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THE AMERICAN INDIAN AS A SOUVENIR: ANTIQUARIANISM, EXOTICISM, AND SENTIMENTALISM IN COOPER'S *THE PIONEERS*

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INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year, my wife and I travelled to the French metropolis of Lénizeul—total population 106[1]—to visit our Great-Aunt Genevieve. The landscape was breathtaking; green fields dotted with sheep and cattle stretched to the horizon. On the way, we detoured through Domrémy to visit the birthplace and hear our French Granny's rendition of Jeanne d'Arc's timeless tale. From there, we continued our journey until we spotted an old water tower off in the distance, the single landmark of our final destination. Reaching the tower, we veered off of the old country road and immediately into the narrow driveway of Genevieve's eighteenth-century home. We unloaded our luggage and Genevieve guided us on an immediate tour. We marveled at the original wood flooring, doors, window frames, and shudders. The home contained so much history of France and of family. It seemed almost enchanted, taken straight from the pages of one of Perrault's famous tales. We concluded our tour in the living room, where instead of a continuation of Genevieve's fairytale-like French cottage, we were suddenly transported into the American Wild West.

The walls were lined with paintings, crafts, and statues of the American Indian. [2] On the shelf adjacent the television, she proudly displayed her complete DVD collection of Jane Seymour's television classic, *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*. The bookshelf lining the perpendicular wall completed her living room collection with the complete *Winnetou* series written by Charles May, a francophonization of the late nineteenth-century bestselling German author Karl May. Beyond May's francophonization, though intrinsically interesting, the display of *Winnetou* instantly raised a barrage of questions: how and why does an eighty-year-old French widow, living in a single-*boulangerie* town, where the postman delivers the mail directly to her kitchen counter, enjoying a bonbon on the way out, display a collection of the American Indian in her living room? Having grown up frequenting the national parks of the western United States, where replicas of the arts and crafts of the American Indian have long been commercialized; Genevieve's living room exhibit itself was in no way unique. It was rather the setting of the collection and her underlying longing to collect the American Indian that proved so singular.

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[1] Genevieve Gallois, interviewed by myself, *Financial Secretary to Mayor of Lénizeul* (November 25, 2011).

[2] Throughout this text, I have chosen to singularize and masculinize American Indians as the American Indian when connected to *The Pioneers*, either directly or to the Indian identity it creates, because of Cooper's use of Chingachgook as the solitary and last representative of his race.

Through translation, I began to inquire as to the origins of her collection and her fascination with the American Indian. Beginning with the paintings, then the crafts and statues; she explained that her collection began while visiting the very national parks I was so familiar with in my youth. Having been unable to return herself, she has since received the majority of her collection as souvenirs from family and friends returning home from the United States. From the more obvious souvenirs, I then asked about her *Dr. Quinn* collection. She smiled, almost sheepishly, but gave little explanation for her inexplicable obsession with Seymour's dramatization of the 1860s American frontier. (But then again, who can blame her?) I continued to investigate regarding the remaining collection, Charles, and there found the origin I was so politely prying for. Her eyes lit up as she told of her childhood, reading, imagining, and reenacting the fanciful accounts of the American Indians found in May's *Winnetou* series. And, oh, how she had loved reading those same stories to her daughter as a young mother. Appropriate to the *Bildungsroman* style May adopts in his traveling tales of the American West, May had taught Genevieve everything she knew about headdresses, buffalo hunts, and Howgh. Long before her vacations to and *Dr. Quinn's* more recent reproductions of the settings May brings to life, through *Winnetou,* Genevieve had already been to the American frontier many times, had gotten to know, and had become forever fascinated with the American Indian.

Well-known to and celebrated by many Germans is the fact, however, that neither Charles nor Karl May had ever stepped foot on the American continent prior to publishing *Winnetou*. He, too, required a source from which to derive his obsession with, and imaginative literary renditions of the American Indian. In the first chapter of *Winnetou I*, May announces his origin as the novel's renowned *Westmann*, Sam Hawkens, observes in his young companion and May's fictional double, Old Shatterhand: "Den Inhalt Eurer Bücher habt Ihr gut im Kopf, das ist wahr."[3] Beginning with Hawkens' initial declaration, May turns Old Shatterhand's books into a motif as Sam repeatedly criticizes Old Shatterhand for relying so much on his scholastic rather than practical knowledge. To Sam's amazement, however, Old Shatterhand repeatedly employs his pedantry to conquer ongoing, otherwise insurmountable frontier dangers, often saving Sam in the process.

One book, or rather series of books, May names throughout his *Winnetou* series, thereby revealing its prominent place in Old Shatterhand's personal library, is James Fenimore Cooper's

[3] Karl May, *Winnetou I* (Bamberg: Joachim Schmid, [1893] 1951]), 14.

Lederstrumpferzählungen. Although May often mentions Cooper only to criticize his romanticization of the frontier, May simultaneously discloses his own familiarity with Cooper's work. Inserting a brief dialogue on Cooper into *Winnetou II*, May writes:

> Sir. Habt wohl früher manche schöne Indianergeschichte von Cooper und Anderen gelesen? Haben Euch wohl sehr gefallen, diese hübschen Sachen?
>
> Ziemlich.
>
> Hm, ja! Das liest sich so gut; das geht alles so glatt und reinlich. Man brennt sich die Pfeife oder die Zigarre an, setzt sich auf das Sofa, legt die Beine hoch und vertieft sich in das schöne Buch, welches der Leihbibliothekar geschickt hat. Aber lauft nur einmal selbst hinaus in den Urwald, in den fernen Westen! Da geht es wohl ein wenig anders zu, als es in solchen Büchern zu lesen ist. Cooper ist ein ganz tüchtiger Romanschreiber gewesen, und auch ich habe seine *Lederstrumpferzählungen* genossen; aber im Westen war er nicht. Er hat es ausgezeichnet verstanden, die Poesie mit der Wirklichkeit zu verbinden; aber im Westen hat man es eben nur mit der letzteren zu tun, und von der Poesie habe wenigstens ich noch keine Spur entdecken können.[4]

Echoing many of Cooper's contemporary critics, May attempts to distance his own work from Cooper's misleading poetic account of the American frontier. Yet, May also admits his own enjoyment of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, and their widespread popularity. Surely, although critical of Cooper's authorial honesty, and most definitely wanting to propel his own misleading literature, such admitted enjoyment and repeated identifications of Cooper throughout May's texts signify Cooper's influence on May's imaginative interpretation of the American frontier; a place he had never personally experienced.

Having been translated into German as early as 1824, *The Pioneers*, being the first of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, became a sudden sensation throughout Europe, spurring the imagination of many more than May.[5] Cooper's tales, however, became more than a simple catalyst for authorial innovation. In a letter written in 1828 by the Austrian composer, Franz Shubert, just a week before dying of typhus, he suggests that Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* were also stilling a certain desperate longing. "Dear Schober," Schubert writes:

> I am ill. I have had nothing to eat or drink for eleven days now, and can only stagger feebly and uncertainly between armchair and bed.... If I take food I cannot retain it. So please be good enough to help me out in this desperate state with

[4] Karl May *Winnetou II* (Freiburg: Verlag von Friedrich Ernst Fehsenfeld, 1893), 164.
[5] Willard Thorp, "Cooper Beyond America," *New York History* (1954): http://www.oneonta.edu/external/cooper/articles/nyhistory/1954nyhistory-thorp.html.

> something to read. I have read Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, *The Spy*, *The Pilot*, and *The Pioneers*. If by any chance you have anything else of his, do please leave it for me.[6]

In a state of total desperation, nearing life's end and seeking solace, Shubert longed to read Cooper. Listing the *The Pioneers* and its prequel, *The Last of the Mohicans*, Shubert displays what many Europeans were experiencing with Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*: a satiation of an inner longing for something new, something original, a transport of sorts into a world outside of their own.

Germany's Goethe notes a similar longing for *Leatherstocking*. Not in the same sickened state, but also in the latter days of his life, Goethe yearned for a release from modern monotony. He sought something new, something fantastic, something he seems to have found in Cooper. After having completed *The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Prairie*; the first three in the *Leatherstocking* series, Goethe records in his diary: "I marveled at the rich materials and his ingenious handling of them. Such works as Cooper's romances, with their extraordinary sensibility and easy flow of plot, are not completed without great labor."[7] As noted by Schubert and Goethe, Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* somehow stilled, yet simultaneously increased a longing for something beyond the representations of realism. Goethe and Schubert are but a small sampling of the many Europeans, who sought and found an escape in Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* from the rote routinization of modernity.[8]

Cooper voices a personal yearning similar to his European readership. In his 1828 publication, *Notions of the Americans: Picked up by a Traveling Bachelor*, Cooper laments, "I have never seen a nation so much alike in my life. . . . There is no costume for the peasant, (there is scarcely a peasant at all,) no wig for the judge, no baton for the general, no diadem for the Chief Magistrate."[9] Cooper's observation of the universal uniformity, the routinized, democratic sameness of the United States was not unique. It was an idea Jean de Crevecoeur introduced years earlier as a "uniformity of decent competence."[10] A contemporary of Cooper, Alexis de

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[6] Willard Thorp, "Cooper Beyond America."
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans: Picked up by a Traveling Bachelor* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 348.
[10] J. Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904), 50.

Tocqueville presented the idea as a "universal middling standard."[11] Then in the late nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne submitted a similar complaint, describing the United States as "a country where there is no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight."[12] In recent years, Sacvan Bercovitch has summarized these early observations and lamentations of modern monotony as "a tyranny . . . of middle-class thought."[13] Unimpressed, and frankly bored with the "dull" literature such uniformity conceived,[14] Cooper aspired to provide an escape, for him as a writer and for his audience, from the crippling consensus conveyed by so many throughout the nineteenth century.

By 1831, in his introduction to the newly released edition of *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper announced that he had finally discovered that diversity so lacking in American culture and literature. Cooper declares, "Few men exhibit greater diversity, or, if we may so express it, greater antithesis of character, than the native warrior of North America." Delineating the diverse characteristics of his newfound native, Cooper continues, "In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste."[15] Offering a cure to his 1828 complaint, Cooper reintroduces *The Last of the Mohicans* as the discovery of American diversity. The timing of his announcement, however,—five years after the initial publication of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and thus eight years after *The Pioneers* (1823)—proves curiously anachronistic. Some argue that Cooper's delayed declaration is the result of him having run into the American Indian by chance while composing *The Pioneers*, which was initially intended as an Americanization of the English novel of manners.[16] The fact that Cooper's American Indian of *The Pioneers* had already captured the fascination and, at least, transiently satisfied the longing of some of the greatest minds of Europe, however, suggests that there must have been more behind the scenes

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[11] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969), 56.
[12] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), vi.
[13] Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Ideological Context of the American Renaissance," in *Forms and Functions of History in American Literature*, ed. Winfried Fluck, Jürgen Peper, and Willi Paul Adams (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1981), 11.
[14] Warren S. Walker, *James Fenimore Cooper: An Introduction and Interpretation* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), 12.
[15] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, [1826] 1986), 5.
[16] Michael Davey, "Plainly Bred in the Woods: Manners in *The Pioneers*," *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art*: 1997, http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1997suny-davey.html.

of Cooper's writing and discovery process than fortuitousness. As Goethe observes, "great labor" must have been involved.

Indeed, a closer look at the devices used to present his American Indian in *The Pioneers*, considering especially the contemporary context and uses of those same devices reveals what seems to be an implicit strategy guiding Cooper's literary popularization of the American Indian. Three of the literary devices Cooper employs that prove most determinant in creating the popular identity of the American Indian, which spread throughout the United States, across the Atlantic; and as Genevieve demonstrates, remains an object for longing and collection still today; are antiquarianism, exoticism, and sentimentalism. Tracing the line of origin from Genevieve's living room back to *The Pioneers* reveals the lasting effect of Cooper's transformation of the American Indian from a living, breathing, fascinating native warrior—the epitome of American diversity—into an antique, exotic, sentimental object for collection: a souvenir.

CHAPTER 1: THE SOUVENIR

Throughout the nineteenth century, white Americans were becoming increasingly fascinated with the American Indian. As is often the result of heightened interest and demand for a specific object within a capitalist country, aspiring entrepreneurs quickly began transforming the American Indian into a marketable good. They began turning a people over for personal profit. Or, as Susan Stewart states, they commenced "[contracting] the world in order to expand the personal."[17] One American Indian the American public became especially intrigued by was Black Hawk. Numerous artists began including his portrait in their collections; histories of Black Hawk were published; and his dictated autobiography became widely read. After his death in 1838, however, one entrepreneur went to new lengths to satiate the demand for Black Hawk. He first exhumed Black Hawk's head with the hopes to display it for profit, and later disinterred the rest of Black Hawk's bones to exhibit his complete, reconstructed skeleton. To this young entrepreneur's dismay, however, Territorial Governor Robert Lucas confiscated the skeleton and began exhibiting it at the Burlington, Iowa Geographical and Historical Society. In 1855, the building burned to the ground, taking Black Hawk's remains with it.[18] The exhumation, reconstruction, and final incineration of Black Hawk's bones provide a critical window into the nineteenth-century souvenirization of the American Indian.

Black Hawk's posthumous exhibit also provides an example of what Stewart terms a souvenir of death. Stewart argues that such "souvenirs of death, the relic, the hunting trophy, and the scalp are . . . the most intensely potential souvenirs and the most potent anti-souvenirs." Differentiating between the souvenir and the anti-souvenir, Stewart explains:

> [Anti-souvenirs] mark the horrible transformation of meaning into materiality more than they mark, as other souvenirs do, the transformation of materiality into meaning. If the function of the souvenir proper is to create a continuous and personal narrative of the past, the function of such souvenirs of death is to disrupt and disclaim that continuity. Souvenirs of the mortal body are not so much nostalgic celebration of the past as they are an erasure of the significance of history.[19]

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[17] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), xii.
[18] Jane Simonsen, "Descendants of Black Hawk: Generations of Identity in Sauk Portraits," *American Quarterly* (2011): 308.
[19] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 140.

By understanding Black Hawk's exhumation, reconstruction, and destruction through Stewart's theory of the anti-souvenir, and then transposing the exemplified theory onto *The Pioneers*, my title could read "The American Indian as an Anti-Souvenir: Antiquarianism, Exoticism, and Sentimentalism in Cooper's *The Pioneers*," for, Cooper also appropriates an Indian body to erase the significance of actual American Indian history. Presenting Cooper's creation as an anti-souvenir, however, fails to capture Cooper's clandestine twisting of the antiquarian, exotic and sentimental conventions he uses to package the anti-souvenir as the souvenir proper in order to sell his "personal narrative of the past" as authentic.

To argue that *The Pioneers* transforms the American Indian into a souvenir, it is necessary to first explicate terms and distinguish between the souvenir and the artifact, a distinction critical to understanding the weight of Cooper's creation. Academics, fieldworkers, and Cooper's public persona would most certainly cringe, for example, if some ignoramus identified their collections of cultural artifacts as souvenirs, and rightly so. The difference in terms reflects much more than a simple preference or slight case of academic snobbery. Each term tells a drastically different story. Etymologically, the term souvenir once signified a memory or a remembrance. By 1782, however, the souvenir had taken on the meaning it carries today: a keepsake.[20] By the late eighteenth-century, the souvenir had evolved from a memory—an object of the mind—into a tangible object that serves to spark the intellectual process of memory. An artifact, on the other hand, has always retained its original definition: an object created by human workmanship.[21] By linking root words, an artifact is thus the creative accomplishment of an artisan. An artifact is art in its most rudimentary form. For an academic, field worker, or Cooper to collect an artifact, he or she receives, purchases or excavates it directly from the source—the artisan—or the remains of that source. An artifact, thus, preserves the fingerprints of the artisan. A souvenir, on the other hand, retains only the fingerprints of a gift shop salesclerk. Black Hawk's bones, for example, remained an artifact until stained by the entrepreneurial fingerprints of reconstruction and narrative imposition. Rather than allowing the broken bones to speak for themselves, the young entrepreneur reconstructed his own version of history.

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[20] "souvenir, n.". OED Online. September 2011. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/185321 (accessed November 26, 2011).

[21] "artefact | artifact, n. and adj.". OED Online. September 2011. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11133 (accessed November 26, 2011).

