

“I Would Prevent You from Further Violence”:  
Women, Pirates, and the Problem of Violence in the Antebellum American Imagination

DISSERTATION

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By

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## Abstract

*“I Would Prevent You from Further Violence”: Women, Pirates, and the Problem of Violence in the Antebellum American Imagination* analyzes how antebellum American pirate stories used the figure of the pirate to explore the problem of violence and the role women play in opposing violent men. This project joins ongoing conversations about women in the nineteenth century in which scholars, such as Nina Baym, Mary Kelley, and Mary Ryan, have made key contributions by recovering a domestic model of nineteenth-century womanhood. As my work demonstrates, antebellum Americans were similarly invested in a more adventurous, and sometimes violent, model of womanhood that was built upon the figure of the gentleman pirate and placed in opposition to violent men. I argue that it is important to think about the pirate story and the figure of the pirate, not only in the context in which it has come to be known—escapist fantasies written for boys and young men—but as a place where authors reinforced, modified, and established different models of gender roles. Frequently within the mid-nineteenth-century American pirate story, authors answered the question of who is allowed to be violent by demonstrating that women had the capacity for violence and constructing scenarios illustrating that women were often the only ones in a position to forcibly oppose violent men.

The pirate story uniquely blends different narrative conventions: adventure stories that are often believed to appeal to male audiences and domestic scenarios that are

usually understood to resonate with female readers. Although historical and fictional pirates of other eras and geographical locations have been examined, little scholarship has focused on piracy in the antebellum American imagination, even though the figure of the pirate continued to proliferate, especially in popular fiction, throughout the nineteenth century. My project addresses this gap not only by demonstrating the importance of pirates in nineteenth-century American fiction, but also by exploring how American authors, such as James Fenimore Cooper, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, J. H. Ingraham, and Eliza Ann Dupuy, were responding to and revising earlier British depictions of the figure of the pirate by Byron and Walter Scott.

In addition to its unique focus on pirates in antebellum American fiction, my project explores a body of popular texts that has been neglected by scholars. These ephemeral stories are difficult to obtain outside of archives and libraries; however, they were extremely popular in their own time. While scholarship has shifted to recognize the value in previously dismissed popular texts, story papers and shilling novelettes have not yet been thoroughly analyzed, and my project seeks to reintroduce a small portion of these texts through archival research centering on the work of Maturin Murray Ballou and Benjamin Barker. By placing transatlantic canonical texts in conversation with formerly neglected ephemeral mediums, I explore stories that resonated with audiences and proposed unconventional violent and heroic models of womanhood, thus disrupting the idea that there was a monolithic version of womanhood in antebellum America.

To my parents, Kim and Mike Avila

and

In memory of Drew Cayton

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## Introduction: Bodkins and Daggers

In an 1869 Rhode Island newspaper article, a woman who signed her piece “S. H. W.” reminisced about having read Byron’s *The Corsair* (1814) as a child, recalling that she had read it “with avidity and was sadly perplexed whether to name my favorite dolly Medora or Gulnare” (2).<sup>1</sup> The remembered dilemma hinges on deciding between the two women in the poem: Medora, the domestic wife of the pirate who dies when she learns that he might have been captured or killed, and Gulnare, the woman who falls in love with the pirate and kills the man who enslaved her and captured him. Within the poem, Gulnare becomes less desirable in the eyes of the pirate after her violent act, but S. H. W. did not have the same reaction as she “eventually decided on Gulnare and sewed a ‘bare bodkin’ to her [doll’s] girdle to represent a dagger” (2). Not only does S. H. W. choose Gulnare over Medora, but she also provides her doll with a symbol of Gulnare’s violence, the sharp, needle-like bodkin standing in for the dagger wielded by the woman in the poem. This particular reader response suggests that Gulnare’s active and violent model of womanhood, which gave her control over her situation, may have resonated with some American, and in particular female, readers.

While Gulnare’s violence can be read as heroic, scholars have theorized that violent women are perceived as heroic less often than their male counterparts. Ann Lloyd

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<sup>1</sup> See “Byronism” in *Manufacturer’s and Farmer’s Journal* on October 18, 1869.

has argued in *Doubly Deviant, Doubly Damned* that in general “when women commit violent crimes they are seen to have breached two laws: the law of the land, which forbids violence, and the much more fundamental ‘natural’ law which says women are passive carers, not active aggressors, and by nature morally better than the male of the species,” making the woman doubly deviant (36). By contrast according to Patricia Pearson in *When She Was Bad*, for men, “aggression mirrors that which is valiant in other arenas, such as in war” (21). As a result, male aggression or violence is often read as heroic, but female violence is more commonly viewed as unnatural. Theorizing more broadly about women and violence, Pearson argues that female aggression, which she terms indirect aggression because it takes the form of verbal attacks and social manipulation, is not acknowledged as often as the more direct male aggression (17). According to Pearson, these indirect aggressive strategies utilized by women “are never valorous, for they are by necessity underhanded” (21). For antebellum American women, using these indirect strategies would not necessarily gain them the same legitimacy and power associated with male aggression. Instead, the female hero in antebellum fiction often builds from the established traits of the male hero, using more direct male aggressive strategies to legitimize her heroism and her violence.

Antebellum Americans were concerned more broadly about this question of whose violence is considered legitimate. The election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 alarmed many Americans and Europeans for a number of reasons as they feared that he would be “impulsive, even reckless, in the exercise of power” (Herring 164). Unlike his predecessors, Jackson, who had more of a record as a soldier than a statesman, embodied

a violent, rather than restrained, form of masculinity, and Jackson's election signaled the possibility for others like him to obtain positions of power. In *American Sensations*, Shelley Streeby argues that "a white egalitarian position, which emphasizes equal opportunity and class mobility for nonelite men, is grounded in the ideal of white "native" military manliness tested and displayed through violent encounters with foreigners and nonwhites" (129). In this manner, antebellum Americans imagined violence in two ways: as the threat posed by foreign and nonwhite men and as the legitimate tool of white men to prove their manhood against others. Both of these methods work toward extending the legitimacy of violence to all white men, regardless of class. Amy S. Greenberg in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* associates this martial construction of masculinity with "the aggressively expansionist discourse of the Democratic Party" (12). While Jackson's election might have expanded possibilities for white men of all classes who aspired to positions of power, those aspirations were continuously defined against others—women, nonwhite men, and people outside the borders of the United States.

For white women trying to embody the characteristics of those in power, it was a different negotiation than for men because women did not have to contend with assumptions that they would be violent. Instead, depictions of female violence had the potential to be viewed as unnatural, causing female characters to be read as monstrous, but in a different way from nonwhite men. While discussing "national manhood" in *Revolutionary Backlash*, Rosemarie Zagarri claims that this particular construction of masculinity, which originated in the period following the American Revolution, expected

men to fight on behalf of the nation, but “appeals to national manhood had a downside for women. They depended for their power on the belief that no one could possibly want women to take up arms” (110-111). Therefore, not only were white women assumed to be nonviolent, but they had to remain passive and potential victims in order to justify a white masculinity founded on the ability to protect women and the nation. This particular construction of masculinity was grounded in the belief that men could restrain other men, and perpetuated in the fiction of the antebellum era. As a result, Americans were less actively concerned with female violence, but at the same time, they were very concerned about who was allowed to use violence in defense of women who were not expected to use violence themselves. As the narratives that I examine in this project demonstrate, however, this question did not remain limited to others acting on behalf of women. Antebellum American authors considered various options for dealing with violent men, which included redemption and rescue, but ultimately, they had to contend with the possibility of a situation like that of Gulnare in *The Corsair*, where the woman cannot talk her way out and no man is available or willing to save her. When they have considered and disregarded other solutions to masculine violence, these narratives ask when it is acceptable for a woman to use violence in her own defense as Gulnare ultimately had to do.

I argue that the figure of the pirate offers an ideal opportunity to interrogate this question of who is allowed to be violent on behalf of women because pirates—historical and fictional—are continuously constructed as violent, and fictional pirates in particular are often presented as threatening to or rescuing women, or as women themselves. While

much scholarship has been devoted to exploring nineteenth-century women in domestic roles and spaces, my project demonstrates that antebellum Americans were similarly invested in a more adventurous, and sometimes violent, model of womanhood that was built upon the figure of the gentleman pirate and placed in opposition to violent men.<sup>2</sup> The pirate story uniquely brings together different narrative conventions: high-stakes adventures which are often believed to appeal to male audiences and domestic concerns which are usually understood to resonate with female readers. Pirate stories and the figure of the pirate bring together hypermasculine and violent men and domestic damsels who require protection, virtuous ladies who try to redeem them, and assertive women who thwart their plans. Increasingly within the mid-nineteenth-century American pirate story, authors answered the question of who is allowed to be violent by demonstrating that women had the capacity for violence; furthermore, they constructed scenarios that illustrated that often women were the only ones in a position to forcibly oppose a violent man.

It is important to think about the pirate story and the figure of the pirate not only in the context in which it has come to be known—escapist fantasies written for boys and young men—but as a place where authors reinforced, modified, or established different models of gender roles. Pirate stories shifted over the course of the nineteenth century from those focused on brooding male heroes inspired by Byron's *The Corsair* to those in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, such as *Treasure Island* (1883) that

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<sup>2</sup> For studies of women in domestic roles and spaces, see Anne M. Boylan's *The Origins of Women's Activism*, Mary Kelley's *Private Woman, Public Stage* and *Learning to Stand and Speak*; and Mary Ryan's *The Empire of the Mother*.

enacted boys' fantasies of running off to join a pirate crew. Stories based on the lives of historical pirates were often interconnected with these fictional versions. Intertwined throughout both fictional and nonfictional pirate tales were stories that used traits associated with the male pirate to critique violent men as heroes and replace them with assertive, capable, and sometimes violent, female heroes. These issues of violence and gender roles have perpetuated in current pirate stories, such as Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003-2007) film trilogy. Although the later films in the trilogy develop more assertive and piratical women, the first film remains focused on the relationships between the male characters and their efforts to evade the law. As a result, the franchise is grounded in the ideals of male-centered pirate stories found in the latter half of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. In order to obtain a more complete understanding of the multifaceted origins of the contemporary pirate story, one must also examine the earlier, less conventional narratives from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Historically, pirates led extralegal lives that frequently erupted in violence, making them ideal figures for exploring who is allowed to be violent and under what circumstances. As John C. Appleby argues in *Women and English Piracy*, "Pirates...were perceived to be among the toughest and most disorderly members of a heavily masculinized seafaring culture" (2). Marcus Rediker discusses how the relationship between Caribbean pirates and the authorities "constituted a cycle of violence," while Nina Gerassi-Navarro agrees in *Pirate Novels* that "[v]iolence was [the pirate's] most

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion that traces the roots of the modern pirate story from juvenile literature in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Victor Emeljanow's "Staging the Pirate: The Ambiguities of Representation and the Significance of Convention."



distinguishing trait” (13; 7). The introduction to the anonymous *The Pirate’s Own Book* (1837), a popular history which claims to contain “Authentic Narratives of the Lives, Exploits, and Executions of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers,” declares piracy “an offence against the universal law of society” and argues that “by declaring war against all mankind, all mankind must declare war against [the pirate]” while the preface labels pirates “monsters in human form” (x, iii).<sup>4</sup> The popularity of *The Pirate’s Own Book*, which had reached its eighth edition by 1859, indicates that this image of pirates would have been present throughout the early- to mid-nineteenth century (vi).

By utilizing the violence of historical piracy, the fictional pirate tale is able to address questions of how to deal with violent masculinity, specifically that which is directed at women. One of the most common plot constructions found in these stories is the pirate’s efforts to kidnap a woman in order to coerce or seduce her into surrendering her virtue or her wealth. While the underlying threat is often one of sexual violence, it is not always emphasized or explicitly played out in the narratives themselves. In fact, in *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell argue that because pirates are rarely permitted to follow through on their intentions—whether treated as romantic or violent—toward the female characters, they instead represent “geographical and cultural chaos” for women (111). Although pirates by their very nature evoke mobility, the pirates in the antebellum American fiction often remain relatively stationary. Still, they offer the geographic chaos suggested by Burwick and Powell on a smaller scale by kidnapping women and controlling the space they occupy.

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<sup>4</sup> Although published anonymously, the compiler of *The Pirate’s Own Book* was Charles Ellms (vii).

As a result, pirates represent violent masculinity that has threatening sexual undertones, but rarely acts on, and often is not clear about, those intentions. This idea of the pirate as threatening women, but not always following through, even when he is in a position to do so, often took the form of the gentleman pirate, which, for nineteenth-century audiences, grew out of works by Byron and Walter Scott.<sup>5</sup> In connection with their utilization of the gentleman pirate, authors of American pirate stories almost always depicted the pirate leader as Anglo or European, thus creating an implicit connection between whiteness and gentlemanliness.<sup>6</sup> While other types of narratives, such as captivity narratives or seduction narratives, threaten violence against women, none embody this particular threat in quite the same way.<sup>7</sup>

The figure of the pirate is uniquely positioned to investigate this cultural anxiety about the possibility of masculine violence being directed inward toward women and the home, rather than outward toward other nations. Beginning with responses to the gentleman pirate novel by Walter Scott, American authors experimented with different solutions, including redirecting violent men toward patriotic causes while the women

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<sup>5</sup> Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell discuss the “Gentleman Pirate” in *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, 153-154. Deborah Lutz contrasts the “gentleman pirate” with working-class origins of actual pirates in “The Pirate Poet in the Nineteenth Century: Trollope and Byron,” 23-40 in *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century*. In *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates*, Erin Mackie forms her central argument around thinking about connections between deviant characters and the modern gentleman in the eighteenth century.

<sup>6</sup> This claim is specifically directed at fictional pirates—historical pirates were much more diverse—and while there are a few pirate stories that focus on black male pirates, including Douglass’s *The Heroic Slave* and *The Florida Pirate* (1823) by an unknown author, and some that centered on female pirates, which will be discussed in Chapter 3, the majority of pirate leaders in the nineteenth-century popular American imagination were white men.

<sup>7</sup> Captivity narratives threaten physical violence against women, but the person(s) committing the violent act is usually othered in terms of race or ethnicity. Seduction narratives warn of sexual dangers to women but are often very different from pirate stories in that the danger in seduction narratives is some combination of seduction, manipulation, and trickery whereas the danger in pirate stories is being forcibly kidnapped and often it is not explicitly sexual in nature. Mackie has argued that unlike the rake, the pirate’s criminality is founded on violence more so than sexual transgression (114).

passively await rescue, redeeming the villain through the power of female morality, outmaneuvering antagonists as women and their allies manipulate events in their favor, and eventually, leaving the woman with no choice but to actively offer violence in return. Increasingly within the mid-nineteenth-century American pirate story, authors answered this question of who is allowed to be violent by demonstrating that women had the capacity for violence; furthermore, they constructed scenarios that illustrated that often women were the only ones in a position to forcibly oppose a violent man.

This project begins in the late 1820s with two American responses to British novelist Walter Scott's *The Pirate* (1822) in order to consider how American authors James Fenimore Cooper and Catherine Maria Sedgwick were using the figure of the pirate to respond to anxieties surrounding masculine violence while rejecting the legal solution of their British counterpart, which restricted legitimate violence to the official agents of the state. Building on these responses to fictional British pirates, I read J. H. Ingraham's masculine adventure novel, *Lafitte* (1836), alongside Eliza Ann Dupuy's domestic novel, *The Pirate's Daughter* (1845) in order to evaluate the common assumptions of women as passive and domestic land-dwellers and men as active occupants of the sea. Both novels center on New Orleans and reimagine the historical pirate Lafitte as they blend domestic and adventure genres to produce different models of gender roles.

In the 1840s, the distinction between adventure and domestic genres completely collapses with shilling novelettes that featured lady pirate protagonists, which I explore by focusing on the extremely popular *Fanny Campbell* (1844) in order to consider a new

model of womanhood based on the male adventure hero.<sup>8</sup> Finally, this project ends in the 1850s with the last work of shilling novelette and story paper author, Benjamin Barker, who extended the idea of the lady pirate to include women who were sexually transgressive, resulting in several different models of active, problem-solving, and sometimes violent womanhood. On the whole, this project moves in roughly chronological order through a time when American authors were utilizing different forms of fiction to experiment with alternatives to the law as a method of restraining violent behavior, and to consider the roles men and women would play in these solutions. In many of these narratives, assertive women play active—and sometimes violent—roles in society, which works toward legitimating the female violence while gesturing toward women's capacity for full citizenship and political power.

### **Historical and Fictional Pirates**

On the surface, piracy seems to be a straightforward criminal activity; however, when one considers the multitude of piratical terms—pirate, buccaneer, corsair, freebooter, smuggler, privateer—the definition becomes more ambiguous (see table 1). I have chosen to use the term “pirate” because it is the term most often invoked by the stories themselves. The fact that an individual considered a pirate by one group might be considered a legally-sanctioned privateer by another, allows fictional pirates to occupy many different, and sometimes opposing, roles within a narrative. Much of the introduction to the *The Pirate's Own Book* (1837) is devoted to defining piracy in general

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<sup>8</sup> I use the term lady pirate as a counterpart to the gentleman pirate established by the earlier pirate stories.

as being “By the universal law of nations, robbery or forcible depredation upon the ‘high seas’” as well as discussing specific English and American statutes, by which “other offences are made piracy” (ix-x). This emphasis on definition illustrates that even in the nineteenth century, Americans were wrestling with how to determine what was and was not considered piracy.

