in the works produced around the time of the Mexican War depicted Anglo-Saxons overwhelming inferior, evil Spanish and Mexican enemies. Generally there was a triangle or love knot to be resolved as a sub-plot. The Anglo-Saxon may or may not be man enough to escape both the amorous entanglements of a Spanish Venus and the Spanish Villain's machinations to trap and murder him. What made Buntline's fiction superior to that of other dime novelists was his fabrication of exciting local color, his ability to spin an exotic love story, and most importantly, his nativist politics. His xenophobia assured his Anglo-Saxon readers of their racial and national superiority.

One of the more successful methods Buntline used to create an authentic tone and mood was by rhetorically inserting Spanish words and phrases in his works. Always, the meaning of the Spanish was immaterial to the gratification it was supposed to give the reader.

For instance, in his short story, "The Smuggler," the climax was highlighted by Señor Mexicano, the clownish peón, shouting: "'Guarda costa --contrabandistas!'"¹³ Because these Spanish words have recognizable cognates in English, it was not necessary for Buntline to provide a translation. The Spanish phrases were supposed to stimulate the reader two ways. First, the use of the Spanish language helped to give the story's setting, a scene on the Mexican coast, an authentic atmosphere; second, these phrases were supposed to be translated as the comical gibberish of an inept bandido. The author's attitude was that Señor Mexicano was so foolish that he could not even speak English. Buntline's use of the Spanish language encouraged the reader to identify the lazy peón stereotype in much the same fashion that comedians traditionally affected ethnic brogues to identify national types as butts of their jokes.

Buntline's use of Spanish in Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid (1846) dramatized the Mexican as a comic, blustering fool. Before Charley Brackett, the protagonist, was to leave on a spy mission, he succeeded in frightening his friends with his Mexican costume and Spanish threat: "'Malditos Americanos Adone [sic] vas, bijos [sic] de infierno?'"¹⁴ The misspelled Spanish words here and elsewhere in the corpus of Buntline's works suggested that his knowledge of Spanish probably consisted of informal exposure.

Buntline knew how to please his audience with such foolery. Señor Mexicano of "The Smuggler" and Charles Brackett in Magdalena functioned as comics. The humor was derived by allowing white readers to test their racial superiority against the absurd antics of the dark-skinned characters. The audience's reaction to the clowns in these works was

probably very similar to the audience's response to the black clowns in the popular minstrel show.¹⁵ As a writer, Buntline was sophisticated enough to make conscious use of comic relief, heightening the dramatic suspense of more serious scenes.¹⁶ Because of Buntline's skill as a writer and because of his fanatical, American nativist politics, it may be assumed that he stereotyped Spanish-speaking people, exaggerating their inferiority, to capitalize on the political, racist ideology of his time.¹⁷

Buntline made little attempt to portray Spanish-speaking characters as the products of their distinctive cultural milieu. Instead, he directed his energies to caricaturizing the "inferior" races in accordance with current prejudices. The hidalgo, the Spanish Venus, the corrupt Catholic priest, the bandido, and the shiftless peón were the stereotypical categories that war-conscious, Mexican-hating Americans used to represent Mexico's population. The remainder of this chapter will describe the various negative stereotypes found in Buntline's Mexican War pot-boilers and sea yarns:

1. The hidalgo was depicted as an aristocratic Spaniard who had compromised his honor by becoming indebted to unsavory characters. The hidalgo heavily mortgaged both his estate and his daughter's hand. His only means for salvation as a gentleman and businessman was to improve his fortune through his daughter's marriage.

2. The Spanish Venus was the hidalgo's daughter. As she radiated her sexual presence, she amorously ensnared careless white boys. Marriage with the Venus was unforgivable. Other arrangements were condoned.

3. The vicious Spanish padre trucked in cabalistic secrets; he

trifled with both immortal souls and young virgins in the confessional; and he defrauded his flock with counterfeit holy relics and miracles.

4. The bandido or the emasculated mestizo, was larcenous, drunken, childish, lecherous, volatile, and inept when confronted with the superior Anglo-Saxon.

5. The incompetent lazy peón could always be found taking a siesta in the shade.

The Hidalgo

The hair of Don Ignatio, or what little he had left, for he was nearly bald, was white as the snows which cap Orizaba's mighty peak; his features were of a Roman cast and his face wore that look of habitual dignity which seems so natural to a Castillian. His form . . . was firm and erect; his step had all the elasticity of youth, and his voice, when he spoke to his well-loved children, was soft as the tones of a troubador. He ever wore his sword, and had a hand not only ready, but able to use the weapon, which had been the plaything of his boyhood, the companion of his whole life.¹⁸

Ned Buntline, Magdalena

The hidalgo was a Spanish aristocrat. The most important feature of this petty aristocrat was his royal favor or lineage. Descendants of the heroes of Spain's wars which finally led to the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews, these latter day Spanish gentlemen were bred to become knights. Buntline was an admirer of Spanish chivalry; however, he portrayed the aristocrat as an impotent leader who had outlived his usefulness. The hidalgo was characteristically portrayed in nineteenth-century American literature as a nobleman whose pride kept him from pursuing a career in any capacity other than bearing arms. Involvement with any sort of commerce or business enterprise severely compromised the hidalgo's honor. If the hidalgo did not have funds to live the

prescribed life of luxury and ease, the appearance of luxury and ease had to be maintained at all cost--all cost except entering into someone's employ. Buntline's aristocrats were nobly sad figures. Their only hope in Buntline's fiction was that an enterprising Anglo-Saxon assume responsibility for their estates and set them to rights.

The question of the hidalgo's regeneration and eventual assimilation into the Union was subtly stated. This goal, however, was never accomplished in Buntline's Mexican War novels. Instead, the true hidalgos were contrasted with superior, Anglo-Saxon frontiersmen and with white Americans who had been forced to disguise themselves as Mexican hidalgos. As noble as the hidalgo was, he was made to appear decadent--aristocratically inferior to American Army officers who personified democratic ideals.

Buntline's frontiersmen were descendent from Cooper's Leatherstocking. The frontiersman in Buntline's novel The Volunteer: or the Maid of Monterey (1847) was characterized as a half-god, half-man, an American Achilles. George Blakey was "just twenty-one, and a noble specimen of a backwoodsman. He stood just six feet and one inch in height, straight as one of his own forest maples, had a brow high, fair, and unfurrowed by care or dissipation . . . limbs that developed muscle and strength which would in the days of Grecian splendor, have made him a favorite model for the sculptor's eye . . . he was the idol of his parents . . . his education . . . was good, yet that boy had never been inside a schoolhouse. His mother had taught him to read; his father had always taken two or three newspapers . . . the best read man in the county."¹⁹ As his name suggested, he was as American as George Washington. Blakey, the epitome of masculinity, was handsome without being

a sissy. Strong as an oak, graduating cum laude from the woods, the frontiersman was suited to be either the president of the United States or a conquering hero. And in Buntline's world vision, the western lands to be conquered were temporarily in the hands of unworthy, swarthy peoples.

In Buntline's The Volunteer George Blakey's respected foe was a hidalgo, Don Canales. Canales was a patriotic Mexican guerrilla chieftain. He was in fact the son of an Anglo-Saxon Texan named Vicars. Canales and his sister Edwina had been forced to flee to Mexico to escape the murderous revenge of the evil bandido, Captain Gorin. Coincidence upon coincidence. Gorin was not the Anglo-Saxon Texas Ranger that he pretended to be, and Canales was not the hidalgo he assumed to be. At the same time Buntline revealed another coincidence. As a Mexican-American Don Canales combined Spanish nobility with American know-how. Canales' telltale physiognomy was described:

small but comparatively, nay, elegantly formed; his features are regular and delicate as a woman's; his eyes large, black and dewy; his skin dark, yet clear as the rind of the sun-burned pomegranate. His hands were small and white; the left, however, had lost the thumb. His face was peculiarly expressive of a kind and woman-like disposition; his thin lips alone, curving downward at either corner, have token of resolution and firmness. His eyes were deeply set beneath a high and overhanging brow, which might make his frown dark and terrible, as his smile was sweet and pleasing.²⁰

In effect, Canales had inherited his mother's Spanish beauty and his father's Anglo-Saxon resoluteness. While his face mirrored his sensitive but cruel aristocratic character, his small, white hands indicated to Buntline's color-conscious readers that he was of honorable blood. Buntline gave the impression that the nobility of the Mexican army, as little as it was, was due to the natural nobility possessed by Anglo-Saxons, who, like Don Canales, were naturalized Mexican citizens.

An example of the typical weak hidalgo was Don Ignacio Valdez, a character in Buntline's novel, Magdalena, The Beautiful Mexican Maid: A Story of Buena Vista (1846). Don Ignacio's worth was appraised in dollars and cents. Don Ignacio's real property was measured by the beauty and solidity of his home, a "dark, reddish stone" house that was "built like a castle."²¹ The house, of course, was but a small part of his estate; Don Ignacio was the "owner of the hacienda or estate of Buena Vista."²² Although Don Ignacio was a man past his prime, he had not always been a peaceful man. He had been forced to leave Spain because, as a Castilian noble, he had supported Don Carlos' claim to the Spanish throne. Don Ignacio, "a contemporary with Zumelacarruguei the . . . guerrilla chieftain," was an old freedom fighter.²³ And as such, it followed that he should be sympathetic to the American cause. Besides courage and wealth, Buntline assured his readers that Don Ignacio had an aristocratic title and two extremely beautiful daughters, Magdalena and Ximena.

What Don Ignacio did not have, Buntline stated, was Yankee business sense. He was bankrupt. To demonstrate the hidalgo's incompetence, Buntline described how Don Ignacio became hopelessly dependent on the villainous bandido, Colonel Alfrede. Oblivious to the fact that loans had to be repaid, Ignacio "became indebted to Alfrede for several thousand dollars; and this perchance added to his willingness to have him for a son-in-law."²⁴ It became clear in the novel that Don Ignacio was representative of the Mexican ruling class who, in spite of their potential, were ultimately incapable in bringing progress to their people. One of the morals taught in Magdalena was that Yankee commercialism would remedy Mexico's sick economy. Marriage, in Buntline's romances,

was a convenience. The hidalgo made a good match for his daughter. The American husband was to gain title to the ruined estate and regenerate it with American "know-how." Avid expansionists, Buntline's frontiersmen were preoccupied with saving Mexican resources. Regenerating Mexicans was an immaterial war indemnity.