Cooper, as a literary artisan, creates art. The original, tangible, leather-bound copy of the first edition of *The Pioneers* is therefore an artifact, an artifact of Cooper. As a gift shop salesclerk, however, Cooper sells a literary rendition of the life and death of the American Indian as a souvenir in that he sells his own fingerprinted, reconstructed, narrated version as the authentic. Cooper constructs and costumes a manikin Indian. He does not present interviews, original texts, art, or weaponry, all of which would have been artifacts of the American Indian. Instead, Cooper presents a fictitious account and publishes it as fact. To further illustrate the terminological difference between the artifact and the souvenir as it applies to Cooper, Stewart argues:

> The souvenir replica is an allusion and not a model; it comes after the fact and remains both partial to and more expansive than the fact. It will not function without the supplementary narrative discourse that both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regard to those origins.[22]

A souvenir is thus either an exaggeration or an understatement of the fact: a plastic or platinum version of the original potter's clay. *The Pioneers* presents a souvenir of the American Indian in that Cooper provides an, at times, understated and often exaggerated supplementary narrative of the Indian's origins and ends, rather than an objective, documented representation of the original artifact itself.

Stewart goes on to clarify the difference between the artifact and the souvenir by comparing their substitutive power. She concludes, "As experience is to an imagined point of authenticity, so narrative is to the souvenir. The souvenir displaces the point of authenticity as it itself becomes the point of origin for narrative.[23] Hence, the key difference between the souvenir and the artifact lies in its point of origin. An artifact is itself an authentic point of origin. It can be read as an unsullied piece of art, telling its own narrative. A souvenir, on the other hand, does not speak, at least not at the depth or truth an artifact naturally emits. A souvenir, therefore, requires an omniscient narrator to invent meaning. No matter the skill used in its narration, the souvenir never rids itself of a dialect of distance. The artifact, on the other hand, is always a native speaker. The artifact is a three-dimensional object. The souvenir reduces what was once three-dimensional and full of vitality into a two-dimensional, more easily appropriated

[22] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 136.
[23] Ibid.

representation.[24] This is not to suggest that literary representations cannot be, in some metaphysical sense, three-dimensional, asserting an inherent bidirectionality[25] with their reader, which *The Pioneers*, in some instances, may become. Cooper's representation of the American Indian, however, proves to be a strategic two-dimensionalization, of the once three-dimensional individual.

Drawing no direct connection to Cooper in her treatise, Stewart explicates the cultural context within which Schubert, Goethe and so many others longed to read more of Cooper's Indian as a modern exchange economy. She writes, "Within the development of culture under an exchange economy the search for authentic experience and, correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical." Stewart continues, "As experience is increasingly mediated and abstracted, the lived relation of the body to the phenomenological world is replaced by a nostalgic myth of contact and presence.[26] Adopting Stewart's theorization of modernity to contextualize Cooper's earlier complaint against America's lack of diversity and Schubert and Goethe's longing for *Leatherstocking*, illustrates the cultural backdrop that proved so fertile a market for Cooper's souvenir. Reacting to his contemporary context of universal uniformity, *The Pioneers* transforms the American Indian into a souvenir by publishing a myth of contact and presence to the primitive meant to satisfy the widespread "social disease of nostalgia"[27] modernity had inflicted throughout Western Europe and the United States.

Stewart goes on to explain that the souvenir's myth of contact fundamentally "speaks . . . through a language of longing . . . arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia." [28] Applying Stewart's definition of the souvenir to Cooper's mythicisation of the American Indian, it is no coincidence that Schubert and Goethe, surrounded by the mediated routinization of modernity, longed to read more of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. The tales provided a souvenir to sate their nostalgia for contact and presence as they neared life's end. What neither Schubert nor Goethe asserts, however, is that in seeking to satisfy their nostalgia, Cooper's tales also created an even greater longing for further and a more intimate connection with the

[24] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 137.
[25] Lawrence Buell, "The Ecocritical Insurgency," *New Literary History* (1999): 705.
[26] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 133.
[27] Ibid., ix.
[28] Ibid., 135.

primitive. Cooper accomplishes this simultaneous satiation and starvation through a rhetorical strategy Donald A. Ringe identifies as a "balanced mixture of realism and nostalgic longing."[29]

The nostalgic mood Cooper connects to the American Indian was as misleading then as it is today, for it fixates the American Indian to the only reportable past, as if the Indian inherently belongs to some preexistent realm. Misleading as it was and is; nostalgia is a necessary component in the creation of a souvenir. Few long for the here and now. Souvenirs are therefore always keepsakes of the past. Cooper's rhetorical nostalgia for the American Indian reduces him to a souvenir in that it transforms the living, breathing Indian into an antique.[30] As an antique, the souvenir presents those peoples and places temporally distant to the now, connecting the modern possessor to the always-distant past.

The antique, however, is only one side of a successful souvenir and draws only a specific audience. Thus in order to appeal to a wider audience, Cooper combines the antique with Stewart's second characteristic of the souvenir: the exotic. In the modern search for authenticity, for a connection to the past and pure as illustrated by Schubert and Goethe, Stewart argues that "location of authenticity becomes whatever is distant to the present time and space; hence we can see the souvenir as attached to the antique and the exotic."[31] The antique narrows the temporal distance between now and then. The exotic bridges the spatial gap between here and there. Thus Cooper reduces the American Indian to a souvenir by presenting the authentic Indian as an exotic antique.

After exploring the social implication of the need for and creation of the souvenir as an antique and exotic object, Stewart concludes her survey by asserting that the souvenir market is predominately female. Or rather, the market has been strategically feminized with the assumption that women are the collectors of keepsakes. The female souvenir market Stewart describes parallels Cooper's nineteenth-century literary audience. Introducing the critical consensus, which her work then argues against, Nina Baym summarizes Cooper's audience as a group of "genteel, sentimental and trivial women . . . , who had to be satisfied if an author was to sell."[32] Connecting the feminine sentimentality of the nineteenth-century literary market with Stewart's souvenir market and the definition of the souvenir as a keepsake, an item collected for

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[29] Donald A. Ringe, *James Fenimore Cooper* (Boston: Twayne Pub., 1962), p. 33.
[30] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 140.
[31] Ibid., 140.
[32] Nina Baym, "The Women of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*," *American Quarterly* (1971): 696.

its sentimental rather than use value; the third literary device Cooper employs to finalize his reduction of the American Indian into a souvenir is sentimentalism. Through the antique, Cooper connects now and then. Through the exotic, Cooper links here and there. And, through sentimentalism, Cooper contracts us and them. Thus Cooper combines the technical trio of antiquarianism, exoticism, and sentimentalism to package the three-dimensional, still-living American Indian into a sellable souvenir, an object to sate the epidemic longing of the modern western world.

CHAPTER 2: ANTIQUARIANISM

All that is past we seek to treasure here,
All that may make the past a thing of life;
And we would save what else in worldly strife
Might perish, though the present hold it dear.

H.R. Wadmore "Time's Footsteps"

In 1812, just eleven years prior to Cooper's publication of *The Pioneers*, an independent research library known as the American Antiquarian Society was founded to research, collect, and "document the life of America's people."[33] Surely out of a longing similar to Schubert and Goethe's, the American Antiquarian Society began collecting and retelling the history of the antique: the artifacts of peoples and places belonging to the "good old times."[34] It is, therefore, no coincidence that the American Antiquarian Society sponsors the Penguin edition of *The Pioneers* cited throughout this work, for the novel is, as Cooper maintains, "a descriptive tale" of eighteenth-century America.[35] Although the American Antiquarian Society strives to collect artifacts, it remains connected to Cooper and thus to the souvenir in that it voluntarily seeks to recall memory, to "make the past a thing of life." As Stewart explains, "The souvenir is used most often to evoke a voluntary memory of childhood . . . of the individual life history or in the larger antiquarian theme of the childhood of the nation/race."[36] In *The Pioneers*, Cooper evokes memories of his own childhood, and by featuring the American Indian, Cooper also recalls the nation's childhood. As Gary Ashwill argues, "Native Americans represented the primitive childhood of the human race, and Europeans, of course, represented its mature adulthood."[37] Thus Cooper's tale tells of the good old days with the American Indian by recreating his own childhood as well as the childhood of the nation. By doing so, Cooper fixates the American Indian in America's primitive past to preserve the essence of American antiquity.

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[33] American Antiquarian Society, http://www.americanantiquarian.org/index.htm.
[34] "antique, adj. and n.". OED Online. December 2011. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/Entry/8825?rskey=fhqbH4&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed December 27, 2011).
[35] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (London: Penguin Books, [1823] 1988), 6.
[36] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 145.
[37] Gary Ashwill, "Savagism and Its Discontents: James Fenimore Cooper and His Native American Contemporaries," *American Transcendental Quarterly* (1994) in *MLA International Bibliography*, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=13&sid=784de19a-561d-4dc8-b288-d598d5cae3fa%40sessionmgr14&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=mzh&AN=1994020381.

Becoming an authentic antique, however, is a matter of time, not of rhetorical choice. It is the natural process of all objects as they weather the world. There is no number or combination of techniques to speed up the natural process of authentic antiquation. There are, however, numerous techniques to antiquate an object in order to pass it off as an antique before its time. Today's do-it-yourself and designer furniture attest to such techniques. Designers distress wood, crackle paint, and patinize metal, all in the attempt to fabricate an antique. Cooper, among other literary giants of nineteenth-century Anglophone literature, proves to be no stranger to the arts of antiquation, producing an effect in his characterization of the American Indian similar to today's furniture designers.

One common technique of literary antiquation Cooper employs is to fictionalize the past, a technique Wayne Franklin describes as creating a "delusive peace of an older moment."[38] This technique became widely popular throughout the nineteenth century in the form of the historical novel. One of the most fundamental figures of such literary retrospection, and the figure with whom Cooper is most often associated, is Sir Walter Scott. Both Cooper and Scott "used [historical fiction] to create a literary basis for the nascent nationalism of their middle-class audiences."[39] Providing a creative realm to Cooper's later literal Indian tales, Scott retells Scottish history by connecting Scotland's ancient Highlanders with modern American Indians. It was Scott's rewriting of Scottish history "in the image of modern Indians," that led Tim Fulford to conclude, "Indians came to bear the marks of a residual Scottish nationalism."[40] Scott's literature presents the antique Scotsman in the form of the modern Indian, claiming, as Joseph Ritson maintains, that American Indians were "the most representative tribal people still living" representative of the "warriors and hunters, rustic and patriarchal. . . . Their poetry was oral and sublime, an immediate expression of the 'simplicity of the remotest periods' and the gallantry of 'ancient heroes.'"[41] By appropriating the American Indian to retell Scottish History, Scott brings the Highlanders back to life, but simultaneously antiquates the American Indian. Scott became one of the most widely-read authors of his time and ensconced himself forever in the literary canon by retelling the past in a new, intriguing manner, by connecting ancient Scots with modern

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[38] Wayne Franklin, *The New World of James Fenimore Cooper* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 132.
[39] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction" in *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), xiii.
[40] Tim Fulford, *Romantic Indians: native Americans, British literature, and transatlantic culture 1756-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7-9.
[41] Ibid., 8.

American Indians. Thus the ancient Scots became modern American Indians and the modern American Indian became an ancient Scotsman.

Similar to Ritson's claims of the American Indians' sublime expressions of simplicity, another antiquating technique is to directly emphasize the antique manners of contemporary characters. William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* provides perhaps the most popular example of this technique. Wordsworth consciously chose characters who were connected more directly to nature, and were thus free from the commercialized corruption of modernity; characters, who still spoke a tongue of unsullied simplicity. Defending his unique choice to poeticize pastoral characters, Wordsworth writes:

> Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.[42]

Like Scott, Wordsworth made a conscious choice to turn away from the modern middle-class by representing the primitive. Although perhaps not driven by the same intent, both emphasize, romanticize, and rewrite the past, reflecting in their literature their desire to entertain the widespread nostalgia for the antique. Stewart elucidates how Scott and Wordsworth's antiquating techniques relate to the creation of a souvenir, writing, "We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative."[43] Thus Scott and Wordsworth turned to antique peoples and manners for their inherent connection to the simplistic, natural beauty that once was.

In *The Pioneers*, Cooper employs Scott and Wordsworth's techniques of connecting the modern to the antique in a way that "[re]invent[s] the pastoral and the primitive through an illusion of a holistic and integrated cultural other."[44] Stewart reports, "In England nationalism

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[42] William Wordsworth, "Preface to Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*," 360.
[43] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*: 135.
[44] Ibid., 149.

became romantic nationalism . . . , a veneration of pastoralism, decentralization, and a collective 'folk spirit.' But in the New World, for example, antiquarianism centered on the discovery of a radical cultural other, the Native American."[45] In New World literature, Cooper quickly became the leading antiquarian on the American Indian. By focusing on the American Indian, Cooper, in a sense, created a new American literary genre: the antiquarian novel. Yet, Cooper reveals his representation of the antique as nothing new, admitting, "Nothing will, or need be told, with which any one, in the smallest degree acquainted with Indian antiquities, is not already familiar."[46] Cooper makes it clear that although he more frequently labels himself as a historian, he is truly an antiquarian of the American Indian.

A brief look into Cooper's sources from which he derived his American Indian illustrates Cooper's intent in presenting American Indian antiquity rather than history. Although a plethora of primary sources surrounded him, it seems Cooper relied almost solely on secondary sources. According to some accounts, he once admitted to an acquaintance: "You have the advantage of me for I was never among Indians."[47] It was not until after he began publishing *The Leatherstocking Tales* that Cooper took the opportunity to meet an American Indian firsthand. Instead, Cooper drew the majority of his American Indian from the records of the Moravian missionary, John Heckewelder.[48] Summarizing Cooper's choice and depth of sources, Arthur C. Parker states frankly, "It was the Indian of printed pages that Cooper saw, though breathing Indians still lived not far from his Cooperstown home."[49] Then drawing an even stronger conclusion to Cooper as an author of an inauthentic American Indian history, Parker continues, "A deep and rich historical mine was at his elbow, and it was filled with ores that would have given amazing tints to literature. Yet he preferred his easy chair and looked for topics through glasses not his own."[50] It is out of Cooper's sole use of secondary sources instead of the abundant primary sources he could have engaged with to present the American Indian to his

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[45] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 141.
[46] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, [1826] 1986), 1.
[47] Arthur C. Parker, "Sources and Range of Cooper's Indian Lore," *New York History* (1954): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/nyhistory/1954nyhistory-parker.html
[48] Will J. Alpern, "Indians, Sources, Critics," *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art* (1984): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1984suny-alpern.html; Barbara Alice Mann, "Spirits of Sky, Spirits of Earth: The Spirituality of Chingachgook," *James Fenimore Cooper Society Miscellaneous Papers* (2002): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/ala/2002ala-mann.html; Keat Murray, "Indians and Dissembling Gentlemen"; William A. Starna, "Cooper's Indians: A Critique," *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art* (1979): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1979suny-starna.html.
[49] Arthur C. Parker, "Sources and Range of Cooper's Indian Lore."
[50] Ibid.

public that causes critics to blame Cooper for the many misconceptions his literature has published about the American Indian. But, as Parker inquires, "Who can blame [Cooper] for missing the boat if he didn't wish to board it?"[51]

As displayed by Cooper's choice of sources to discover his American Indian, the slight difference in terms—historian and antiquarian—elucidates a critical difference in authorial intent. Contrasting the historian to the antiquarian, Stewart explains, "[The antiquarian's] search is primarily an aesthetic one, an attempt to erase the actual past in order to create an imagined past which is available for consumption."[52] Critics continually correct the historicity of Cooper's tales. But as an antiquarian novelist, rather than a historical novelist, Cooper was more concerned with the aesthetic appeal of his subjects than with their factual representation. As an antiquarian novelist, Cooper's American Indian, thus adapts to Cooper's fancy, "always display[ing] a functional ambivalence; . . . either the nostalgic desire of romanticism or the political desire of authentication."[53]

As Stewart suggests, in order to create an aesthetically appealing history of the American Indian, Cooper had to first erase the facts that detracted from the aesthetics. Cooper, thus, takes the extent of antiquation a giant leap further than Scott and Wordsworth, realizing that an antique is not only sought after for its age, but for its rarity. In other words, Cooper realized that "in order to awaken the dead, the antiquarian must first manage to kill them."[54] Thus, embodying antiquarianism to its core, Cooper begins his *Leatherstocking Tales* by removing the last American Indian before going on to retell his imagined Indian history in the subsequent series. Swimming against the consensual current by recognizing that Cooper employs ecological metaphors and a psychoanalytical motif of post-violence regret to simultaneously problematize the anti-Indian violence he presents, Cooper indisputably presents the American Indian as an already "dying race relegated to the past, despite the existence in the 1820s of vibrant cultures [still] east of the Mississippi."[55] Rather than blatantly glorifying the extermination of the American Indian, as many critics conclude, Cooper relegates his American Indian to the past by first coupling his Indian with a romantic nostalgia and then eradicating the American Indian

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[51] Arthur C. Parker, "Sources and Range of Cooper's Indian Lore."
[52] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 143.
[53] Ibid., 140.
[54] Ibid., 143.
[55] Gary Ashwill, "Savagism and Its Discontents: James Fenimore Cooper and His Native American Contemporaries."

through a rhetorical rifle common throughout the nineteenth century, and coined recently by Jean O'Brien as a process of *firsting*, *replacing*, and *lasting*.[56]

2.1: FIRSTING

Historically in New England, as O'Brien so comprehensively catalogues, American settlers began erasing authentic American Indian history by claiming white settlers' events as the first of such to have ever occurred on the continent's unsullied soil. Among the countless other instances of *firsting* recorded throughout early New England histories and literatures, some of the most common examples include "the first settlement, . . . marriage, meetinghouse, birth, death, minister's house, court, temperance measures, minister, accidental death, militia, bridge, interment, school, public highway, . . . college graduate, and prison."[57] Other frequent *firsts* include the "first divisions of land, first newspapers, [and] first schools."[58] One *firsting* found in a local history of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, proves especially telling: the "first public demonstration in Woonsocket, that is worthy of mention."[59] Throughout New England, white settlers wrote their history as America's first history worthy of recording. Although most definitely not employed as strategically by some as by others, New Englanders began erasing the American Indian by claiming their own events as the first of their kind, as the beginning of American history, thereby denying the much earlier, intricate history of the American Indian.