More recently in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy,” anthropologists Shannon Lee Dawdy and Joe Bonni devise an all-encompassing definition of piracy as “*a form of morally ambiguous property seizure committed by an organized group*,” which covers traditional piracy on the high seas and newer forms of piracy, such as internet piracy (695). Their study highlights the idea that “Piracy, because of its moral ambiguity, lends itself to quite different material fantasies and quite different political interpretations” (676). This ambiguity makes the pirate the ideal character for addressing many anxieties around violent behavior in antebellum America. The fictional pirate cannot automatically be considered a hero or a villain, but evokes a type of historical criminality that is at times considered vicious and brutal and at others a heroic celebration of democracy. As many scholars, such as Marcus Rediker, have detailed, pirate communities had the potential to disrupt hierarchies and offer some measure of agency to marginalized groups.

<b>Pirate</b>	“A person who plunders or robs from ships, esp. at sea”
<b>Privateer</b>	“An armed vessel owned and crewed by private individuals, and holding a government commission known as a letter of marque...authorizing the capture of merchant shipping belonging to an enemy nation”
<b>Buccaneer</b>	“The name was first given to the French hunters of St. Domingo...a name given to piratical rovers who formerly infested the Spanish coasts in America”
<b>Corsair</b>	“The name in the languages of the Mediterranean for a privateer; chiefly applied to the cruisers of Barbary, to whose attacks the ships and coasts of the Christian countries were incessantly exposed”
<b>Smuggler</b>	One who conveys “(goods) clandestinely into (or out of) a country or district, in order to avoid payment of legal duties, or in contravention of some enactment”
<b>Mutineer</b>	“A person who revolts against or openly resists the authority of a superior or governing body”
<b>Filibuster</b>	“A member of any of those bands of adventurers who...organized expeditions from the United States, in violation of international law, for the purpose of revolutionizing certain states in Central America and the Spanish West Indies”

Table 1. Definitions of Piratical Terms

Source: *Oxford English Dictionary. OED Online*. Oxford University Press. Web.

Pirates were a serious and widespread threat in the eighteenth century, and scholars have focused their attention on the piratical characters (real and imagined) in that time period. Discussions of Barbary piracy in relation to such texts as Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive* (1802) and Susana Rowson’s *Slaves in Algiers* (1794) tend to focus on the captivity more than the piracy. Scholars of the eighteenth century, including Marcus Rediker, Erin Mackie, and Hans Turley have examined historical pirates with an emphasis on their motivations, practices, and the myths that surround them.<sup>9</sup> In *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates*, Mackie considers the pirate in relation to other constructions

<sup>9</sup> See Rediker’s *Villains of All Nations*; Mackie’s *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates*; and Turley’s *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash*.

of masculinity as she brings together the figures mentioned in the title with the modern gentleman in order to “show how the creation of an illicit space underwrites prestige and enshrines many of patriarchy’s privileges” (4). Because her investigation is not limited to pirates, she is one of the few scholars who explores connections between land- and sea-based outlaws. Although most of these studies center on historical pirates and piracy, my project builds upon this body of scholarship since many authors based their fictional pirates directly or indirectly on historical pirates.

More recent scholarship, including *British Pirates in Print and Performance* by Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell, has added additional layers to the exploration of the pirate by giving a more serious consideration to the role that women play in historical and fictional piracy. In general, most scholarship on pirates makes at least a passing mention of women, usually in the service of making an argument for or against the existence of historical female pirates. The consensus seems to be that there is little concrete evidence for many of the female pirates and their exploits that can be corroborated using multiple sources. It is worth noting, however, that the same rigorous scrutiny is less often applied to their male counterparts. Discussions of fictional female pirates, however, are not so encumbered with the burden of historical proof. Taking up the often neglected relationship between historical pirates and women in *Women and English Piracy*, Appleby argues that “indirectly many women were closely involved in the business of piracy” (7). To this end, he not only discusses the possibility of women as pirates, but also women as merchants and land-based support systems for male pirates. Appleby’s work, which focuses on historical pirates, helps to collapse the perceived

division between land and sea that often prevents scholars from thinking about the ways in which the lives of women and male pirates intersected. Most of these scholarly conversations about historical pirates focus on British piracy in the eighteenth century, but they provide important frameworks for thinking about pirates, violence, and gender roles in the United States as well.

Despite these recent studies on British piracy, the character of the pirate has been largely ignored in nineteenth-century American literature. *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century*, a collection edited by Grace Moore, is the only book-length treatment of pirates in nineteenth-century literature, and as a transatlantic work, only two out of the sixteen articles focus on American contexts. While it is important to consider different fictional pirates from various parts of the world alongside one another, it is equally important to explore these figures and their individual contexts in more depth. My project addresses a portion of this gap by using the figure of the pirate to examine fluctuating gender roles and the problem of violent white masculinity in a mid-nineteenth-century American context.

### **The Problem of Violence in Antebellum America**

Although piracy itself was not much of a problem in antebellum America, it had long been associated with violent models of masculinity. According to Appleby, historical piracy “was an outlet for aggressive masculinity which found release in the conduct and behaviour of groups of men at sea” (7). However, antebellum American men did not have piracy as an outlet for their aggression and violence.



The election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 has long been viewed as representative of the continued expansion of democracy to the common man in America, but Jackson embodied a particular form of masculinity founded on violence and reserved to a particular group of people. As Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton argue in *Dominion of War* with regard to Jackson himself, “Describing Jackson’s character as democratic barely scratches its surface: it flatters his aggression and obscures the primal quality of his rage” (210). In many ways, Jackson represented the dangerous potential of this expansion of democracy to the common man. Of Jackson’s life more broadly, Anderson and Cayton write: “Whether dueling with competitors, killing Indians, or fighting the British, Jackson embraced violence, prospered by it, reveled in it” (211). This overview illustrates that in both his public persona as a war hero and his personal reputation as a man who would not back down from a duel, Jackson capitalized on the masculine ideals of aggression and violence. However, it is important to note that while the celebration of these ideals in Jackson reflected changing attitudes toward the common white man, they were not extended to women or people of color.

Although these expanded possibilities for white men were defined against others, marginalized groups, such as people of color and women, used the characteristics and history of violent white masculinity to make a case for their own expanded power. In *The Heroic Slave* (1852), Frederick Douglass does so by having his protagonist, Madison Washington, draw parallels between his actions leading a slave rebellion and those of the men who fought in the American Revolution: “I am not a murderer... We have struck for our freedom, and if a true man’s heart be in you, you will honor us for the deed. We have

done that which you applaud your fathers for doing, and if we are murderers, *so were they*” (48, emphasis in the original). In “Race, Violence, and Manhood,” Richard Yarborough analyzes Douglass’s efforts to use white masculinity with its sanctioned violence and warlike nature to construct a black masculinity for his protagonist that would be palatable to an antebellum audience (162). Yarborough notes, however, that Douglass’s efforts might have been hindered by the need to negotiate between a white model of violent masculinity and stereotypes in which “[b]lack men were viewed as unmanly and otherwise inferior because they were enslaved; at the same time, they were often viewed as beasts and otherwise inferior if they rebelled violently” (169). As a result, authors had to tread a fine line to invoke the violence of white masculinity on behalf of their black male characters without inviting association with the negative constructions of black masculinity.

White American masculinity was often in conflict with other versions of masculinity, and Greenberg suggests in *Manifest Manhood* that American men felt their manhood was threatened by many societal changes that brought different groups of people together, including industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and discussions of women’s rights (139). While most scholars agree that white masculinity was contested in antebellum America, Greenberg identifies two competing models of masculinity that had formed by 1848, which she terms restrained and martial (11). In *Reforming Men and Women*, Bruce Dorsey discusses “A new ideal of white middle-class manhood” that emerged in the 1830s and was “active, dynamic, aggressive and...often remained as aggressive in personal relationships as...in business ones” (105). As Dorsey suggests,

this version of masculinity is not confined to public interactions with other men, but had the potential to extend into personal relationships. Dorsey adds with regard to this particular model of masculinity, “If aggression and action were part of the new masculine character of white men, it appeared that so too were violence and lustful drinking” (106). While several scholars refer to this version of masculinity as “aggressive” or “martial,” Dorsey’s disclaimer illustrates that there is very little separating aggression from outright violence.

This contested American masculinity left many men with a desire to prove their manhood, and both history and literary scholars have discussed the ways in which they sought to do so on the frontier of the American west. Less often considered but equally important were other actively martial endeavors, such as participation in filibustering, which was when Americans took part in liberation movements in Latin America in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> As Greenberg claims, “On the new Central American frontier, the martial man could prove his character through heroic acts against racial inferiors” (151). Therefore, this version of white masculinity, as with that embodied by Jackson, is constructed in opposition to and with violence toward the nonwhite other. These outlets for violent masculinity are not limited to the land as Myra C. Glenn suggests in *Jack Tar’s Story* that sailors, including those who wrote sea narratives, also demonstrate a “quest to achieve manhood and to resist what they saw as threats to their manliness” (3).

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<sup>10</sup> While filibuster came to be known as “A member of any of those bands of adventurers who between 1850 and 1860 organized expeditions from the United States, in violation of international law, for the purpose of revolutionizing certain states in Central America and the Spanish West Indies,” the term originated with the Dutch word “vrijbouter,” which is also the root for freebooter, privateer, and pirate (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Also, as my discussion of Lafitte will demonstrate in Chapter 2, these filibuster campaigns were often undertaken or aided by individuals already participating in privateering and pirating.

Although American men had a variety of options for displaying their manhood, the fact that this version of masculinity was founded on a lack of restraint and violence left open the possibility that it could be directed at more accessible targets, such as women. Much of antebellum American fiction, and pirate stories in particular, is devoted to working out possible solutions to this problem of the dangers for women posed by violent masculinity. In *The Murder of Helen Jewett*, Patricia Cline Cohen identifies the potential problem of seduction narratives, which is that they “bolstered male egos, encouraged men to assert sexual mastery over women,” even though they were often written as warnings against deviant behavior (356). Similarly, in *Seduced, Abandoned, and Reborn*, Rodney Hessinger argues that public perception moved away from sympathy for the libertine’s victim in favor of celebration of his actions (156). Taken together, these claims illustrate a greater danger for sexual aggression toward women. Fictional pirates, however, often embodied a more nebulous, although no less violent, threat toward female characters. Regardless of the intentions of the violent man, the construction of white womanhood as being restrained and passive resulted in women not being encouraged to respond to potential violence in effective ways.

Pirate stories, which often involved attempts to coerce or kidnap women, explored various responses to the threat of violent men. These solutions range from a passive response where the woman does nothing and waits for the violent man to be policed by other men to an active response where the woman matches violence with violence and stops the man herself. The narratives that I examine tend to produce female characters that exhibit more agency, including violence, when they are opposed by irredeemable

men. This model of violence as agency can also be found in the male adventure hero. Borrowing from this formula while maintaining conventional aspects of femininity, such as marriage and family, allows authors to construct acceptable heroic (and sometimes violent) models of womanhood. In this manner, authors used previously accepted heroic traits to usher in a heroic woman who illustrates the inadequacy of relying on others or the law to solve the problem of violent men, and ultimately, solves it herself.

### **Women's History and Novels**

While Jackson's election is often constructed as expanding democracy for white men, historians identify the 1820s, where my project begins, as the point where resistance to women in democratic politics and the public sphere of the new nation was solidified. In *Revolutionary Backlash*, Zagarri points out that the time period from the Revolution to Jackson's election is often seen as time of increasingly democratic opportunities in the United States when, in fact, it contained increasingly explicit exclusion of women from electoral politics and government (148-149). This changing attitude toward women's roles in politics extended into other areas of society as well. As Clare Lyons explains in *Sex Among the Rabble*, by 1830 "bad" sexuality was attributed to the lower classes while "good," which centered on virtuous women, was reserved for the middle class. As a result of this image, greater restrictions were placed on the sexuality of women who were in, or aspiring to be in, the middle class. Taken together, these restrictions created an atmosphere where women were being confined to increasingly narrow roles.

Many of these restrictions and the possibility for resisting them originated within eighteenth-century discussions of what has come to be known as Republican Motherhood, a model which nineteenth-century women further developed to form their own conceptions of womanhood. The term was introduced by Linda Kerber in her article “The Republican Mother,” which described it as “one among many structures and contexts in which women might define the civic culture and their responsibilities to the state” (188). In “The Republican Wife,” Jan Lewis built upon Kerber’s model to consider the ways in which it applied to married life. Many scholars, including Mary Kelley, Cathy N. Davidson, and Mary P. Ryan, have explored various repercussions of this model including how some women used revolutionary rhetoric to their advantage to create expanded roles for themselves within civil society. In *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*, Barbara Cutter introduces the idea of “redemptive womanhood,” which “embraced woman’s superior virtue as articulated in republican motherhood, yet at the same time was a reaction against the exclusion of women from public life embedded in that earlier ideology” (9). These various and interconnected models demonstrate the ways in which American gender roles were being created, reinforced, and modified in early and antebellum America. Authors reacted to previously established types and played a role in these conversations by reinforcing or pushing against the emerging tradition.

Novels, and writing fiction more broadly, was one of the places where women could participate in this conversation and attempt to revise the dominant narrative. Furthermore, with the technological innovations in the production and distribution of printed documents, women were not as limited by geography, economics, or personal

networking. Writing offered another advantage that other modes of conversation did not: the author could keep her writing anonymous or disguised with a pseudonym, thus freeing her from having to risk her own reputation with the ideas she expressed. As a result of these factors, women had more opportunities to push boundaries through writing than they did in many other areas of life. Whether the author is male or female, fiction is an ideal place for challenging the status quo because the author controls the construction of the narrative and its outcome, which meant that authors could argue for a more active role for women by putting heroines in positions where they could demonstrate their potential to be resourceful, assertive, and sometimes violent, problem-solvers.

While some authors use pirate stories to reinforce masculine fantasies of damsels in distress needing rescue and objectify women as prizes to be won, pirate stories can work particularly well when arguing for active women. In many of these tales, the women are placed in opposition to men who want to coerce, kidnap, or cause them harm. With little hope of outside assistance, the woman must take control of the situation, thus also taking control of her life and her choices, and rescue herself. When the woman succeeds in thwarting the pirate and rescuing herself and/or others (as many of them do), she makes an implicit argument for women being just as capable and independent as the masculine heroes of the adventure story.

### **Gender and Genre**

By working against the tendency to divide fiction into gendered categories, the pirate story provides a place where many of the commonly gendered elements intersect,

including high-stakes scenarios and marriage plots, adventure and domestic, sea and land, and different roles for men and women. Despite these intersections, Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling indicate in *Iron Men, Wooden Women* that “Virtually all maritime scholars agree, however, that for centuries seafaring has been one of the most exclusively male-dominated occupations” (ix). While that may be true in terms of money-earning occupations, Marion Meinzerin notes in “The Woman and the Old Sea” that a broader examination of history and the world yields numerous connections found in myth, legend, and superstitions between powerful women and the sea (8-25).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the division of men on the sea and women on the land is a more recent occurrence.

The general division of men’s literature and women’s literature more broadly has likely been a result of how women were reintroduced into the canon of American literature as writing primarily domestic fiction. In “Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors” (1981), Nina Baym observed that women’s fiction was excluded from the literary canon because the canon tended to focus on a certain narrative of Americanness, which centered on individualism, the frontier, and moving away from domestic ties. As a result, women’s writing was ignored on the whole because women’s fiction tended to prioritize domestic settings and a sense of community. Baym’s article reflects a shift toward a greater inclusion and appreciation of literature by women, and scholarship continues to address this neglect. In addition to exploring how women were writing fiction for a female audience, we also need to pay

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<sup>11</sup> Meinzerin’s piece is an introduction to Ulrike Klausmann’s *Women Pirates and the Politics of the Jolly Roger*.



attention to the ways in which these conventions of masculine individualism and feminine domestic communities overlap. As illustrated by the pirate story in the mid-nineteenth century, both women and men were defining gender roles with a variety of results—some maintain conventional roles, others push against the boundaries, and a few write their own rules. Because we usually discuss stories according to the gender of the author and the dominant genre, we often overlook elements of other genres found within the narratives.

In this project, I think about the ways in which authors borrowed from each other or blurred genre lines in order to appeal to multiple audiences or revise previous narratives. For example, both Sedgwick and Dupuy primarily wrote domestic novels; however, each contains small adventure plot arcs within the primary plot and ends with a life-or-death conflict. Even Sedgwick's *Clarence* (1830), which is categorized as "a novel of manners," contains a cross-country carriage chase and puts the protagonist's life in danger before the novel ends. At the same time, the fairly straightforward adventure novels of Cooper and Ingraham exhibit much anxiety about the safety of women, their virtue, and who will protect them. This concern works toward constructing masculine roles of hero and protector, but even so, it also defines what women were not expected to do, such as protect themselves or act heroically on behalf of others. As Shelley Streeby argues in *American Sensations*, adventure stories and sensational fiction were used to construct white masculinity in the nineteenth century. I would like to address Streeby's insistence "that sensationalism is not just about men" by extending this conversation to think about how these stories were also being used to construct femininity, and how

many authors were able to borrow from the masculine adventure story to construct new models of heroic womanhood (32). Pirate stories, and sensational plots in general, work well to illustrate this overlap of genres and gender roles because they have a tendency to put women in danger and bring men and women into conflict with one another.