Charles Brackett, a half-breed Spanish-American attached to General Taylor's command, was introduced as Don Ignacio's potential savior. His superior officer, Captain Walker, described Charles to General Taylor as a brave soldier who spoke fluent Spanish. Brackett was as dark as his Castilian mother, but "not quite so yellow as a real native."²⁵ His coloring, symbolically significant, foreshadowed the Valdez family's doom. His skin automatically identified him as someone racially inferior even to those so-called "inferior" races. Because of his parents' miscegenation Brackett was cast as a schizophrenic half-breed who possessed, alternately, the emotionalism of a Castilian nobleman and the powers of a Jacksonian frontiersman. Charles exhibited physical perfection: "He was about five feet eight or nine inches high, with a slight but well knit figure, in which muscles seemed to make up for a deficiency in size: erect, and in form looked every inch a soldier. . . . There was that in his look which showed that courage and resolution were his by nature."²⁶ In spite of his not being six-foot tall--the classic height for a frontiersman, this half of Brackett's character was admirable. His physical perfection gave the impression that he enjoyed God's special favor as an American expansionist.

Don Ignacio's economic and moral problems should have been resolved because of Brackett's love for Ignacio's seventeen-year-old daughter, Magdalena.

All might have gone well, Buntline intimated, except for Brackett's "rich brunette" skin which "betokened plainly his Spanish descent."²⁷ Neither fish nor fowl, Brackett's racial impurity was a categorical flaw. Buntline developed Brackett's unhappy circumstance by creating a coincidence of such astonishing proportions that it could be credible only to dime novel readers. It was learned that Charles Brackett was the offspring of a wayward Valdez girl who eloped with a low-born americano. The lady in question was no other than Isabella Marin y Valdez, Don Ignacio's sister--Magdalena's long lost aunt. Irony upon ironies: Brackett who had been introduced as an American spy disguised as an hidalgo, was in reality an hidalgo parading as an American spy--or an hidalgo disguised as an hidalgo.

Although Brackett did not become a traitor, he did allow his Spanish idiosyncracies to dominate his personality whenever he was in the presence of the Valdez family. For instance, his hot blood attracted him to Magdalena. From the beginning their love affair was based upon their mutual hate of the bandido, Colonel Alfrede. After falling in love at first sight and exchanging negative opinions of the bandido, Charles said to Magdalena, "'Then, lady, we are friends, even by the hate we hold!'"²⁸ Characterized as Mediterranean lovers, their passions compromised their common sense. First, their vendetta against Colonel Alfrede was self-consuming. Charles' machismo demanded that he fulfill his vow to kill Alfrede for the murders of his "outraged mother and sister, whose corpses are now mouldering in a bloody grave near San Jacinto."²⁹ Second, Charles' and Magdalena's hot Latin blood could not be restrained, even after they learned that they were first cousins. Buntline was consciously pandering to the taboo, incestuous lust of his

readers by vicariously allowing them to enjoy the sexual ramifications of their proposed marriage. Don Ignatio admitted that their love was prohibited by canon law. But to foil the bandido he gave his blessing. Surprised, Magdalena asked if it was proper. Ignatio answered, "'Yes, my child; thy father's nephew--Charles Brackett, the son of my sister.'"³⁰ Buntline offered two alternatives. The reader was invited to moralize, condemning their illicit love. Or, libidinous imaginations could be unleashed.

Brackett's wages of sin identified him as an imperfect frontiersman and American expansionist. Because of his racial impurity he was unable to fulfill his destiny of morally regenerating Mexico and Mexicans. Buntline's frontiersmen were invested with savior complexes. His moral turpitude was his tragic flaw. Buntline had Brackett killed during the Battle of Buena Vista: melodramatically killed in the killing of the bandido, Colonel Alfrede. Magdalena, like Juliet, finding her lover in the throes of death, committed suicide over Charles's corpse.

The miscreant hidalgo, Don Ignatio, completed this tragedy. Shortly before Colonel Alfrede was dispatched, Alfrede burned Don Ignatio's hacienda. Because of the don's unpaid loans, Alfrede had the power to foreclose on the hacienda of Buena Vista. The indigent, homeless hidalgo and his remaining daughter sought safety in the American camp. Regeneration of the hidalgo would have been inconsistent with Buntline's racist attitude. Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid was concluded with an anti-climatic description of the violence of the Battle of Buena Vista. The patriotic, drum and bugle sensationalism of this battle scene purposefully directed the reader away from the overwhelming question of whether or not the hidalgo should have been regenerated. Thus, by

evading the issue, Buntline did not compromise his readers by accepting the moral responsibility of regenerating a conquered Mexican. Originally an argument justifying the Mexican War, the concept of providentially regenerating Mexicans had become ticklishly unpopular. In the beginning of the war American reformers and patriots envisioned the war as a crusade to spread the happiness of Protestantism and to develop Mexico's natural resources. Americans became disillusioned with reports of the widespread poverty, the racial mixtures of the eight million Mexicans, and the limited natural resources in the country. Even the most avid of the expansionists became quiet on the subject of war indemnities. Buntline's attitude toward the regeneration of Mexicans was indicative of America's disenchantment with the prospect of raising to full citizenship the masses of Mexico. Economically, they did not believe it was worth it.

Don Ignatio, a Mexican character type, was typical of all the hidalgo figures appearing in Buntline's writings. Land rich but money poor, the hidalgo lacked the capital and business efficiency to develop his resources. Commonly, the hidalgo was a venerable old man who had outlived his usefulness. As an anachronism, this ancient European aristocrat was forced to step aside in the name of industrial progress. Progress was represented by the Yankee astuteness of the superior, Jacksonian frontiersman. By stepping aside, the hidalgo bequeathed the social status associated with his aristocratic name, his beautiful daughter, and a dowry of Mexican land.

Compare Don Ignatio to Dona Elementa's hidalgo father in The Ice-King; or the Fate of the Lost Steamer (1848); to the noble hidalgo, Don Antonio Lizardo, in Matanzas; or a Brother's Revenge (1848); and

the evil caricature of Don Enrico Larranga of The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main (1847). Buntline appropriately gave his characters type-names which helped to identify them as peculiar Mexican caricatures. Heroes were assigned Anglo-Saxon appellations such as George, Charles, or Ned--often their surnames began with B as in Buntline. The Spanish names of the hidalgos resembled English words; however, the English meanings of their names had perjorative connotations. For instance, in Magdalena Don Ignacio's ignorance of good business sense could not be overlooked. The pretender, the Marquis de Bellamira in The Last Days of Callao (1847) was as poisonous as belladonna; and, Don Lizardo of Matanzas was as coldblooded as a lizard. The facility with which a reader could analyze a hidalgo's name contributed to his acceptance of the character's fixed attributes.³¹

Buntline's hidalgo formula was unwavering. Dona Elementa of The Ice-King described her father as "noble, honorable, and ruined."³² Like Don Ignacio, Dona Elementa's father was in sore need of the good sense of an Anglo-Saxon businessman. He allowed himself to be compromised by a villain, thus losing his fortune and his honor. Elementa stated, "'Aye, I was wronged, a noble father was ruined and then foully slain.'"³³ In both romances, Magdalena and The Ice-King, Buntline exploited the hidalgo stereotype, communicating that the Spanish aristocracy was weakened by characters who could not motivate themselves. The Puritan work ethic was supposedly missing from their socio-cultural orientation. The tragedies of Magdalena's death and Elementa's depravity were consequences of their hidalgo fathers' inability to deal with the practicalities of life.

Buntline endowed his aristocratic hidalgos with a perverted sense of honor that hastened their ruin. In The Ice-King, Dona Elementa tried to save her father's honor: she married the ancient but rich Mr. Frost "for gold to save [her] father's honor and life."³⁴ Buntline made a mockery of the Spanish aristocrat's honor in Matanzas; or a Brother's Revenge. Don Antonio Lizardo originally wanted to kill the shipwrecked Frenchmen; however, since the evil priest, Father Sabino, had extended the hospitality of the castle to the Protestant Frenchmen, he had to forebear: "'I cannot break the bond of proffered hospitality. . . . Because in that I should deeply stain mine honor.'"³⁵

The Spanish aristocrat was incapacitated by his code of honor-- impractical in the nineteenth century. In Buntline's writings the hidalgo's pride and honor always led to violent, tragic compromises. His hidalgos were so preoccupied with preserving their honor that they allowed their families and estates to fall into ruin. The caballeros destructive honor triggered the conflict in The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main. The cavalier's honor was determined by his noble lineage; the purity of the family's aristocratic blood was of the utmost importance. Buntline described the Cuban Governor, Don Enrico Larranaga as a "noble cavalier" who generously educated his French slave Solonois. But after Solonois eloped with the hidalgo's daughter, the family's honor had been tarnished, stained by his uncouth slave. The central conflict of the novel was the struggle between the aristocrat's honor and the honor of the commoner, Solonois.

The Black Avenger was an episodic blood bath. To avenge his publicly wounded pride, Don Larranaga captured his daughter, and staged a scene convincing the pirate chief, Solonois, that his wife, Medora,

and their infant son had been slaughtered. Swearing "Death to the Spaniards!" Solonois became a racist, homicidal maniac.³⁶ He proved his love for his lost Medora by slaughtering several hundred Spaniards.

Buntline did not allow the haughty hidalgo to regain his honor. Instead, the natural dignity of the common man prevailed. After Solonois defeated the hidalgo he magnanimously forgave the old and broken cavalier. The old aristocratic order had been overthrown and the zealous, youthful victor promised to rejuvenate the newly acquired property with democratic vitality. Solonois' seventeen-year-old son combined the free spirit of the pirate and the nobility of the Larranaga family. Even staunch nativists like Ned Buntline had a nostalgic respect for the age of chivalry. The hidalgos were Quixote figures possessing the pure, if not naive, soul of the knight-errant.

These noble figures, however, had been corrupted and made ineffectual by their association with racial reprobates of mixed blood. Buntline's formularized resolution of supplanting the hidalgo with the frontiersman was: strip the old aristocrats of their honor, bankrupt them, and marry their good looking daughters to the war-weary conquerors. Buntline's preoccupation with the destruction of the Spaniards amounted to more than a patriotic statement supporting the Mexican War. Buntline offered simplistic solutions to Americans who were in a quandary trying to decide what to do with Mexicans who inhabited the territory that was to be annexed to the United States. Mexico's mestizo population did not fit into the expansionists' dream of creating a garden for perfect people. Buntline's hidalgos were made to comprehend the significance of the Promised Land that was to be created in the West. However, Buntline never allowed the hidalgo to participate in the American dream.