Providing a "brief explanation of the history and character of some of [his] personages,"[60] in the introduction and first two chapters of *The Pioneers*, Cooper employs the common rhetoric of *firsting*, which he then abandons as his characters begin to "speak and act for themselves."[61] Before beginning his discourse of *firsting*, Cooper introduces the novel by identifying himself as a historian of facts, not only of his created characters, but of the actual happenings of the area. To the readers of *The Pioneers*, Cooper assures, "They who will take the trouble to read it, may be glad to know how much of its contents is literal fact, and how much is intended to represent a general picture."[62] Cooper repeats a similar assertion in his preface to the first edition of *The Last*

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[56] Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
[57] Ibid., 6.
[58] Ibid., 11.
[59] Ibid.
[60] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 37.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 6.

of the Mohicans, warning, "The reader, who takes up these volumes, in expectation of finding an imaginary and romantic picture of things which never had an existence, will probably lay them aside, disappointed. The work is exactly what it professes to be in its title-page—a narrative,"[63] a historical, mostly factual narrative. Having introduced himself as a historian, Cooper goes to great lengths to play the part, including definitions and footnotes throughout his novel to explicate and authenticate peoples, places, political movements, and terms. After declaring his tale historically accurate, Cooper commences to erase American Indian history by introducing his tale as the beginning of history in the area.

Cooper goes on to introduce *The Pioneers* by reporting the events and images of his earliest observations. Describing one such observation, Cooper writes, "The grave of this unfortunate man [Gen. James Clinton] was the first place of human interment that the author ever beheld, as the smoke-house was the first ruin."[64] After employing one of the most frequent *firstings* recorded throughout New England, "interment," Cooper summarizes the setting of his forthcoming narrative:

> In short, the whole district is hourly exhibiting how much can be done, in even a rugged country, and with a severe climate, under the dominion of mild laws, and where every man feels a direct interest in the prosperity of a commonwealth, of which he knows himself to form a part of.[65]

After connecting his first observations of the first marks of humanity to the transformation of the wilderness into the commonwealth, Cooper labels the pioneers, those men of the commonwealth, as those "who first broke ground in the settlement of this country."[66] By inserting and repeating the term *first,* Cooper establishes his novel's setting by displacing the original American Indian history of the area with his own version of white-settlement history.

Cooper repeats his technique of *firsting* the American Indian out of existence in his preface to *The Last of the Mohicans* by denying the Mohicans original occupancy of their native land. Cooper writes, "The Mohicans were the possessors of the country first occupied by the Europeans in this portion of the continent." According to Cooper, the Mohicans existed upon the American continent and even possessed the land, but perhaps because of their lack of observable civility and Christianity, were unable to occupy the land they possessed and existed upon.

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[63] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans,* 1.
[64] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 8.
[65] Ibid., 16.
[66] Ibid.

Instead Cooper insists that the Europeans were the *first* to actually occupy the continent. Cooper then admits, the Mohicans were "consequently, the first dispossessed."[67] By denying the American Indian original occupancy, Cooper lightens the act of extermination to a simple passing over of possession, a bill of sale of sorts, legitimized because of the Europeans' ability to become the *first* actual occupants of the land.

After having established himself as a historian and his history as one covering the first events of the area, *The Pioneers* commences with a bounding buck and simultaneous gunshots. An argument then erupts between Leatherstocking, Judge Temple, and Oliver Edwards. Through this introductory argument, often interpreted metaphorically as an argument over the legality of land rights,[68] in which the American Indian is absent, Cooper complicates, yet coincidentally condones the white settlers' claim to the land upon which their shifty settlement stands. Judge Temple, the financial and legal patriarch of Templeton, wanting to establish his own ability with the rifle and his legal right to the buck, begins to barter with Leatherstocking and Oliver. Unable to come to an agreement, Judge Temple finally offers to purchase the buck. Unsatisfied with the offer, Oliver retorts, "First let us determine the question of right to the satisfaction of us both."[69] Or, by reorganizing Oliver's statement: "Let us determine the question of [first] right to the satisfaction of us both." The fact that the first right to the land originally belonged to none of the argument's participants, juxtaposing Cooper's introduction of dispossession in *The Last of the Mohicans* with Cooper's final revelation in *The Pioneers* that through inheritance from his grandfather, "a man of the first consideration in his native colony—which was that of New York,"[70] Oliver Edwards holds the right not only to the buck, but to the entire settlement; introduces the second round in Cooper's rhetorical, deracinating rifle: *replacing*.

2.2: REPLACING

By revealing Oliver as the final heir of the frontier, Cooper follows O'Brien's pattern of first *firsting* and then *replacing* the American Indian out of existence. Perhaps out of his obsession with legality, Cooper, however, seeks to legitimize Oliver's replacement of Chingachgoook, the novel's only Indian, by creating a bond between the two. As Ringe explains,

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[67] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 6.
[68] Hugh C. MacDougall, "Reading *The Pioneers* as History," *James Fenimore Cooper Society Website*: http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/writings/pioneers.html.
[69] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 24.
[70] Ibid., 32

"Wrongs have been done, injustices have been committed, and until they have been redressed, the community must remain under a cloud." Ringe continues, "The moral obliquity can only be removed if the rights of the dispossessed are somehow allowed and can become embodied in the future possessors of the land." [71] Cooper accomplishes this passing on of power cleverly by presenting Chingachgook as being forever indebted to Oliver's grandfather, Major Effingham, for having saved the chief's life. Out of his duty to Major Effingham, Chingachgook adopts Oliver as his frontier grandson. Thus, as Oliver ascends to the throne of Templeton, "although his connection with the Delawares is only through adoption, Oliver Edwards can be said to embody the Indian entitlement."[72] Through adoption, having already lost his biological son, Uncas, of *The Last of the Mohicans*, Chingachgook passes on his possession of the land to Oliver and Cooper legalizes his replacement of the American Indian.

Before claiming the legality of Oliver's ascension, however, Cooper proceeds through a series of replacement strategies common throughout the nineteenth century. Historically, early American settlers began replacing the American Indian through "the erection of monuments to Indians and non-Indians, the celebration of historical commemorations of various sorts, the enterprise of excavating Indian sites, the selective retention of Indian place-names, and claims Non-Indians made to Indian homelands."[73] Exhibiting a number of O'Brien's replacement strategies in his work, Cooper begins *replacing* the American Indian by renaming the novel's only actual American Indian, and renaming the land he inhabits.

Cooper's American Indian debuts in the novel's first chapter, not at the height of his native nobility, but rather as a side note in Natty Bumppo's[74] autobiographical account of the old war. Seeking to authenticate his own past heroics, Natty casually adds, "Old Indian John knows the time well."[75] Cooper's nonchalant introduction of Chingachgook introduces three elements key to understanding Cooper's characterization of the American Indian as a souvenir. Cooper's Indian is old, Christianized, and a side note to Anglo-European history. Placing Cooper into the historical context O'Brien presents proves the significance of introducing Chingachgook by his Christian name rather than as the native chief he truly is. Cooper reveals Old Indian John's native name first in chapter seven and even then only through others overhearing him speaking

[71] Donald A. Ringe, "Introduction" in *The Pioneers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), xx.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 57.
[74] As does Cooper, I interchange between Natty and Leatherstocking freely throughout the text.
[75] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 26.

of himself in the third person. Explaining Chingachgook's nominal duality Cooper writes, "We have already mentioned the baptismal name of this ancient chief; but in his conversation with Natty, held in the language of the Delawares, he was heard uniformly to call himself Chingachgook."[76] Cooper goes on to explain Chingachgook's renaming by qualifying it as a selfless service on behalf of the white settlers. Cooper explains:

> Perhaps there was something of deep feeling, excited in the bosom of this inhabitant of the forest, by the sound of a name, that recalled the idea of his nation in ruins, for he seldom used it himself—never, indeed, excepting on the most solemn occasions; but the settlers had united according to the Christian custom, his baptismal with his national name, and to them, he was generally known as John Mohegan, or, more familiarly, as Indian John.[77]

Cooper delineates the settlers' custom to replace their local natives by Christianizing and then renaming them, but simultaneously suggests that the American Indian willfully renamed himself. Although Cooper illustrates the problematic relationships between the white settlers and the American Indian throughout *The Pioneers*, he also adheres to his colors' customs, even dropping the Indian and Mohegan in "Old John's" most civilized and inebriated states.[78]

Explained just prior to Cooper's justification of Chingachgook's Christian renaming, Cooper also clarifies his common usage of the white version of Chingachgook's tribe: "the Lenni Lenape, or, as they were called by the whites . . . , the Delaware nation."[79] Instead of reasserting the native name of the Lenni Lenape, Cooper packages Chingachgook's tribe with the white label of the Delawares. In fact, after the initial explanation of Chingachgook's tribe, in which he repeats the Lenni Lenape's native name twice, Cooper goes on to use a form of the name Delaware over thirty times throughout the novel, never again mentioning the native Lenni Lenape. As with Chingachgook, Cooper completely replaces the native tribe with a white translation.

Beyond Chingachgook and his tribe, Cooper also replaces and renames the landscape the Lenni Lenape once peopled. Applying the Christian renaming theme to the now sanctified landscape, Cooper makes no mention of the land's original designation and establishes his frontier settlement in true Christian fashion as Templeton. Cooper constantly criticizes the prodigality of his Templeton settlers, but his frontier project of replacing the wilderness with

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[76] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 85.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 170, 178.
[79] Ibid., 84.

civilization, replacing the heathen with saints, rolls forth. At one instance, Squire Jones, the novel's most outspoken imperialist, explains the frontier replacement project to his cousin and future heiress of Templeton, Elizabeth Temple. While taking a tour of Templeton's newest improvements, Elizabeth inquires, "Where are the beauties and improvements which you were to show me?"[80] Jones replies surprised, "Where! Why everywhere. Here I have laid out some new streets; and when they are opened, and the trees felled, and they are all built up, will they not make a fine town?"[81] Elizabeth then, not necessarily questioning the project itself, but rather the course taken, inquires further, "I see no streets in the direction of our walk . . . unless you call the short avenues through these pine bushes by that name. Surely you do not contemplate building houses, very soon, in that forest before us, and in those swamps."[82] Then describing the underlying process of replacement, Squire Jones replies, "We must run our streets by the compass, coz, and disregard trees, hills, ponds, stumps, or, in fact, anything but posterity."[83] Their dialogue then softens into whispers as they inadvertently eavesdrop on a simultaneous dialogue going on between Natty and Chingachgook behind the branches of those soon-to-be streets, revealing the human victim of landscape renaming and replacement: the American Indian.

Beyond transforming the trees into Templeton, Cooper also assigns a new name to the most prominent piece of landscape in the area: "the Vision." Unlike his renaming of Chingachgook and choice to continue using the common white name of the Lenni Lenape, Cooper again makes no reference to the Vision's native name, though a promontory of such significance surely carried a name dating back much earlier than any white settler could have bestowed. Cooper's choice to rename the Vision with no regard for its original name aligns him further with his intent to write American history anew, the art of an antiquarian, rather than presenting the true history of the American Indian. O'Brien's report proves that Cooper did not stand alone in his choice of maintaining white renamings rather than reasserting and preserving the individuals' and landscape's native names. "Local narrators took different positions on the value of Native place-names," O'Brien concludes. "But those who favored their retention because of their rich symbolic meaning generally lost out to those who argued for the systematic

[80] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 182.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 183.
[83] Ibid.

renaming of the landscape."[84] Placing Cooper into his New England context O'Brien presents explicates how Cooper's white-Americanization of Old John, the Delawares, Templeton, and the Vision further solidifies his antiquarian intent to erase the actual American Indian in order to prematurely antiquate, and thus, souvenirize an imagined one.

Cooper's most complete, and therefore, most criticized act of replacement comes at the conclusion of *The Pioneers* as Chingachgook symbolically passes the territorial torch, and all the authority it contains, to the newly revealed Oliver Effingham and his young bride, Elizabeth Temple. Although Cooper questions Templeton's problematic replacement process throughout the novel, which critics often understate in order to emphasize the novel's innate imperialism, Cooper goes on to literally replace Chingachgook, the last of the native nobility, with Oliver Effingham. By doing so Cooper announces, as Keat Murray argues, that "the frontier is not the domain of savages and rude underclasses but a ripe discursive space for American gentlemen to reinvent themselves as natural, honorable leaders of a democratic republic."[85] Summarizing *The Pioneers*, in this regard, Murray concludes:

> In *The Pioneers* a young man of gentle lineage crosses into the cultural morass on the frontier and, disguised as a mixed-blood, befriends a Delaware sagamore and a frontiersman to plot his (re)emergence as a man of indisputable gentle status and high acclaim."[86]

By pulling Oliver Effingham's story into the center, Murray's summary explains how Oliver's reemergence as the heir of Templeton culminates Cooper's final replacement of the American Indian, but not before Oliver had already "appropriate[d] for his own class the vanishing Indian's natural nobility so as to reinforce the gentleman's natural ascendancy and authority as the guardian of the common good."[87] After introducing Oliver's grandfather as "a man of the first consideration in his native [New York]," replacing Chingachgook with Old John, the Lenni Lenape with the Delawares, the trees with Templeton, and finally replacing Chingachgook with Oliver; Cooper adopts the conventions of New England antiquarians by "formulat[ing] a history that negate[s] previous Indian history as a 'dead end' (literally)."[88] By replacing the American Indian, Cooper "restore[s] [white American gentlemen's] noble and natural station, or else they,

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[84] Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 57.
[85] Keat Murray, "Indians and Dissembling Gentlemen in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers*."
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 55.

like the Indians, risk treading an irreversible course towards extinction at the hands of egalitarians."[89] Through renaming the American Indian individual and his landscape, and by replacing the American Indian with a new-American gentleman, Cooper transforms the frontier from a meeting-ground between two civilizations into an outpost for the advancement of white America.[90]

2.3: LASTING

As Murray maintains and O'Brien's reported process foretells, Cooper concludes *The Pioneers* with a literal dead end for the American Indian. Just as *firsting* and *replacing* are in no way unique to Cooper, prematurely posting a dead end in American Indian history—*lasting*—proves commonplace among Cooper's contemporaries. Due to the fact that "neither the Delawares nor Mohicans [were] on the verge of extinction . . . and in fact both tribes survive today,"[91] O'Brien explains *lasting* as "a rhetorical strategy that asserts as a fact the claim that Indians can never be modern."[92] Announcing his own stylistic choice to represent the American Indian as anti-modern in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper admits, "the seemingly inevitable fate of [the American Indians], who disappear before the advances, or it might be termed the inroads of civilization, as the verdure of their native forests falls before the nipping frost, is represented as having already befallen them."[93] By introducing *The Pioneers* as mostly factual, yet admitting that, although inevitable, the represented removal of the American Indian was premature, Cooper employs the rhetorical strategy of *lasting* to deny Indians a place in modernity. Cooper locks the American Indian to an identity of eternal antiquity.

Central to Cooper and his contemporaries' rhetoric of *lasting* is the issue of blood. Beginning in *The Pioneers*, Cooper's blood motif, which becomes increasingly overt throughout the subsequent *Leatherstocking Tales*, seems almost canine[94] in its hyperbolic emphasis on Leatherstocking, Chingachgook, and Uncas' pure blood. Yet, in the contemporary context of presenting the last of the purebreds, Cooper's blood motif is not necessarily noteworthy.

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[89] Keat Murray, "Indians and Dissembling Gentlemen."
[90] Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Ideological Context of the American Renaissance," in *Forms and Functions of History in American Literature*, ed. Winfried Fluck, Jürgen Peper, and Willi Paul Adams (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1981), 14.
[91] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction," xiii.
[92] Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 107.
[93] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 6-7.
[94] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 166.