### **Shilling Novelettes and Story Papers**

In addition to its specific focus on the intersection of pirates and women in antebellum American literature, my project explores a body of popular texts that have been neglected by scholars. These ephemeral stories are difficult to obtain outside of archives and libraries now; however, they were extremely popular in their own time. *Fanny Campbell*, for instance, sold 80,000 copies in the first few months it was in print and continued to be sold for the next several decades. Many of the other stories that I analyze also underwent multiple printings with different formats and titles. On the whole, this project examines texts that were popular in their own time, including works by the more canonical Cooper and Sedgwick, regardless of how they are viewed today. In *Beneath the American Renaissance*, David S. Reynolds has explored “the process by which hitherto neglected popular modes and stereotypes were imported into literary texts” (3). His work, however, still maintains a distinction between popular and literary, which reinforces canonical divisions. I am more interested in how the popularity of these narratives demonstrates that they resonated with audiences, which in turn, can help us to understand the values and anxieties surrounding roles for men and women in antebellum

America. I have uncovered a few individual responses to these texts, but such responses have not survived on a large scale, making an in depth reader response survey impossible.

The second half of this project is based around shilling novelettes and stories from story papers, which were serialized weekly papers that started in the United States in the 1840s and are largely not reprinted or read today. In addition to their unique formats, story papers were unusual for being directed at a family audience, whereas later papers were directed explicitly at boys. For example, the masthead of the popular story paper, *The Flag of Our Union* read “A Literary and Miscellaneous Family Journal,” which means that the stories were not directed at a narrowly gendered audience.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, it can be assumed that shilling novelettes had a similar intended audience because they were often story paper stories reprinted in a different format.

Despite being used more broadly as a term, most scholars agree that the dime novel began with the publication *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter* by Ann S. Stephens in 1860, the first in *Beadle’s Dime Novels* series; however, they are in less agreement on what to call the precursors to the dime novel. They have been referred to as “pamphlet novels,” “romances,” “shilling shockers,” or simply categorized as no different from dime novels. I have chosen to use the term “shilling novelette” for short novels published prior to the era of the dime novel for a number of reasons. It seems to be the most concise of terms used at the time, although it specifically referred to novelettes that cost a shilling, and many of the stories discussed by this project would have likely cost more due to length. Therefore, I am expanding the term, much like the term dime

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<sup>12</sup> For this example, see the masthead on the February 10, 1849 issue.

novel is often used to describe a broader range of works than its terminology indicates. I have chosen this term partially because it mirrors the term dime novel, thus acknowledging the shared lineage as well as the blurred division between the two. Finally, the term “novelette” itself has the additional advantage of having a negative connotation of being less serious and/or more scandalous than other forms of literature, which seems fitting for how these stories were viewed during their own times and by more recent scholarship as well.

While scholarship, led by Reynolds’s *Beneath the American Renaissance*, has been slowly shifting toward recognizing the value in previously dismissed popular texts, there is still much material to examine. The type of popular story that is most often addressed is the dime novel. Michael Denning uses the dime novel to think about class divisions in *Mechanic Accents* while Shelley Streeby examines a variety of ephemeral narratives in *American Sensations*. Mary Noel’s *Villain’s Galore* (1954) remains the only book-length critical history of story papers, although scholars such as Lori Merish and Dawn Fisk Thomsen have addressed story papers in their work. As precursors to the dime novel, these other forms present an important bridge between novels and dime novels, demonstrating the necessity of including these texts in our conversations about popular American fiction of the nineteenth century. By drawing together established canonical texts and the relatively recent enthusiasm for ephemera as well as shilling novelettes and story papers explored through archival research, my project seeks to reintroduce a small portion of these formerly neglected texts. As my focus on the pirate story illustrates, these texts are important for understanding how antebellum Americans were thinking about a

variety of models for gender roles and the problem of violence beyond what is found in more established literature.

### **Chapter Overview**

My dissertation begins in the 1820s with two established canonical authors—Catharine Maria Sedgwick and James Fenimore Cooper—and remains chronological before reaching the last work of story paper and shilling novelette author Benjamin Barker in the 1850s. This progression moves from examining often-discussed authors in new ways to exploring previously unexamined narratives. My line of inquiry begins with anxieties surrounding the problem of violence in pirate stories, which is complicated by blurred genre divisions. The stories in the second half of my project collapse the divide between women and pirates in order to understand the broader range of models of womanhood and manhood available to antebellum Americans through fiction. (See table 2 at the end of this section for a chronology of referenced texts.)

My first chapter focuses on canonical authors, Catharine Maria Sedgwick and James Fenimore Cooper, who were both responding to and rewriting Walter Scott's *The Pirate* (1822) in order to think about the relationship between individual choices and the law as well as who was in the best position to police violent behavior. In *The Red Rover* (1827), Cooper envisions a country founded on violent masculinity in which a pirate can escape destruction and redirect his potentially dangerous love of liberty in the service of a patriotic cause, and women occupy the position of objects to be rescued or won through the maneuverings of the male characters. On the other hand, in *Hope Leslie* (1827) and

*Clarence* (1830), Sedgwick destroys the piratical characters exhibiting unrestrained behavior while endorsing the female characters who act assertively to rescue themselves and their friends. In doing so, she makes women an active force in decision making and policing masculine violence.

Building on these contrasting views of the relationship between women and pirates, my second chapter brings together two novels centered on the common subject of pirates in New Orleans: J. H. Ingraham's *Lafitte* (1836) and Eliza Ann Dupuy's *The Pirate's Daughter* (1845). By reading a masculine adventure story alongside a novel that would be categorized as domestic fiction, I explore the connections between women being associated with the land, domesticity, and passivity while men are considered active occupants of the sea. Although the pirate is usually thought of as existing solely on the ocean, many fictional pirates, including those found in *Lafitte* and *The Pirate's Daughter* spend much of their narratives on the land, which allows the story to address anxieties about dangers and violence in domestic spaces. As a result, neither novel provides a clear division between public and domestic spaces. Likewise, neither story fits comfortably into the contrast established by the works of Sedgwick and Cooper in the first chapter where active women thwarted unredeemable pirates and passive women were pawns of pirates. This blurring of genre highlights the ambivalent space created by many pirate stories where feminine domesticity intersects with masculine adventures, allowing the author to offer the possibility of female agency through violence without the necessity of carrying it out.

After considering the divisions between public and domestic lives in pirate stories in the previous chapter, the third chapter focuses on Maturin Murray Ballou's shilling novelette, *Fanny Campbell, the Female Pirate Captain* (1844), which collapses this divide entirely by having a female protagonist who is a pirate. While Fanny's motivations are wrapped in domestic concerns of rescuing a lover, her narrative does not focus on domestic life. Instead, Fanny leads a mutiny, takes prize ships, executes a rescue, prevents a mutiny, and forcibly stops an assault on her person. All of this action takes place before Fanny marries, which emphasizes her unconventional actions, rather than her domestic desires, but without negating either the domestic or the heroic model of womanhood. *Fanny Campbell* leaves the reader with a version of marriage where the woman is an independent and an equal (or more) partner. Moreover, this chapter considers *Fanny Campbell* within the broader scope of pirate stories from its decade, including the lady pirate stories inspired by *Fanny Campbell*'s success: Cooper's *Jack Tier* (1848), Ned Buntline's *The Queen of the Sea* (1848), and Lorry Luff's *Antonita* (1848).

The final chapter turns to the work of Benjamin Barker, who likely wrote for story papers and shilling novelettes under multiple pseudonyms. By examining a selection of Barker's pirate stories, this chapter explores the ways in which Barker created a pattern of active, independent, and often violent women to fill a variety of roles in each story. These stories create complex plots that are unusual for their genre in that they feature so many female characters so prominently. The men labeled as "heroes" are eclipsed by their female counterparts as they are incapacitated or absent during the action

while the women thwart the villains and restore order to the plot. Most of the stories do not have a single heroine, but instead, establish a pattern of women who resist masculine violence, kill false lovers, and rescue themselves and each other. Taken together, these women present alternate versions of women's roles, ones that are not domestic or interested in keeping women isolated in the home, but instead, teach young women to be assertive, independent, and use violence if necessary. These women stand up for themselves and protect loved ones without eliminating the possibility that a woman would choose to marry and have children.

The conversation that pirate stories enabled about women's agency and violent men in antebellum America began with the dichotomy of women as objects or independent forces policing male behavior before being disrupted by women playing complicated roles as the redeemer or sacrifice of the pirate's criminal behavior. In some cases, the dichotomy collapses entirely when assertive female characters take on that criminal behavior and become pirates themselves, creating a pattern of active women—some pirates, some not—at the center of the stories, who rescue themselves and their loved ones while the male heroes are absent or incapacitated. Overall, these narratives illustrate how antebellum American authors were participating in a conversation about the problem of violence, especially when men directed it at women, and exploring solutions through their fiction. These solutions included relative passivity and aggressive agency, which ultimately hinged on requiring the woman to meet violence with violence.



<b>1814</b>	• <i>The Corsair, A Tale</i> by [George Gordon] Byron
<b>1822</b>	• <i>The Pirate</i> by Walter Scott
<b>1823</b>	• <i>The Pilot</i> by James Fenimore Cooper
<b>1827</b>	• <i>Hope Leslie</i> by Catharine Maria Sedgwick • <i>The Red Rover</i> by James Fenimore Cooper
<b>1830</b>	• <i>Clarence; or, A Tale of Our Own Times</i> by Catharine Maria Sedgwick
<b>1836</b>	• <i>Lafitte: The Pirate of the Gulf</i> by J. H. Ingraham
<b>1837</b>	• “The Curse” by Eliza Ann Dupuy
<b>1844</b>	• <i>Fanny Campbell, The Female Pirate Captain</i> by Lieutenant Murray [Ballou] • <i>Theodore, The Child of the Sea</i> by J. H. Ingraham
<b>1845</b>	• <i>The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main</i> by Ned Buntline [Judson] • <i>The Naval Officer</i> by Lieutenant Murray [Ballou] • <i>The Pirate’s Daughter</i> by Eliza Ann Dupuy
<b>1846</b>	• <i>The Land Pirate, or The Wild Girl of the Beach</i> by Benjamin Barker • <i>The Nymph of the Ocean, or the Pirate’s Betrothal</i> by Benjamin Barker • “Rose-bud” by James Fenimore Cooper
<b>1847</b>	• <i>The Indian Bucanier: or, the Trapper’s Daughter</i> by Benjamin Barker • <i>The Pirate Queen: or, The Magician of the Sea</i> by Benjamin Barker
<b>1848</b>	• <i>Antonita; or The Female Contrabandista</i> by Lorry Luff • <i>Celeste: The Pirate’s Daughter</i> by Eliza Ann Dupuy • <i>Jack Tier</i> by James Fenimore Cooper • <i>The Queen of the Sea; or, Our Lady of the Ocean</i> by Ned Buntline [Judson]
<b>1855</b>	• <i>The Bandit of the Ocean; or The Female Privateer</i> by Benjamin Barker

Table 2. Chronological List of Referenced Pirate Stories

## Chapter 1: “A Devilish Genteel Fellow”: The Problem of Violence in Cooper’s and Sedgwick’s Novels

Byron’s narrative poem *The Corsair* (1814) begins with a morally ambiguous pirate as its hero whose role is soon usurped by a woman solving problems with violence. It is rare to find this pairing of an ambiguous pirate and a violent woman within a single work, but as this project will demonstrate, both of these figures were at the core of antebellum American author’s efforts to answer the question of who should be allowed to use violence, especially in defense of women. *The Corsair* intertwines the figure of the pirate and the woman as they trade roles and articulate the circumstances in which they are willing to use violence. Many of the pirate stories chronologically closest to *The Corsair*—British and American—adopt Byron’s version of the criminal but compassionate and self-restrained pirate, but none of them are willing to endorse a violent and heroic woman.<sup>13</sup>

*The Corsair*, with its combination of a pirate who should be more violent but is not and a woman who should not be violent but is, was extremely popular in Britain and America. According to Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell in *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, when *The Corsair* was published “queues formed at the booksellers. Ten thousand copies were sold on the first day of sale, and a seventh edition

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<sup>13</sup> As Chapters 3 and 4 will demonstrate, this unwillingness to endorse violent women did not persist in the pirate stories of the 1840s and 1850s.

was printed within the first month” (62). Deborah Lutz agrees, arguing that “it is hard to overstate the popularity of Byron’s writing throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth” (36). As the newspaper article at the beginning of this project indicates, *The Corsair* was read avidly in America as well.<sup>14</sup> Due to its popularity, *The Corsair* has been credited with popularizing this version of the morally ambiguous pirate which would be replicated and revised throughout the nineteenth century, and in fact, Lutz claims, “Practically every literary pirate of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was influenced by Byronism and the re-imagining of the pirate as a gentleman” (37). More specifically in terms of how this version of the pirate affected popular conceptions of gender and gender roles, Burwick and Powell argue that “Byron’s creation signals a new era in which pirates and wives become antithetical to each other” (101). Not only does *The Corsair* deny pirates wives, and the ability to settle down in domestic spaces, but it also constructs male and female violence in a way that privileges the masculine realm of battle over feminine acts of violent self-preservation.

The narrative begins with Conrad, the corsair of the title, leaving his wife, Medora, to disguise himself and infiltrate the household of the pacha, Seyd, in order to distract him while Conrad’s men prepare a surprise attack. The titles of these individuals place this narrative with a specific geographical and religious context: pachas were high-ranking Turkish officers, such as a military commander or governor, and corsair was the

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<sup>14</sup> In America, especially, *The Corsair* came to be connected to stories of Jean Lafitte (the subject of the novels discussed in Chapter 2). William C. Davis explains that after an erroneous connection in an American newspaper in 1829, American readers frequently believed that *The Corsair* was based on the life of Lafitte (471). In *Treasure Neverland*, Neil Rennie discusses how that connection originated after Byron included a note in the eighth edition of *The Corsair* in 1815 detailing Lafitte’s life from an American newspaper in an effort to “defend the credibility of his pirate hero’s combination of ‘virtue’ and ‘crimes’” (128).

term for a privateer sanctioned by the Barbary States to attack any ship flying the flag of a Christian nation.<sup>15</sup> Conrad's attack is a preemptive strike because he has learned that Seyd plans to attack him, but during the fight, the house catches fire, and Conrad directs his men to save the women of Seyd's harem who are trapped inside, urging them to "spare the weaker prey" (811). To this point in the poem, Conrad is constructed as very much the hero as he risks his life to save "the helpless" (813).

At the same time, this heroic decision to save the women leads to Conrad becoming a captive in need of rescue. By deviating from their attack, Conrad's men lose their advantage in the battle, and they are killed while he is captured. Seyd plans to torture and kill Conrad, but Seyd's favorite slave, Gulnare, who had been rescued from the fire by Conrad personally and has fallen in love with him, comes to his aid, offering to save Conrad on the condition that he kills Seyd. Even before she resorts to violence, Gulnare reverses the formula established when Conrad rescued her. She has acquired the agency that the imprisoned Conrad can no longer access. Still, Conrad refuses her offer, reasoning that his weapon is the scimitar used in open battle, "not the secret knife" of assassination (1531). While this reasoning further positions Conrad as a gentleman possessing honor, it contrasts with his statement that he "knew himself a villain" (267). Although Conrad maintains his moral high ground that privileges face to face combat, the narrative makes it clear that he will die if he does not act.

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<sup>15</sup> Due to the religious difference, fictional corsairs are often accompanied by a different set of negative connotations than other pirates. The Oxford English Dictionary notes that "In English [corsairs were] often treated as identical with *pirate*, though the Saracen and Turkish corsairs were authorized and recognized by their own government as part of its settled policy towards Christendom." For a more detailed discussion of how the English viewed corsairs in relation to other types of piracy, see Barbara Fuchs, "Faithless Empires."

Completing the shift that began with her offer to rescue Conrad, Gulnare moves into the realm of violent hero. When Conrad refuses, she takes it upon herself to kill Seyd, announcing that she'll "try the firmness of a female hand" (1548). While Byron does not give Gulnare a specific backstory, she identifies herself as having "an Eastern heart," which has the potential to align her with stereotypes of violent nonwhite women (1520). When she returns, Conrad sees blood on her face and exclaims:

That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak,  
Had banished all the beauty from her cheek!  
Blood he had viewed—could view unmoved—but then  
It flow'd in combat, or was shed by men!" (1593-1596)

For Conrad, Gulnare's violence has caused her to cease to be attractive to him, and he constructs his rejection in gendered terms because he is horrified by the blood on her face, but he can view blood shed by men on the battlefield without being affected.

Despite Conrad's rejection, Gulnare is positioned as heroic in terms of her actions as she has orchestrated their entire escape. In an effective reversal of Conrad's rescue of her, which still left her in the power of Seyd, she frees Conrad and reunites him with the rest of his band. When they return, Medora has died from grief and Conrad vanishes, leaving "the Corsair's name to other times, / Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand crimes," but Gulnare is not mentioned again after their return (1862-1863).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Although the narrative does not give any explicit evidence to support this conclusion, several scholars, including Gloria T. Hull, read the ending as an indication that Conrad and Gulnare ran away together (74). While scholars consider Byron's *Lara* (1814), with its English nobleman returned from the East accompanied by a cross-dressed page, to be a continuation of these characters' journey, Gregory Olsen argues that "the characters are represented quite differently," and the page, who would be a disguised Gulnare, is not heroic (475n23).