The anti-climactic resolution of Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid ironically restated Buntline's contention that all Mexicans, hidalgos included, were to be excluded from the utopia. Buntline quoted abolitionist, pacifist John Greenleaf Whittier's poem, "The Angels of Buena Vista." The persona lamented:

Not wholly lost, oh Father, is this evil world
of ours;
Upwards, through the blood and ashes, springs
afresh the Eden flowers:
From its smoking hills of battle, love and
pity send their prayers,
And still thy white-winged angels hover dimly
in our air.³⁷

When read in the context of Whittier's other works, the speaker's tone was universally beatific, while the mood was hopeful and serene. However, read in the context of Magdalena, the ambiguous abstractions in the poem may be interpreted in a manner considerably different from what Whittier probably intended. Those fresh "Eden flowers" that were to grow out of the battlefield guaranteed the regeneration of a Promised Land. Whittier was addressing the meek, but Buntline wrote for the free: for "the free rather than the meek would inherit the earth."³⁸ The free, of course, were the future generations of Anglo-Saxons who would settle this newly conquered Garden of Eden. At the same time this Garden was emphatically closed to Mexico's racially impure millions. Since the hidalgo was not a member of the Elect, Don Ignatio's only hope was that his remaining daughter, the dark-eyed Castilian beauty, Ximina, could become an Eve for some industrious American Adam.

The Spanish Venus

A foolish little Venus always thinking of love
and romance.³⁹

Ned Buntline, The Volunteer.

Ned Buntline's stereotypes of Spanish women were a Victorian pornographer's delight. They did not exist as women; rather, they were characterized as erotic pieces of plastic sculpture meant to titilate the libido. They were beautiful, receptive to the point of being immobile, and suggestively posed for physical love. He described Magdalena's charms: "a girl of sweet seventeen . . . several years in advance of her age. . . . She is above medium height; yet her form is so full, so perfectly proportional, that she does not look too tall; her low-necked dress reveals shoulders that are graceful as a sculptor's ideal. . . . In disposition she was gay and dashing."⁴⁰ The Spanish Venus had hair-trigger emotions, similar to those Buntline attributed to Anita Urrea in The Volunteer: "Her face expressed a character of surpassing softness and sweetness; she looked as if smiles and tears could come and go with her . . . as if her heart was full of beauty and sympathy. She seemed to be all woman--all tenderness." Beautiful statues of pent-up passions, these Spanish enticers had a special appeal to Anglo-Saxons. The only intelligence that Buntline granted the Venus was her unwavering preference for frontiersmen.

An extreme example of the Venus's sexual attraction indicated by the lyrics of Magdalena's courting song. Brackett stopped to listen like a romantic knight-errant to the enchantress' proposal. She sang:

Es cierto que en casa yo vivía saltera [sic],
No tengo disgusto [sic], ni nada me altera,
Pero un buen marido, mejor me será 41
Sí, buen Esposito, mi amor pide lla.

Buntline would have us believe that Magdalena was as solicitous as her biblical namesake. Sung in Spanish, the song became the exotic language of the Latin lover.

Magdalena was unlike her Anglo-Saxon counterpart. Charles' response to her physical charms and to her invitation was acceptable precisely because she was a Mexican. The charms of a Yankee virgin could not have been so freely discussed. But the exotic Spanish Venus' innocence was less of a chattel and more of a challenge, sexually teasing the Protestant frontiersman. Buntline was said to have written much of his work while sitting drunk in his favorite brothel.⁴² His ideological fluctuations, at once a chauvinistic champion of virginity and a despoiler of young women, were reflected in his novels. Justification for this oscillation was a matter of discrimination. An Anglo-Saxon lady needed protection, but the fallen woman or the racially "inferior" Venus did not require the same respect. Knowing his readers' moral appetites. Buntline regularly placed the Anglo-Saxon male in a morally compromising situation with a Spanish Venus. Of course, the male was lightly chastized for his immorality, but not before his exciting love affair had been suggestively narrated.

The Venus provoked the frontiersman with her superb figure, with her unusually pretty face, and with her youthful innocence. There was no involved courtship for the Anglo-Saxon lover. Spanish Venuses fell in love at first sight. There was a danger in this too easy conquest. The wise frontiersman realized that he had to direct or check the señorita's dangerous passions. The Venus' love could consume a weak man--destroying life and fortune.

Buntline's nineteenth-century chauvinism typically distinguished sexual roles. The Mexican male was either a cowardly rascal or an aged and inept aristocrat. The Mexican aristocratic woman, however, had two functions: first, her bold sex was an omnipresent feature attracting Anglo-Saxon adventurers; second, because her dowry was Mexico, the Anglo-Saxon was given economic and social mobility after marriage. Buntline avoided the expansionist contention of right to "true title" by conquest. His Anglo-Saxon heroes were given property titles as wedding gifts.

The girls the frontiersmen left behind provided delicate contrasts to the more lusty Mexican beauties. The Anglo-Saxon gentlewoman was portrayed as a fragile, delicate piece of Dresden china. She was a household madonna to be worshipped in the Victorian chapel of hearth and home. In The B'hoys of New York: A Sequel to the Mysteries and Miseries of New York (1850), Agnes Morton, the hero's sister, was described as "exquisite, sweet, sad, and graceful." Buntline wrote, "Her deportment was modest and retired, her manner was simple and artless."⁴³ Suitors rivaied "to win and own" Agnes' hand."⁴⁴ Possession of such a hand was true love--love without eros, filled with the devine sentiments of holy worship. The American interpretation of love as a Christian Charity led to "abstinence, repression, and self-restraint."⁴⁵ The consequence of such goodly restraint stimulated the infamous "guilt and shame" that came to be associated with the sex act.⁴⁶ Buntline characterized Agnes Morton of The B'hoys of New York as the virtuous, ideal Protestant daughter and sister. With an authorial interjection, he stated that Agnes "was just such a girl as Ned would like to have for a sister."⁴⁷

The B'hoys of New York was a moral tale. Burdening this sad, sweet creature with a death-before-dishonor virtue, Agnes committed suicide in order to preserve her virginity.

Buntline's heroes always left their American darlings at home whenever they embarked on adventures promising excitement, glory, and taboo love. In the introduction to The Volunteer George Blakey's departure from Rural Choice, Kentucky was described: "Among the girls there were tearful eyes, yet not one of them was weak enough to bid her lover stay."⁴⁸ The superior frontiersman was always leaving women behind. Sexually exciting women, however, were later introduced, adding danger and romance to the hero's quest. In Buntline's Mexican War romances the most exciting women were hot Castilian roses--slaves to their passions.

Doña Elementa who was unashamed of her elemental urges was such a Spanish Venus. Described in The Ice-King, she was a "handsome, dark-eyed woman, whose brunette cheek, jetty hair, long eyelashes, and delicately voluptuous form, talk of a southern clime for her birthplace; an ardent temperament for her heritage. She was young. Not more than eighteen or nineteen summers could have passed over her head; her brow was clear, her cheeks full, her eye bright as if never a tear had dimmed or a cloud of care had shadowed it."⁴⁹ This picture of Doña Elementa was meant to be more of a race classification than a complimentary description of her feminine beauty. The references to her voluptuousness, her dark characteristics, and her fiery temper signaled her dangerous personality. Out of control, Doña Elementa had the capacity to jeopardize the Victorian morality of Protestant America. Buntline's sensuous

adjectives vivified Doña Elementa as an evil Spanish Venus. She was dangerous because she had lost her innocence. And as an Eve figure, she led the unwary out of Grace.

Elementa's aristocratic English lover did not have the presence of mind to control or to direct her flood of desires. Lord Wimsett, a weak-kneed, silly Britisher, was introduced as a man who was not in full control of his masculine faculties. When he first boarded the steamer, the captain said of him: "'Ned is down in his stateroom just now, for he was in a rum state when I saw him a bit ago . . . his republican friends up at the Astor House wanted him to love the country properly, impressed with the spirit of its citizens, and in a manner suited to his rank, so they made him 'drunk as a lord, that's all.'"⁵⁰ Wimsett was condemned, not because he was drunk, but because he, a Limey foreigner, could not hold his liquor in an all-American drinking bout. This weakness adumbrated his future failures as a man.

Like Charles Brackett of Magdalena, Lord Wimsett did not have the strength of character to control the emotions of his Latin Venus, Dona Elementa. Too late, he realized that Elementa's stormy passion was much more dangerous than the storm that washed their steamer onto the ice-flow. The setting of The Ice-King was a passenger ship. Elementa, Wimsett and others were journeying to some vague destination in the far North. Elementa's stormy character was metaphorically developed to correspond to the dangerous winter storm that threatened the ship and its passengers. Elementa had been trapped in the frigid impotence of her husband's old age. She was being emotionally crushed by Mr. Frost and looked to Lord Wimsett to free her. Elementa's predicament foreshadowed the fate of the steamer. Wimsett had the power to save Doña

Elementa, just as he had the power to save the doomed passengers at a later date. But Wimsett did not have the strength of character to control this wild woman. He convinced her that she should not commit suicide, but he could not dissuade her to give up her desire for revenge. She wanted to kill the villain who sold her to her husband. In spite of the bride price that Mr. Frost had paid for her, her noble hidalgo father had died poor and ashamed. She told Wimsett, "'I shall soon be the mistress of millions, for the old dotard will die and leave me all his wealth, and then I shall seek revenge, such revenge as a Spanish woman can afford to live for.'"⁵¹ Tenderly, however ingenuinely, Lord Wimsett accepted her affections and took her part against her husband.

When Elementa's husband conveniently died, she proposed to Wimsett, "'Oh, Edward Wimsett, if you have any mercy in your soul hear me. If I cannot be your wife, let--let me be--your--mistress!'"⁵² Belatedly, Wimsett told her that they could not be lovers--only friends. Rejected, the raging Spanish Venus put the match to the powder magazine and blew the entire cast of characters to the "chaos of destruction."⁵³ Perhaps it was unconscious on Buntline's part, but his description of Lord Wimsett's indecisiveness was typical of the Victorian American's desire to remain respectable and to deviate from the socially acceptable morality of the time.

It would have been degenerate to vocalize sexual desire for a Puritanical lady like Agnes Morton in The B'hoys of New York. To possess a Spanish Venus like Doña Elementa, the Anglo-Saxon male did not have to compromise himself. He could always attribute his moral failings to a moment's weakness, influenced by the Venus' immoral character. Wimsett was destroyed because he did not recognize Elementa for what she was.

Instead of trying to love her as a sympathetic big brother, he should have taken advantage of her so-called "inferiority" and accepted her as his mistress. This was the prerogative of the superior race. Wimsett's British priggishness characterized him as a poor sort of man.

Interracial marriage was taboo in Buntline's works. If the Anglo-Saxon married a Spanish Venus, they were killed. There was one exception. George Blakey was allowed to marry Edwina Canales in The Volunteer. But Edwina only appeared to be a Spanish Venus. Their marriage was a perfect match. George Blakey was as wise and as strong as a god of the forest, and Edwina Canales, whose real name was Helen Vicars, possessed all the characteristics that the wife of a frontiersman should have. Beautiful and hardy, she could "fight like a tiger."⁵⁴ Nevertheless, when George's mother read of his proposed marriage to a Mexican-American, she pondered: "'I don't know whether such a wife would prove a reward or a punishment.'"⁵⁵ George's doting father assured Mother that their country-bred boy had unimpeachable "'fine taste.'"⁵⁶

George's letter to his mother concluded The Volunteer. Buntline obviously felt the need to reexamine Helen Vicar's character and racial heritage. The readers had to be assured that Helen's Spanish ancestry could not contaminate George. Admitting the weakness of her Mexican ancestry, Helen Vicars left Mexico to enter the temple of American freedom. She became a girl that any son could take home to his Jacksonian Mother.