Analyzing local histories rather than popular literature, O'Brien reports, "An essential location for *lasting* is to be found in the complex discourse surrounding 'blood' in these narratives, most starkly in stories about the 'last full-blooded' Indian."[95] O'Brien presents numerous examples of *lasting* found in literature, engravings, and paintings carrying titles such as *Metamora; or, The Last of the Wampanoags* [1829], *Ester, the last of the Royal Narragansetts* [1882], *Eunice Mahwee: The Last of the Pequods* [1871], *Martha Simon, the Last of the Narragansetts* [1857], *Abram Quary, the Last Nantucket Indian Half-Breed* [1914], *Dorcas Honorable*, "last pure-blooded Nantucket Indian."[96] Tracing the chronology of *lasting* that O'Brien catalogues, it seems that Cooper stands as a forerunner in the last-of-the-pureblood movement, announcing it already in Chingachgook of *The Pioneers* [1823] and then more advertently in Chingachgook and Uncas in *The Last of the Mohicans* [1826].

Repeatedly throughout his novels, Cooper presents the passing of the last of the pureblooded Mohicans. His clearest examples of *lasting* come in the closing chapters of each of the first two novels as each Indian subsequently *lasts* himself from modernity. Beginning with *The Last of the Mohicans* to adhere to the storyline's chronology, Uncas is the first to *last* himself from the American frontier. Imprisoned in the camp of the Lenni Lenape, Uncas reveals his pedigree to Tamenund, the tribe's imperturbable patriarch. Tamenund inquires, "With what tongue does the prisoner speak to the Manitto?"[97] "Like his fathers," Uncas replies, "with the tongue of a Delaware." Astonished beyond his normal composure, Tamenund exclaims:

> A Delaware! I have lived to see the tribes of the Lenape driven from their council fires, and scattered, like broken herds of deer, among the hills of the Iroquois! I have seen the hatchets of a strange people sweep woods from the valleys, that the winds of Heaven have spared! . . . Does Tamenund dream! . . . Have the winters gone backward! Will summer come again to the children of the Lenape![98]

Announcing his amazement, Tamenund simultaneously admits his tribe's inevitable extinction. As Tamenund emphasizes his newfound hope in a future for his tribe, Cooper repeats his antiquarian antics. He first inserts the tribe's white name—Delaware—into the native dialogue, reasserting that the American Indian willfully appropriated his white designation. Cooper then

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[95] Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 107.
[96] Ibid., 108-114; 153-154.
[97] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 307.
[98] Ibid., 308.

immediately denies Tamenund his deepest hopes as Uncas, one of the last two purebloods—Chingachgook being the other—dies in the hopes to rescue Cora, his desired white damsel.[99]

Upon hearing of Unca's death, Tamenund, the last great patriarch and the Lenni Lenape's last mortal connection with the Great Spirit gives up all hope in the future of his tribe, rhetorically giving up the ghost. "Why should Tamenund stay?" He inquires:

> The pale-faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red-men has not yet come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the sons of Unâmis happy and strong; and yet, before the night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans![100]

In these final lines of *The Last of the Mohicans*, Uncas, after announcing his own lastness falls to his grave, to which Tamenund recounts his sudden hope for an Indian future. Tamenund's concluding statement *lasts* himself and his deceased native warrior—Cooper's American anomaly—from the American frontier.

Juxtaposing Tamenund's despair and self-*lasting* in *The Last of the Mohicans* with Chingachgook's closing scene in *The Pioneers* reemphasizes Cooper's presentation of the American Indian's belief in his own inevitable extinction. Sitting amongst the flames that had engulfed Templeton's Vision, Natty calls out, "Up and away, Chingachgook! Will ye stay here to burn, like a Mingo at the stake!" To which Chingachgook questions:

> Why should Mohegan go? . . . He has seen the days of an eagle, and his eye grows dim. He looks on the valley; he looks on the water; he looks in the hunting-grounds—but sees no Delawares. Every one has a white skin. My fathers say, from the far-off land, come. My women, my young warriors, my tribe, say, come. The Great Spirit says, come. Let Mohegan die.[101]

Unable to motivate his native friend, Natty avers, "Tis useless to talk to an Indian with the death-fit on him." Natty's reply transforms Chingachgook's murderous death by the hands of the white settlers into a self-appointed suicide, transferring the *lasting* of the American Indian from the white settlers to the Indian himself. It is his own giving up and lack of desire to become modern that deletes him from modernity. Although Chingachgook denounces the whites' imperial violence throughout *The Pioneers*, and although Cooper employs ecological metaphors and dissects the psychological effects of committing violence; he, in turn, *lasts* the American Indian in order to finalize his antiquation of the American Indian as a souvenir. As a fundamental

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[99] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 309.
[100] Ibid., 350.
[101] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 416.

contributor to the Cooper-is-an-imperialist consensus, Richard Slotkin argues that Cooper depicts Chingachgook's death as a proper passing on of possession by manipulating the Mohican myth of national regeneration through kingly sacrifice.[102] Adapting Slotkin's imperialist argument to the idea of *lasting*, Chingachgook, the last pureblooded Mohican and therefore king of the Mohicans, volunteers himself as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit as a final, regenerative service to his native home.

Whether adhering to Slotkin's imperialist interpretation of myth appropriation, or simply to the widespread assumption of the inevitable Indian extinction, Cooper presents Chingachgook's death as the next, irreversible stage in nature's cycle. In fact, Cooper constructs his entire novel to coincide with nature's seasonal cycle and its effects on the American frontier.[103] Cooper begins the cycle with an epigraph atop the novel's first chapter: "See, winter comes, to rule the varied year, / Sullen and sad, with all his rising train; / Vapours, and clouds, and storms—."[104] Citing James Thomson's *The Seasons*, Cooper introduces *The Pioneers* by alluding to the cyclical process of nature. Paralleling the seasonal cycle, Cooper also presents Chingachgook as one having naturally progressed through life's natural seasons. As cited previously, Natty introduces Chingachgook at the beginning of the novel by alluding to his past heroics as a young warrior in the old war. By the beginning of action within the timeframe of *The Pioneers*, however, Chingachgook is nearing life's end. He is literally struggling through the frigid winter of old age, holding on to the edge of extinction.

Cooper's choice to advance his novel through the yearly cycle as a parallel to the life and death of Chingachgook also displays his adherence to the widely accepted stage theory of civilization of late eighteenth-century Scottish philosophers. Donald Ringe sums up the first stages of the theory nicely: "White man supplants Indian, and agriculture displaces hunting as a means of livelihood."[105] Adhering to the stage theory of civilization as simplified by Ringe, Chingachgook serves as the final hunter to be supplanted before agriculture can take the stage. Thus Cooper presents Chingachgook "as a relic of a broken and dispersed people, living in his own country with the status of a 'displaced person:' lonely, frustrated, drunken, and proud. His dignity, what remains of it, stems from the consciousness that his own personal tragedy is but a

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[102] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 491.
[103] Hugh C. MacDougall, "Reading *The Pioneers* as History."
[104] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 15.
[105] Donald A. Ringe, "Introduction" in *The Pioneers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), xii.

symbol of the tragedy wrought on his race by 'war, time, disease, and want.'"[106] As Wallace argues, instead of characterizing Chingachgook as the young, strapping warrior he once was, Cooper goes so far as to force Chingachgook to describe his current self as a "Christian beast."[107] During one scene, as Oliver inquires regarding the causes of Chingachgook's current degraded state, Chingachgook blames the white settlers for introducing him to alcohol as a cure to the anguish they had inflicted. Oliver's inquiry again repeats Cooper's motif of the American Indian *lasting* himself from the American frontier. "Why then do you use it, old man?" Oliver asks. "Why will one so noble by nature, aid the devices of the devil, by making himself a beast!"[108] In other words, the whites introduced the alcohol, but Chingachgook chose to accept it and drive himself to destruction. As in the final scenes of Uncas, Tamenund and Chingachgook, Cooper again twists his representation in that Chingachgook has chosen, not only in his suicide, but in his preparatory drunkenness, to *last* himself.

Cooper's representation of Chingachgook as a broken relic also proves essential to the creation of a souvenir. It is in fact the second key in presenting the antique. The first is that the souvenir is a "sample of the now-distanced experience, an experience which the object can only evoke and resonate to, and can never entirely recoup." Thus Cooper retells the past rather than presenting the reality of the current. The second is, as illustrated by Cooper's presentation of Chingachgook in the degraded last stages of life, that "the souvenir must remain impoverished and partial so that it can be supplemented by a narrative discourse."[109] Thus, in order to present the American Indian as an antique, the first stage of a successful souvenir, Cooper first creates chronological distance between the then and now, and then displays the American Indian as one nearing life's natural end. Through his alcoholism and sacrificial suicide, Chingachgook not only accepts being *lasted* by the white settlers, he speeds up the process, forever denying himself and his tribe a place in modernity.

Having *lasted* the last great Indian, Cooper concludes the antiquating process necessary in the creation of a souvenir. Explaining the souvenir in terms of the antique, Stewart explains, "The antique as souvenir always bears the burden of nostalgia for experience impossibly distant

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[106] Paul A. W. Wallace, "Cooper's Indians," *New York History* (1954): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/nyhistory/1954nyhistory-wallace.html.
[107] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 185.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 136.

in time."[110] It was this burden of nostalgia Cooper sought to satisfy by creating a souvenir, thereby providing his readers with an imagined experience with the antique American Indian. Stewart continues, "The nostalgic is enamored of distance, not of the referent itself. Nostalgia cannot be sustained without loss."[111] Thus, in order to create the most potent literary souvenir of the American Indian, Cooper creates loss and then connects modernity to that loss. Cooper offers this connection "through the medium of the scout [Leatherstocking], who served for years afterwards, as a link between [the American Indian] and civilized life."[112] Leatherstocking's body links the human chain between modernity and antiquity, between white settlers and the "rest[, who] have disappeared, either from the regions in which their fathers dwelt, or altogether from the earth."[113]

Nostalgia, however, is not the natural result of all that is lost. Instead, longing latches onto those things regretfully lost, those peoples and places modernity lacks. Cooper creates this regret for those lost by initially ennobling the American Indian he then *firsts*, *replaces*, and *lasts*. Throughout *The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and the remaining *Leatherstocking Tales*, Cooper always ennobles before he *lasts* the native warrior from modern America, leaving his readers with an insatiable, nostalgic longing for those noble beings who once were. Those beings so intimately connected to nature, so pure and primitive, so free from modern corruption. Indeed, "Cooper never loves his Indians so much as when he is watching them disappear."[114] Cooper's depiction of the *last* American Indian also affects a similar love in his readers as he invites them to watch the American Indian disappear from America. After setting his story in the past and asserting his role as a historian of facts, Cooper goes on to *first*, *replace*, and then *last* the American Indian, securing an eternal antique for modern, middle-class America.

[110] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 140.
[111] Ibid., 145.
[112] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 348.
[113] Ibid, 8.
[114] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction," xxv.

CHAPTER 3: EXOTICISM

Extremes of habits, manners, time and space,
Brought close together, here stood face to face,
And gave at once a contrast to the view,
That other lands and ages never knew.

James Kirke Paulding, "The Backwoodsman: A Poem"

Beyond ennobling the antique American Indian, Paulding's poem, which is inserted on the title page of various editions of *The Pioneers,*[115] hints at Cooper's second strategy to create desire in his audience for the American Indian: exoticism. More than providing his audience the opportunity to possess a piece of American antiquity, Cooper invites his white, civilized audience to approach and observe the exotic American Indian up close. Stewart explains the effect of connecting the exotic to the antique in the process of souvenir making:

> The exotic object represents distance appropriated . . . . To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy; on the one hand, the object must be marked as exterior and foreign, on the other hand it must be marked as arising directly out of an immediate experience of its possessor. It is thus placed within an intimate distance; space is transformed into interiority, into "personal" space, just as time is transformed into interiority in the case of the antique object.[116]

Interpreting Paulding's epigraphic poem in terms of Stewart's theorization of the souvenir, introduces Cooper's combination of the antique and the exotic as the first two elements of his souvenir. The antique speaks to nostalgia; the exotic "[plays] upon *our* 'natural attraction to the unnatural.'"[117] By emphasizing the exoticism of the American Indian, Cooper taps into the natural draw to experience and possess the exotic as an act of self-exoticism.[118] Thus, Cooper emphasizes the exotic nature of the American Indian in order to increase the desire to experience him.

After discussing the antique as the first facet of creating a souvenir, Stewart turns to Jean Baudrillard's *Le Système des objets* to introduce the role the exotic plays as a souvenir. Summarizing Baudrillard, Stewart writes, "The exotic, like the antique, functions to lend authenticity to the abstract system of modern objects." In other words, the exotic brings

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[115] Hugh C. MacDougall, "Reading *The Pioneers* as History," *James Fenimore Cooper Society Website*: http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/writings/pioneers.html.
[116] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 147.
[117] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction" in *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), xxv.
[118] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 148.

modernity back to earth to "an earlier and purer stage of contemporary civilization."[119] The core difference between the antique and the exotic is the otherness each represents. The antique represents an otherness of time, a time distant from the present. The exotic represents cultural otherness.

Unlike the antique, possessing the exotic introduces a certain excitement, a thrill factor, to such souvenirs. Again transposing Stewart's assessment of Baudrillard onto Cooper and the nostalgic longing noted by himself and so many others throughout the United States and Europe, Stewart writes, "modern is 'cold' and the antique and the exotic are 'warm' because contemporary mythology places the latter objects . . . remote from the abstractions of contemporary consumer society."[120] Stewart, however, extends Baudrillard's warm-cold comparison of the modern and the antique onto the exotic, emphasizing its increased attraction as a souvenir. Stewart observes:

> Unlike the ancient object, which, though it arises from the distant past, is endowed with a familiarity more 'warm' than the present, the exotic object is to some degree dangerous, even 'hot.' Removed from its context, the exotic souvenir is a sign of survival—not its own survival, but the survival of the possessor outside his or her own context of familiarity.[121]

Beyond the hotness of the exotic, possessing the exotic also attests to the possessor's ability to enter an exotic, other, unknown environment—like the "rugged country" Cooper describes as the setting of *The Pioneers*—and come out wielding a trophy of victory. The exotic as a souvenir, therefore, is hot because it "always displays the romance of contraband, for its scandal is its removal from its 'natural' location."[122]

Suggested by this section's epigraph, such highlighting of white ability to master the American frontier and come out victor, possessor of the exotic, appears throughout Cooper, and proves one of the major connections Hans Plischke traces from the American continent back to his native Germany in his monograph *Von Cooper bis Karl May*. Plischke calls Cooper's exotic effect and May's adaptation thereof "den spannungsvollen Reiz des Ungewöhnlichen und Fremden."[123] Plischke goes on to explain the sociological context Cooper vented about in

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[119] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 146.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 148.
[122] Ibid., 135.
[123] Hans Plischke, *Von Cooper bis Karl May* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1951), 5.

Notions of the Americans and the reason why he and later May turned to depicting the exotic. "Am Ausgang des 19., noch ausgeprägter im 20. Jahrhundert," Plischke reports:

> Zeigte sich gerade auf dem Gebiet der Literatur, ja überhaupt der Kunst eine Europamüdigkeit. . . . Man fühlte und empfand vielmehr, daß das Abendland insbesondere für das künstlerische Schaffen, um nicht zu erstarren, der Befruchtung von Außen aus überseeischen Welten bedürfe, daß sich ihm in der Exotik andersartige, Inhalt und Form neugestaltende Gebiete erschließen müßten.[124]

Surely the general concern among Western Europeans and Americans, including Crevecoeur, Tocqueville, Hawthorne and Cooper about the dearth of artistic material in the western world drove Cooper to search out, capture, and then exaggerate the exoticism of the American Indian. Cooper and May both turned to the exotic, for the exotic had, above all other artistic material available, a "mächtig[e] . . . Anziehungskraft."[125]

By highlighting the exoticness of the American Indian and the thrill of possessing such, Cooper combines the nostalgic longing for the antique, with a savage scandal of the exotic. Perhaps it was this combination of longing and lust, antique and exotic, that drove Cooper to announce in the introduction to *The Pioneers*: "The author has had more pleasure in writing *The Pioneers*, than the book will probably ever give any of its readers . . . , but as he has, in intention at least, done his full share in amusing the world, . . . he trusts to its good nature for overlooking this attempt to please himself."[126] The reaction to Cooper's intention to only please himself proves Cooper's assertion in *Notions of the Americans* and Plischke's summary regarding the lack of pleasure-giving art in the western world tenable. As Penguin Classics asserts, *The Pioneers* is "quite possibly America's first bestseller (more than three thousand copies were sold within hours of publication)."[127] Through presenting the American Indian as an antique, Cooper simultaneously satiated and stirred the nostalgic longing of modernity for the primitive pristine. By presenting the American Indian as an exotic, Cooper excited his readers through allowing them to participate in the contraband of removing the American Indian out of the wilderness into their parlor for an intimate experience with the time's most thrilling cultural other. Beginning in *The Pioneers* and then increasing throughout his remaining tales, Cooper emphasizes the

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[124] Hans Plischke, *Von Cooper bis Karl May*, 148.
[125] Ibid., 155.
[126] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (London: Penguin Books, [1823] 1988), 10.
[127] Ibid., publisher's blurb on back cover.