While Conrad illustrates a shift in how the pirate was depicted in fiction, recent scholarship has taken an increasing interest in the characterization of Gulnare. In “Rewriting the Byronic Hero,” Gregory Olsen has argued that Gulnare is not only heroic, but that she is *the* Byronic hero of the poem (465). For Olsen, the Byronic hero is a rebel, an outsider, a criminal, and a passionate lover with a personal code of honor who is plagued by guilt but will not repent.<sup>17</sup> Burwick and Powell agree that Byron “strips away [Conrad’s] masculinity and transfers the heroic action to Gulnare” (62). More specifically, they identify the moment this shift begins with the moment Conrad tries to occupy two different versions of masculinity simultaneously: “When [Conrad] attempts to fight men and protect women in the domestic sphere at the same time, he is no longer a pirate...he becomes a moody failure” (101). While Conrad is unable to transition between different versions of masculinity, Gulnare successfully navigates between conventionally masculine and feminine roles. These arguments that the poem is celebrating heroic and violent womanhood are compelling from the perspective of a modern day reader because ultimately Gulnare is the one to solve the primary conflict and rescue Conrad, but within the poem, Conrad uses Gulnare’s willingness to commit violence to establish his moral superiority as he refuses to act in a similar manner. As a result, the pirate evades the problem of violence that he embodies in so many other texts by restraining himself and allowing Gulnare to act in his place.

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<sup>17</sup> While scholars consistently address the Byronic hero as an identifiable figure, they vary on some of the characteristics associated with this type. In “Pirate Chic,” Mel Campbell regroups these into negative and positive characteristics: “defiant, alienated and misanthropic (and misogynist), yet also sensitive, honourable and faithful,” and Joetta Harty in “Playing Pirate” adds the principle of self-destruction to be paired with the principle of defiance (15; 45).

Whether she is read as a foil to establish Conrad's morality or as a heroic in her own right, Gulnare—and her complex positioning at the intersections of gender, race, and religion—is one element of Byron's poem that did not get replicated by the authors of the pirate stories that immediately followed. Walter Scott was encouraged by his editor to write "his own historical romance of piracy and adventure on the high seas" in response to Byron's poem (Burwick and Powell 76). The resulting novel was *The Pirate* (1822) wherein Scott borrows from Byron's hero, making his pirate a morally ambiguous and conflicted outsider, but writes the violent woman out of the formula. Instead, Scott models his female characters more on Medora who waits at home and dies of grief when she finds out Conrad might have been killed. Since he cannot transfer the problem of what to do about violence to a woman, Scott introduces the law as a key component of restraining violent behavior—not of the pirate, who does not need to be restrained and is pardoned, but of his crew.

When American authors, in the form of James Fenimore Cooper and Catharine Maria Sedgwick, began to write their own pirate stories or write pirates into their stories, they adopted Scott's revision of Byron by not including or not endorsing violent women. Scholars of American literature often read Cooper and Sedgwick alongside one another in an effort to think about nationalistic narratives of the frontier, but less attention is paid, particularly with Sedgwick, to how these authors were constructing national narratives of the sea.<sup>18</sup> In *Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature*, Gesa

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<sup>18</sup> Most scholarship discussing Sedgwick uses Cooper as an entry point into the conversation, but a few works that shape an argument around a comparison of the two are Ivy Schweitzer's "The Ethical Horizon of American Friendship in Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*" in *Perfecting Friendship*, Carolyn L.

Mackenthun critiques Henry Nash Smith's claim that westward expansion, more so than maritime trade, was a better model for the actual events of the nineteenth century by asserting that the "version of the history of the United States as a historically unique process of agricultural expansion into an 'empty continent' is an ideological construct produced in response to the need for formulating a national narrative of progress" (70). Instead, Mackenthun argues that in the 1820s "Western settlement and Atlantic commerce were equally important for the economy and the imagination of the United States" (71). Therefore, the prominence of frontier narratives over sea narratives in scholarship is not necessarily the result of a preference for one over the other among early American authors and audiences.

The sea offered a different type of narrative than the frontier, one that often involves mobile figures like the pirate who inhabit what both Luis Igelsias and Jason Berger call "extranational" space (24; 657).<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Sarah H. Ficke discusses in "Pirates and Patriots" how "the 'shifting spaces' that ships represented in the Atlantic world" could just as easily be reconfigured as the sources of "assertive, adventurous, *white*, masculine national identity" (116; emphasis in the original). For James Fenimore Cooper and Catharine Maria Sedgwick writing historical novels in 1827, this masculine multifunctional space of the sea offered a way to redirect or critique the dangers of masculine violence through an emphasis on individual choices, rather than the legal

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Karcher's Introduction to *Hope Leslie*, and Susanne Opfermann's "Lydia Maria Child, James Fenimore Cooper, and Catharine Maria Sedgwick: A Dialogue on Race, Culture, and Gender" in *Soft Canons*.

<sup>19</sup> See Luis Igelsias's "Transatlantic History and American Nationalism in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Red Rover*" and Jason Berger's "Killing Tom Coffin."



solution adopted by Scott in *The Pirate* or the violent woman utilized by Byron in *The Corsair*.

Although neither Cooper's *The Red Rover* (1827) nor Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827), replicated the character of Gulnare, both novels revised the British figure of the pirate established by Byron and Scott. While Cooper and Sedgwick offered different solutions to the problem of violence, both rejected Scott's proposition that the law played a role in restraining violent behavior. Instead, they promoted American individualism by suggesting that the established legal system of Britain was unnecessary because Americans could work together to restrain violence in themselves and others. They deviate from each other, however, on which individuals should be participating in that restraint. Cooper suggests that men can learn to control themselves and other men, or failing that, they can be redirected away from causing chaos for ordinary citizens toward a more appropriate endeavor, such as warfare. Sedgwick, in contrast, offers women as problem-solvers, and while she does include one instance of violent womanhood, she does not necessarily endorse the action. Ultimately, her destruction of the buccaneers, along with the violent woman, denies the possibility of a heroic pirate and suggests that the behaviors he represents need to be eradicated, rather than reformed.

Through their pirate characters, both Sedgwick and Cooper were addressing this question of who should be included in shaping the nation, and this inclusion was based on the ability to control violent men. Both deny the necessity of the law as a control mechanism, but Cooper endorses a nation founded on self-restraint and masculine violence, leaving little to no possibility of an active female presence, while Sedgwick

foregrounded women taking an active role in shaping the nation through individual behavior. Together, they establish contrasting solutions to the problem of masculine violence embodied by the figure of the pirate, which would be developed and reworked by the authors of pirate stories that followed them.

### **“New-born Virtue”: Rewriting Walter Scott’s *The Pirate***

Beyond similarities in their use of the pirate figure, both Sedgwick’s and Cooper’s other writings demonstrate that they were reading and thinking critically about Scott’s novels in general and his pirate novel in particular. Cooper wrote his first sea novel, *The Pilot* (1823) in response to Scott’s *The Pirate*. In the preface to the 1849 edition, Cooper explains that a friend had praised the technical accuracy of the seamanship and nautical terms of Scott’s novel. As a result of this conversation, Cooper writes that he determined “to produce a work which, if it had no other merit, might present truer pictures of the ocean and ships than any that are to be found in the *Pirate*. To this unpremeditated decision, purely an impulse is not only the *Pilot* due, but a tolerably numerous school of nautical romances that have succeeded it” (vii). While Cooper claims the motivation for writing *The Pilot* was founded entirely on a desire for a more nautically accurate novel, the similarities between Scott’s *The Pirate* and Cooper’s first two sea novels, which both used the figure of the pirate to demonstrate the ability of men to restrain themselves and others, make it clear that he was also thinking about ways to revise Scott’s work by shifting away from the legal solution toward an emphasis on

individual choice.<sup>20</sup> Cooper followed *The Pilot* with *The Red Rover* in 1827, which focuses even more explicitly on the potential moral ambiguity of the pirate character and responds directly to *The Pirate* by creating a greater contrast between the pirate's criminality and his reform than its predecessor.

Although less explicit in identifying her motivation for writing, Sedgwick also read Scott's *The Pirate* prior to writing *Hope Leslie* (1827) and *Clarence* (1830), both of which feature piratical characters and women who must thwart their plans in order to save others. In an 1822 letter to a friend, Sedgwick wrote: "I hope you have read the *Pirate* with delight as we have. ... The world here is divided into the followers of Minna and Brenda. They seem to me the fair representatives of this world and a higher" (Sedgwick 147).<sup>21</sup> She expands upon this division between the two main women in *The Pirate* in her 1835 sketch "Old Maids," which is essentially a debate between two women on the merits of remaining single and how women who choose to do so are characterized. One of the women cites three of Scott's heroines, including Minna from *The Pirate*, as evidence for the nobility of remaining single (101). Sedgwick, then, is not merely delighted by *The Pirate*, but she is also thinking about it critically in terms of how its characters resonate and might be considered role models for young women who were trying to be independent and self-sufficient. Unlike Scott's novels where the violent men are constructed as ambiguous heroes, Sedgwick's heroines prove their independence by thwarting these violent men. Therefore, Sedgwick's revision serves a dual purpose of

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<sup>20</sup> For a more detailed comparison of *The Pirate* with *The Pilot* and *The Red Rover*, see Burwick and Powell, 87-88, 95-97.

<sup>21</sup> See "Miss Sedgwick to Mrs. Channing" in *Life and Letters of Catharine M. Sedgwick*.

highlighting the dangers of violent men and giving women more active roles in policing them.

In *The Pirate*, Scott draws on Byron's model to create an ambiguous and potentially violent pirate figure in the form of Clement Cleveland. Cleveland is found washed ashore on the Scottish island of Shetland following a shipwreck and spends the majority of the novel among the community there, rather than pirating on the sea. The novel defines "pirate" in legal terms because Cleveland is not labeled as such until it is discovered that he was pirating English and Dutch ships in addition to the Spanish (192). By pirating the Spanish, he was a government-sanctioned privateer; by pirating the English, a criminal pirate.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, Cleveland's crew returns, and the other characters learn that he is a feared pirate from the Caribbean. As Burwick and Powell trace, Cleveland was based on the ruthless historical pirate John Gow, but Scott does not adhere to the historical example because he gives his pirate a redemption arc.<sup>23</sup> In order to complete this change, the novel undermines Cleveland's fearsome reputation by explaining that he was actually working to restrain his more vicious crew. The narrative presents Cleveland's backstory as sympathetic, saying that he was "involved in evil rather by the concurrence of external circumstances than by natural inclination, being, indeed, one in whom his first engaging in this lawless mode of life, as the follower of his father, nay, perhaps, even his pursuing it as his father's avenger, carried with it something of mitigation and apology" (318). Cleveland is presented as more civilized and "being of

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<sup>22</sup> Burwick and Powell explore the question of when a pirate is considered a pirate in *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, and Barbara Fuchs considers a range of piratical terms in "Faithless Empires."

<sup>23</sup> For an overview of John Gow's pirate career see Burwick and Powell, *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, 77.

another species” than his crew, and he only acts the part of a bloodthirsty pirate to ensure their loyalty to him (191). This characterization gains him the trust of the other characters and the love of Minna, but it does not prevent him from being held accountable by the law.

At the same time, these noble impulses save Cleveland’s life. When Cleveland is eventually captured at the end of the novel, these contradictions are placed alongside one another. While the rest of his crew (with the exception of one loyal follower) are convicted and hanged, Cleveland is pardoned for an earlier act of “protecting, at the hazard of [his] own life, the honour of two Spanish ladies against the brutality of [his] followers” (339). These divergent legal decisions highlight the separation between Cleveland, who has more gentlemanly characteristics, and his crew. Even though Cleveland does not share the fate of his crew, the legal process of the trial and pardon demonstrate that Scott is willing to solve the problem of violent men with the law, which makes it unnecessary for the female characters to take up arms and commit violent acts like Byron’s Gulnare.

Despite his legal pardon, the novel is not entirely confident of Cleveland’s ability to be redeemed. At the end of the narrative, Cleveland joins a ship sailing for the Spanish Main in order to serve his country, and when Minna hears of his death, she is grateful that “he had been snatched from a situation of temptation ere circumstances had overcome his new-born virtue” (344). Thus, Minna’s belief that Cleveland could easily be tempted back into his old ways raises the question of whether or not he has changed and potentially undercuts his representation as civilized and redeemable, which suggests that

Scott's legal solution, although necessary, might not be infallible. It also places Cleveland in a liminal space between the gentleman and the pirate because he dies before he could illustrate whether or not he was reformed.

In order to enter the conversation about who was allowed to use violence and in what circumstances, Sedgwick and Cooper built on the figure of the pirate established by Byron and Scott. By rewriting Scott's *The Pirate*, which ultimately turns to the legal system to prosecute the pirate of the title, both Cooper and Sedgwick argue for the importance of individual choice over legal consequences to keep violent men in line, but they deviate on which individuals' choices matter to this form of policing. For Cooper, men restrain other men and themselves, relying on a hierarchy founded on inner character. The law is relegated to the background while the emphasis is placed on which men are disciplined enough to control themselves and which men need to be controlled by others. The Red Rover in particular does not require others to control him; instead, Cooper provides him with gentlemanly qualities and patriotic impulses. The novel bypasses the Revolutionary War and ends twenty years after its main plot with the Rover mortally wounded. In addition to revealing that he is the hero's uncle, the Rover tells him that after they parted ways, "I long hid my repentance, and my shame, together...but this war drew me from my concealment. Our country needed us both, and both she has had! You have served as one who never offended might serve; but a cause so holy was not to be tarnished by a name like mine. May the little I have done for good be remembered, when the world speaks of the evil of my hands!" (521). Not only did the Rover survive the explosion that occurred at his last appearance, but he repented of his crimes and

fought on the side of the colonies during the war. It was the same patriotic impulse that took him from the British Navy to a life of piracy that led him to fight for his country in the Revolution; the former resulted in a desperate life of crime while the latter earned him forgiveness from his kinsmen at his death. The Rover's redemption does not occur as a result of him changing his criminal ways; instead, the reader slowly discovers over the course of the novel that he was a gentleman and a patriot all along, restraining himself and his violent crew. Because this hierarchy of control is based on relationships between men, the white women in the novel exist mostly as passive objects to be defended, rescued, and won in order to establish the moral character of the men, rather than taking an active role shaping identity and policing behavior.

While Sedgwick also establishes a merit-based hierarchy and places an emphasis on individual choice over the law, she and Cooper diverge on the role of women in policing violent behavior.<sup>24</sup> Through the actions of not only her heroines, but also secondary characters, Sedgwick pushes boundaries for female characters, a trend throughout her work which is cataloged as deviant by Jenifer Banks in “‘From Home to Home’” and developed in relation to secondary characters as alternate versions of femininity by Jennifer Camden in *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels* (235-236; 124). By deviating from the typical depictions of women, Sedgwick makes it clear that women must play an active role in policing violence,

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<sup>24</sup> See Brook Thomas, *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract*, for a discussion of the relationship between social status and economic position (3-4). He also notes that “contract’s promise could be evoked ideologically to create the illusion of equitable social relations when in fact they retrained a residue of inherited and realigned hierarchy” (5). This idea of obscuring the realities of class relations could be applied to both Sedgwick and Cooper who emphasizes the importance of individual choice, but maintain an implicit social hierarchy based on merit earned through characteristics that derive from notions of gentility.

especially when it is directed at themselves or other women. This assertiveness is necessary because, as Sedgwick illustrates, women are often the only ones in a position to make the choices that will prevent violence. Although this shift has the problematic implications of putting the responsibility for preventing violence on the women, rather than the unrestrained men, it also encourages women to take an active role in defending themselves instead of teaching them to rely on men (who might not be present or willing) to save them.

Both Sedgwick and Cooper offer significant revisions of Scott's *The Pirate*, and in doing so, they write Scott's legal solution out of the story. The British colonial navy is a threat for Cooper's Rover, but neither he nor his men are caught, and thus, there is no legal mechanism of a trial. However, more so than Scott, Cooper builds the Rover's character arc so that by the end of the story, it is clear that he is no longer in need of legal mechanisms to contain him (if he ever was). Although the law clearly exists in the world of Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* and others are put on trial, the reader never gets to see the buccaneers subjected to it. At their first appearance, they had been banished from Boston, but this only serves to emphasize the fact that the law is incapable of containing them. The ineffectiveness or absence of the law in both of these narratives allows the authors to foreground individual choice as a method for restraining violent behavior.<sup>25</sup> For each

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<sup>25</sup> In *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract*, Thomas explores different versions of agency in the late nineteenth century founded on liberal, republican, and corporate senses of self, wherein the liberal and republican versions differentiated by their beliefs about "the origins of individuals' duties and responsibilities" (270). As a result, liberals think of obligations in terms of contracts, whereas republicans focus on obligations based on social status (270-271). However, in scenarios in which violent men threaten women, these lines become blurred as the woman's obligation to protect herself is at once self-interested and in the service of the greater good if coupled with the idea that women provide a necessary moralizing and civilizing influence to those around them.



author, that choice takes a different form: men choosing to restrain themselves or other men, or women learning to rely on and defend themselves instead of waiting for rescue, but unlike Scott, neither American novelist requires a final endorsement from the law to support the characters' choices.