Buntline knew that the nineteenth-century American would not tolerate miscegenation, particularly with a person of Spanish ancestry at the time of the Mexican War. Even in a historical romance like Matanzas the marriage between the French Huguenot, Edouart de Gourges,

and the Spaniard, Elisa Lizardo, was taboo. Edouart was punished--cruelly murdered by Padre Sabano's hoard of wild indians. The heart-broken Elisa withered and fell with the autumn leaves.

Buntline justified the frontiersman's desire for the Spanish Venus. She was sexually attractive. But he terminated the relationship if their romance led to marriage. A perplexing question resulted. If the frontiersman was supposed to gain true title to the land by marrying the hidalgo's daughter, how could they regenerate the land and the señoritas when Buntline killed them off? It was a promise that Buntline held out to both frontiersmen and hidalgos. This promise was not kept. Interracial marriage was too horrible to condone.⁵⁷ Coincidences such as an Anglo-Saxon virgin who was disguised as a Spanish Venus were more acceptable.

The Vicious Priest

'Let it rather cause you to fear God than man!' replied he who seemed so little like a minister of God.'⁵⁸

Ned Buntline, Matanzas.

To emphasize a character's heroic proportions, Ned Buntline often stressed his Protestant orientation. Conversely, he emphasized a villain's evil character by mentioning his Spanish, Catholic orientation. For instance, the hidalgos in the novel The Last Days of Callao (1847) were admirable lovers because of their Anglo-Saxon blood and their Protestantism. Doña Azelia, a German Lutheran like her mother, related the miracle of her salvation to the young, infatuated Marquis de Bellamira. Because of her faith, Azelia had been spared the violent death met by the pharisaical Catholics. When the earthquake began, the

Peruvians rushed to their churches, hoping to find sanctuary from the wrath of God. But the "palaces of their faith" were as corrupt as their prayers.⁵⁹ The Catholics were plunged into a bottomless grave . . . that opened in the earth like the biblical sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah.⁶⁰ After Bellamira had heard the story, and it was time to retire, Azelia's guardian asked, "'read us a chapter from the Holy Book, and then when we have thanked our Creator and Preserver for his mercies this day, conduct our guest to his chamber.'"⁶¹ Azelia's fundamental belief that the Bible was the ultimate word of God had given her a democratic orientation. Prior to the earthquake she had scorned her aristocratic title, begging her father to break off her betrothal to the son of a pirate who pretended to be the Marquis de Bellamira. Her old hidalgo father was faced with ruin, and he hoped to repair both fame and fortune with his daughter's marriage. Azelia answered Don Sebastian, "'Ruin--father? What unto a Christian is ruin? Is it the loss of gold that he cannot carry to heaven with him? Is it to lack the magnificence and splendors on earth which when compared to those that are in heaven, are feebler than a glow-worm's light against the glories of a noon-day sun?'"⁶²

In contrast with a Protestant heroine like Doña Azelia of The Last Days of Callao was the evil, Catholic villain Captain Gorin of the Texas Rangers. In The Volunteer Gorin's nationality was left undetermined, but his dark skin, his perfect Spanish indicated that if he were not a Mexican--he should have been. A traitor to the Rangers and to the United States Army, this deserter joined the company of American Catholics that made up Santa Anna's San Patricio Brigade during the Mexican War. Buntline disparaged these deserters by pointing out to native

Americans that the Brigade was comprised of immigrants, "mostly Irish, German, and French Catholics."⁶³ Gorin's moral depravity was accentuated not so much by his desertion, as by his joining a Catholic organization.

Buntline's novel Matanzas was a historical allegory addressing itself to the religious issues of the Mexican War. Americans believed the Catholic Church was corrupt. In the name of the Pope, vicious self-interested priests were using the war as an excuse to thwart Protestant expansionism and to seize control of Mexico and the greater West. Buntline exposed Padre Sabano in Matanzas as a stereotypical vicious priest--a pious fraud who used the sacrament of confession to gain power and wealth. Sabano represented the black history of the Spanish Inquisition; he typified all that was suspect in the Catholic Church. Protestants and Catholics had been warring in American cities. Convents had been burned--schools too. As Catholic voting power increased the traditional Protestant power structure was being threatened and both sects overreacted. American nativists like Buntline saw the Mexican War as a continuation of the Protestants struggle against the Catholic threat in the West. Padre Sabano was the embodiment of the evil power that the priest was supposed to have--blackmailing all who were reluctant to do his bidding.

A good example of his nastiness was when he lured the heroine, the pious and innocent Doña Elisa, into his confidence. But rather than allowing her to confess her sins, Sabano confessed his love for her: "he clasped her to his breast and impressed a kiss upon her pale lips. As he did this she again attempted to burst from his grasp . . . he pressed his vile, lustful lips to hers."⁶⁴ Sabano was a dissolute rake.

Buntline combined murder and rape pornographically titilating the reader. Sabano threw the young French Protestant in the dungeon and locked Elisa in a strong, private room. The lying priest told Elisa that he had killed her father and that he had planned an exquisite torture for Edouart. In fact, the priest had Edouart chained up in a room adjoining Elisa's. There, he would be able to agonize over the proposed rape. Sabano goulishly threatened Elisa: "'I am like the gorged tiger--I can play with my victim for awhile till I get hungry; I shall not yet destroy thee, I wish thy young French lover to know that thou art mine. I have a torture in store for him--one which he could not feel did he not love thee.'"⁶⁵

Sabano's great power stemmed from his control over those who looked to him for spiritual guidance. Planning his coup and the murder of the French Huguenots, he inventoried his military strength: "'The troops are under my influence--I have the key to their very souls. Ah, but the rite of confession is a great thing; it has given me a hold upon every man in the garrison. There are murderers, adulterers, felons, and thieves amongst them, who dare not, for their very lives, disobey me.'"⁶⁶

Indulging in pornographic priest baiting, Buntline was guaranteed a large popular readership. Anti-Catholic, anti-Mexican Americans could not be overly sympathetic to a Catholic señorita in distress. Care was taken to prejudice the reader against Elisa. Had she not been a devout Catholic, she would not have been confronted with the secrets of the Church. Sabano asked: "'have I not . . . taught you much that other maidens never learn, much of that ancient lore which none save such students as we can gain!'"⁶⁷ Buntline did not divulge this knowledge,

but these Catholic secrets somehow implicated Doña Elisa in Padre Sabano's bloody crimes.

Buntline's didactic message became apparent when Elisa witnessed the crucifixion of the crew from the Huguenot ship. Praying in her locked room, Elisa forsook her Catholic catechism and embraced Martin Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. Appealing directly to God, she "fell and prayed, not with the set forms and stereotyped words that had been taught her since her earliest infancy, but with the natural language of a miserable, helpless, terror-stricken soul."⁶⁸ Elisa's Protestant appeal, of course, was answered and through a series of near-miracles she, her father, and the French Protestants were able to route Sabano and his renegades.

Buntline's attack on the Catholic Church was unwavering in this novel. The vicious priest was constantly irreverent. Doña Elisa's doom was foreshadowed because of her comprehension of the mysteries of Catholicism. The resolution of the novel was a warning. In Matanzas the blood thirsty priest returned when the unvigilant Protestants believed themselves to be safe. Sabano led a raiding party and killed Edouart. Sabano was killed, but not before he destroyed the Protestant colony's last hope. Buntline's moral was: never trust a Catholic--especially a Catholic priest.

Both Mexicans and Americans attempted to justify the Mexican War as a holy crusade. The anti-Catholic propaganda in Buntline's Mexican War novels capitalized on this popular sentiment. His good Protestant and bad Catholic argument was simplistic and emotional. As a nativist he was not concerned with theological niceties. He developed anti-Catholic themes to fan the flames of war. He was a Protestant patriot.

As character types the evil Catholic and the vicious priest represented in macrocosm all that made Mexico a weak country. In macrocosm, these negative stereotypes were predicated on the nineteenth-century Protestant's need to reinforce his sense of religious, racial, and national superiority.

The Bandido

All of the crew were Spaniards, not of the motley mixture usually composing hands of their calling.⁶⁹

Ned Buntline
The Last Days of Callao.

The Anglo-Saxon's abhorrence of the half-breed Mexican pitched the so-called superior race into a quandry. They were thought of as an illegitimate race, belonging neither to the whites nor to the darker skinned parents. Yet, the mestizo had a claim in both. For nativist thinkers like Ned Buntline, they were dangerous people because they combined Anglo-Saxon or Spanish intelligence with Indian savagery.

Buntline's stereotyped bandido, whose dark, aboriginal heritage had damned him beyond rejuvenation, was the hidalgo's burden and the Anglo-Saxon's enemy. The bandido must be destroyed in Buntline's novels or the American frontiersman could not succeed in his dual mission to morally regenerate the Spanish caballeros and to expand American territory. The bandidos were invariably stronger and more courageous than the hidalgos. The bandido's lack of honor and the hidalgo's preoccupation with honor placed the hidalgo at a distinct disadvantage. The bandido was often difficult to recognize, disguised as an honorable gentleman. But he was capable of any dishonorable act. Even when weak Anglo-Saxons and hidalgos recognized the bandido for what he was, these

honorable gentlemen could not bring themselves to destroy the villain in any other but an honorable way. Because of this misplaced chivalry, Buntline's bandidos were allowed to escape justice long enough to work their criminal tricks and do irreparable harm.

Two different kinds of bandidos appeared in Buntline's works: the ugly--evil-looking--villain and the handsome rake who acts the gentleman. In The Volunteer, Captain Gorin's displeasing face reflected his cruel, violent nature. Indirectly described, he was "a bird somewhat of the same feather" as his mean looking cohort: a common soldier having "a thin peaked face, eyes like two half-ripe seeds in a rotten watermelon, and a form more short, but exceeding like that of the officer [Gorin]."70 His bandido history was as horrible as his physical appearance. When but a youth, he murdered Helen Vicars' parents because she had spurned his love. Joining the Texas Rangers, he indiscriminately hated Mexicans and Anglo-Saxons. He was loyal to no one. When his plot to frame George Blakey as a traitor failed, he deserted the American Army and joined the Mexicans.