American Indian's exoticism in three ways: drawn-out descriptions of costume; language, and the conflict between American Indian religion and Christianity.

3.1: COSTUME

> A Cooper Indian who has been washed is a poor thing, and commonplace; it is the Cooper Indian in his paint that thrills. Cooper's extra words are Cooper's paint-his paint, his feathers, his tomahawk, his warwhoop.
>
> Mark Twain "Fenimore Cooper's Further Literary Devices"

Twain's satirical criticism of Cooper's prolix descriptions of the American Indian, which many use today as an excuse to avoid Cooper altogether,[128] also sheds light on the success of its effect. Beginning in *The Pioneers*, Cooper presents the American Indian as an exotic, a foreigner to contemporary society through detailed descriptions of his costume. As Cooper introduces Chingachgook to his readers, just after the already cited justification for Christianizing Chingachgook's native name, Cooper provides a drawn-out description of Chingachgook's physiognomy and dress. "From his long association with the white-men," Cooper begins. "The habits of Mohegan were a mixture of the civilized and savage states."[129] Admitting Chingachgook's partial assimilation to white ways, Cooper immediately interjects, "Though there was certainly a strong preponderance in favour of the latter."[130] After emphasizing Chingachgook's exoticness rather than his ability, or at least attempt, to assimilate with white society, Cooper begins his description: "Notwithstanding the intense cold without, [Chingachgook's] head was uncovered; but a profusion of long, black, coarse hair, concealed his forehead, his crown, and even hung about his cheeks."[131] Cooper emphasizes the exotic by contrasting Chingachgook's uncovered, long, black, coarse hair with the assumedly covered, shorter, lighter, softer hair of the settlers.

Having described Chingachgook's exotic hair, Cooper moves on to describe the singularity of Chingachgook's facial features. "His forehead, when it could be seen, appeared lofty, broad, and noble," Cooper begins:

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[128] Will J. Alpern, "Indians, Sources, Critics," *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art* (1984): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1984suny-alpern.html.
[129] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 85
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 86.

> His nose was high, and of the kind called Roman, with nostrils, that expanded, in his seventieth year, with the freedom that had distinguished them in youth. His mouth was large, but compressed, and possessing a great share of expression and character, and when opened, it discovered a perfect set of short, strong, and regular teeth. His chin was full, though not prominent; and his face bore the infallible mark of his people, in its square, high cheek-bones. The eyes were not large, but their black orbs glittered in the rays of the candles . . . like two balls of fire.[132]

Instead of defining Chingachgook's similarities with the white settlers, Cooper showcases his noble forehead, high nose, large mouth, full chin, high cheek-bones, and penetrating pupils. Cooper also reveals his tendency, or strategy, to describe the American Indian as simultaneously exotic and antique. Cooper could have described Chingachgook as German, French, Irish, English, or even American-like; but instead, he connects Chingachgook to the ancient—antique—and more foreign—exotic—Roman race. By linking Chingachgook to the ancient Romans, Cooper ennobles the American Indian, adopting the noble savage identity so ubiquitous throughout nineteenth-century rhetoric. Cooper does so, however, only to link the American Indian to an ancient and also fallen race.

After describing Chingachgook's hair and facial features, Cooper goes on to describe Chingachgook's exotic clothing, especially the lack thereof, and his deliberate display of his own exoticness. Cooper writes:

> The instant that Mohegan observed himself to be noticed by the group, around the young stranger, he dropped the blanket, which covered the upper part of his frame, from his shoulders, suffering it to fall over his leggings, of untanned deer-skin, where it was retained by a belt of bark, that confined it to his waist.[133]

Similar to Uncas, Tamenund, and Chingachgook's self-*lasting* at the conclusion of *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers,* Chingachgook knowingly puts himself on display for the settlers to marvel at his exotic costume. Instead of displaying Chingachgook's assimilation into European fashion as Cooper admits initially, Cooper stresses Chingachgook's costume's dissimilation: the "untanned deerskin" and "belt of bark" compared to the tanned leather clothing and fashioned leather belts of the white settlers. In his introduction of Chingachgook through depictions of costume and composition, Cooper combines the rhetoric of the antique with the expression of the exotic to introduce the American Indian as a souvenir of the then and there.

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[132] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 86.
[133] Ibid.

More significant than the clothes Chingachgook wears, however, are the clothes he chooses not to. In his later descriptions of Chingachgook's exotic attire, Cooper introduces a key component of exoticness, employed similarly by Wordsworth, Scott, and other contemporary writers: nakedness. In his "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*," Wordsworth describes his own use of nakedness metaphorically as linguistic nakedness. Defending his poetry against critics, Wordsworth contends:

> Poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a more naked and simple style than I have aimed at, which poems have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day.[134]

Wordsworth's choice to poeticize the simple and naked derived from his belief that such would provide a fuller pleasure to his present audience. Similar to Cooper's writing *The Pioneers* in order to please himself, Wordsworth poeticizes the pastoral—the antique—in order to please himself, hoping that by rendering linguistic nakedness, he would also please his readers. Wordsworth, therefore, antedates his own poetry by emphasizing the antique manners of contemporary characters, not solely because of their preserved antiquity, but because of the exoticism of their natural nakedness.

Laura George labels Wordsworth's new kind of poetry "naked poetry."[135] Then connecting Wordsworth's "Preface" with Scott's literature, George argues, "Both works establish themselves as the works of a culture which is opposed to the condition of primitive nakedness: a nakedness located in native people, in women, in savage Highlanders, and in the poor, a nakedness which is finally silent, although the proper writer can read volumes in it."[136] Then, contextualizing the widespread nineteenth-century exhibition of poetic nakedness, George concludes:

> Increasingly throughout the nineteenth century primitive nakedness will be more and more firmly associated with rhetorical nakedness, with a kind of precultural and even preverbal silence, in which the primitive and the feminized [are] eloquent not in their language but in their both aphasic and articulate flesh.[137]

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[134] William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*," in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (London: [1802], 1827), 379-380.
[135] Laura George, "The Native and the Fop: Primitivism and Fashion in Romantic Rhetoric," *Nineteenth-Century Contents* (2002): 38.
[136] Ibid., 40.
[137] Ibid., 41.

As some of the biggest names in nineteenth-century Anglophone literature, Wordsworth, Scott, and Cooper became leaders in the presentation of primitive nakedness. Whether literal or linguistic, each dipped his pen into antiquity not for the sole sake of nostalgia, but because antiquity allowed a certain exoticness that modernity had since clothed.

It is this "articulate flesh" through which Cooper further introduces his audience to Chingachgook. Before allowing Chingachgook to speak, his naked body conveys an autobiography of honor and shame, pain and triumph. Cooper writes:

> As [Chingachgook] walked slowly down the long hall, the dignified and deliberate tread of the Indian, surprised the spectators. His shoulders, and body, to his waist, were entirely bare, with the exception of a silver medallion of Washington, that was suspended from his neck by a thong of buck-skin, and rested on his high chest, amidst many scars. . . . The medallion was the only ornament he wore, although enormous slits, in the rim of either ear, which suffered the cartilages to fall two inches below the members, had evidently been used for the purposes of decoration, in other days.[138]

Adhering to George's observation of rhetorical nakedness, Cooper presents Chingachgook's bare body to attest for his exotic character in a way articulate speech could never achieve. By allowing his readers to view Chingachgook's nakedness, Cooper emphasizes those bodily features, which set him apart from the surrounding settlers. Cooper covers Chingachgook's nakedness with only scars and an American medal of honor inadequate to cover those scars accrued in earning it. Cooper also exhibits Chingachgook's exotic earlobes, leaving the reader with a desire to experience Chingachgook in all of his original ornamentation, a privilege Cooper allows much later in the novel. By focusing on Chingachgook's costume, or exotic lack thereof, Cooper announces his discovery of the creative material he found so lacking in America.[139]

Perhaps because Chingachgook's seventy-year old frame does not invite the type of voyeuristic nakedness exoticism demands, after presenting Chingachgook's initial nakedness, Cooper returns seldom to the motif of physical nakedness in *The Pioneers*. In *The Last of the Mohicans,* however, Cooper turns the clock back to Chingachgook's younger self and his son, Uncas, and reemphasizes their nakedness. In *The Last of the Mohicans,* Cooper reintroduces his readers to Chingachgook in a way similar to his introduction in *The Pioneers*. Chingachgook is

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[138] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 86.
[139] James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans: Picked up by a Traveling Bachelor* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 348.

"nearly naked," with an "expanded chest [and] full-formed limbs."[140] To introduce Uncas, Cooper returns to his more detailed depictions of native nakedness, introducing Uncas as "muscular," "haughty," and "pure in [his] native red."[141] Explaining the effect Uncas' nakedness had on the innocent Alice, Cooper continues, "The ingenuous Alice gazed at his free air and proud carriage, as she would have looked upon some precious relic of the Grecian chisel, to which life had been imparted, by the intervention of a miracle." Howard, Alice's accompanying officer and future lover, then "openly expresse[s] his admiration at such an unblemished specimen of the noblest proportions of man," announcing, "This, certainly, is a rare and brilliant instance."[142] As with Cooper's introduction of Chingachgook in *The Pioneers*, Cooper introduces Uncas to his readers by comparing him to the antiquity of Greece, as if Alice and Heyward were walking the halls of some museum of ancient artifacts, admiring the incredible accuracy of Myron's "Discobolos." To reiterate his *lasting* of the American Indian, Cooper again links Uncas, the model American Indian, to a past people, noble, but antique. Chingachgook is so noble he is Roman. Uncas is so brilliant he is Greek. Like the Romans and Greeks, Cooper provides the American Indian his place in the annals of the ancients, the archives of the antiques. Again, however, Cooper not only connects Uncas to an antique, he disrobes that antique like the naked statues of old, heating up the antique with the exotic.

Alice's complete awe at Uncas' nakedness also illustrates the pleasure Cooper desired to affect by exhibiting the exotic to his female audience. Cooper announces this desire through his ironic invitation at the conclusion of his preface to the first edition of *The Last of the Mohicans*. "[The author] will advise all young ladies," Cooper warns:

> Whose ideas are usually limited by the four walls of a comfortable drawing room . . . , if they have the volumes in hand, with intent to read them, to abandon the design. He gives this advice to such young ladies, because, after they have read the book, they will surely pronounce it shocking."[143]

Cooper's cautioning would be similar to Stephanie Meyer admonishing today's teenage girls (not to mention the masses of middle-aged moms) not to engage with her *Twilight* series because of Edward and Jacob's seductive six-packs. Through this invitational irony, Cooper reveals his

[140] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, [1826] 1986), 29.
[141] Ibid., 52-53.
[142] Ibid., 53.
[143] Ibid., 4.

intent to exhibit the shocking, which he does through his depictions of the exotic in terms of nakedness. By doing so, he permits his readers a "transcendent and distanced" voyeurism.[144] It is out of this voyeuristic use of the exotic that Stewart extends Baudrillard's comparison of the modern and the antique, arguing that if the antique is "warm" the exotic is "dangerously hot.'"[145]

3.2: LANGUAGE

Beyond attenuating Chingachgook and Uncas' native nakedness, their exotic features, costume, and lack thereof, Cooper also adopts the rhetorical nakedness George finds among the simple characters of Wordsworth and Scott's works. Throughout *The Pioneers* and then increasingly so in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper allows the American Indian little voice compared to his white settlers' verbosity. When Cooper does give his American Indian voice, he does so in a way often condemned or misunderstood by the surrounding settlers. Within Templeton, Chingachgook is among many non-native English speakers, and native speakers with varying dialects in a community composed in the "melted" fashion widely observed by newcomers to America.[146]

At the beginning of the novel, as Squire Jones almost drives the wagon over an icy cliff, Cooper displays the settlement's linguistic amalgamation nicely. As the passengers realize their sudden danger, the French refugee, Monsieur Le Quoi, cries out, "Ah! Mon cher monsieur Deeck! Mon Dieu! Que faites vous!" Joining in the consternated chorus, German veteran Major Frederick (Fritz) Hartmann exclaims, "Donner and blitzen, Richart." Playing his part well, Parson Grant reacts reverently, "Good Mr. Jones, . . . be prudent, good sir—be careful."[147] Despite this cacophony of languages displayed, Cooper provides no translation. He assumes his audience's knowledge of French, which he returns to in greater length at times in *The Last of the Mohicans*, and displays the German settler's ability to communicate and be understood despite his thick dialect. Parson Grant also adds his proper, native English naturally to the exclamations adding to the variety, but also suggesting the general feeling of a certain European sameness and understandability among the Templeton settlers.

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[144] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 134.
[145] Ibid., 148.
[146] J. Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904), 55.
[147] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 50.

Chingachgook's native tongue, on the other hand, is understood by none but Leatherstocking, thus requiring frequent translation. Reemphasizing the idea of Cooper as an antiquarian searching for aesthetics rather than historical facts, Cooper's display of Indian languages proves problematic. It is clear that Cooper is not in the business of linguistic accuracy, or as Lawrence Rosenwald argues, "No American author, probably, has gotten more things wrong about language and languages; but none has dramatized more about how language and languages function in American experience."[148] Rather than accuracy, Cooper seeks the "manipulative use"[149] of aestheticism in the American Indian's articulations. Unlike the intermixing of modern European languages and dialects, all settlers besides Leatherstocking remain completely ignorant to the American Indian language. Mrs. Hollister, an Irish immigrant and landlady of the local tavern, The Bold Dragoon, displays the common ignorance towards the Indian language as she overhears two customers discussing law. One of the speakers employs the term, "filius nullius," to which she interjects, revealing her lacking knowledge in Latin: "Spake *[sic]* it out, man, . . . spake it out in king's English; what for should ye be talking Indian, in a room full of Christian folks."[150] Mrs. Hollister's announced ignorance and disdain for the Indian language proves common throughout the community, because of the settlers' inability to understand it.

Mrs. Hollister's contempt for the Indian language illustrates one of the most strident ongoing hurdles between the us-them, civilized-exotic dichotomy. It is a hurdle Cooper repeats throughout the novel to inspire an increased interest in the American Indian rather than ignorance. Another example comes as Chingachgook sits behind a group of settlers joined in song and drink at the Bold Dragoon. Squire Jones leads the settlers' song: "So let us be jolly, / and cast away folly, / for grief turns a black head to gray."[151] Suddenly, Jones interrupts his own song, turns to Chingachgook and contends, "Hear how old John turns his quavers. What damned dull music an Indian song is. . . . I wonder if they ever sing by note?"[152] Jones' offense goes unnoticed, however, as Chingachgook continues to "mutter dull, monotonous tones, keeping time by a gentle motion of his head and body. He made use of but few words, and such as he did

[148] Lawrence Rosenwald, "*The Last of the Mohicans* and the Languages of America," *College English* (1998): 27.
[149] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 166.
[150] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 150.
[151] Ibid., 164.
[152] Ibid.

utter were in his native language, and consequently, only understood by himself and Natty."[153] After again highlighting Chingachgook's rhetorical nakedness and need for translation, Cooper continues, "Without heeding Richard, [Chingachgook] continued to sing a kind of wild, melancholy air, that rose, at times, in sudden and quite elevated notes, and then fell again into the low, quavering sounds, that seemed to compose the character of his music."[154] Unable to understand his song, the group of settlers ignored the Indian and settled into conversing about the day-to-day. Chingachgook, however, "continued to sing, while his countenance was becoming vacant, though, coupled with his thick bushy hair, it was assuming an expression very much like brutal ferocity. His notes were gradually growing louder, and soon rose to a height that caused a general cessation in the discourse."[155] Cooper continues, "The hunter now raised his head again, and addressed the old warrior, warmly, in the Delaware language, which, for the benefit of our readers, we shall render freely into English."[156] Cooper's final courtesy to his readers in translating Natty's interruption of Chingachgook's native song emphasizes the exoticness, of the American Indian. Whereas the French and German settlers need no translation, Cooper presents Chingachgook's language as an unknown, an exotic.