**“Master Spirit”: Pirates as Patriots and Women as Objects in Cooper’s *The Red Rover***

With the law virtually absent, questions surrounding the Red Rover’s intentions and moral character form the central issues in Cooper’s novel by the same name.<sup>26</sup> Set shortly before the start of the American Revolution, *The Red Rover* follows Harry Wilder’s attempt to capture the infamous pirate, the Red Rover, by going undercover as part of his crew. However, the protagonist’s primary goal quickly gets sidetracked and complicated when he learns that two women, Gertrude Grayson and Mrs. Wyllys, are passengers on the ship that the Red Rover has targeted. Although they do not take significant action in the plot, these white women, as objects to be captured or protected, become pieces in a contest of strength and cunning between the men. A conversation between the two women illustrates their position when one claims, “There may be wicked and evil-intentioned men in his majesty’s fleet; but we are surely safe from them, since fear of punishment, if not fear of disgrace, will be our protection” and the other responds, “I dread lest we find that the lawless spirits who harbor here submit to no laws except

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<sup>26</sup> According to Luis A. Iglesias in “And Yet He May Be Our Man,” *The Red Rover* was Cooper’s most successful sea novel (292). For a more detailed account of *The Red Rover*’s publication history and influence see Mackenthun, 72-73.

those of their own enacting, nor acknowledge any authority but that which exists among themselves” (320). This exchange suggests that only the threat of punishment as outlined by the law can protect women from violent men, and if they should find themselves in the hands of the pirates as the second woman fears, there can be no hope of protection. As a result, the initial conflict of the novel highlights the limitations of relying on others, in the form of legal mechanisms or heroic men, to protect women from violence. However, the events of the novel are constructed in such a way that the law is shown to be insufficient while the protection from men is demonstrated to be more reliable but not infallible. This revision illustrates the narrative’s struggle to devise a solution that will protect women from violent men who remain uncontained by the law.<sup>27</sup>

For Cooper, this conversation about the problem of violent men falls entirely within the realm of men. In his own words, Cooper saw his sea novels as responding to exclusively masculine concerns. In 1849 preface to *The Pilot*, the same in which he references Scott’s work, Cooper writes: “The Pilot could scarcely be a favorite with females. The story has little interest for them, nor was it much heeded by the author of the book, in the progress of his labors. His aim was to illustrate vessels and the ocean, rather than draw any pictures of sentiment and love” (viii). It should be noted that Cooper’s expectation of a male audience in no way negates the possibility that women were reading his novels. In fact, Susan Warner not only records reading *The Red Rover* in

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<sup>27</sup> While “rover” is most commonly another word for pirate, Rodney Hessinger explores a recurrent figure found in two ballads, one from 1801 (“The Men are All Rovers Alike”) and the other 1830 (“Dr. Stramonium” by Samuel Woodworth) who was identified as a “Rover,” but depicted a rake, rather than a pirate specifically. The first condemned the rover/rake and evoked sympathy for the women while the second celebrated the rover/rake as part of “an emerging subculture glorifying rakes in Jacksonian America,” which demonstrates changing attitudes toward men who pose a sexual threat to women (151-152).

her diary, but she dismisses the aspects that Cooper identified as feminine in favor of the naval and sea adventures: “O the inexpressible charm of the sea, and its thrilling adventures and chances, and the display of fine character in intelligence, coolness, and command! The interest of the love-story is absolutely nothing!—it is the fine naval characters and doings” (Warner 317). Regardless of actual audiences, Cooper, like many critics and scholars that followed, categorized his work and thus his audience in gendered and exclusionary terms. The 1834 preface to *The Red Rover* does not discuss the audience as explicitly as that of *The Pilot*; however, Cooper explains: “All that has been aimed at, in the way of moral, is to show the manner in which men of the fairest promise can be led astray by their wayward passions, and prove how narrow the boundaries become between virtue and vice, when education or neglect gives a false tendency to such minds as may contain the seeds of better things” (viii). Taken together, these prefaces create an argument that crime, punishment, and reform, but also exciting adventures, are primarily a concern of men and should be dealt with and experienced by them alone. And yet, *The Pilot* does contain not one, but three love stories, and ends with a double marriage. Likewise, *The Red Rover* includes a romance and spends a considerable portion of its pages worried about whether or not two women (one of them young and pretty) will sail on a ship targeted by the Rover and his crew. While Cooper’s prefaces claim the realm of sea adventure fiction as a masculine domain, the novels themselves illustrate a much more complex world that is constructing for its readers a particular kind of femininity, which often finds itself the target of the masculine violence that runs alongside it.

Because of this relationship, the white women of *The Red Rover* function primarily to give the vague threat posed by the Rover a target, making them little more than pieces in a game played between men. Even though the Red Rover never explicitly tells Wilder what his intentions toward Gertrude and Mrs. Wyllys are, Wilder suspects that the Rover intends to capture their vessel. Wilder goes to great lengths to convince the women that their vessel is unsafe and they should not take passage on it, making it clear that the central anxiety is not for the vessel itself, but for the women onboard. So convincing is his determination to get them to change their plans that when Wilder gets put in charge of their ship (through the Red Rover's intervention), Mrs. Wyllys reacts by telling him, "After the opinions you were pleased to express of this vessel...I did not expect to find you filling a place of so much responsibility here" (191). As this passage indicates, Wilder's efforts only succeed in making Mrs. Wyllys suspicious of *his* intentions, which perhaps is part of the game that the Red Rover is playing with him. Regardless of who triumphs, it is clear that the game is between Wilder and the Red Rover with the women merely existing as pieces to be used or prizes to be won. The women cannot be players in the game because, although Mrs. Wyllys has suspicions, neither woman is privy to the knowledge that it is being played, which suggests that women have no control over their own safety and cannot act to protect themselves.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> In "The Women of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales," Nina Baym argues that "Though Cooper's women have no power over men, they are vital for man's civilizations, and thus man has to take them along wherever he goes, and at whatever cost" (698). This assertion places women in a position of being necessary but passive. However, although the women in Cooper's novels are often not developed as complex characters, Juliet Shields makes a compelling case that they should not be ignored altogether because they are being used to illustrate the roles of women in nation formation (155).

Although the women are not presented as being able to protect themselves, Mrs. Wyllys does possess some unusual knowledge of the sea, which is initially used to position her as difficult to manipulate, but ultimately, works to place her in more danger. After Wilder tries to convince them that their ship is unfit for its journey, she tells Gertrude, “He certainly uttered nonsense part of the time...Gertrude, you are not as familiar with nautical expressions as myself” (149). In this case, Mrs. Wyllys possesses enough technical knowledge to know that what Wilder is telling them is not true, but she does not have enough knowledge or understanding of what is going on to realize that this means he is trying to help them. She lacks what Margaret Cohen identifies as “craft,” which consists of the professional practices of mariners that allow them to manage the perils of the sea (15). Later, when one of the Red Rover’s crew asks her a trick question about the placement of flags on a ship, she points out the mistake, earning the response, “Well answered, for petticoats!” (330). In terms of technical aspects of the ship and sea, Mrs. Wyllys’s knowledge is beyond what is expected for a woman, but she is unable to use this knowledge to protect herself from the Rover, and she inadvertently ensures that she and Gertrude remain in danger by insisting that they leave on the ship, despite Wilder’s attempts to warn them away. Likewise, Mrs. Wyllys compliments Gertrude that she shows the “capabilities...to become one day a seaman’s wife” because of the way Gertrude describes the beauty of the ship they are passing (197). In this passage, Mrs. Wyllys positions Gertrude’s future in terms of her husband’s occupation, rather than her own skills and knowledge. While Mrs. Wyllys has enough knowledge to get herself into trouble, Gertrude is only capable of observing and commenting on sea life without really

understanding or participating in it, which means she would have to rely on her husband and be incapable of assessing any dangers at sea on her own. Furthermore, Mrs. Wyllys's unladylike nautical knowledge contributes to her danger, implying that women would be better off like Gertrude—able to appreciate the beauty of the ship, but ignorant of how it works. As the central women in the novel, these depictions produce a pattern of white women as passive observers, who only get into more trouble the more knowledge they gain, rather than being active participants and affecting the course of their own stories.<sup>29</sup>

The two central women are contrasted with Cassandra, Gertrude's enslaved attendant. While Cassandra's depiction is far from unproblematic, she does model a different type of womanhood than the white women in the novel. Cassandra is briefly introduced at the start of the novel, vanishes for a couple hundred pages, only to reappear: "Here is Cassandra...who alone has nearly the strength of a man" (286). Although this passage suggests that her strength is positive, Hazel V. Carby has asserted in *Reconstructing Womanhood* that "Strength and ability to bear fatigue, argued to be so distasteful a presence in a white woman, were positive features to be emphasized in the promotion and selling of a black female field hand at a slave auction" (25). Even though Cassandra's strength is useful, it works to separate her from the ideal of white womanhood. Furthermore, Cooper does not develop her as a character and she only appears at brief moments in the novel. In this way, she illustrates Maria del Guadalupe Davidson's argument that "The white imagination...is unable to see the black woman as

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<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of Cooper's more active female characters see Luis A. Iglesias, "'And Yet He May Be Our Man.'" It is significant to note that Gertrude and Mrs. Wyllys, the central women in *The Red Rover*, do not share many traits with Cooper's cross-dressing sailors, and *The Red Rover* is only discussed in this article in terms of Roderick, the Rover's cross-dressed cabin boy. I will return to this discussion of cross-dressing female characters with *Fanny Campbell* in Chapter 3.

an individual; instead it typically sees black women through the lenses of certain general 'images' or 'archetypes' (194). However, I would argue that Cassandra's ability to impact the events of the plot offers an important deviation from this tendency to depict black women as stereotypes.

Despite these significant negative considerations, Cassandra is able to affect the events of the novel in ways that the white women are not. When their ship is wrecked and they are drifting in a boat on the ocean, Wilder "trusted the helm to the hands of Cassandra, who suffered the launch to vary a little from its course" (298). Letting the boat drift off course might indicate that Cassandra is not an able seaman, but the fact that Wilder turned the helm over to her demonstrates that she is at least competent to manage it, which separates her from Mrs. Wyllys who only has knowledge, rather than the skills, of sea craft. With regard to the gendering of craft, Cohen notes that "Women are generally barred from acceding to craft's empowered agency in the masculine fraternity of the sea" (96). As a result, Cassandra's knowledge of sea craft alone has the potential to give her agency that is usually reserved for men. When they spot the Red Rover's ship, Wilder refuses to let them signal it, but:

Cassandra alone was rebellious. She made stout objections against even a moment's delay, assuring the inattentive young seaman, that, should any evil come to her young mistress by his obstinacy, General Grayson would be angered; and she left him to reflect on the results of a displeasure that to her simple mind teemed with more danger than would attend the resentment of a monarch.

Provoked by his contumacious disregard of her remonstrances, the negress,

forgetting her respect, and blinded by her fears for her whom she had not only loved, but had been taught to reverence, seized the boathook, and unperceived by Wilder, fastened it to one of the linen clothes that had been brought from the wreck. (302-303)

Although Wilder soon notices and makes her take the signal down, she achieves her purpose since the other ship sees them and comes to their aid. Cassandra's action saves them, but the way it is presented is problematic because she is motivated by fear of her mistress's father and reverence for her mistress, placing her firmly in a racial and gendered hierarchy. Furthermore, the passage emphasizes her position with regard to the Graysons—equating the general to a monarch and reverence to Gertrude—instead of allowing her to act as her own agent. However, it is also important to note that Cassandra's perspective on the matter is never given. While Cassandra's actions are potentially undercut by her motivations, it is not insignificant that Cooper chose to give this role to a black woman. He could have easily placed a male character in her role—there could have been one sailor left alive who defied Wilder because he desperately wanted to be rescued—but instead, he chooses Cassandra.

Her character could be read as reinforcing racial hierarchies as she acts on behalf of her mistress, but she could also be read as pushing boundaries of race and gender because her actions are ultimately heroic and save the rest of the characters. Although the narrative tries to present her as lacking agency through her relationship to the Graysons, Cassandra's choice is her own, and it is in direct contrast to the wishes of Wilder, who is the only representative of white masculine authority present in the boat. In "The Body



Politic,” Beverly Guy-Sheftall has identified the “most essential aspect of what it meant to be a slave woman in the nineteenth century” as “the inability to control one’s own body” (30). In this particular scenario, Cassandra is able to affect what happens to her and for a brief moment, gains control over what happens to her body. Furthermore if Cassandra’s effort to signal the ship was presented differently, it could be read as unquestionably heroic, because without it, the boat would not have been rescued. However, Cassandra’s actions offered only a temporary solution as the characters go from drifting in a boat on the ocean to captives on a pirate ship. Even though Cassandra is granted some measure of agency, the novel ultimately places responsibility for solving the primary conflict on the Rover himself.

The reason Cooper’s solution of redirected male violence works owes much to his ambiguous characterization of the Rover, which draws from the gentleman pirate established by Byron and Scott. The Rover deviates from the earlier British models primarily on the basis of his strong underlying patriotism. Although the novel does initially establish that the Red Rover has a fearsome reputation as a pirate, it quickly links his piracy to his devotion to the colonies. In one of their many discussions, the Rover reveals to Wilder how he became a pirate, “Would you think it, sir; one of [the king’s] commanders dared to couple the name of my country with an epithet I will not wound your ear by repeating” (355). After the commander insulted the colonies, “He never repeated the offence. ‘Twas his blood or mine; dearly did he pay the forfeit of his brutality” (355). This backstory grounds the Rover’s piratical origins in violence, but in a particular type of violence founded on codes of honor and love of his country. As a result,

the Rover's decision to become a pirate would be admirable in the eyes of a patriotic American audience, which suggests that his violent origins are to be admired, rather than feared. The Red Rover, and by extension his turn to piracy, becomes the product of the inequality between the American colonies and Great Britain.<sup>30</sup> If Britain did not oppress the colonies, the Rover would not have started, nor continued, pirating. Despite the fact that the Red Rover "is said to keep chiefly to the Caribbean Sea," the conflict clearly foreshadowed the Revolution with the Red Rover aligning himself with the American cause, thus, giving him the audience's sympathy for his patriotic leanings (174).

While the novel makes some effort to represent the Red Rover as a less than upstanding individual, it is not very convincing and his violent acts of piracy are never presented in detail. By the time it begins, he has gained a reputation for "wild and audacious" enterprises and has a price on his head: "The king would pay him well who put the rogue into the hands of the law" (199, 174). The Red Rover never actually commits any acts of piracy in the novel—he plans to capture a ship and goes to great lengths to ensure that its female passengers remain on it, thus presenting a vague threat to them, but his plan is thwarted when the weather destroys the ship before he can capture it, and therefore, he never actually succeeds in his piratical plan. Through his discussion of his past, it is clear the Rover's reputation is based on previous fearsome acts of piracy and a history of solving problems through violence. For instance, he tells of a time when his crew became unruly, and "I got among them single-handed, and with no other aid

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<sup>30</sup> In "Killing Tom Coffin," Jason Berger reads the Rover being in "a private war against the nations of the early eighteen century" (664). However, the novel prioritizes the conflict between the Rover, who represents the American colonies, and Britain more so than any other nation.

than a boat from the shore; but I ask no more than a place for my foot, and room for an arm, to keep a thousand such spirits in order” (339). However, this instance could just as easily support the idea that he is a strong, brave leader. As Juliet Shields argues, Cooper connects manliness “with an American identity defined by chivalric sentiment and savage fortitude” (152). Even though the Rover’s past is violent, many of his qualities and actions could be read as much in the service of constructing white American masculinity, rather than specifically criminal behavior. Considering he is prevented from pirating the ship and never offers any violence to the women once he has them in his control, very few of his actions in the novel can even be considered criminal. The effort he exerts at the beginning of the novel to keep the women on the ship he planned to capture could simply be explained by the power game he is playing with Wilder as opposed to an actual intention to do them harm. This point is further underscored by the fact that the enemy commander says of the Red Rover, “Had he but the commission of the king in his pocket, one might call him a hero!” (485). With little evidence of criminal activities, most of the Red Rover’s actions categorize him as a hero being viewed from the wrong perspective.

Because the Rover’s piratical actions are not detailed, his reputation becomes rumor for the reader as well as the characters. Although the details of his crimes are unclear, his reputation implies that he had to have committed some of them in order to earn it. Furthermore, the Rover shows Wilder his treasure room, containing valuables, weapons, and captured flags, which serves as a testament to his piratical crimes (91-92, 98-102). Without a detailed history, most of the Red Rover’s menace arises from the way others react to his name and his frequent label as a “desperate freebooter” (199). Within

the novel itself, his past crimes are unclear, which makes it easier to construct him as having the potential for heroism. He only admits to one recent crime, beyond the one that caused him to leave the Navy: he had gone to Boston to free one of his crew through “[g]old and artifice,” despite the fact that he did not like the man very much (354). This scenario serves to further undermine his violence as he used bribery and deception to free his crew member. Even in this crime, the Rover demonstrates loyalty to his followers, which implies that even though he is being presented as a criminal, he is also being constructed as a responsible leader.

Because much of the Rover’s reputation is founded on rumor, Cooper is able to explain it away as merely exaggerated stories, further undermining the idea that the Rover is a violent and out of control man. At one point, the Rover declares himself “[t]he monster of the seas, he who plunders defenceless fishermen, ravages unprotected coasts, and eludes the flag of King George” (450). However, when another character repeats a similar description, Wilder responds that it is “no more than the embellishments of vulgar rumour” (467). And the enemy commander, who is Wilder’s superior officer, comments, “I saw nothing, sir, of his shaggy whiskers, heard nothing of his brutal voice, nor perceived any of those monstrous deformities which are universally acknowledged to distinguish the man” after he learns that he had met the Red Rover in disguise (467). This passage makes it clear that rumor has warped the Red Rover into having “universally acknowledged” inhuman qualities. While most of the rumors surrounding the Rover serve to position him as a dangerous villain, his reputation does contain some redeeming factors which work alongside his patriotism to lay the groundwork for his eventual

redemption. Mrs. Wyllys finds that some positive aspects creep into the Rover's reputation as she explains:

Even the tales of the time, which recounted the desperate acts of the freebooters, with wild and fanciful exaggerations, did not forget to include numberless instances of even chivalrous generosity. In short, he [the Red Rover] bore the character of one who, while he declared himself the enemy of all, knew how to distinguish between the weak and the strong, and who often found as much gratification in repairing the wrongs of the former as in humbling the pride of the latter. (384)

While rumor turns the Red Rover into something less than human, it also depicts him as chivalrous and a champion of justice. This characterization draws directly from Scott's pirate who had a fearsome reputation that was ultimately explained away by belonging to his crew while he worked to restrain them. In both cases, it allows the pirate to shift more easily into the realm of hero, or at least moral ambiguity, because he does not have to account for his own violent deeds.