Race and breeding were the missing factors in the bandido's psyche. One of the more successful methods that Buntline used to exhibit Gorin's nastiness was by showing the reader the stupidity and sloth of the bandido's Negro slave. Common to nineteenth-century American fiction, both the protagonist's and the antagonist's characters were developed by describing their servants and slaves. For example, the heroic hidalgo in The Volunteer, Don Canales had a useful and valuable slave. His Negro was big. He was silent. And after he had served his master's dinner, "he cast himself lazily upon the ground, with his head toward the glowing embers of the fire, a habit singularly peculiar to Ethiopians, and within

less than five minutes was sound asleep."⁷¹ A villain like Captain Gorin of The Volunteer could not control his ugly slave. Gorin's inability to command and his ungentlemanly bearing was reflected by his Negro's insolence. Returning to his dirty quarters Gorin found his slave asleep in his bed. No refreshments were waiting for him. In a rage, Gorin kicked the presumptuous Negro to the floor. Rather than controlling a slave through kindness and good treatment, Gorin was mean and violent. His slave, therefore, felt neither love nor loyalty for him. White, nineteenth-century Americans had nightmare fears of black slave rebellions. The man who could not control his slaves was a dangerous individual and did not have the respect of other slave owners. Gorin's villainy was extended to his slave. His slave posed a threat to both the white community and to the black. The Negro's independence was a bad example to more obedient slaves.

Buntline asserted that the black slave was intuitive enough to realize the Anglo-Saxon's superiority and the bandido's inferiority. One of the bandidos in The B'hoys of New York, Señor Gomez, was described for his avarice and his miserly appearance. Made to conform to both the traditional Jewish stereotype and the bandido caricature, Gomez was "a small, dried-up, chocolate-colored gentleman, whose thin lips, little black eyes, sharp features, and general looks, denoted that business-cunning was surely one of his characteristics; while a thread-bare dress, an absence of all jewelry, and a kind of a hungry look, also looked symptomatic of avarice."⁷² The bandido's lack of stature was furthered by his Negro slave's, Beauty, betrayal. Beauty was an "angel of darkness . . . a small deformed, hideous-looking black boy."⁷³ Knowing that Gomez was about to murder George Morton, the hero, this "hideous

little dwarf negro" perceived George's superior bearing and warned him: "'Massa, you too young and good to die! Me no want to see you go ober for sharks to eat!'"⁷⁴ Buntline was a staunch supporter of American slavery. To his way of thinking the black African wanted nothing more than to be a good, happy sambo.⁷⁵ Like Beauty in The B'hoys of New York and like Lobo in The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main, Negro slaves would always desert a bad master when they recognized true nobility.

The bandido pirate Señor Alvorado in The B'hoys of New York was identified more by his evil deeds than by his looks. He did emit an effusion of his horrible presence. Agnes Morton, who possessed an infallible intuition, told her immature brother George that Señor Alvorado's "'visits and attentions to me are very unpleasant. I know not why, but I dread that man! . . . He is such a passionate, impetuous man!'"⁷⁶ To reinforce Agnes' fear of Alvorado's bandido character, Buntline had one of his minor characters, Miss Alice Etting, say to her married lover, Lieutenant Harry Charleston, "'A Spaniard! . . . One of that hideous nation--one of those people who'll murder a lady for love, and spit a gentleman through the back, like a roasting-pig, for no other crime than making love.'"⁷⁷ Miss Etting's fear of Alvorado stemmed from Lieutenant Charleston telling her that he had offered his services to Alvorado and his proposed filibustering expedition to Cuba.

The Anglo-Saxon orphans, George and Agnes Morton, were no match for the criminal "greaser." Because of their innocence, they were unable to tread the sea of foreign corruption in New York City. As a bandido Captain Alvorado represented the criminal foreign immigrants who were believed to be corrupting the Protestant moral fiber of the United States. George and Agnes were overpowered and killed by Alvorado's villainy.

Compounding his crimes, the evil bandido murdered the good American pirate Captain Harris who robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. After his murdering and looting spree, Captain Alvorado was allowed to escape, taking all the American gold to Cuba. Buntline concluded The B'hoys of New York by promising a sequel describing Alvorado's filibustering expedition.⁷⁸

Buntline caricaturing of Alvorado as a bandido enhanced the novel's American nativist theme. Buntline adamantly believed that the American people were being debauched, destroyed by the innately corrupt immigrants who had infiltrated and severely weakened American institutions. The B'hoys of New York was a nativist protest cautioning Americans against the vices of foreign immigrants. Throughout the novel Buntline implied that Americans must act or suffer the consequences of having bandidos like Captain Alvorado destroy the American family.

The bandido Colonel Alfrede in Magdalena, The Beautiful Mexican Maid was doubly dangerous. His bandido nature was concealed: he was a man of "rather prepossessing appearance, whose age might be thirty, and had a reputation for gallantry both in the battlefield and ladies' boudoirs."⁷⁹ Alfrede telegraphed his low breeding to Magdalena. She felt an unconquerable repugnance for him."⁸⁰ Exhibiting his dishonorable character, Colonel Alfrede proffered "loans to [Don Ignatio] . . . when those loans were very acceptable."⁸¹ Later, he threatened to foreclose when Magdalena refused to marry him.

After Charles Brackett, the schizoid half-breed, foiled the villain's plot, he marked the bandido's face so that he could be recognized as a bandido in the future. Brackett said, "'Now, thou hound of hell, I've marked you so that when next we meet . . . I may know you . . . and

if I should die, every friend I have on earth would dog you by the sign of the bloody cross upon your brow!"⁸² Buntline was playing on the Anglo-Saxon's haunting fear that he could not recognize the "inferior" with mixed blood. The pains that Buntline took to identify Colonel Alfrede as a bandido suggested the fabricated contrivances that nineteenth-century Americans used to physically identify their racial "inferiors."

Racist themes developed in Buntline's fiction were consistent with the intense prejudices against the Mexicans at the close of the war. American prejudice had become so considerable that the expansionists who had previously desired all of Mexico as a war indemnity began to vocalize against the annexation of all of Mexico. Believing the mixed-blooded Mexicans to be hopelessly degenerate and ungovernable, Anglo-Saxon Americans were unwilling to accept Mexican mestizos as potential citizens of the United States.

Just as in other Buntline novels, neither Brackett nor Don Ignatio could bring themselves to destroy the bandido when it was in their power to do so. Unwilling to tarnish their honor by killing the bandido in an ignoble manner, Alfrede was freed to continue plaguing the countryside with his bandido villainy.

Buntline allowed hidalgos and Anglo-Saxons to kill bandidos in ultimate combat. But the protagonists of these works were usually killed in turn. In novels like The Volunteer and The B'hoys of New York, bandidos were allowed to escape punishment. The moral implied by having the bandido at large was that Americans had to be constantly vigilant against the probable threat of bandido machinations--threatening American institutions.

The Peón

At last, when it was near midnight, the Mexican became less frequent in his snatches of song, and the "liquor-drowse" seemed to be coming over him. He would all unwillingly close his eyes, and then his head would make a long slow bow . . . until his chin rested on his breast.⁸³

Ned Buntline, "The Smuggler"

Buntline did not visualize Mexico's peón class as a political or moral threat to Anglo-American institutions. He portrayed the peón as a member of the lowest class, the class that was born to serve. There was very little difference between Buntline's peones and his stereotyped Negro slaves. The peón was portrayed as the hidalgo's good and faithful servant or as the foolish and lazy slave of the bandido.

In The Volunteer, or the Maid of Monterey the peón, Vicentio, was described as having "features of decidedly an Indian character. The cheek bones were prominent, the nose aquiline, the eyes small, dark and snakish in expression; his whole face seeming to be a map whereon a character for cunning and ferocity had been plainly written by the hand of providence."⁸⁴ Fortunately, providence gave Vicentio a mistress like Edwina Canales, who in her goodness could direct his cunning and ferocious nature against the bandido, Captain Gorin.

Loyal, obsequious Vicentio was much like the peón in Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid. Zalupah described himself: "'Zalupah can crawl like a snake in the grass, get close to guard, stab 'em and let his new master out of prison."⁸⁵ Buntline's peones had no character or intelligence excepting what was lent to them by their masters. Unfortunately, Zalupah's weaknesses were identical to his mistress'. Zalupah's penchant

for emotionally overreacting hastened Charles' and Magdalena's deaths as he was unable to give Magdalena practical advice.

In a similar fashion Don Canales' followers in The Volunteer reflected his good breeding and hidalgo characteristics. His troop of rancheros were described as "rude, warlike looking men, whose dress, consisting of loose trousers; jackets of green, trimmed with yellow; broad-rimmed hats; rawhide boots; spurs of immense size and long rowels. . . . The red sashes around their waists are filled with pistols; broad hunting knives are also there. A long curved sabre is hanging to each man's belt, a sword too long for any service save that of the cavalry."⁸⁶ These peones were an extension of Don Canales' noble character, as they were his creation. Their uniforms represented Don Canales' good taste and sense of good order.

By contrast, the peón soldiers of Padre Sabano in Matanzas; or a Brother's Revenge mirrored the vicious priest's superstitious absurdities. Two of Sabano's guards conversed: "'Saw you ever a ghost, Juan,' asked the sentinel of that post, as he leaned upon his musket lazily."⁸⁷ What ensued was a ghost story that proved them both fools and cowards. Their laziness was evidence of Padre Sabano's inability to instill a sense of professional pride in his followers. Their superstitious belief in ghosts was indicative of both their ignorance and their cowardice. Sabano's peón soldiers behaved much like stereotyped black sambos who, at the sight of a ghost, turned white, rolled their eyes, and exaggerated their cowardice by comically running away. When Don Lizardo appeared disguised as a ghost, the guards reacted: "One full minute they stood and looked, their knees shaking under their quivering bodies, then dropping each his musket, they fled."⁸⁸ By attributing characteristics

usually reserved for black sambo clowns to Mexican peones, Buntline as much as stated that he believed that the Negro slave and the peón were equally "inferior."

Padre Sabano's stupid, lazy peones in Matanzas were similar to those negative characteristics attributed to Colonel Alfrede's peón troops in Magdalena. Magdalena, who conspired to help Charles escape from Alfrede, said of the peón who was guarding Charles, "'I have conquered one of them with a bottle of wine--tomorrow night he shall have another, but it shall be drugged.'"⁸⁹ With a poor leader, the childish peón will forsake his duty, get drunk, and go to sleep.

Buntline did not invent the stereotype of the irresponsible, dark-skinned servant, but his consistent use of this caricature hammered it home for his dime novel readership. Buntline's dramatization of Mexican peones was not different from the descriptions to be found in the newspapers and journals at the time of the Mexican War. After the conquest Mexican peones were to be annihilated if they could not be used as a source of labor. Either way, Anglo-Saxon conquerors did not intend to allow peones "to remain in their passive state of idleness."⁹⁰ Unlike the hidalgos and the bandidos, the peones raised few questions. They were believed to be decidedly "inferior." Their regeneration amounted to no more than being allowed to serve Anglo-Saxons.