In presenting the American Indian's language as exotic, Cooper does not intend to increase disdain. By exhibiting the exotic, Cooper aims to amaze not appall. Consumers do not collect souvenirs of objects that disgust them, but rather of objects that excite them, that satiate their longing for presence and pleasure. Thus Cooper combats the settlers' disdain for Chingachgook's language, by frequently celebrating the exotic tones so unique to the American Indian. Cooper transforms the common contempt from being unable to understand into amazement at a musical masterpiece. Cooper's most direct celebration of the exoticism of the Indian language comes in *The Last of the Mohicans* as Chingachgook and Uncas sit conversing by the night's fire. Cooper writes:

> It is impossible to describe the music of their language, while thus engaged in laughter and endearments, in such a way as to render it intelligible to those whose ears have never listened to its melody. The compass of their voices, particularly that of the youth, was wonderful; extending from the deepest bass, to tones that were even feminine in softness."[157]

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[153] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 164-165.
[154] Ibid., 165.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 200.

Through this, as one of many examples, Cooper celebrates the melodious language of the American Indian. By doing so, he appeals to his female audience's well-attuned aestheticism by contrasting the exotic euphony of the American Indian to the settlers' common cacophony of modern European languages. Although Cooper fails to present an accurate linguistic account, he accents the aesthetics of the American Indian in order to heighten the desire to hear his voice. Instead of increasing ignorance towards the American Indian, Cooper creates a desire to possess the American Indian in order to better observe his exotic nakedness and hear his sonorous song.

3.3: RELIGION

Beyond native costume—or lack thereof—and language, Cooper presents the American Indian as an exotic through juxtaposing American Indian spirituality and white Christianity. Similar to describing Chingachgook's costume, Cooper begins describing the religious tension in the novel as almost non-existent, initially narrowing the gap between the American Indian and the white settler. Proving that religion is key to Cooper's understanding of the American Indian as an exotic, Cooper inserts the first dialogue on deity in the same chapter he introduces Chingachgook. Parson Grant invites Chingachgook to take part in the Christmas-eve service, explaining that now that Chingachgook has "taken up the cross" of Christianity, he should participate "before the altar, with a contrite heart, and a meek spirit."[158] Chingachgook concedes to come, to which Parson Grant replies with a sermon on God's unbiased nature and non-segregated heaven: "The Redeemer died for all, for the poor Indian, as well as for the white man. Heaven knows no difference in colour; nor must earth witness a separation of the church."[159] Although Parson Grant inserts a demeaning epithet, immediately placing himself and his fellow white settlers as superior to the American Indian, Chingachgook adds his testimony of the unbiased nature of the Great Spirit and the parson and the chief bid each other good night. Through this opening scene of the Christian clergy and the converted chief coming to an agreement as to the nature of God and heaven, and Chingachgook's concession to participate in the Christmas service, Cooper attests to the similarities between the American Indian and the white settler. As Cooper also initially asserts how Chingachgook's costume had assimilated to European fashions only to immediately emphasize his indelible exoticism, Cooper also

[158] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 94.
[159] Ibid.

attenuates the exoticism of Chingachgook's spirituality in contrast to Christianity rather than celebrating their similarities.

After announcing Chingachgook's conversion, thereby narrowing the cultural gap, Cooper immediately describes in much more length the indelible differences that hold the American Indian as an exotic to Christianity. The next day, as all of Templeton gathers to the chapel, Cooper introduces the scene, foreshadowing his later complaint in *Notions of the Americans*, by observing in the congregation "a marked uniformity of expression in countenance."[160] As the uniform countenances then settle into silence in preparation for the parson's sermon, "a heavy stamping of feet [is] heard in the passage below. . . . It [is] succeeded by no audible tread; but directly Mohegan, followed by the Leatherstocking and the young hunter made his appearance."[161] Reiterating George's observed silence of the naked natives, not even Chingachgook's tread is audible. With his reverent step, "The Indian moved with great gravity, across the floor, and observing a vacant seat next to the Judge, he took it, in a manner that manifested his sense of his own dignity."[162] Asserting his own dignity and placing himself as the native chief aside the white patriarch of Templeton, Cooper no longer allows Chingachgook to exhibit innate exoticism. Instead, after taking his seat, Chingachgook "draw[s] his blanket closely around him, so as partly to conceal his countenance."[163] By blanketing his nakedness, Chingachgook attests to his own discomfort as the only native amongst a white, Christian congregation. By covering his nakedness with his blanket, Chingachgook admits his own exoticness.

Unlike Cooper's introduction of Chingachgook earlier in the novel as Chingachgook allows his blanket to fall to expose his own exotic sinews and skin, here, Cooper points to Chingachgook's exoticism by forcing him to conceal his true nature in order to participate in Christianity. Even as the sermon of the Savior comes to a close and the congregation begins to file out, "Mohegan retain[s] his seat, with his head shrouded in his blanket, as seemingly inattentive to surrounding objects, as the departing congregation was, itself, to the presence of the aged chief."[164] By the end of the sermon, because Chingachgook had completely clothed himself beneath his blanket, he had lost all exoticness in the eyes of the congregation; he sat

[160] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 123.
[161] Ibid., 124.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid., 124-125.
[164] Ibid., 133.

alone, ignored and ordinary. Moments later, however, as he, Leatherstocking and Oliver join the rest of the congregational party outside; Chingachgook's blanket again begins to fall, reminding the surrounding settlers of his exotic otherness. Cooper writes:

> The Indian [moved], his hair falling about his face, his head uncovered, and the rest of his form concealed beneath his blanket. As his swarthy visage, with its muscles fixed in rigid composure, was seen under the light of the moon, which struck his face obliquely, he seemed a picture of resigned old age, on whom the storms of winter had beaten in vain, for the greater part of a century; but when, in turning his head, the rays fell directly on his dark, fiery eyes, they told a tale of passions unrestrained, and of thoughts as free as air.

Still mostly covered by his blanket, Chingachgook's released hair and ignited eyes already emit an aura of unadulterated antiquity and with the exoticism of unrestrained passions. Cooper then returns to his depictions of costume describing Chingachgook's "wild attire" in "marked contrast" to that of the preacher's daughter, Miss Grant.[165]

Pages later, Natty reveals what it is Chingachgook conceals under his Christian blanket, juxtaposing Christianity and American Indian spirituality in order to emphasize the exotic. Describing Chingachgook to the landlady of the Bold Dragoon, Natty explains:

> Old John and Chingachgook were very different men to look on. . . . In the "fifty-eight war," he was in the middle of manhood, and taller than now by three inches. If you had seen him, as I did, the morning we beat Dieskau, from behind our long walls, you would have called him as comely a red-skin as ye ever set eyes on. He was naked, all to his breechcloth and leggens; and you never seed a creater *[sic]* so handsomely painted. One side of his face was red, and the other black. His head shaved clean, all to a few hairs on the crown, where he wore a tuft of eagle's feathers, as bright as if they had come from a peacock's tail."[166]

As Natty describes, beneath Chingachgook's Christian blanket, he is handsome, a comely red, and naked. He wears only a leather loincloth, leggings and the exotic bird feathers to decorate his head. By contrasting Old John—the clothed Christian—with Chingachgook—the naked native—Cooper creates a longing to experience Chingachgook's original, uncovered self. Cooper creates a desire to disrobe Chingachgook of his Christian blanket to view and marvel at his primitive, pure exotic nakedness.

At the close of the novel, Cooper does exactly what he invites his readers to desire; he disrobes Chingachgook of Christianity to emphasize his exoticism as Chingachgook commits,

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[165] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 136-137.
[166] Ibid., 155.

despite the suppliant cries of Christianity, self-righteous suicide. By this point in the novel, Natty had been sentenced to jail, Chingachgook had aided his escape, and now Natty, Oliver, Elizabeth and Chingachgook stand atop the Vision surrounded by flames. Chingachgook interprets the flames as the invitation of the Great Spirit to return to his heavenly hunting grounds. So, he sits down amidst the flames and begins to sing a self-requiem. After a series of entreaties, Chingachgook remains immovable. Suddenly, Parson Grant, in a desperate search for his missing daughter, arrives miraculously on the scene where he sees Chingachgook set to die a martyr's death. Parson Grant appeals, "John, . . . do you hear me? Do you wish the prayers appointed by the church, at this trying moment?"[167] Here in the flames, void of his conciliatory blanket, Chingachgook as the epitome of exoticism and "turn[s] his ghastly face towards the speaker, and fasten[s] his dark eyes on him, steadily, but vacantly. No sign of recognition was made," Cooper continues:

> In a moment he moved his head again slowly towards the vale, and begun to sing, using his own language, in those low, guttural tones that have been so often mentioned, his notes rising with his theme, till they swelled so loud as to be distinct."I will come! I will come! To the land of the just I will come! The Maquas I have slain!—I have slain the Maquas! And the Great Spirit calls to his son. I will come! I will come! To the land of the just I will come!"[168]

Not understanding Chingachgook's native tongue, Parson Grant inquires whether he sings "the Redeemer's praise."[169] To which Natty affirms the opposite. Chingachgook sings his own praise. He defies all the Christian customs Parson Grant attempts to press upon him. In the final moment of his life, instead of dying in the way of a Christian, meek, mild, and covered in a blanket; Chingachgook dies naked, singing his own requiem in a language foreign to the settlers, in a manner exotic to Christianity.

By juxtaposing Chingachgook with Christianity, Cooper reemphasizes the exoticness of the American Indian. Throughout the novel, Cooper intertwines collocations of costume, language and religion; admitting similarities between his readers and the American Indian, but emphasizing their stark dissimilarities as a means to create a greater longing to experience the Indian's inner exoticism, the natural nakedness Christianity and modernity have sought so diligently and violently to cover up. By creating a desire to experience Chingachgook's

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[167] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 419.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid., 420.

exoticness in contrast to the congregations of Christian uniformity, Cooper invites an audience of jaded women to scream, in a quiet, domestic sort of way, "Take it off!" Take off that Christian blanket and expose the Indian's original exoticism. Proven by *The Pioneers*' sales and instant success, Cooper taps into the universal boredom of the western world's widespread, democratic sameness by expounding upon and exaggerating the exoticism of the American Indian.

CHAPTER 4: SENTIMENTALISM

Necessary to Cooper's presentation of the exotic, and in a style akin to his female audience, Cooper's drawn-out descriptions of costume and characteristics result in a style R. W. B. Lewis identifies as "unbearably sentimental."[170] E.D.E.N Southworth, in her novel, *Retribution*, admits that men, such as Lewis, may think such lengthy descriptions "tedious," but maintains her course of long-winded descriptions, arguing, "We women always like to know how celebrated belles dress—don't we?"[171] Discussing Southworth and Harriet Beecher Stowe's delineations of costume and appearance, Diane Price Herndl admits that, like Lewis, many readers find such detail "evidence . . . of the obviously inferior quality" of such writers. "But read in the context of sentimental theories of the gaze," Herndl argues. "We can understand that emphasis on clothing and appearance in women's fiction is not a marker of superficiality, but a technique to emphasize similarity between reader and character, and to evoke thereby the sympathy and pity that Hume theorized."[172] David Hume's theory, to which Herndl refers, observes, "Pity depends, in a great measure, on the contiguity, and even the sight of the object."[173] Or, as Ann Jessie Van Sant argues, it is expedient to "set an object 'before the eyes' in order to make the object more sympathetic."[174] Placing Cooper into the discourse of sentimentality and likewise of the definitive sentimental value of a souvenir sheds light on the stratagem guiding Cooper's lengthy, prolix passages of the American Indian. Cooper appeals to his female audience by providing the detailed descriptions they demand in order to permit sight of the American Indian.

Cooper, however, does not permit sympathetic sight to insight social reform as did his female counterparts. Instead, as Herndl asserts, Cooper is "antisentimental," in that he fails to use sentimentalism to strike a compassionate chord of similitude,[175] which Hume presents as the core of sentimentality. "All human creatures are related to us by resemblance," Hume writes. "Their persons, therefore, their interests, their passions, their pains and pleasures must strike upon us in

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[170] R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 114.
[171] E.D.E.N. Southworth, *Retribution* (Chicago: M. A. Donahue and Company, 1849), 172-173.
[172] Diane Price Herndl, "Style and the Sentimental Gaze in *The Last of the Mohicans*," *Narrative* (2001): 264.
[173] David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature, Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (London: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1964), 261-262.
[174] Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28-30.
[175] Nina Baym, *Feminism and American Literary History: Essays* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 22, 25.

a lively manner, and produce an emotion similar to the original one."[176] Sentimental novelists depicted dress and appearance as one way to announce similarity between middle-class society and the cultural other, in order to invoke the sympathy and resulting social change Hume discusses. Throughout *The Pioneers*, Cooper also surrounds the American Indian with sympathetic scenes, encouraging his audience to feel pity and compassion for Chingachgook, having been robbed of his name, his land, his people, his religion, and finally his life; which has often resulted in Cooper's audience "misread[ing] him as a 'friend of the Indian.'"[177] Cooper, however, invites only enough sympathy for the American Indian to draw his audience in without allowing himself or his audience to become overly sentimental to the point of influencing social and political reform to reverse the American Indian's incumbent, 1830s removal. Instead, Cooper creates a feeling of transient sympathy toward the American Indian to create a greater desire to experience him, always immediately pulling the attention back to the more important plot: the reinstitution of the American republic on the American frontier. By doing so, Cooper becomes an anti-sentimentalist in that he uses sentimental conventions to advance an anti-sentimental cause, drawing an interesting parallel to Stewart's earlier idea of the anti-souvenir. By allowing only a short-lived sympathy towards the American Indian, Cooper creates material out of a man rather than redeeming the man beneath the material.

4.1: THE MARKET

After theororizing the souvenir as antique and exotic, Stewart concludes her treatise by discussing the role of the female in the souvenir market. Stewart historicizes and problematizes the idea of the female consumer, arguing that masculinity has purposely placed "women within the cycle of exchange."[178] She concludes that the female is connected to the souvenir because the souvenir, as a consumer product within an exchange market, "depends upon the fluctuations of . . . fashion,"[179] an economic sector also misleadingly, but predominantly female. Stewart thus labels the discourse of the female souvenir collector as "The Female Impersonator."[180] Problematic, false, misleading, or not, the female or female impersonator remains connected to

[176] David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 2:155.
[177] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction" in *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), xii.
[178] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 168.
[179] Ibid., 167.
[180] Ibid., 166.

the souvenir because the souvenir is a sentimental object. It has no quantifiable use value; a characteristic man has so mysogynistically forced upon women beyond their domestic duties. A characteristic Cooper's contemporaries also placed upon women and their writings.

Presenting the chauvinistic consensus of the nineteenth-century American literary critics, Hawthorne infamously complained to his publisher: "America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash."[181] Reiterating Hawthorne's disgust, Jane Tompkins rhetorically labels nineteenth-century American literature as "a flood of sentimental rubbish."[182] Cooper, however, being perhaps not as philosophically driven as Hawthorne, sought success and did whatever it took to get it. As Richard Slotkin concludes in his introduction to *The Last of the Mohicans*, "Cooper's economic well-being and his success as an Americanizer depended directly on his popularity with a mass of middle-class readers."[183] Thus Cooper adheres to the demands of his audience by employing the key conventions of sentimentalism ubiquitous throughout nineteenth-century popular fiction to concatenate the final component of sentimentality to his already antique, exotic souvenir of the American Indian.

Cooper, however, wanting to stay aloof from the trivial crowd, preferred the more masculine label of a romanticist rather than a sentimentalist, claiming this title himself in an 1850 preface to a collection of the *Leatherstocking Tales*. Cooper writes, "If anything from the pen of the writer of these romances is at all to outlive himself, it is, unquestionably, the series of *The Leatherstocking Tales*."[184] Presenting himself as a historian in the original introduction to *The Pioneers* and now as a romantic novelist in this later preface to the complete *Leatherstocking* series, Cooper reveals his overlapping of the time's most popular genres. Cooper's work, thus, often carries the designation of a historical romance: historical because of his novels' setting in the past and romantic because it borrows from the "realm of fancy."[185] Winfried Fluck explains Cooper's combination of genres frankly, stating, "The historical novel

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[181] Paul B. Reuben, "Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1805-1864," *Perspectives in American Literature*, http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap3/hawthorne.html.
[182] Jane Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History," in *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 269.
[183] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction," x.
[184] Mark Canada, "James Fenimore Cooper, 1789-1851," University of North Carolina, http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/17841865/lit/cooper/.
[185] Mark Canada, "*The Pioneers*," University of North Carolina, http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/17841865/lit/cooper/pioneers.htm.

has to draw on the romance in order to make itself dramatically interesting and to provide a space for scenarios of heroic self-enhancement."[186] Or, by examining *The Pioneers* through Richard Chase's definitive lens, Cooper's novels combine the romantic to the historical in that they contain the picturesque, the heroic, and what Mark Twain famously despises most in Cooper, "an assumed freedom from the ordinary novelistic requirements of verisimilitude, development, and continuity."[187] Indeed, Cooper is not only a contributor to American romanticism, he is the patriarch.[188] Cooper Americanizes the romance genre into what Fluck calls "a literature of flight from civilization and the claims of society, of a literature, in other words, of individual self-assertion, often by a male character whose only companion is a Native American or dark-skinned outsider living on the fringes of society."[189] As Kay House concludes, "Cooper hadn't just dipped into romances, but was saturated with their conventions and patterns."[190] As House suggests, Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* do not only fit the bill as novels of romance, even historical romance, they define it.