This dual characterization places the Rover in the position of the gentleman pirate, a figure that Cooper seemed particularly interested in exploring. According to his 1834 preface, Cooper was thinking about the relationship between criminals and gentlemen, or those who are "favoured by fortune." He writes:

It was also believed it might be useful to show that crime can be committed under a fair exterior, and that men are not always to be thought monsters because they fail in some one important quality, by which they have justly forfeited the esteem

of their fellow-creatures; for, in general, as much harm is done by the ruthless denunciations of those who, favoured by fortune, are removed from the dangers of temptation themselves, as by the example of the criminal. (viii)

While the Red Rover fits the description of someone who forfeited the esteem of his fellow creatures but is not a monster, Cooper provides no counter-example of crime being committed under a fair exterior or someone removed from the dangers of temptation by fortune. However, this passage indicates that Cooper was exploring the moral gray area occupied by gentleman criminals.<sup>31</sup> Erin Mackie argues that these types of gentleman criminal characters are appealing because they possess “that very kind of absolute authority which had been supplanted by the revisions of patriarchy” (11). Although Mackie’s argument centers on the eighteenth century, this more stable version of masculinity founded on gentility would be equally appealing amid the contested masculinity of antebellum America. Building on the trope of the gentleman pirate and based on concrete evidence of actions in the novel, rather than vague rumor and reputation, the net result positions the Rover as more of a misunderstood martial patriot and less of a violent, brutal, out of control criminal.

A key component of being characterized as a gentleman pirate—and thus being able to wield legitimized violence—was the Rover’s superiority over his men. These positive aspects of his character are further emphasized by the Rover’s identification as a “master spirit” over his men and “a prince among his followers” (344, 353). In addition

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<sup>31</sup> It is important to note, however, that in economic terms, the Red Rover is not a gentleman. When Mrs. Wyllys realizes that the reformed Rover is her brother, she explains: “Poverty and misfortune divided us. I suppose we thought each other dead” (520).

to giving his protagonist redemptive qualities, Cooper establishes that the Red Rover is more disciplined than his crew, which reflects a common division in pirate stories where the pirate leader is presented as exemplary and above his unruly men. In “Killing Tom Coffin,” Berger discusses Cooper’s view that not only were officers necessary for leadership on a ship, but that such men should come from “the traditional ‘best families’ of the nation” (656). Although the Rover does not originate in a high economic class, he is characterized as having many of the qualities of a gentleman, which works to reinforce the idea of a merit-based class hierarchy. It is his words alone that stop a mutiny that would have resulted in one of his officers being thrown overboard. He explains the lack of discipline to Wilder by saying, “The rascals knew my eye was off them,” but the narrator assures the reader that “[T]he skilful leader of this band of desperate marauders knew how to curb their violence with the fetters of discipline” (339, 338). In this scenario, the Rover, following the pattern established by Cleveland in *The Pirate*, must work to restrain the violence of other men.

Not only does the Rover know how to restrain himself and his men, but he feels honor bound to them.<sup>32</sup> When Wilder proposes that they leave the ship and its crew, the Rover responds, “Mr. Wilder, your proposal would make me a villain! Lawless, in the opinion of the world, have I long been; but a traitor, to my faith and plighted word, never!” (354). In this instance the Rover sees breaking his word as worse than his other crimes, which implies that he holds himself to some gentlemanly code of honor.

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<sup>32</sup> As Amy S. Greenberg discusses in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, these notions of honor and self-control are often associated with “Southern gentlemen, and the yeomen farmers who idealized them,” who “embraced militarism as the pinnacle of masculine virtue, showing strength, mastery, and self-control” (271). However, Greenberg argues that “a culture of martial manhood bridged sectional divides” as well (272).

However, it is worth noting that he is more concerned with breaking his word than breaking the law; therefore, the code of honor does not necessarily align with the legal code. Eventually, when the Rover decides to part ways with his crew, he tells them, “[T]he covenant is now ended” (511), formally severing their ties, rather than simply running off as one would expect a completely unrestrained man to do. This passage also reinforces his connection to American origins through rhetoric surrounding the American Revolution and the formation of the United States.<sup>33</sup> The Red Rover, from his origins to his end, maintains his self-discipline and conducts himself with honor. Through him, Cooper implicitly makes a case for certain men being capable of restraining themselves—even a fearsome pirate like the Red Rover has codes of honor and lines he will not cross; he does not need the law, or a wife, or a government of his peers to make sure his violence will not become too villainous. The fact that his men are not restrained like him builds on this idea by establishing a merit-based hierarchy in which men police other men, which in turn implies that the United States would be best served by individuals who know how to restrain themselves, rather than strict laws or military forces.

While the Red Rover is far from unambiguously evil on his own, the novel does introduce some element of the redemptive influence of white women, an idea which is taken up by later authors of pirate stories.<sup>34</sup> The narrator explains that the Red Rover’s

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<sup>33</sup> Many documents associated within the origins of America prioritize contract, including John Winthrop’s “A Model of Christian Charity,” *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*. For discussions of the rhetoric and political thinking see Eric Slauter, “Reading and Radicalization” and Gordon S. Wood, “Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution.” For how these ideas developed in the late nineteenth century, see Thomas’s *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract*.

<sup>34</sup> In *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*, Barbara Cutter defines “redemptive womanhood” as woman’s “ability to use her special moral, religious, and nurturing nature to redeem others” (7). This idea of redemptive womanhood was, of course, not exclusive to pirate stories, and Cutter addresses it in a more



life experience had taught him “the necessity of keeping tight those cords which experience has so often proved are absolutely necessary to quell such turbulent bands, when removed from the pale of society, the influence of woman, and when excited by the constant collision of tempers rudely provoked and equally disposed to violence” (338-339). This passage not only implies that men become more violent when they are removed from society, but also when they are specifically isolated from the company of women. When the crew discovers that Wilder is a double agent, they decide to hang him, but Mrs. Wyllys pleads for her recently discovered son’s life, offering ransom and then begging them to spare him. She almost succeeds: “The grim freebooters regarded each other in doubt ; the workings of nature manifesting themselves even in their stern and hardened visages” but “[t]he result would have been doubtful” had the Red Rover not appeared and declared that he would decide on the case the next day (508). Through these passages, Cooper acknowledges the ability of women to influence men in a positive manner, but he denies them the opportunity to exercise those abilities to influence the course of the novel—it is the Rover who controls the situation and makes the ultimate decision—leaving the female characters in a passive background role of almost, but not quite, affecting what happens to them. Although Cooper seems primarily interested in offering the solution of men policing men, his construction of his female characters highlights the fact that women had very few options when confronted with violent men.

Even though Mrs. Wyllys does not succeed in saving Wilder on her own, her presence is necessary to give the Red Rover a reason to save him. Earlier when Mrs.

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general sense. In a well-known example from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe demonstrates this idea through Mrs. Bird when she puts religious morals and ethics above politics and the law (101-102).

Wyllys told a story of her childhood, the Red Rover realized (but did not acknowledge) that she was his sister, and thus, when she identifies Wilder as her son and pleads for his life, the Rover must also recognize that Wilder is his nephew, even though it is never explicitly mentioned by him or the narrator. Mrs. Wyllys's role in bringing about a positive conclusion for the protagonist results from her existence because she brings the male characters together as family; however, her role does not require her to take action, but simply passively exist. It is the Red Rover who must ultimately decide to let Wilder go. Giving the crew treasure, he claims "these prisoners alone for my portion" (511). He declares Wilder off-limits to his crew's vengeance and releases him along with the women who are still under his protection. Although it is most likely motivated by his familial connection, the Red Rover's final act against the people he manipulated into his power is one of selflessness and protection, which is more in character for a gentleman than a pirate.

Through the Rover's character and the women in the novel, Cooper explores the roles of men and women in antebellum America and how they should respond to violence. Although the Red Rover seems to be a dangerous criminal feared by the other characters, Cooper capitalizes on the ambiguity of pirates to explain most of his reputation away as rumor and to give him honorable origins grounded in defending the colonies from British insults. The result is a redemption arc even more troubling than that of the charismatic gentleman criminal, troubling because the Rover does not realize the error of his ways and reform; instead, it is the reader's perspective that shifts, and without changing, the Rover releases the pieces (Wilder and the women) he has won in the game.

Not playing much of a part beyond passive game pieces are the female characters, who hint at possibilities for intellect or action to oppose the threat of violence, but these possibilities are ultimately undermined or left undeveloped. Cooper uses the adventure story not only to construct a violent, individualistic, and patriotic masculinity, but also a passive, potentially calming, and relatively helpless femininity. The focus remains on the male characters, and if the Rover is being presented as a role model for male readers, the novel does little to depict his past criminal actions or his present manipulation as wrong. As the reader nears the end, it is not even clear that the fearsome pirate, the Red Rover, needs redemption since he is already playing the part of the honorable gentleman.

**“Our New Country Develops Faculties”: Problem-solving Women and  
Unrestrained Pirates in Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie***

In contrast, *Hope Leslie* presents a very different image of unruly behavior and the roles of women and of pirates.<sup>35</sup> The main plot takes place in the 1640s, in and around the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay, where the title character must attempt to aid her friends while avoiding romantic entanglements with the villainous Sir Philip Gardiner. It is Gardiner who brings the piratical characters into the story. Writing to a friend, Gardiner explains his plan to kidnap Hope Leslie, adding, “Our old acquaintance Chaddock is riding in the harbor here...Now I think if I should have occasion to smuggle any precious freight, and convey it over the deep waters, convenient opportunity and fit

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<sup>35</sup> Although she has received less critical attention, Sedgwick, like Cooper, was a popular author during her time. In fact, Harriet Martineau passes over Irving and Cooper to discuss Sedgwick: “She is the most popular writer, we believe, in the United States” (excerpted in Damon-Bach and Clements 155).

agents will not be wanting” (211-212).<sup>36</sup> Introduced into the narrative as “the same bold desperado” that Gardiner knew previously, Chaddock and his crew play a small and often overlooked part in the plot *Hope Leslie*, in which they exhibit the unrestrained behavior and violence that one would expect, but does not find, in Cooper’s *Rover*.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, Hope is very different than the passive female characters of *The Red Rover*, behaving in ways that many of the other characters consider undesirable for young women. Initially, Hope lives on a frontier settlement with the Fletchers, removed from the extension of English authority that can be found in Boston. When her aunt tells Hope that exploring the wilderness is “unladylike” and “unheard of in England,” Hope responds “that our new country developes faculties that young ladies, in England, were unconscious of possessing” (98). In a similar manner to the Red Rover’s decisions to defy authority due to his connection to the colonies, Hope specifically links environment to the development of the ability to exert herself more than proper English women. In this manner, Sedgwick borrows the independence, with an underlying patriotism, often associated with the wilderness in stories centered on male characters in order to develop a more assertive version of American femininity. However, unlike Cooper’s *Red Rover*, Hope is not linked to a violent version of patriotism.

Connected to her contrasting vision of the roles of women, Sedgwick had a broader conception of her audience than Cooper. In the preface to her final novel,

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<sup>36</sup> It is worth noting that Gardiner refers to Hope as “precious freight” in this passage, drawing a similar connection to Cooper’s *The Red Rover* of women as objects. However, in *Hope Leslie*, this connection is undermined by the actively involved heroine.

<sup>37</sup> Most scholarship surrounding Sedgwick’s novels focuses on marital status or women more broadly, representation of Native Americans in the case of *Hope Leslie*, and to a lesser extent, questions of citizenship. For an overview, and the only book-length treatment of Sedgwick, see *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Lucinda Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements.

*Married or Single?* (1857), Sedgwick claims, “Aside from the great tasks of humanity, for which masculine capacities are best fitted, we believe she [a woman] has an independent power to shape her own course, and to force her separate sovereign way” (6). In this manner, Sedgwick illustrates a confidence that women can be independent much like her heroines. With the preface to *Hope Leslie*, Sedgwick considers a broader audience: “the ambition of the writer would be fully gratified if, by this work, any of our young countrymen should be stimulated to investigate the early history of their native land” (4).<sup>38</sup> “Countrymen” is an ambiguous term that might be referring to men and women or just men, but either way, she was not exclusively addressing her novel to young women and telling men that they would not be interested like Cooper did. Sedgwick’s words reflect the content of her novels, which seem to be straightforward domestic fiction—historical romance in the case of *Hope Leslie* and a novel of manners with *Clarence*—but each contain unexpected elements of adventure including pirates, jailbreaks, duels, explosions, carriage chases, cliffside rescues and wilderness escapades, which makes categorizing her novels equally complex. Even though she is primarily read as a domestic novelist, she was similarly interested in high-stakes scenarios and the role that women would play in violent situations.<sup>39</sup>

With regard to *Hope Leslie*, these moments of potential violence center on scenarios in which Hope comes into contact with the buccaneer, Chaddock, and his crew,

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<sup>38</sup> This potentially gender neutral audience is reiterated in the *Married or Single?* preface when Sedgwick states that young friends “will receive the fruits of her observation on the defects and wants of our social life with ingenuousness, and perhaps with some profit” (5). This passage also underscores the idea that Sedgwick’s novels could provide readers with guidance in their own lives.

<sup>39</sup> In “Disinterest as Moral Corrective in *Clarence*’s Cultural Critique,” Patricia Larson Kalayjian argues against categorizing *Clarence* as domestic fiction, claiming that “Sedgwick herself would not have narrowed her field of readers in a like manner” (105-106).

who are constructed as being unrestrained and violent. In contrast with Cooper's vague treatment of the Rover's criminal activities, Sedgwick establishes from the beginning that the buccaneers are not honorable or misunderstood loyal citizens of the colonies. At their first appearance, the narrator explains, "The disorders of both master, and men, had given such offence to the sober citizens of Boston, that they had been prohibited from entering the town; and the men having been on this occasion allowed by their captain to indulge in a revel on land, they had betaken themselves to an uninhabited island, where they might give the reins to their excesses, without dread of restraint or penalty" (250). As this passage illustrates, the buccaneers are introduced into the text as outsiders. In addition to being kept outside of Boston physically, the reactions of the citizens to their unruly behavior places them outside of the realm of what is acceptable. From their introduction, the buccaneers are constructed as deviant in a way that none of the previous British or American pirate figures were.

In order to add authenticity to her revision of the pirate as unpatriotic and tyrannical, thereby demonstrating that these behaviors were a documented problem, Sedgwick draws on John Winthrop's journal in order to establish a parallel between her buccaneers and historical figures. She based the character Chaddock on a real person, Captain John Chaddock, whom John Winthrop writes about in his journal. Winthrop describes the incident on which this scene is based:

[S]o soon as they came on shore, they fell to drinking, &c. and that evening, the captain [Chaddock] and his master being at supper and having drank too much, the captain began to speak evil of the country, swearing fearfully, that we were a

base heathen people. His master answered that he had no reason to say so, for it was the best place that ever he came in. Upon these and other speeches the captain arose and drew his sword, and the master drew forth his pistol, but the company staying them from doing any mischief, the captain sware blood and wounds he would kill him. (149-150)

In a reverse of the Red Rover's origin story, this historical Chaddock gets into a violent conflict by insulting the colonies, rather than defending them from the insult of others. Winthrop continues that both men are then fined, describing "the captain, who had formerly misused other of his men, and was a very proud and intemperate man" (150). Therefore, in direct contrast to the gentlemanly Red Rover who would not abandon his crew, Chaddock is not good to his men. This connection links the fictional buccaneers to historical individuals, something that Cooper does not do.<sup>40</sup> Cooper's lack of historical grounding adds to the ambiguous nature of his Rover, whereas Sedgwick underscores the real problem of this type of unruly and violent behavior by drawing on historical examples.

From the outset, Chaddock and his crew are set apart from the other characters not only by their behavior and their physical location, but by their connection to the Caribbean, which is established through their label of buccaneers and their past activities on the Caribbean island of Tortuga. The continued connection to Winthrop's journal creates additional emphasis for the Caribbean origins by identifying the historical Captain

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<sup>40</sup> In fact, Cooper explicitly stated that he did not base *The Red Rover* on a historical person or events in his 1834 preface: "The object of the book is to paint sea scenes, and to describe nautical usages and nautical character, and not at all to embody any real events. There never was any such freebooter as the hero of this tale, nor did the writer ever hear of the appellation which he has given him. As respects to himself, the name of Red Rover is as much invention as any other part of the book" (vii-viii).

John Chaddock as the son of the former governor of Bermuda and describes Chaddock as having made multiple voyages to the Caribbean (149). Even Gardiner, the primary antagonist and a disguised Catholic, originates in Europe. Because he appears at several disconnected points in the novel, Chaddock receives multiple introductions, one of which explains that Gardiner “knew him to be a desperate fellow—that he had once been in confederacy with the bucaniers of Tortuga—the self-styled ‘brothers of the coast,’ and he believed that he might be persuaded to enter upon any new and lawless enterprise” (334). Both of these terms—“bucanier” and “brothers of the coast”—are not used to describe pirates in general but a particular group of pirates with a particular historical setting.