American nativists like Ned Buntline were laying the groundwork for what was later called "the white man's burden." Nineteenth-century Americans believed that it was necessary to subjugate the dark-skinned Mexicans in order to save them. If they were killed in the process of their salvation, at least their territory could be regenerated and utilized by the efficient Anglo-Saxon pioneers. The concept of "the white

man's burden" has been described: "This euphemism consists of designating any largely unpleasant thing not by its ordinary name but by the antithesis of the connotation of the ordinary name. Thus imperialism, connoting the burdening of the race of color by military subjugation if not economic exploitation, was called in 'onomantithesis' the white man's burden. Similarly the Southern expansionists of 1845 referred to extension of slavery as 'extension of freedom,' and Stephen Douglas later spoke to the allowance of slavery in the territories as popular sovereignty."⁹¹ Buntline gave no thought as to whether the peón could be regenerated; the Mexican peón was to be liberated from his hidalgo or bandido master. He would, however, continue his peonage, becoming a better servant when privileged to serve Mexico's "Good Neighbor" to the North.

A prolific popular writer Ned Buntline's contribution to the Mexican War amounted to a significant reinforcement of negative stereotypes of Mexicans. His nativist politics was a dominant feature in his novels and short stories. The anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, and anti-Mexican were his important literary themes. As Mark Twain pointed out, Buntline's propaganda was cloaked in swash-buckling adventure stories. He was a dangerous man. The Tom Sawyers of America were convinced that Anglo-Saxon Black Avengers of the Spanish Main were superior people. Therefore, inferiors could be justifiably robbed and slaughtered. Buntline's fiction had a tremendous appeal, and due to the simultaneous developments of printing and dime novel publishing houses his readership took on massive proportions.

Summary

Capitalizing on the Mexican War, Buntline worked with formularized plots and stereotyped characters. Invariably his Anglo-Saxon heroes and heroines were Jacksonian frontiersmen and gentlewomen. Typical frontiersmen in his novels, The Volunteer and Magdalena, were handsome, six foot tall, strong, intelligent without being formally educated, and expansionists. Physically, intellectually, and philosophically opposed to these frontier heroes were his caricaturized Mexicans. The five basic stereotypes exploited in Buntline's works were: the hidalgo, the Spanish Venus, the vicious priest, the bandido, and the peón.

Buntline's typical hidalgo was Don Ignatio of Magdalena. The old aristocrat had outlived his usefulness. The reader, however, could respect the past significance of the grandee's title. He had been a man of considerable wealth and property. As a leader he had deserved the high social status that he once possessed. But in Buntline's fiction he was a man in ruins. He had allowed his fortune and property to depreciate to the point that he was forced to accept loans from the bandido Colonel Alfrede. Unable to repay the loans, the hidalgo was seriously compromised when Magdalena refused to marry the bandido. The bankrupt hidalgo appeared regularly in Buntline's fiction and indicated that what the hidalgo needed was Yankee business sense or a partner.

The Spanish Venus was the hidalgo's daughter. Her characteristics emphasized her sexual presence. Young and beautifully voluptuous she contributed to the adventure by stimulating the frontiersman. The Venus was both enticing and dangerous. If the Anglo-Saxon was weak or unwary, she caused his death. Thus Elementa in The Ice-King and Magdalena in

that he committed. Captain Alvorado of The B'hoys of New York was a handsome bandido with winning ways. Only Agnes Morton, who was forced to commit suicide to escape rape, recognized him for the villain that he was. Captain Gorin of The Volunteer was a bandido with a face like a rotten melon. All bandidos were amazingly strong. The hidalgo and the weak Anglo-Saxon were no match for them.

The Mexican peón dramatized by Ned Buntline was born to serve. The inferior, subservient peón reflected his master's virtues or vices. Vicentio, Edwina Canales' peón in The Volunteer, was controlled by his mistress' superiority. He was a reliable watch dog and was adept in gathering information about the dangerous bandido. Don Canales, her brother, had a troop of peones; the pride of the Mexican army, they reflected his good taste and breeding both with their physical appearances and with their performances as soldiers. The peón guard who allowed himself to be bribed by Magdalena in the novel Magdalena proved himself to be a drunken sot as unreliable and as dishonest as his master, Colonel Alfrede, the bandido. The American victory of the Mexican War would liberate the peones so that they could have the opportunity to serve superior Anglo-Saxon masters.

Buntline's treatment of Mexican character types in his fiction was a statement of the Anglo-Saxon's fears of losing control of the so-called "inferior" races. Tragic romances such as those developed in The Ice-King, Matanzas, and Magdalena were tragedies precisely because the Protestant Anglo-Saxons were unable to control the "inferior," stereotypical Spanish-speaking characters. The Volunteer, The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main, and The Last Days of Callao were positive statements

Magdalena were responsible for their lovers' deaths. Interracial marriage was taboo; however, if the strong Anglo-Saxon could handle his firebrands other relationships were possible. Locating the responsibility for the base passions in her as a member of an "inferior" race, the frontiersman remained in control.

The vicious priest stereotype received its fullest development in Matanzas. Padre Sabano, a fugitive and thief before he joined the priesthood, had little reason to reform afterward. Sabano personified all the fear and distrust nineteenth-century Protestants had of Catholics. Learning the innermost secrets of his congregation in the confessional, he wielded immense power. He seduced young virgins. He controlled the army, threatening to expose their sins and condemning their immortal souls. The arch-villain Sabano had behind him the horrible power of the Spanish Inquisition. He murdered Protestants and controlled Catholics without fear of reprisal. Matanzas was a precautionary tale warning Protestants that they must be vigilant against all Catholics, but especially against Catholic priests.

The bandido was more evil than the vicious priest. Nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon Americans were preoccupied with their racial purity--the foundation for their superiority over the dark-skinned races. The bandido was a mestizo, a half-breed. He possessed the worst characteristics supposedly inherent in both races. His Anglo-Saxon or Spanish intelligence was dangerous because it made him a superior criminal. From his Indian ancestors he had inherited a savage lust for blood. He manipulated, murdered, robbed, raped, and threatened the very foundations of American democracy. Buntline developed two types of bandidos--the handsome dissolute rake and the spoiler who was as ugly as the crimes

of the Anglo-Saxon's superiority. The heroes of their respective novels had the presence of mind and the physical strength to control or defeat the villains.

As expansionist statements Buntline's novels and stories advocated the Anglo-Saxon regeneration of Mexican territory. The Mexicans, however, were undesirables--except for an occasional Venus. Regenerating Mexicans to become American citizens would have been inconsistent with his inflated xenophobia and racism. As an American nativist Buntline was a staunch supporter of Protestant fundamentalism, Anglo-Saxon superiority, and the American concept of the self-made man. His Mexican stereotypes were negative projections that insured the Anglo-Saxons at the time of the Mexican War that the American conquest of Mexico was justified. These Mexicans lacked Anglo-Saxon business efficiency. They were immoral Catholics, racially impure criminals, and poorly controlled inferiors.

ENDNOTES

¹Ned Buntline, "Who the De'il Is Buntline?" Cruisings, Afloat and Ashore, from the Private Log of Ned Buntline (New York: Robert Craighead, 1848), p. 76.

²Ned Buntline, The Volunteer: or the Maid of Monterey (Boston: F. Gleason, Flag of our Union Press, 1847), p. 71.

³See Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: the American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), p. 54. Buntline "the patriarch of blood-and-thunder romancers [had] . . . by the time of his death in 1886 . . . written more than two hundred stories of the dime novel type."

⁴Jay Monaghan, The Great Rascal: the Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952), p. 76.

⁵House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels, ed. Albert Johannsen, II (Norman, Okla.: Univ. of Okla. Press, 1950), p. 9.

⁶Mark Twain, Huckleberry Finn (Evanston: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 75.

⁷Tom Sawyer's daydream provided a comic situation, but the touch of satire, the murderous Black Avenger, was a criticism of the hypocrisy of making a hero of a violent criminal. See Constance Rourke, American Humor: A Study of National Character (Garden City: Doubleday, 1931), pp. 168 and 174. Of Twain's humor Rourke stated, "In a sense the whole American comic tradition had been that of social criticism: but had been instinctive and incomplete, and so it proved to be in Mark Twain." Although Twain's criticism was couched in burlesque it lost none of its sting. He merely sugared a bad dose so that his readers would take the criticism. Rourke wrote that there was satire in Twain's writing; however, as he was principally a humorist, he "fell back continually upon the vast burlesque that belonged to earlier years and was his heritage."

See Bernard De Voto, The Year of Decision 1846 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 328. The Black Avenger had become such a literary cliché that twentieth-century historian De Voto could invoke a little humor by referring to Bill Hickman--reputed to be Brigham Young's

Destroying Angel--as the "Black Avenger of the Spanish Main," and have this comparison understood to mean that Hickman hated Gentiles as savagely as Solonis, the prototype Black Avenger, hated Spaniards.

See also Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 35. As evidenced by Twain's and De Voto's use of the satirical stereotype of the Black Avenger, Buntline's character, Solonis, became a typename for a white racist. Elkins used a variation of this cliché in his discussion of how the Anglo-Saxon Americans developed their violent prejudices against the dark-skinned races. He stated, "The gentle American of mild vices was transformed into the bloody avenger." Elkins pointed out that both the Northerners, who were morally indignant over slavery, and the Southerners, who like the abolitionists turned to the Bible to justify their position, were Black Avengers. The Black Avengers from the North and the South, in spite of the polarity of their sentiments, stereotyped the black African as an inferior being.

⁸Buntline, The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main. Or the Fiend of Blood (Boston: F. Gleason, Flag of our Union Press, 1847), p. 17.

⁹Monaghan, p. 46.

¹⁰The House of Beadle and Adams, p. 168.

¹¹Ibid. Buntline was a rough-and-tumble young man, never short of courage. For instance, in 1838, just after he had enlisted in the United States Navy, Buntline was commissioned as an acting midshipman by President Van Buren for heroically rescuing several people from drowning in New York's East River. Exemplary of his fierce pride and his capacity to overreact, Buntline was reported to have fought seven successive duels with fellow midshipmen who had cruelly snubbed him because of his lack of gentlemanly qualities (see Jay Monaghan, The Great Rascal, p. 54).

¹²Ibid., p. 77.

¹³Buntline, "The Smuggler," Cruisings, Afloat and Ashore, p. 18.

¹⁴Buntline, Magdalena, The Beautiful Mexican Maid, a Story of Buena Vista (New York: Williams Bros., 1846), p. 8.