Cooper's tales, however, prove to be much more, or to many masculine critics, much less than romance. As Stephen Railton suggests, "No writer was more committed than Cooper to contemporary literary conventions. . . . He was, for example, simply unable to conceive a tale without a love story, without a comic character, without a narrow escape." Summarizing Cooper's contemporary context, Railton continues, "In the nineteenth century literary conventions fulfilled the terms of an unwritten, tacit contract that a popular novelist had agreed upon with his audience: readers demanded novelty and suspense, but they also expected to be entertained in a familiar way, and the writer was pledged to satisfy those expectations."[191] Thus, as Fluck asserts, Cooper interlaces literary genres and conventions of historical fiction and romance fiction through what postmodernism and poststructuralism have since identified as a

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[186] Winfried Fluck, "'The American Romance' and the Changing Functions of the Imaginary, *New Literary History* (1996): 428.
[187] Ibid., 417; Mark Twain, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses," *American Studies at the University of Virginia*: 1895, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/indians/offense.html.
[188] Warren Motley, The American Abraham: James Fenimore Cooper and the Frontier Patriarch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
[189] Ibid., 416.
[190] Kay S. House, "Cooper's Adaptations of Romance Conventions and Structures," *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art* (1982): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1982suny-house.html.
[191] Stephen Railton, *Fenimore Cooper: A Study of His Life and Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 27.

"rhetorical strategy or performance."[192] Employing postmodernism and poststructuarlism's methods to dig a layer deeper and ascertain the rhetorical strategy beneath the romance, Cooper's lacing of the historical romance with the conventions of sentimentalism proves his crowning performance. Beginning in *The Pioneers*, Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* perform the conventions of sentimentality beneath the masculine mask of historical romance, revealing Cooper as a "female impersonator."

Introducing Cooper's use of sentimentalism, Signe O. Wegener concludes, "Regardless of aspirations, no writer truly escapes his or her cultural and socioeconomic context."[193] Wegener's conclusion gives one the notion that if capable, Cooper would have sought to escape his cultural and socioeconomic context of sentimental scribbling. Placing Cooper's earlier drawn-out descriptions of native costume, so key to presenting the American Indian as an exotic, into their literary context, however, suggests that Cooper was more akin to his female readership than often assumed. Utilizing one of the most core and, by men, complained about characteristics, places Cooper in canonical companionship with Stowe, Southworth, and the like, who "use descriptions of clothing and hairstyle . . . to call on our sense of resemblance or its absence."[194] Herndl agrees that even though "Cooper uses descriptions of clothing and style to a different end than does Stowe; he uses the same visual trope, invoking similarity or dissimilarity, to control sympathy and its absence in the reader."[195] Beyond simply being keen on Native apparel, which Cooper describes to emphasize the singularity of his new American literary subject, Wegener goes on to present that instead of seeking to escape sentimentalism, Cooper performs on cue in order to add the sentimental component to his already antique and exotic souvenir. Throughout his *Leatherstocking Tales*, Cooper performs the core conventions of sentimentalism. Placing Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* into their literary context suggests, as with his use of the antique and the exotic, that Cooper strategically styled his novels to invoke sentimentality in order to increase his readers' desire towards his souvenir.

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[192] Warren Motley, *The American Abraham*, 420.
[193] Signe O. Wegener, *James Fenimore Cooper versus the cult of domesticity: progressive themes of femininity and family in the novels* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005), 1.
[194] Diane Price Herndl, "Style and the Sentimental Gaze in *The Last of Mohicans*," 264.
[195] Ibid.

4.2: THE CONVENTIONALIST

In order for Cooper to be able to tap into the emotions of his readers, he had to be familiar with the conventions of sentimentalism. Tompkins suggests, "The power of a sentimental novel to move its audience depends upon the audience's being in possession of the conceptual categories that constitute character and event."[196] Therefore, in order to move his audience, Cooper had to also possess and represent the conceptual categories and conventions his audience expected. Beyond his longwinded costume descriptions, three of the key conventions Cooper selects out of what Tompkins describes as a sentimental "storehouse of assumptions," are courtship, marriage, and motherhood.[197] These three sentimental conventions seem sidelined in *The Pioneers*, but can be traced throughout the novel, leading Slotkin to conclude that *The Pioneers* presents a dual narrative: "The reconciliation of the Temples and the Effinghams, families divided in the Revolution, through the marriage of Oliver Effingham and Miss Temple; and the destruction of the world of the primitive frontier, symbolized in the death of Indian John and the exile of Natty Bumppo."[198] As previously discussed, as the novel advances through its three-stage sentimental cycle, the former narrative serves to *first*, *replace*, and *last* the latter.

Oliver and Elizabeth's courtship begins early in the novel. Having introduced the surface narrative through the opening hunting scene and after the mystery of the buck has been resolved; Judge Temple invites Oliver and Natty to join his party in a sleigh back to town. It is here where the underlying, but ever-present courtship begins. Cooper writes, "There had been a look of care, visible in the features of the youth, when he first entered the sleigh, that had not only attracted the notice of Elizabeth, but which she had been much puzzled to interpret."[199] Elizabeth's attraction and puzzlement toward Oliver only increase as they reach her father's mansion home. After an appraisal of Oliver, Judge Temple, pointing to his mansion, announces to his daughter, "See, Bess, there is thy resting-place for life! And thine too, young man, if thou wilt consent to dwell with us."[200] Then describing the effect of Judge Temple's exclamation, Cooper continues, "The eyes of his auditors involuntarily met; and if the colour, that gathered over the face of Elizabeth, was contradicted by the cold expression of her eye, the ambiguous smile that again played about the lips of the stranger, seemed equally to deny the probability of his consenting to

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[196] Jane Tompkins, "Sentimental Power," 271.
[197] Signe O. Wegener, *James Fenimore Cooper versus the cult of domesticity, Contents.*
[198] *Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence*, 486.
[199] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (London: Penguin Books, [1823] 1988), 38.
[200] Ibid., 39.

form one of this family group."[201] Foreshadowing the ultimate union of Oliver and Elizabeth, what begins as attracted bewilderment between the two evolves into a Jane Austinesque romance.

Perhaps because Cooper is a man, however, Cooper spares no time or imagination in advancing the novel's courtship. Now within Judge Temple's home, as the members of the party shake off the snow, Cooper continues, "When the young lady had extricated herself from her garments, she was at liberty to gaze about her."[202] Elizabeth scans her father's mansion, daydreaming of how it will once be her own, when her eyes suddenly meet Oliver's. Cooper explains, "In a corner of the hall, near the grand entrance, stood the young hunter. . . . On entering the apartment he had mechanically lifted his cap, and exposed a head, covered with hair that rivaled in colour and gloss the locks of Elizabeth."[203] With Elizabeth, the heiress of Templeton, and Oliver, the puzzlingly attractive young hunter, both exposed, Cooper continues:

> The hand that held the cap, rested lightly on the little ivory-mounted piano of Elizabeth, with neither rustic restraint nor obtrusive vulgarity. A single finger touched the instrument, as if accustomed to dwell on such places. His other arm was extended to its utmost length, and the hand grasped the barrel of his long rifle, with something like convulsive energy . . . and Elizabeth continued to gaze at him in wonder."[204]

Without wanting to dwell in the trend of academic adolescence, seeing sex in every symbol, for this passage serves foremost to foreshadow Oliver's reemergence as a pureblooded American gentleman, one familiar with mansions and pianos; this metaphor of intercourse seems blatant as Elizabeth and Oliver begin a courtship that advances throughout the novel toward their final matrimony.

Having completed the novel's courtship with a final wedding celebration of what Slotkin categorizes as "pure love between an exemplary pair of well-born lovers,"[205] motherhood remains at first glance missing from Cooper's completion of the conventional sentimental cycle. A closer look, however, reveals that Cooper announces Elizabeth's future motherhood and with it the promise of white modernity at the very climax of the novel. Atop the Vision, when it seems all hopes of escape are lost for Oliver, Elizabeth, and their companions, Chingachgook

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[201] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 39.
[202] Ibid., 67.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 68.
[205] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction," x.

announces the end of his own race by foretelling the promising future of Oliver and Elizabeth. Cooper writes:

> Once or twice the eye of the aged chief, which was ordinarily fixed in the direction of the distant hills, turned towards the young pair, who seemed doomed to so early a death, with a slight indication of pity crossing his composed features, but it would revert again to its former gaze, as if already looking into the womb of futurity.[206]

On the surface, the womb Chingachgook sees is his own future death and rebirth into his heavenly hunting ground. Elizabeth, however, contains the only literal womb within Chingachgook's immediate gaze and as such embodies Cooper's vision of American civilization impregnating the virgin soil of the American frontier. Juxtaposing Cooper's introductory exposure of Elizabeth and Oliver, metaphorically foreshadowing their now appropriate and expected intercourse, Chingachgook denies himself and his tribe a place in modernity while prophesying the impregnation and future posterity of Elizabeth, the mother of white modernity. Thus Cooper completes his sentimental cycle of puzzling attraction, courtship, marriage, intercourse, and motherhood. Or as summarized by Ezra Tawil, Cooper presents his superficially secondary, yet ever-present narrative of *The Pioneers* through the sentimental necessities of "desire, courtship, and the formation of families."[207]

Beyond the conventions of fashion and families so fundamental to sentimental novels, Cooper also employs conventional scenes and motifs aimed to evoke the emotions so necessary to sentimentalism. The first of which, as seen in the courtship, marriage, and motherhood cycle, is Cooper's creation of a white heroine. [208] Understanding Elizabeth as Cooper's white heroine is central to understanding Cooper's use of the sentimental to create a souvenir. As Baym explains:

> Elizabeth has been designed to embody the type. She has a high degree of moral and aesthetic sensibility and her refinement is exemplified, conventionally enough, in her sensitivity to "sublime" landscape. Her natural generosity and gregariousness have been tempered by an awareness of social distinctions into a generally agreeable and charitable frame of mind.[209]

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[206] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 410.
[207] Ezra F. Tawil, "Domestic Frontier Romance, or, How the Sentimental Heroine Became White," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* (1998): 101.
[208] Ibid., 100-119.
[209] Nina Baym, "The Women of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*," *American Quarterly* (1971): 699.

Cooper presents Elizabeth as the essence of nineteenth-century womanhood. She embodies all of the essential characteristics of the white sentimental heroine.[210] In other words, by creating Elizabeth as a type, even the very epitome of the type, Cooper draws in his female audience to associate with Elizabeth and want her to end up on top. Thus Cooper employs his sentimental heroine and her acute aestheticism in a way that attracts sentimental emotion toward her and the future of white modernity with the American Indian as a souvenir for white possession rather than as an active participant.

Cooper accomplishes this redirection of sympathy most drastically by placing Elizabeth within the novel's most sentimental scene: Chingachgook's "deathbed testimony."[211] Having already discussed Chingachgook's death as Cooper's final *lasting* of the American Indian, the fact that Cooper employs such a sentimental scene to depict Chingachgook's death, yet deflects his stylistic sympathy towards Elizabeth, further cements sentimentalism to the American Indian in a way that secures his identity as a souvenir. Returning once again to the all too significant Vision, just prior to its incineration, Elizabeth traverses the mountain to fulfill her promised duty to Natty. She inadvertently comes across Chingachgook in all his antique exoticness. "Mohegan was seated on the trunk of a fallen oak," Cooper begins:

> With his tawny visage turned towards her, and his eyes fixed on her face with an expression of wildness and fire that would have terrified a less resolute female. His blanket had fallen from his shoulders, and was lying in folds around him, leaving his breast, arms, and most of his body bare. The medallion of Washington reposed on his chest, a badge of distinction that Elizabeth well knew he only produced on great and solemn occasions. . . . The long black hair was plaited on his head, falling away, so as to expose his high forehead and piercing eyes. In the enormous incisions of his ears were entwined ornaments of silver, beads, and porcupine's quills, mingled in a rude taste, and after the Indian fashion. A large drop composed of similar materials, was suspended from the cartilage of his nose, and, falling below his lips, rested on his chin.[212]

After first illustrating Elizabeth's heroic resolve, Cooper invites his audience to observe Chingachgook's exotic ornaments he hinted at earlier in the novel. Cooper also re-exposes Chingachgook in his native nakedness as he sits covered once again only by the medallion he earned fighting for white civilization and the resulting extermination of himself and his tribe.

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[210] Ezra F. Tawil, "Domestic Frontier Romance."
[211] Laura L. Mielke, "'Native to the Question': William Apess, Black hawk, and the Sentimental Context of Early Native American Autobiography,'" *American Indian Quarterly* (2002): 249.
[212] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 399-400.

Despite, or perhaps because of his exotic nakedness, Elizabeth strikes up a conversation of exchange, placing herself in the exchange economy Stewart theorizes as the souvenir market: "John! How fare you, worthy John? . . . You have long been a stranger in the village. You promised me a willow basket, and I have long had a shirt of calico in readiness for you."[213] Denying himself a place in modernity, even as a transitory trader, Chingachgook replies, "John's hand can make baskets no more—he wants no shirt." To which Elizabeth confesses, "But if he should, he will know where to come for it. . . . Indeed, old John, I feel as if you had a natural right to order what you will from us."[214] In this instance, Elizabeth announces Chingachgook's first right to the land Judge Temple, Leatherstocking and Oliver argued over to begin the novel. Yet, Chingachgook does not reclaim his natural right. Instead, he replaces himself with his Christian name while decorated with Washington's medal, proud of his bravery in fighting for whiteness. Elizabeth, having learned to sympathize with the American Indian, displays her heroic sentimentalism by offering her upmost hospitality and Christian charity if John, not Chingachgook, would but return and assimilate into white culture.

Their dialogue then continues, as Chingachgook explains why he cannot and will not return to white society. Chingachgook begins by announcing the heroics of his past life as a native warrior to which Elizabeth replies, "Those times have gone by, old warrior. . . . Since then, your people have disappeared, and in place of chasing your enemies, you have learned to fear God and to live at peace."[215] Elizabeth first reminds Chingachgook of his Christian conversion, another trope of sentimentalism,[216] and attests to his antiquity and *lastness*. Having already introduced the scene by describing Chingachgook's exotic fashion, Cooper inserts Elizabeth's belief in the positive effect of Chingachgook's conversion. Chingachgook replies with his deathbed testimony:

> Stand here, daughter, where you can see the great spring, the wigwams of your father, and the land on the crooked-river. John was young, when his tribe gave away the country, in council, from where the blue mountain stands above the water, to where the Susquehanna is hid by the trees. All this, and all that grew in it, and all that walked over it, and all that fed there, they gave to the Fire-eater—for they loved him. He was strong, and they were women, and he helped them. No Delaware would kill a deer that run in his woods, nor stop a bird that flew over his

[213] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 400.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid., 401.
[216] Laura L. Mielke, "'Native to the Question': William Apess, Black hawk, and the Sentimental Context of Early Native American Autobiography,'" 249.

> land; for it was his. Has John lived in peace! Daughter since John was young, he has seen the white man from Frontinac come down on his white brothers at Albany, and fight. Did they fear God! He has seen his English and his American Fathers burying their tomahawks in each other's brains, for this very land. Did they fear God, and live in peace! He has seen the land pass away from the Fire-eater, and his children, and the child of his child, and a new chief set over the country. Did they live in peace who did this! Did they fear God![217]

Chingachgook begins his deathbed testimony by addressing Elizabeth as daughter. Having already adopted Oliver, Chingachgook avows to his familial tie to Elizabeth, further legitimizing Oliver's final assumption to frontier leadership. Chingachgook then Christianizes his native name and expresses the love the Indians had for their American fathers. He also testifies to the act of passing over his possession of the land to the whites. He only laments the violence he has witnessed between the Americans and the English. Similar to Cooper's depictions of Chingachgook's fashion and language, Cooper reveals the sympathy Chingachgook has for his white neighbors, especially for Oliver and Elizabeth, and their suffering for their new land.