Unlike Cooper’s Red Rover, who also sailed in the Caribbean, these buccaneers are not given a stronger link to any other place; therefore, they are unable to draw on the same type of patriotic rhetoric as Cooper’s pirate. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term buccaneer was first given “to the French hunters of St. Domingo, who prepared the flesh of the wild oxen and boars” in a particular way “after the manner of the Indians,” with the earliest use being in 1661. By 1693, ‘buccaneer’ came to be used as “A name given to piratical rovers who formerly infested the Spanish coast in America.” Both of these definitions link the outlaws specifically to the Caribbean. Considering that the term “pirate” had been in use since at least the fifteenth century, Sedgwick’s choice of the word “bucanier” to describe Chaddock emphasizes the connection between these piratical characters and the Caribbean, setting them apart from the rest of the characters in the novel and linking them to a particular group of piratical individuals who went on pirating expeditions throughout the Caribbean, destroying towns



or holding them for ransom, robbing and often killing many of the inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> By selecting this particular term to describe her piratical characters, Sedgwick connected them to a specific violent historical context that was outside British North America, unlike the Red Rover, who as merely a pirate could actually be a supporter of the colonies on the verge of revolution.

In addition to associating the buccaneers with a geographically separate place, Sedgwick draws on a tradition of demonizing historical pirates, which allows her to suggest that they are outside of the human race. In *Villains of All Nations*, Marcus Rediker claims that historical pirates were often demonized: “Many writers, referring to pirates, agreed that ‘the name of Men they do not deserve.’ So they re-created the outlaws as sub-human beings—monsters, demons and animals,” and presented them as in league with the devil: “Pirates were held up as the antithesis of the Christian way of life. They were possessed by Satan...Pirates did not have the fear of God before their eyes and were instigated by the devil” (131-132). Sedgwick evokes this historical tradition when Barnaby the jailer thinks that Gardiner’s “profane swearing exceedeth Chaddock’s men, or Chaddock either, or the master they serve” (273). In this passage, “the master they serve” is the devil, which not only links the two main villains, Gardiner and Chaddock, with yet another unruly behavior in the form of swearing, but it also identifies the guiding force of their actions and villainy as supernatural evil. In this manner, their villainy and violence construct them not only as outsiders in the city of Boston, or even simply as criminals breaking a law, but also as being outside the human race through their

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<sup>41</sup> For a detailed account of the buccaneers written by a man who claimed to have sailed with them, see Alexander O. Exquemelin’s *The Buccaneers of America*.

connection to the devil. Sedgwick places a final emphasis on this connection after Gardiner's death at the end of the novel when the narrator explains, "All the bodies of the sufferers were finally recovered, except that of Sir Philip Gardiner; and the inference of our pious forefathers, that Satan had seized upon that as his lawful spoil, may not be deemed, by their skeptical descendants, very unnatural" (369). But Sedgwick is not just demonizing pirates, she is also condemning a certain set of violent and unrestrained behaviors. Through this characterization, Sedgwick makes a clear argument that these behaviors cannot be reformed or tolerated, and if left unrestrained, they will only cause death and destruction. However, unlike Cooper, she does not entertain the possibility that these men are capable of restraining themselves.

By placing the buccaneers in opposition to Hope, Sedgwick also highlights the fact that masculine violence was often directed at women, and relying on others for protection was an insufficient solution. Chaddock and his men demonstrate these violent inclinations when Hope finds them passed out on the beach after they "had been indulging in a lawless revel" and begs their aid: "If ye have the soul of a man...protect me—convey me to Boston. Any reward that you will ask or take shall be given to you" (250-251). Despite her appeal to his compassion, the buccaneer responds, "There's no reward could pay for you, honey" (251). When she runs, they chase her. Instead of relying on someone to save her, Hope extracts herself from this situation with the help of an Italian crew member, who had remained sober and believed her to be a Catholic saint. Hope's interaction with the buccaneers on the beach emphasizes the fact that a woman

could easily find herself isolated in a situation with violent men, thus reinforcing the need for female agency.

Unlike Mrs. Wyllys who is only suggested as a civilizing force while the Rover has the final say, Hope is actually successful, on her own and isolated from all forms of authority, in guiding a man on the path of redemption. Hope uses the buccaneer's devotion to his patron saint to give authority to her efforts to convince him to change his ways as she tells him, "thou hast proved thyself by withdrawing from thy vile comrades. To take part in their excesses would but endanger thine eternal welfare—bear this in mind" (253). The sailor takes her words to heart, and as the reader discovers near the end of the narrative, he tried to warn the governor of the plan to kidnap Hope (357). While *The Red Rover* contained an unclear instance of a woman participating in the redemption of a pirate in the form of Mrs. Wyllys revealing her familial connection to the Rover, *Hope Leslie* offers this brief instance of successful redemptive womanhood. However, it is not a solution that Sedgwick presents for the majority of the buccaneers and this man is somewhat of an anomaly for having remained sober during his crewmates' drunken revel. Perhaps, then, Sedgwick is suggesting that redemptive womanhood is not a universal solution, but it can work if the man has not gone too far down the path of villainy. The behavior of the rest of the buccaneers, from disruptive to excessive drinking to chasing Hope, sets them apart from the man who answers her plea for protection and is later redeemed.

For the rest who refuse to be redeemed, these actions exhibit a particular type of criminality: these buccaneers are villains due to their unwillingness to restrain their

behavior in any way, and as a result they are presented as a direct threat to women. Through the buccaneers, Sedgwick offers a critique of the gentleman pirate by showing that men cannot always be relied upon to restrain themselves. As a result, their actions place them in contrast to the Red Rover, who was defined as different from his men specifically as a result of his ability to restrain himself. While Cooper shifts the perceptions of the reader to move the Rover from a villain in need of redemption into a champion of liberty, Sedgwick demonstrates the dangers of liberty taken too far by having her buccaneers exhibit unrestrained behavior in multiple scenarios. Unlike Cooper's Red Rover, Sedgwick does not try to position Chaddock as an exemplary exception, different from his men. Instead, *Hope Leslie* denies Chaddock any claims to gentlemanliness. When Gardiner reminds Chaddock, "You have pledged me the honour of a gentleman," Chaddock responds, "Remember, Sir Philip....remember our motto, 'Trusted, we are true—suspected, we betray'" (336). This motto illustrates a determination to match trust with trust and deceit with deceit, which could result in rather fluid loyalties, depending on the circumstances, and is very different from the Rover's insistence on an honorable obligation to his men. When Gardiner again references Chaddock's fidelity, Chaddock mutters to himself that "he has my vessel in pledge" because while Chaddock accompanies his crew to kidnap Hope, Gardiner remains behind, controlling Chaddock's ship (337). This honorable pledge of a gentleman becomes empty words to cover the actual situation in which Gardiner controls the means of Chaddock's livelihood. The actions of Chaddock and his crew support the idea that they do not have gentlemanly qualities, which places them in a lower status position,

even with respect to Gardiner, allowing Sedgwick to critique the idea of the gentleman pirate as depicted by her male contemporaries. Chaddock and his men are presented as similar to one another—equally villainous and unrestrained, rather than the image of the gentleman pirate leader restraining a violent crew found in Scott’s *The Pirate* and Cooper’s *The Red Rover*.

Although she does not include a gentleman pirate in charge of her buccaneers, Sedgwick does provide one potentially redeemable, and gentlemanly, piratical character in the form of Rosa, Gardiner’s mistress.<sup>42</sup> Connected to the buccaneers through Gardiner, Rosa shares their outsider status and conventionally unacceptable behavior, although the novel presents her more as a victim than a villain. Based on her name and the quotations from *As You Like It* at the beginning of some of the chapters in *Hope Leslie*, Rosa could be a reference to the character of Rosalind in that play; however, Rosalind’s disguise as a man aids her agency and the positive conclusion of the play while Rosa only becomes a powerful problem-solver—and in a destructive manner—when she reclaims her female identity. Perhaps, then, Sedgwick is rewriting Shakespeare to illustrate that problems cannot be solved by simply turning women into men; it is only through reclaiming her female identity that Rosa gains agency and is able to thwart the villain. Introduced into the novel as Roslin, Gardiner’s male page, Rosa, the child of an English nobleman and a French actress, is an outsider in more ways than one. While in disguise, Rosa obeys Sir Philip’s commands even when he requires her aid in his plot to

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<sup>42</sup> Camden argues that “Rosa’s language reveals her belief in the chivalric code,” which informs her ideas about honor and worthlessness (128). Camden makes a gendered distinction between Gardiner’s ability to manipulate chivalric code and Rosa’s inability which leads to her death, but this connection could also serve to illustrate the ways in which Rosa had internalized the ideals of gentlemanliness.

win Hope's love. In a passage that would be echoed in later pirate stories, Rosa tells Hope, "I!—what am I? Sir Philip Gardner's slave" (168). Controlled by her passions, Rosa defies the authority of Puritan law, but at the same time, the society she is in, one in which she could not exist as a woman, is hostile to her. Although Rosa insists that her love for Gardiner keeps her with him, she also implies that social disapproval prevents her from leaving her current situation.<sup>43</sup> Rosa exclaims, "Where shall I go! if I go to the good, they will frown on me, and despise me; and I cannot go to the wicked,—they have no pity" (203). She remains with Sir Philip because she has no other options. Much like the Red Rover, Rosa made one bad decision that placed her in an outcast position from which she feels she cannot return. Respectable citizens would condemn her, and no one else would care. However, her alignment with Gardiner and his plan is an uncomfortable one as she befriends Hope and even tells her that Gardiner's goal is to replace Rosa with Hope, warning her in a roundabout way of his intentions toward Hope (257). Unlike Gardiner who is motivated by greed and the buccaneers who simply refuse to restrain themselves, Rosa's representation is more complicated: her actions are her choice, but her choices are dependent upon her love for Gardiner, whose orders she follows, and limited by what is socially acceptable.

In a similar manner to *The Red Rover*, and many other pirate stories, much of *Hope Leslie's* plot is devoted to the antagonist's attempts to get a woman into his power and the protagonist's attempts to stop him. However, unlike *The Red Rover*, the women

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<sup>43</sup> According to Clare A. Lyons in *Sex Among the Rabble*, the "seduction-to-prostitution narrative" was "so dominant in the print culture" of early America that reforms often assumed that it matched the experiences of actual women, and that once seduced, they would have no other options but prostitution (332).

of *Hope Leslie* fight back. In the scene mentioned earlier where Hope encounters the buccaneers on the beach, she enlists the help of another to free herself from a hostile situation. The narrative places emphasis on this self-rescue by having Hope defend her actions to a disapproving Winthrop when she returns. When Winthrop and Mr. Fletcher object to her strategy of masquerading as a Catholic saint, Hope turns to her pious friend Esther for judgment on what she should have done. Esther responds, “I would rather, Hope, thou hadst trusted thyself wholly to that Providence that had so wonderfully wrought for thee thus far” (286). Hope agrees, but the narration makes it clear that she was just “glad to escape from any further discussion” (286). While the other characters emphasize that Hope should have done nothing and trusted Providence, the reader, having been present for that scene, knows that if Hope had done nothing, the buccaneers would have caught her. The scene on the beach and the conversation that condemns Hope’s actions illustrate that even if they are taught to trust Providence, in actual situations, young women must be resourceful in order to protect themselves from violent men, rather than relying on someone else to come to their rescue.

Further supporting the idea that women must play an active role in their own rescue, Sedgwick does not limit the rescue scenarios to Hope, but draws parallels between her actions and others, establishes a pattern of active women, not all of whom are white. Early on in the novel, Hope frees an elderly Native American woman who had been imprisoned for curing a sick man using heathen medicinal practices, which results in Hope being sent to Boston to live with John Winthrop (120). More dramatically, Hope carries out a plan to free Magawisca, a Native American woman who had been captured

in an attack on her tribe and was sent to live with the Fletcher family as a servant, escaping when her tribe retaliated by attacking the Fletchers. It is because she is believed to have aided that attack, which resulted in the death of most of the family, that Magawisca has been imprisoned. Although Hope does not devise the plan, she executes it by substituting her disguised tutor for Magawisca in order to get the Native American woman on a boat out of Boston before anyone notices the switch (327-329).<sup>44</sup> Even though she shares the blame for Magawisca's escape with Everell Fletcher, Hope takes the risks and plays the more vital role, demonstrating the importance of female action motivated by her own sense of right and wrong, rather than the law. Both Sedgwick and Cooper downplay the role of the law in curbing violence or unrestrained behavior, but Cooper promotes men policing other men with women playing little to no role in their own safety while Sedgwick gives women a model for using creative and non-violent ways to achieve the safety of themselves and others.

Although Hope does most of the rescuing, she cannot be considered an anomaly because Sedgwick includes other women risking themselves to rescue others. In particular she draws parallels between Hope and Magawisca, whom Carolyn L. Karcher identifies as "twinned heroines" in her introduction to *Hope Leslie* (xxi). In this manner, Sedgwick implies that it is not only white women who are capable of problem-solving on behalf of others. The beginning of the novel includes the kidnapping of Everell Fletcher and Faith Leslie, Hope's younger sister, by Magawisca's tribe. The tribe eventually adopts Faith, but they intend to sacrifice Everell to pay for the life of the chief's son who

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<sup>44</sup> In addition to the multiple jailbreaks in *Hope Leslie*, Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* also involves a jailbreak that is planned and executed by a woman and involves substituting one individual for another.



was killed in an earlier conflict with the colonists (91). Magawisca opposes the chief, who is her father, in his decision to kill Everell, and she decides to save Everell, throwing herself between him and her father's knife, losing her own arm in the process. She announces, "I have bought his life with my own" (93). The parallel between the actions of Hope and Magawisca establishes a pattern of women, regardless of race, who defy male authority in order to act selflessly to save themselves or others. While Cooper included a brief moment of heroic action on the part of Cassandra, he undermined her agency through his racist depiction and lack of character development, but Sedgwick used parallels between female characters of different races to construct them both heroically. However, the representation of Native American women in *Hope Leslie* is not unproblematic as Magawisca insists that she must leave at the end of the novel, saying, "the Indian and the white man can no more mingle, and become one, than day and night" (349).<sup>45</sup> Despite this separation, the actions of Magawisca and Hope in the story itself argue for more universal female agency than that of the passive women in *The Red Rover*.

Like Cooper, Sedgwick explores anxieties surrounding violence and unruly behavior, but unlike Cooper, Sedgwick places an emphasis on what women can do to oppose it. While piratical characters continue to represent unrestrained male behavior, Sedgwick's buccaneers lack the redeeming gentleman criminal as their leader. Chaddock and his men are all depicted as rough, lower status characters who drink, chase women,

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<sup>45</sup> For additional information on the representation of Native American women in *Hope Leslie*, see Jennifer Camden, *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels*, Ivy Schweitzer's "The Ethical Horizon of American Friendship in Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*" in *Perfecting Friendship*, and Carolyn L. Karcher's introduction to *Hope Leslie*.

swear, are disruptive, and only talk of honor. As the villains become less redeemable, the female characters gain more agency. However, unlike authors of later pirate stories, Sedgwick does not suggest the possibility that virtuous heroines like Hope or Magawisca can be violent themselves. Hope makes independent choices throughout the novel, and although she does redeem the Italian Catholic buccaneer, most of her efforts are directed toward thwarting the villains' plans and aiding the wrongly accused in escaping from the law. Rather than having a police or military force to prevent violence and unruly behavior, or even the self-policing that can be found in *The Red Rover*, Sedgwick creates female characters who are self-reliant problem-solvers and can get themselves out of trouble with limited assistance from others.

### **Fragments “Engulfed in the Waves”: Piratical Remnants**

The contrast between Cooper's and Sedgwick's solutions to piratical characters and the unrestrained behavior that they represent is emphasized by what happens to each group at the end of their respective novels. While most of the female characters in *Hope Leslie* succeed in averting violence through peaceful means, such as disguises and direct intervention, Rosa stands apart from the rest. At Magawisca's trial, it is revealed that Rosa is a woman and Gardiner's mistress, causing her to lose her place in society and prompting her to act against Gardiner's wishes (291). Believing that Gardiner has captured Hope, Rosa throws a lamp into a barrel of gunpowder and blows up the ship, along with everyone on board. The narrator explains: “The explosion was instantaneous—the hapless, pitiable girl—her guilty destroyer—his victim—the crew—

the vessel, rent to fragments, were hurled into the air, and soon engulfed in the waves” (342). Rosa’s actions deviate from the model established by Hope and Magawisca, leading Sedgwick to suggest, without clearly endorsing violent women, that the ultimate solution to masculine violence might be meeting it with violence in return.

Once again, Sedgwick was rewriting an actual event connected with Captain John Chaddock, although in this instance she makes a significant revision to the gender of one of the individuals involved. As Winthrop writes in his journal, “Captain Chaddock having bought from the French a pinnacle...he had manned and fitted her to go in her to Trinidad, and riding before Boston ready to depart, and eight men aboard her, one striking fire with a pistol, two barrels of powder took fire and blew her up” (150). Winthrop follows with a criticism of the men who survive because they fall to drinking immediately after. He claims that the ship had belonged “to such as despised us and the ordinance of God amongst us” (150).<sup>46</sup> These passages draw a connection between the sailor’s disagreeable behavior and the disaster that befalls them, which indicates that they deserve to be punished; however, the historical version seems to simply be an accident, whereas Sedgwick’s version draws a clearer connection between the deviant activities of the buccaneers and their violent demise at the hands of a woman. The destruction is not accidental, but deliberate. Sedgwick, however, is ambivalent about Rosa’s motivations.