¹⁵For an informative discussion of the popularity of black minstrel shows in the nineteenth century, see Alexander Saxton, "Blackface Minstrelsy and Jacksonian Ideology," American Quarterly, 27 (March, 1975), 27. One of Saxton's strongest points was: "Blackface performers were like puppets operated by a white puppet-master. Their physical appearance proclaimed their non-humanity; yet they could be manipulated not

only to mock themselves, but also to act like human beings. They expressed human emotions such as joy and grief, love, fear, longing. The white audience then identified with the emotions, admired the skill of the puppeteer, even sympathized laughingly with the hopeless aspiration of the puppets to become human, and at the same time feasted on the assurance that they could not do so. Blackface minstrelsy's dominance of popular entertainment amounted to half a century of inurement to the uses of white supremacy." Saxton's observation might be extended to include racist and negative national caricatures popular in other nineteenth-century genres.

¹⁶For a discussion of how a stereotypical clown may function in a dramatic work see Marshall McLuhan and Wilfred Watson, From Cliché to Archetype (New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. 138. McLuhan and Watson stated that "The clown is indispensable as audience-tester and as checker on the moods of the ruling figure. . . . Without his clown, the emperor has no means of contact with the public." When Brackett acted the part of the clown, the reader was allowed to enter the drama and to participate in the joke. Surely some of Buntline's success as a writer was due to the way that he allowed his readers to identify with his characters.

¹⁷It is interesting to compare Buntline's romantic, rural idealism with Jackson's rustic facade; but it is entirely incorrect to assume that the writer, Ned Buntline, was a Democrat. He was adrift like many Whigs were after they broke up over the slavery question. And like the radical Democrats, the Locofocos who were extremely anti-bank, anti-monopoly, and anti-hard money, Buntline wanted reform. As a reformer, it is easier to state what Buntline was not, rather than what he was. Buntline was not an abolitionist; he was not concerned with redefining Protestant Church sacraments; and he was not interested in social welfare projects. As a reformer Buntline was committed to stopping corruption in high political office, but he was not occupied with stopping the honest harlot or the Robin Hood thief. As a temperance lecturer, he was interested in a sober America, but he was not too concerned with sobering up individual Americans. And as a Protestant nativist Buntline was alarmed by the Catholic Church, but he was not concerned with theological metaphysics. He saw the Roman faith as a political threat, not a spiritual threat. In other words, Buntline was interested in the adventurous ideas behind the reforms, not reform measures. He fought in an American nativist riot in St. Louis (see Monaghan, The Great Rascal, pp. 195-203). Drunk, he was acquitted for shooting a Negro whom he believed to be a foreigner, a Greek immigrant (see Monaghan, pp. 210-212). It was an understandable mistake made by a Know-Nothing who had primed himself with whiskey and pistols.

Buntline's little d democratic orientation was exhibited in his novel, The B'hoys of New York. He had his honest thief, Captain Harris, the Hudson River Pirate, say, "When I find some purse-proud aristocrats so anti republican . . . I borrow their plate and jewels, to see how it goes for a democrat to use them" (p. 45). Like the prototypical Robin

Hood, Captain Harris was the little man's hero. In his goodness, he was no match for the dishonest, foreign villain, the Cuban Pirate, Captain Alvarado.

In his fiction Buntline offered the Catholics and the foreigners no quarter. Railing against immigrants, Buntline allowed himself to be ruled by his passions. In fact, in Monaghan's biography of Buntline, Buntline's villainy and ineptitude were so vividly described that he came off no better than the degenerate, Mexican bandits that populated his fiction. While Buntline was an unsuccessful reformer, that which he is remembered for, he did do well. He excited and amused his readers by creating impossible political conflicts in his romances. The absurdity of the good pirate being robbed by the bad pirate in order to finance a political take-over in Cuba reeks of the sort of sensationalism that would appeal to a Tom Sawyer.

¹⁸Buntline, Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 11.

¹⁹Buntline, The Volunteer; Or the Maid of Monterey, p. 8.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 26-27.

²¹Ibid., p. 10.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 12.

²⁵Ned Buntline, Magdalena, The Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 6.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 6-7.

²⁷Ibid., p. 7.

²⁸Ibid., p. 20.

²⁹Ibid., p. 6.

³⁰Ibid., p. 59.

³¹In The Great Rascal Jay Monaghan states that Buntline often gave his characters typenames. Analyzing The Volunteers; Or the Maid of Monterey, Monaghan writes, "Ned introduced his reader to the background with sure language, for Ned knew whereof he wrote. Then, with a touch

he always loved, he gave his hero the name of Blakely. . . . His villain, Captain Gorin--note the guttural G--of the Texas Rangers" (p. 128). Monaghan merely mentions that Buntline made use of typenames; he did not attempt to analyze them and to state how they contributed to the nature of the caricatures in Buntline's fiction.

³²Buntline, The Ice-King; or the Fate of the Lost Steamer (Boston: George H. Williams, 1848), pp. 33-34.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Buntline, Matanzas; or a Brother's Revenge (Boston: George H. Williams, 1848), p. 17.

³⁶Buntline, The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main, p. 17.

³⁷Buntline, Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 80.

³⁸Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 128.

³⁹Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 19.

⁴⁰Buntline, Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 12.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 13.

⁴²Jay Monaghan narrates an incident where Buntline gave a particularly successful temperance lecture to a group of women, and rather than going home to his expectant wife he went to his favorite brothel for a drink. See Jay Monaghan, The Great Rascal, pp. 165-166.

⁴³Buntline, The B'Hoys of New York. A Sequel to the Mysteries and Miseries of New York (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1850), p. 21.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁴⁵Oscar Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957), p. 122.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁷Buntline, The B'Hoys of New York, p. 21.

⁴⁸Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 9.

⁴⁹Buntline, The Ice-King, p. 10.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 9.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 34.

⁵²Ibid., p. 88.

⁵³Ibid., p. 93.

⁵⁴Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 83.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life, p. 61. For nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxons, the horror of miscegenation was the fear that their superiority would be undermined by diluting their "superior" blood with that of "inferiors." Handlin summarized Count Arthur de Gobineau's inquiry into the stratification of races. Based on the pseudo-social science of the era, Gobineau had concluded that all the great civilizations of the past had collapsed because "the inferior blood of the lesser races had acquired a numerical preponderance." As an American nativist, Buntline's Mexican prejudices ran parallel with Gobineau's sociological delusions of Anglo-Saxon superiority. The heroic frontiersman in Buntline's novels asserted his superiority by subduing Mexican men, marrying the most beautiful Mexican woman, and acquiring Mexican real estate. As empire builders, Buntline's adventurers rationalized their conquests on the basis of their Anglo-Saxonism.

⁵⁸Buntline, Matanzas, p. 13.

⁵⁹Buntline, The Last Days of Callao (Boston: Star Spangled Banner, 1847), p. 40.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 46.

⁶²Ibid., p. 32.

⁶³Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 57. See Fairfax Downey, "Tragic Story of the San Patricio Battalion," American Heritage, 6 (June, 1955), 21-23. Downey describes the San Patricio Battalion as a conglomerate made up of five or six different nationalities, deserters from almost every branch of the United States Army. The battalion was commanded by ex-Sergeant John Riley who deserted in 1846 while serving with General Zachery Taylor on the Mexican border. Downey writes that General Taylor was becoming alarmed at the number of desertions: "the Mexican Government had assiduously been urging all of doubtful loyalty or otherwise disaffected 'to abandon their unholy cause and become peaceful Mexican citizens.' Bounties and land grants of 320 acres, rising with the deserter's rank, were promised rewards. Impetus was added by harsh discipline in the units of the U. S. Army where flogging was legal. Riley, like many other Irishmen, may well have been irked by the strong anti-Irish sentiment then prevalent in the United States." Under John Riley's able command the San Patricio Battalion fought well against the United States Army at the Battles of Buena Vista, of Padierna or Contreras, and of Churubusco. Faced with the prospect of being hanged, at Churubusco the battalion fought desperately but, "At last Riley and his remaining men, their ammunition exhausted, were overpowered, seventy-five survived out of a battalion of 260." After the court martials "fifty were condemned to be hanged." Riley, who had deserted before hostilities began between Mexico and the United States, was branded with a "D" on his cheek bone, and after the war was terminated, he was drummed out of the army.

⁶⁴Buntline, Matanzas, p. 22.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 80.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁹Buntline, The Last Days of Callao, p. 10.

⁷⁰Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 36.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 27.

⁷²Buntline, The B'hoys of New York, pp. 70-71.

⁷³Ibid., p. 73.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Vincent Freimarck and Bernard Rosenthal, Race and the American Romantics (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 9. Freimarck and Rosenthal comment that the popular image of the black in the mid-nineteenth century represented the fear that the whites had of a potential Negro uprising: "The view that the American slave was both happy Sambo and vicious monster was part of the cultural orthodoxy of . . . [the] day." Also see Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968); and William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (New York: George Braziller, 1961). Elkins and Taylor describe Northern and Southern myths and stereotypes in admirable detail.

⁷⁶Buntline, The B'hoys of New York, p. 22.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 103.

⁷⁸Ned Buntline was peripherally involved in General Narciso Lopez's attempt to sieze Cuba in 1848. Buntline was commissioned to sell Lopez's Cuban script for ten cents on the dollar. Lopez's filibustering scheme occurred at a time when Buntline was bankrupt. He had traveled to New Orleans in an attempt to oroganize southern American nativists and to re-establish his habitually insolvent tabloid, Buntline's Own. Selling Cuban script was a money-making scheme for Buntline, and he included with his usual temperance lectures and American nativism lectures a new lecture on Cuban freedom. He was so successful selling the script that when he had the misfortune to learn that the Cubans had successfully repulsed Lopez's little American army, Buntline, for fear of the disgruntled customers to whom he had sold the script, traveled West. See Jay Monaghan, The Great Rascal, p. 194.

For a description of Narciso Lopez's ill-fated Cuban filibustering expedition see Kenneth M. Stamp, "America at Mid-Century," The National Experience, eds. John M. Blum et al. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 288. Stamp summarizes, "In 1848 General Narciso Lopez, a Venezuelan adventurer, appeared in New Orleans to find arms and recruits for a filibustering expedition against Cuba. The next year, in spite of federal attempts to stop him, Lopez invaded the island with 250 volunteers, mostly Mexican War veterans, but Spanish troops quickly repulsed them. In 1851 Lopez tried again with a force of 400 men, but once more he was defeated; this time Spanish authorities executed him and fifty other captives as pirates."

For a discussion of what rewards American filibusters had hoped to gain by their daring exploits see Joseph Allen Stout, Jr., The Liberators: Filibustering Expeditions into Mexico 1848-1862, and the Last Thrust of Manifest Destiny (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1973), pp. 13-26.

It was quite likely that Ned Buntline's fictional Cuban filibuster, Captain Alvarado of The B'hoys of New York, was stereotyped as bandido criminal because of the embarrassment that Buntline experienced by his economic involvement with Lopez's failure.