As with Chingachgook's costume, language, and religion, instead of encouraging reciprocal sympathy and understanding in his audience toward the American Indian, Cooper quickly shifts the sympathy from Chingachgook to a rationalization of white violence and the passing on of power to Elizabeth and Oliver. Elizabeth replies rationally, "Such is the custom of the whites, John. Do not the Delawares fight, and exchange their lands for powder, and blankets, and merchandise?" Challenging her ignorance, Chingachgook inquires:

> Where are the blankets and merchandise that bought the right of the Fire-eaters? . . . Are they with him in his wigwam? Did they say to him, brother, sell us your land, and take this gold, this silver, these blankets, these rifles, or even this rum? No, they tore it from him, as a scalp is torn from an enemy; and they that did it looked not behind them, to see whether he lived or died. Do such men live in peace, and fear the Great Spirit?[218]

Chingachgook's testimony against white wrongdoing and the suffering it caused induces "pity and compassion—the essence of the sentimental"[219] toward the American Indian, after illustrating the American Indian's sympathy for white suffering.

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[217] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 400-401.
[218] Ibid., 401.
[219] Diane Price Herndl, "Style and the Sentimental Gaze," 261.

4.3: The Anti-Sentimentalist

Cooper's sentimental deathbed scene, however, does not spur social reform to save the endangered Indian race, but rather shares sympathy—sentimentality—in order to develop a desire to experience such a sympathetic other. Therefore exemplifying what Cooper expects of his audience, Chingachgook does not dwell in the depths of self pity. Instead, he returns to the novel's natural cycle, comparing the passing of his people, his young wife, stalwart sons, and now himself as a winter ice melting at the beginning of spring. He attests to the natural stages of civilization so prevalent during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,[220] while simultaneously furthering the novel's central narrative of sentimental romance between Oliver and Elizabeth. Elizabeth inquires, "Whom call you the Young Eagle? . . . Whence comes he, and what are his rights?" To which Chingachgook returns, "Has my daughter lived so long with him, to ask this question? . . . Old age freezes up the blood, as the frosts cover the great spring in winter; but youth keeps the streams of the blood open, like a sun in the time of blossoms. The Young Eagle has eyes; had he no tongue?" Explaining the effect Chingachgook's words have on Elizabeth, Cooper continues:

> The loveliness to which the old warrior alluded was in no degree diminished by his allegorical speech; for the blushes of the maiden who listened, covered her burning cheeks, till her dark eyes seemed to glow with their reflection; but, after struggling a moment with shame, she laughed, as if unwilling to understand him seriously.[221]

In Chingachgook's final death scene, because he is at complete peace with his own passing, attesting to his race of hunters' time to pass before the spring stage of agriculture and future commerce; and because he foresees in Elizabeth the womb of futurity, Cooper allows the sentimental romance narrative to take precedence over any permanent sympathy for the American Indian. Elizabeth blushes, lighting the mood from mourning Chingachgook's death to a hope for the successful romance and future motherhood of Elizabeth. In reality, such a scene would allow no blushing nor laughter, but desperation. Through twisting this sentimental scene, however, Cooper assuages the would be appropriate sympathy and mourning by suggesting that the American Indian is at peace with his lot, even to the point of willfully encouraging the courtship of his white sentimental heroine. Therefore, since Cooper's central plot is to bring

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[220] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd.: [1776] 1904).
[221] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 402.

Oliver and Elizabeth together in order to create white, Christian children to populate modernity, Elizabeth's lack of sorrow is completely acceptable, even appropriate. To satisfy his sentimental audience, Cooper employs Chingachgook's deathbed testimony of the injustices done to his people to create a sentimental bond to the American Indian while that same Indian willfully redirects the sympathy by committing a hopeful future for whiteness into the hands of Elizabeth.

As illustrated in Chingachgook's commission to Elizabeth, Cooper intertwines the courtship, marriage and motherhood cycle with the sentimental conventions of Christian conversion and a climactic deathbed confession in order to fabricate a sympathy that creates nostalgia and longing, but simultaneously subjects itself to Cooper's greater good of civilized modernity. In *The Last of the Mohicans* and throughout the remainder of *The Leatherstocking Tales*, Cooper continues to experiment with the sentimental conventions of captivity narratives,[222] father-daughter relationships,[223] splitting the white heroine into two sisters connected by a "sentimental bond,"[224] and the forbidden romance between whites and non-whites[225] to entertain his sentimental audience. In contrast to other sentimentalists, however, Cooper employs these conventions not to promote a greater understanding of the cultural other through sympathy, the key to the sentimental mode,[226] but rather to create in his readers a desire to possess in order to experience the antique, exotic, sentimental souvenir of the American Indian.

One scene displays Cooper's twist of sentimental conventions particularly well, illustrating how Cooper, as Herndl argues, "employs a discourse and a set of tropes developed from sentimental theory" in order to "use sentimentalism against its own ostensible ideology."[227] It is a cold winter's night and the two ladies of the novel, Louisa Grant, and Elizabeth awake to the distant sounds of howling wolves. Elizabeth, displaying her fearless sensitivity to the "sublime landscape," ruminates aloud, "Those distant cries are plaintive, and even beautiful."[228] Louisa immediately reminds Elizabeth of the danger of wolves nearing the settlements, but

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[222] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 101.
[223] Signe O. Wegener, *James Fenimore Cooper Versus the Cult of Domesticity*, 92-170.
[224] Ezra F. Twail, "Domestic Frontier Romance," 113, 117; Annenberg Foundation, "'Sleeping Beauty': Sentimentalizing Death in the Nineteenth Century," *American Passages: A Literary Survey* (2011): http://www.learner.org/amerpass/unit06/context_activ-5.html.
[225] Ezra F. Tawil, "Domestic Frontier Romance," 108-110.
[226] Laura L. Mielke, "'Native to the Question'," 248.
[227] Diane Price Herndl, "Style and the Sentimental Gaze," 261.
[228] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 212.

Elizabeth reassures her frightened friend that with her father's wealth there is no need to be afraid. "The enterprise of Judge Temple is taming the very forests!"[229] Elizabeth asserts. Unconvinced, Louisa seeks sanctuary under her covers and fearfully falls back to sleep.

Waking early the next morning, Elizabeth rushes to the window, perhaps hoping to see the sources of the night's plaintive sounds, and swings the shudders open as "a glorious scene [meets] her delighted eye."[230] Cooper goes on to describe the landscape with even more sentimental detail than the Indian's costume, cited here at length to illustrate the various levels of sentimentalism Cooper manipulates:

> The lake had exchanged its covering of unspotted snow, for a face of dark ice, that reflected the rays of the rising sun, like a polished mirror. The houses were clothed in a dress of the same description, but which, owing to its position, shone like bright steel; while the enormous icicles that were pendent from every roof, caught the brilliant light, apparently throwing it luminary, with a golden luster, that melted away, on its opposite, into the dusky shades of a back-ground. But it was the appearance, of the boundless forests, that covered the hills, as they rose, in the distance, one over the other, that most attracted the gaze of Miss Temple. The huge branches of the pines and hemlocks bent with the weight of the ice they supported, while their summits rose above the swelling tops of the oaks, beeches, and maples, like spires of burnished silver issuing from domes of the same material. The limits of the view, in the west, were marked by an undulating outline of bright light as if, reversing the order of nature, numberless suns might momentarily be expected to heave above the horizon. In the foreground of the picture, along the shores of the lake, and near to the village, each tree seemed studded with diamonds. Even the sides of the mountains, where the rays of the sun could not yet fall, were decorated with a glassy coat, that presented every gradation of brilliancy, from the first touch of the luminary to the dark foliage of the hemlock, glistening through its coat of crystal. In short, the whole view was one scene of quivering radiancy, as lake, mountains, village, and woods, each emitted a portion of light, tinged with its peculiar hue, and varied by its position and its magnitude.[231]

As Elizabeth gazes in awe across the morning horizon, Cooper employs metaphors of fashion and domesticity throughout his drawn-out description to draw his readers' aesthetic attraction to the beauties of the limitless landscape. Instead of employing sentimentalism in this scene to create sympathy in his readers for the American Indian and other victims of Judge Temple's taming project, Cooper creates a longing to explore and possess the brilliancy of the frontiers' future. Cooper creates a longing to see and settle those suns still hidden behind the western

[229] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 212.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid., 213.

horizon. He creates a longing to harvest those diamond-studded trees and crystal covered hemlocks. He dresses up western expansion, the deracination of the American Indian, and the denaturalization of the American continent in a beautiful gown with all of its sentimental, lengthy, aesthetic details Southworth's women were so wont to enjoy.

As Elizabeth contemplates the beautiful transformation of the boundless forests into diamonds and domes, Cooper immediately connects her to her role in the future frontier harvest. "See!" exclaims Elizabeth, "See, Louisa; hasten to the window, and observe the miraculous change." Almost abashedly, Louisa looks out the window and replies, "The change is indeed wonderful! I am surprised that he should be able to affect it so soon."[232] Not understanding her companion's timid reply, Elizabeth follows Louisa's eyes below the window to "the form of a well-dressed young man, who was standing before the door of the building, in earnest conversation with her father." After a second glance, the two women realize that the man is none other than Oliver, the Young Eagle, "in a plain, but, assuredly, the ordinary garb of a gentleman." Seeing the costume change of the young, attractive hunter, Elizabeth admits, "Everything in this magical country seems to border on the marvelous . . . and among all the changes, this is certainly not the least wonderful. The actors are as unique as the scenery."[233] Elizabeth's observation reconnects her to her proper role as the mother of white modernity while also reiterating Cooper's discovery of American diversity on the American frontier.

Building on the novel's central, sentimental plot, Cooper displays Elizabeth's heroism through her refined aesthetic sentiment toward the landscape only to immediately reconnect her to her courtship, marriage and motherhood with Oliver. For in Elizabeth lies the womb of American civilization. As Baym suggests, Cooper realizes that "Without women there can [only] be relationships like the friendship of Natty and Chingachgook, profoundly resonant with personal feeling and meaning, and yet entirely without social significance."[234] Hence Cooper's surface plot is the history of Natty and Chingachgook's friendship. Cooper also realizes as Baym argues that women create "classes, societies, [and] civilization."[235] Thus Cooper adheres to Baym's assertion in that he pulls the Oliver and Elizabeth subplot to the novel's center. Yet Cooper does not include Elizabeth as the epitome of white sentimental heroism simply because

[232] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 213.
[233] Ibid., 214.
[234] Nina Baym, "The Women of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, 698.
[235] Ibid.

women play the vital role of childbearing to populate classes, societies, and civilizations. Instead, Cooper continually emphasizes Elizabeth's sentimental heroism, because he understands that women also make up the majority of his potential buying audience. Cooper viewed women as the collectors of his American Indian souvenir, and as such, Cooper had to appeal to their desires, their longing, and their expectations in order to create a longing in them to collect the American Indian as a souvenir.

Though Cooper presents himself as a masculine writer of historical romance, he utilizes the most core conventions of contemporary sentimentalists in order to transform the antique, exotic American Indian into a sentimental object, an object to induce the "'ennobling effects of distress,' the 'benevolent remedying of misfortune,' and the occasion for experiencing 'fine feeling'" expected by his sentimental audience.[236] Cooper, however, perverts such conventions by using them to create a desire in his female-dominated audience, not to save, but to possess in order to more intimately experience the American Indian. Instead of using sentimentalism to spark social reform, Cooper impersonates sentimentalists in order to create a connection to the American Indian, becoming therefore "guilty of the sort of maudlin and manipulative use of emotion critics of sentimentality have always leveled against the genre."[237] Cooper twists sentimental conventions to add his final facet of sentimentalism to his already antique, exotic American Indian. And with this technical trio, Cooper presents the American Indian as a souvenir to satisfy and simultaneously prod the nostalgic longing and routinized boredom of modern, middle-class America.

[236] Michael Davey, "Convention and the Limits of Biography for Literary Criticism: Fathers, Daughters, and Sentiment in Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*," *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art* (1999): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1999suny-davey.html.
[237] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Whether Cooper was a great literary strategist, manipulating the multitudes into justifying American imperialism; or simply a sponge, soaking in the conventions and tropes of his time, Cooper releases a clever concoction of antiquity from historical fiction, exoticism from romanticism, and sentimentality from sentimentalism to transform the American Indian into an international collector's item, a keepsake, a souvenir. The fact that the public perception of the American Indian remains attached to the American Indian as a cultural keepsake rather than an individual with the same hopes, dreams, and rights of modernity; suggests that Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, as the frontrunner in American Indian representative literature, left an everlasting effect. As Paul Wallace asserts, "*The Leatherstocking Tales* cast a spell over the reading public of America and Europe, and determined how the world was to regard the American Indian."[238] Due to an epidemic of nostalgia and an outright boredom that sent readers searching for the antique and the exotic, America and Europe became spellbound by Cooper's rendition of the American Indian.

As one of Cooper's close friends, Samuel F. B. Morse observed, Cooper's souvenir spread much further than America and Europe. Morse followed Cooper's fame throughout the world, writing in 1838:

> I have visited, in Europe, many countries, and what I have asserted of the fame of Mr. Cooper I assert from personal knowledge. In every city of Europe that I visited the works of Cooper were conspicuously placed in the windows of every bookshop. They are published as soon as he produces them in thirty-four different places in Europe. They have been seen by American travelers in the languages of Turkey and Persia, in Constantinople, in Egypt, at Jerusalem, at Ispahan."[239]

Morse reports that Cooper's literary souvenir of the American Indian had literally spread throughout the modern world. His portrait of the American Indian had become the "Mona Lisa" of modern American literature. Thus when one imagined the American Indian, one imagined Chingachgook and Uncas, Cooper's naked nobility of nature.

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[238] Paul A. W. Wallace, "Cooper's Indians," *New York History* (1954): http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/nyhistory/1954nyhistory-wallace.html.
[239] Willard Thorp, "Cooper Beyond America," *New York History* (1954): http://www.oneonta.edu/external/cooper/articles/nyhistory/1954nyhistory-thorp.html.

Explaining Cooper's success, Slotkin maintains, "A mark of Cooper's skill as a writer is that he could make imagined observations pass for realistic descriptions."[240] Cooper developed his skill of making his imaginations realistic by adopting the conventions of an array of authors around him. Cooper's greatest skill as a writer, however, is not that he could make imagined instances real. It is also not that he could copy conventions. It is that he was able to convert and combine conventions in a fashion that persuaded his audience to long to believe his "imagined observations" were real. He used the antique to authenticate his observations. Introducing himself as a historian and his history as the *first* history of the area, Cooper published his imagined history as an authentic antique. He employed the exotic to excite, as Princess Galitzin admits in the postscript of a personal letter: "The moment I see 'American novel by Cooper' my heart leaps."[241] Cooper then completed his creation through drawn-out scenes of sentimentalism, always deflecting the created sympathy away from wanting to save the American Indian to desiring to possess in order to more intimately experience and observe the American Indian. Thus Cooper sold to the world a souvenir of the American Indian that satiated the nostalgia for things past, the boredom with things present, and the sentiment of contemporary sentimentalists.

It remains, however, improvable if somewhere upon the cogs of Cooper's creativity stood imprinted the desire to promote, justify and quicken the deracination of the American Indian from the American continent, an identity critics have stamped upon Cooper in their desire and the academic trend to prove the already proven fact of American imperialism. Throughout *The Pioneers* and similarly throughout the remaining *Leatherstocking Tales*, Cooper, like many nineteenth-century writers, is both imperialistic and anti-imperialistic. As Slotkin suggests, "Like most of us, Cooper would like to have had his dilemmas resolved both ways: the races both reconciled and kept separate, the wilderness both civilized and preserved in purity, the Indian forever vanishing yet never lost."[242] Therefore, labeling Cooper as only one or the other is simplistic and overreaching. It is more telling to dissect the ways in which Cooper applied literature to both advance and harness American imperialism, and to what effect. One way through which Cooper's literature inflamed imperialism was through adopting and adapting the literary and rhetorical devices of antiquarianism, exoticism, and sentimentalism in order to authenticate, exaggerate, and emotionalize the American Indian. Instead of researching,

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[240] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction" in *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), xi.
[241] Willard Thorp, "Beyond America."
[242] Richard Slotkin, "Introduction," xxvii.

observing, recording, and reporting on the living American Indian in order to allow Indian artifacts to speak for themselves, Cooper revamped white versions of the American Indian into an imagined Indian identity and published it as the original. Then with the counterfeit in hand, Cooper's audience proved to have no further use of the original. Cooper's souvenir provided the contact and presence nostalgia demanded. It provided the exotic diversity modernity lacked. It provided the sympathy sentimentalists sought. And as a result, Cooper's antique, exotic, sentimental souvenir of the American Indian provided Cooper fame and fortune foreign to other nineteenth-century American authorship and opened an entire continent of endless horizons, dressed up in diamonds for the taking.

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