⁷⁹Buntline, Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 12.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., p. 52.

⁸³Buntline, "The Smuggler," Cruisings, Afloat and Ashore, p. 17.

⁸⁴Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 24.

⁸⁵Buntline, Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 55.

⁸⁶Buntline, The Volunteer, p. 26.

⁸⁷Buntline, Matanzas, p. 68.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 70.

⁸⁹Buntline, Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid, p. 21.

⁹⁰"The War," The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review, 20 (Feb., 1847), 100.

⁹¹Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History, p. 301.

AFTERWORD

In William Hickling Prescott's histories, the Conquest of Mexico and the Conquest of Peru, heroes were figures with a destiny to fulfill. As far as the Hispanic phase of Manifest Destiny was concerned, both Cortes and Pizarro fulfilled their missions and advanced civilization in the New World. Pizarro was dramatized as destiny's tool. In the Conquest of Peru he was a bandido--cruel, greedy, and ambitious, he never rose above his bastardly beginnings. Cortes was a genuine hero. Among his characteristics were his genteel birth, his status as a romantic knight-errant, and his ambition. Cortes was conscious of his destiny whereas Pizarro was not. Cortes' ambition, therefore, was not motivated by self-aggrandizement. If he wanted gold, it was needed to pay his soldiers, to establish civil government, to build cities, to develop commerce, and to finance his other expeditions. In the Conquest of Mexico Cortes was endowed with the good business sense of a nineteenth-century, middle-class gentleman. Prescott was an adherent to the great man theory. Because there was no Anglo-Saxon hero at the conquest of Mexico, Cortes was invested with those middle-class, Anglo-Saxon virtues and, thereby, was converted into an American hero.

Striking parallels may be drawn between Cortes as an American hero and the mythical frontiersman. As expansionists they shared specific characteristics. They obeyed higher laws, ignoring civil law in order to bring civilization into the wilderness. As self-reliant individualists they were conscious of their roles as destiny's knights.

The development of the image of the American frontiersman involved miraculous change. From Crèvecoeur's pejorative description of the uncivilized American frontier farmer to the self-reliant man of action popularized by the frontiersman rhetoric of Jacksonian democracy was the result of a variety of nineteenth-century phenomena. This transition was stimulated by the rise of the common man and the subsequent shift from deferential politics to egalitarian politics. Preoccupied with their national identity, Americans took pride in "low and common" character traits. Moralists eagerly restated agrarian values. The promise of America's future was the yet-to-be-developed West.

The national hero that emerged was the ideal frontiersman. To this end James Fenimore Cooper characterized Natty Bumppo as the symbol of American self-reliance and freedom. Natty was suited to the frontier. Schooled in the wilderness, his survival depended upon his woodcraft, Indian lore, and his ability to judge the character of his fellow men. Even though Hawkeye was aloof from the laws of man, he symbolized civilization in that lesser men than he (such as Captain Middleton, Paul Hover, and Ishmael Bush of The Prairie) needed the laws of the civilized community to survive. Cooper's attitude toward the frontier was similar to Prescott's attitude toward Aztec chivalry. Both lamented the passing of a way of life, however necessary for the progress of civilization. Natty Bumppo was a reluctant expansionist. In The Prairie he admitted that his own life was symbolic of the westward movement of Anglo-Saxon pioneers.

Cooper's dramatization of the Spanish residents of Louisiana was similar to Prescott's sad, Aztec noblemen. Both were victims of the new dispensation brought about by the advance of a superior

civilization. Didactically he stated in The Prairie that the Spanish hidalgos would have to be regenerated and absorbed into the American mainstream. This would be effected by the old hidalgos marrying their aristocratic daughters to American gentlemen.

Cooper was more urbane than his many imitators. The frontiersmen described in the works of James Kirk Paulding or Francis Parkman were aggressive, Anglo-Saxon expansionists. As the belligerence between Mexico and the United States escalated to open armed conflict, the frontiersman was dramatized as an Anglo-Saxon racist and expansionist who would regenerate or liberate Mexican territory, creating a new Israel in the garden of the West. This frontiersman enjoyed a racial superiority or mastery over the "inferior" races. He was a cloak the expansionists used to justify their conquest. Those "inferior" races at the time of the Mexican War, of course, were the Spanish aristocrats, the impure mestizos, and the Indian peones. This form of Anglo-Saxon racism was an extension of the race prejudices current in the United States before the Mexican War. Besides the Anglo-Saxon's fear of losing control of their Negro slaves, the bigoted "everyman" felt threatened both by the tremendous influx of Catholic immigrants and by the Mexicans beyond their geographical borders.

The rhetoric of the Mexican War defined it as a holy war--Protestant American versus the racially impure Mexican Catholics. Before the Mexican War, Protestant fanaticism coupled with the xenophobia of American nativists had reached the point of hysteria. Protestant-Catholic riots were many. Schools were burned. Convents were searched. And an effusion of anti-Catholic propaganda such as the Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk warned Protestant readers of the

immoral machinations of the Roman Catholic Church. Expansionists fully believed that there was a Romish plot to capture the West for the Catholics. The Mexican Catholic was accused of being a slave of Rome, and it became the American frontiersman's moral responsibility to save Mexicans and their territory from the Pope.

With the frontiersman being characterized as the heroic savior and conqueror, expansionist propaganda organs like the Democratic Review stereotyped the Mexicans as racial and spiritual inferiors. Perhaps no one writer did so much to reinforce negative Mexican stereotypes than did Ned Buntline, dime novelist extraordinary. In Buntline's popular Mexican War novels these stereotypes were common: the indolent hidalgo, the Spanish Venus, the vicious padre, the bandido and the peón.

Recognizing the Anglo-Saxon prejudices which motivated the creation of these negative Mexican character types is important. By using the dime novel as an aid to historical literary research it is possible to understand how deeply these negative stereotypes have been imprinted in the Anglo-Saxon mind. Students of American literature and history can gain special insight into nineteenth-century popular culture by analyzing propaganda in the dime novels. Ned Buntline wrote for the masses. His thematic treatment of the Mexican War was the inflated patriotism of superior-thinking Anglo-Saxons.

The polite writings of New England and Southern academicians constituted a minority report on American expansionism. As the discussion of Buntline's numerous readers has indicated, his popular fiction overstated the Hawks' attitude toward the Mexican War. His war poem, "Churubusco," stressed American unity:

On! ye braves from the Excelsior state,
 Ten thousand eyes are on ye now;

The Southern men are with you side by side,
 The gallant Key-stone boys are there,
 And Watson's band, fresh from old Ocean's tide,
 And there, the battle's brunt to share!¹

"Churubusco, A Rhyme of the Mexican War" tersely stated his belief in the morality inherent in the concept of Manifest Destiny. The persona was the collective voice of the United States. The listing of the home states represented by the different troops involved in the Battle of Churubusco was significant because this was one of the last battles fought in the War, and Churubusco was prematurely celebrated as the end of hostilities.² When Buntline took roll: New York, the Southern states, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana, he praised the states that solidly supported Manifest Destiny and the Mexican War. An old propagandist's trick, Buntline attempted to underscore a national unity that did not exist. The Union, quite the contrary to Buntline's message, was severely shaken by the expansionism, particularly when it was associated with slavery.

Similar to Buntline's Mexican War novels, "Churubusco" was an oversimplification of the struggle between the "warriors of the North" who, undaunted by the Mexicans' superior numbers, came "like tempest clouds that roll/ Across a wild March evening sky."³ The "inferior" Mexican forces were described as: "Stern and dark, behind the bristling walls they stand,/ With gleaming eyes, amid flashing brands,/ The gloomy, war-worm Aztecs of the land,/ Whose blood shall soon enstain their sands."⁴ The imagery used to describe the United States force was from nature, a March tempest. Similar to the woods and tree imagery with which Buntline described the Jacksonian frontiersman, the

nature imagery suggested that the United States had a natural right to win the battle and to relieve Mexico of its territory. The Mexicans were characterized as unnatural: they were ominous, dark images which reflected their Indian ancestry and their fiendish, half-breed natures. Invidiously identifying the stereotyped Mexicans as the enemy of the United States, "Churubusco" becomes a shibboleth, rallying Anglo-Americans to support Manifest Destiny.

Buntline's poem, "Churubusco," was like his pot boilers and sea stories of the Mexican War: the stereotypes of the hidalgos, the bandidos, and the peones that he presented to his readers were timely. Americans like Buntline thought of themselves as empire builders, and in this respect his writings served American cultural needs. His romantic fiction reinforced the white Protestant's zeal for American nativism and Manifest Destiny.

Prolific Ned Buntline left his mark on the national consciousness of the United States. His stereotypes of Spanish-speaking people have been so solidly reinforced or entrenched in the collective American mind that they are today embarrassing anachronisms that plague both Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans. More than one hundred and twenty-five years have passed since the Mexican War, but the stereotypes have survived intact. Studies of some significance for the future would be a comparison of the negative, Mexican stereotypes of the Mexican War era with the negative stereotypes of Mexican-Americans exploited in popular twentieth-century literature and film. A study of Mexican heroes and Yankee villains in the Mexican history and literature of this period would further serve to unravel negative stereotypes.

The way to liberate ourselves from enemies of our own invention is to understand why our predecessors created them in the first place. One of the practical applications of popular culture scholarship is that it sheds some light on the moral sentiments of the period and figures being studied. The literature and history of the American West have traditionally emphasized the effects of western environment on the psyche of American settlers. Mexicans and Indians who were indigenous to the territory have received little attention other than the absurd imaginings of the expansionist's mania for Manifest Destiny. Chicano activists, historians, and creative writers have worked to make the second largest minority group in the United States visible. This visibility calls for a reassessment of historical and literary figures. This study, "Stereotypical Enemies: American Frontiersmen and Mexican Caricatures in the Literature of an Expanding White Nation," provides historical insight which should allow us to free ourselves from the oppressively fearful stereotypes of the hidalgo, the Spanish Venus, the vicious priest, the bandido, and the lazy peon. Freedom from these stereotypes can bring a peace that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo could not.

ENDNOTES

¹Ned Buntline, "Churubusco, A Rhyme of the Mexican War," Cruisings Afloat and Ashore, p. 15.

²General Scott's victories at Churubusco and at Contreras forced the Mexicans to ask for an armistice. Although two more battles were later fought--Molino del Rey and Chapultepec--Scott believed that Santa Anna was beaten at Churubusco. For a description and a discussion of the significant battles fought during the Mexican War see the excellent summary in the "Introduction" of The Mexican War: Changing Interpretations, eds. Odie B. Faulk and Joseph A. Stout, Jr. (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973), pp. 1-14.

³Buntline, p. 14.

⁴Ibid.

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