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<sup>46</sup> Winthrop later references the explosion: “These [prodigies] having some reference to the place where Captain Chaddock’s pinnacle was blown up a little before, gave occasion of speech of that man who was the cause of it, who professed himself to have skill in necromancy, and to have done some strange things in his way from Virginia hither, and was suspected to have murdered his master there; but the magistrates here had not notice of him till after he was blown up. This is to be observed that his fellows were all found, and others also who have miscarried by drowning, &c. have usually been found, but this man was never found” (156). Not finding this man’s body alludes to not finding Gardiner’s body in *Hope Leslie*. But the passage also raises implications regarding race and the supernatural that did not find their way into the novel. However, this man as a murderer further underscores the violent pasts of the fictional characters based on the historical Chaddock’s crew.

Rosa's last words suggest that she could have been acting heroically to save Hope: "I would give my poor life, and a thousand more, if I had them, to save Hope Leslie" (321). But earlier, the narrative suggested that Rosa might be jealous of being supplanted as Gardiner's lover when she told Hope: "I could have plunged this dagger into your bosom; and I made a solemn vow that you should not live to take the place of honour beside my master, while I was cast away a worthless thing" (257). This passage foreshadows Rosa's actions at the end of the novel, which would seem to contradict her final words. But because the narrative is not clear about her motivations, Rosa remains closely aligned with the villains as well as an object of sympathy. Sedgwick uses Rosa to demonstrate the power of violent womanhood, but because of this unclear motivation, the narrative pities her, rather than endorsing her violence.

Although scholars have read Rosa's actions as being directed solely at the villainous Gardiner, Rosa does not just destroy him; she also destroys the buccaneers in league with him.<sup>47</sup> Significantly, she also destroys "the faithless" Jennet, a servant from the Fletcher household, who is unrestrained in her offensive speech and betrays Hope's plans to free Magawisca to Gardiner (333). The narrator describes her: "Jennet, our evil genius...like some other disagreeable people, seemed to be gifted with ubiquity, and always to be present where happiness was to be interrupted, or mischief to be done" (345). Through coincidence, Jennet is kidnapped in Hope's place, and thus on board when Rosa blows up the ship. It is through their association with Gardiner, who is just as

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<sup>47</sup> For these readings, see Judith Fetterley, "'My Sister! My Sister!': The Rhetoric of Catherine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*," 80, and Jennifer Camden, *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels*, 127. Fetterley's reading sees the story and destruction of Rosa and Gardiner as a revision of *Charlotte Temple* (81).

unrestrained as the rest of them in his desire to take a rich wife in addition to his young mistress, that the buccaneers and Jennet bring about their own destruction. With them, Sedgwick destroys all of the disagreeable or disloyal lower class characters in the novel. Through Rosa, who is unable to break away from her love for a villain and remains the victim of a man who cannot restrain himself, Sedgwick is able to demonstrate the destructive power of unrestrained passions while imagining a history for the United States in which such undesirable behavior, along with a significant portion of the lower class, is obliterated before the country is even founded.<sup>48</sup>

Initially, Cooper's Red Rover appears to suffer a similar fate to Sedgwick's buccaneers. After sending his crew and passengers off the ship, the Rover remains behind with his cabin boy, Roderick, whom the text implies is actually a woman in disguise.<sup>49</sup> As the ships go their separate ways, the Rover's ship catches fire and explodes (513). It would seem that he, like Sedgwick's buccaneers, was destroyed. As mentioned previously, the Rover returns after the Revolutionary War, completing his patriotic redemption. Upon his return, he is accompanied by a woman—further illustrating the restraint of his passions, since she appears to be the same who devotedly accompanied him earlier in the guise of his cabin boy. Female characters, in the form of his sister and mistress, remain at the edge of his redemption, providing an additional contrast with *Hope Leslie* where the female characters take a more active role in thwarting and

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<sup>48</sup> The destruction of the undesirable lower class characters is highlighted by the fact that John Digby, a servant who remains loyal to the Fletcher family and Hope is rewarded at the end of the novel.

<sup>49</sup> The novel never explicitly states that she is a woman, but she expresses several moments of extreme devotion to the Rover that parallel Rosa's devotion to Gardiner in *Hope Leslie*, including Roderick's plea on behalf of the Rover: "I am not mad; or, if maddened, it is only by the crimes, the dangers, of those I love. Oh! Mr. Wilder, do not leave him" (475). For a discussion of Roderick's role as one of Cooper's cross-dressed female characters, see Luis A. Iglesias, "'And Yet He May Be Our Man.'"

violently destroying the pirates. In this case, it is unclear if the Rover needed to change—his motivations do not—but his violent actions were redirected toward a cause that could be considered honorable from an American perspective. While Sedgwick wrote her unrestrained buccaneers out of the origin story of the United States, Cooper found a way to take the misguided but principled Rover and place him in the service of a better cause. This redemption—or redirection, since it is only his targets and not his character that changes—undermines the idea that anything needs to be done about violence at all because it promotes a masculine self-policing system that ends in patriotism and heroism through minimal intervention from other characters. In *Hope Leslie*, a network of characters, many of them female, was needed to thwart plans and stop the villains, but in *The Red Rover*, the problem of the violent man fixes itself.

By examining these key piratical characters, each author seems to tidily resolve the problem of what should be done about violence, although they solve the problem in different ways. However, the Red Rover and Chaddock are not the only pirates in the novels. Even though both end with the explosion of a ship, in neither case is the destruction of the piratical characters themselves complete. As the narrator of *Hope Leslie* explains, “There was one man of Chaddock’s crew left alive to tell the tale... This man was lingering to observe the principal actors in the tragedy, when the explosion took place, and, with the rest, was blown into the air; but he escaped with his life, gained the boat, and came, the next day, safely to the shore, where he related all he knew, to the great relief of the curiosity of the good people of Boston” (368). This man’s escape serves a narrative function—he survives to explain how anyone could possibly know

what took place on the ship to cause the explosion. But his survival also presents the possibility that at least one of these desperate fellows remained living among the colonists.<sup>50</sup> In the explosion of historical Chaddock's pinnace, Winthrop records that three men survived; therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that some of their fictional counterparts do as well (150). Since this former buccaneer no longer has the immediate means to travel across the ocean, he would have to stay until he joined another crew. Therefore, despite Sedgwick's efforts to eliminate unrestrained, violent behavior from the colonies, at least one buccaneer survives, leaving the possibility for violent masculinity to continue to grow as the colonies become the United States.

Less ambiguously, the Red Rover sends his crew away before his ship explodes. He tells them, "Go: the land is near. Disperse, for your own sakes: nor hesitate; for, without me, well do ye know that vessel of the king would be your master" (511). Because the nearest land is the American continent, he is, essentially, telling them to start new lives in the colonies. Even if some return to the sea and are caught by the king's vessels, it seems likely that others, like Chaddock's crew member, will become a part of the new United States. The redemption of the Red Rover, who is placed above his crew throughout the novel, does not imply that they would follow his example and fight heroically in the war—just the opposite, actually. As the narrator describes them: "they truly formed a most dangerous and (considering their numbers) a resistless crew" (416). They use the rhetoric of law to form their code and support their actions, but twice they

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<sup>50</sup> Antonio, the Italian Catholic that assisted Hope earlier, also escapes destruction, citing the "extraordinary visitation from his tutelary saint, who had vouchsafed to warn him against his sinful comrades" as his motivation for attempting to warn Governor Winthrop of Gardiner's plan (357). However, considering his questionable status as a piratical character in the process of reforming and his useful actions on behalf of Hope, he would be less of a concern for the colonists in Boston.

are given the opportunity to show mercy to one who wronged them, and in both cases, they choose vengeance instead.<sup>51</sup> This willingness to be ruled by one's passions is not specific to the pirate crew, as Wilder's first crew acts much the same way by choosing to mutiny rather than follow orders (277). But the fact remains that the other mutinous crew perishes after their decision to abandon the ship, while the pirate crew survives with orders to disperse on the land.

It is these piratical survivors that present a dangerous prospect in the future of each novel, because the events of the plot have not taught them restraint. These minor characters who are not destroyed or reformed serve to illustrate that the vices and behaviors of the past are not eliminated entirely, and violent masculinity could continue to be a problem. Cooper and Sedgwick appear to wrap up their competing visions of who should restrain violent men through the redemption or destruction of the principal players, leaving the reader with the sense of danger redirected or eliminated. But although the pirate vessels are now merely fragments engulfed in the waves, a portion of each crew remains, living in the colonies, a quiet warning that liberty taken too far without patriotism to direct it will continue to present a danger to the new United States. Thus, both authors use their versions of the origins of the United States to offer a cautionary tale that prevents the reader from dismissing this violent masculinity as a problem of the past.

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<sup>51</sup> In the first instance, Mrs. Wyllys offers pay a ransom for Wilder's release, and the crew refuses in favor of vengeance. The Rover states that it is their law that requires Wilder to be executed, and Mrs. Wyllys responds, "The law!...Can they who set all order at defiance, who despise each human regulation talk of law! Say, it is heartless, vindictive vengeance, if you will; but call it not by the sacred name of law" (501). In the second, Mrs. Wyllys begs for the life of her son, whom she reveals to be Wilder (508).



### **“A Tale of Our Own Times”: Sedgwick’s *Clarence***

In *Clarence*, her next novel after *Hope Leslie*, Sedgwick addresses the problem of violence and piratical behavior persisting in the United States during her own time. Although *Hope Leslie* and *Clarence* were published only three years apart, in 1827 and 1830 respectively, the majority of *Hope Leslie*’s plot takes place in the 1640s, while *Clarence*, subtitled “A Tale of Our Own Times,” presumably takes place around 1830. The historical setting of *Hope Leslie* allows Sedgwick to imagine an origin story for the United States in which almost all of the corrupt individuals in the British colonies are blown up before the United States is even formed, and Cooper does the same with *The Red Rover* by destroying, dispersing, or redeeming the disagreeable characters. While she can take these liberties with *Hope Leslie*, *Clarence*’s label of “our own times” requires Sedgwick to be more faithful to the issues and concerns that she felt needed to be addressed in the present. Through the 1830 setting of *Clarence*, Sedgwick uses piratical characters to illustrate that violence and unruly behavior is still a problem, in particular a problem for women, in the present day United States.

*Clarence* contains a villain who combines the characters of Gardiner and Chaddock into one person. When Henriques Pedrillo, who is thought to be of Spanish origin, is initially introduced, another character describes him as rich, “a devilish genteel fellow, handsome enough, and has a very insinuating address. What more can a girl ask for?” (136).<sup>52</sup> This description establishes Pedrillo as being more like Gardiner, a

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<sup>52</sup> Pedrillo appears to be named after a character from Byron’s *Don Juan*: after a shipwreck, the other characters are starving and decide to eat him, but those who do go mad. This allusion reinforces the link to unrestrained and morally ambiguous behavior. This connection between *Clarence* and earlier male-authored pirate stories is strengthened by an 1830 review of the novel in *The New-York American*, which

gentleman figure, rather than the entirely disagreeable Chaddock. However, like Chaddock, the narrative suggests that Pedrillo is a dangerous foreigner during an early conversation between the heroine, Gertrude and her friend, Emilie. Emilie mentions that he is evidently a foreigner, and Gertrude responds with surprise, for which Emilie chides her: “You start, as if a foreigner were of course a pirate, or a great bandit” (223). They proceed to discuss whether or not his appearance is that of a foreigner (Gertrude does not think he looks like the Spaniard he is supposed to be while Emilie insists he has a foreign air). But Emilie’s initial reaction to Gertrude’s surprise draws a connection between foreigners and pirates, a connection that has been maintained through pirates’ frequent association with widespread mobility on the ocean and their representation as a dangerous foreign threat.<sup>53</sup> This depiction is consistent with that of Chaddock and his buccaneers as being outsiders from the Caribbean.

Sedgwick reverses Cooper’s formula in order to establish Pedrillo first as a gentleman and then as a pirate. Later in the novel, the reader learns that “there were suspicions abroad that Pedrillo had been connected with a desperate band of men on the South American coast” (243). These suspicions are confirmed for the reader when

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notes Pedrillo “is not a Conrad or a Dirk Hatteraick, but combines with the person of the one, the soul of the other. A fine looking fellow, but horribly depraved” (2). Conrad, of course refers to Byron’s *Corsair*, while Dirk Hatteraick was a villainous smuggler in Scott’s *Guy Mannering*.

<sup>53</sup> Although not directed at pirates specifically, the United States had a history of exclusionary policies, including the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1789. In *Empire of Liberty*, Gordon Wood discusses the pervasive anxieties among both political parties with regard to potentially dangerous foreigners, or aliens. The Alien Enemies Act of July 6, 1798 allowed for the restraint of enemy foreigners during wartime, but the Alien Friends Act of June 25, 1798 “gave the president the power to expel, without a hearing or even giving reasons, any alien whom the president judged ‘dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States’” (249). Although this act was temporary and would have expired by the time Sedgwick was writing, it demonstrates the deep anxieties in American politics with regard to potentially dangerous foreigners. For the enduring effects of these acts through the revival of nativism in the 1850s, see Sean Wilentz *The Rise of American Democracy*, 679-685.

Pedrillo “received letters from a correspondent in the West Indies, informing him that his position in the United States was no longer a safe one; that depositions were about to be forwarded to judicial officers here, proving his participation in a noted piratical affair, in which some of the noble young men of our navy had suffered” (370-371). In this passage, Pedrillo is specifically linked to piracy and lawlessness against the United States Navy. While he is not a complete outsider like the buccaneers of *Hope Leslie* because he is welcome in the other characters’ social circle, the novel does establish him as a dangerous foreigner.

Although his gentleman status provides a contrast, Pedrillo’s actions draw a clearer parallel with the buccaneers in *Hope Leslie*. Pedrillo seduces a woman, blackmails a man, cheats at a duel, plans to marry a woman without her consent (although he does obtain her father’s permission) and take her with him to Cuba. When the woman’s father changes his mind about honoring their deal, Pedrillo decides to kidnap her and force her to marry him. The narrator writes, “He was resolved, at whatever the cost...to possess himself of Emilie Layton” (372). In this manner, he takes up the role of many pirate characters and threatens violence against a woman. As a result of this resolution, the climax of the plot of *Clarence*, like that of *The Red Rover* and *Hope Leslie*, revolves around thwarting a plot to kidnap a woman. Unlike *The Red Rover* where the pirate succeeds in getting the women into his power and then ultimately lets them go and *Hope Leslie* where chance and then the violent act of another woman stops the buccaneers without harming the heroine, Gertrude plays a direct and vital role in stopping the villain. Initially, she uses deception to outsmart him at a masquerade ball and send the intended

victim off with the man she loves.<sup>54</sup> When Pedrillo pursues them in a cross-country carriage chase, Gertrude rides to her friend's rescue, and when he catches up to them, she places herself between her friend and Pedrillo, saying, "I would prevent you from further violence—have you forgotten every thing gentlemanly, manly, that you dare, like a common ruffian, to force yourself into our apartment?" (401). She does not fight him, but simply stands in his way, and the narrator mentions Pedrillo "had never coped with heroism in such a shape, and he shrunk as he would not have done from an armed enemy" (401). Her intervention buys enough time for a group of armed men to join them in opposing Pedrillo and his crew. More so than either *The Red Rover* or *Hope Leslie*, this scene places the heroine in the path of a violent man. On the one hand, this scene answers the question of who is allowed to be violent on behalf of women by maintaining the status quo of violence as a masculine endeavor, but on the other hand, Gertrude presents a powerful opposition to Pedrillo's violence given her likely lack of fighting skills or available weaponry. Therefore, although *Clarence* does not adopt the solution of violent womanhood to oppose violent masculinity, it does strongly suggest that women must play active roles in thwarting violent men.

Although Pedrillo's earlier characterization and Gertrude's words maintain the possibility that he, like the Red Rover or Scott's pirate, is a gentleman, he is not given any redeeming qualities, except, perhaps, the desire not to commit patricide. During the

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<sup>54</sup> According to the editors of the Broadview critical edition of *Clarence*, the masquerade in the novel was based on an actual event in New York in 1829 for Jackson's inauguration, which Sedgwick herself attended (452). In *Sex Among the Rabble*, Clare Lyons discusses Philadelphia's antimasquerade law, which was passed because many believed that masquerades were "designed to induce vice" (343). However, the heroine of *Clarence* uses the masquerade to conceal identities in order to realign other characters with their lovers and prevent a kidnapping.

fight with Gertrude's supporters, Pedrillo thinks that he has killed his own father and responds by killing himself, and his dog (403-404). His dying speech reinforces the idea that one such as him cannot be redeemed. After telling his father where to find his papers, which will leave his father and brother with "countless gold," Pedrillo exclaims: "Build hospitals and churches, then—they may—hereafter—get my soul out of torment—some good men say so—but now, when revenge and hate, are raging within me...when hell is here, oh, how shall I escape!" (404). He dies refusing to repent or ask forgiveness. Even his final, "Oh God! mercy! mercy!" is "involuntary" (404). In spite of his guilt for attacking his father, Pedrillo's death denies him the chance to balance out his actions with good deeds as Cooper did with the Rover's underlying patriotism. Like Chaddock and his buccaneers, Pedrillo is unredeemable, characterized as entirely self-serving, unrepentant, and unrestrained.

Although Sedgwick had established Pedrillo from the beginning as a foreigner, she reverses her audience's expectations during this fight at the end in order to demonstrate that many of the unruly and violent behaviors that are associated in the antebellum American imagination with foreigners are actually found within the United States. By identifying his father as one of the Americans fighting against him, Pedrillo reveals that his origins are not those of a Spanish gentleman, nor a Cuban smuggler, but an American thief.<sup>55</sup> The narrator does call him an "aberration," saying "How such a scion should proceed from such a stock, we know not" (371). But Pedrillo's origins in a

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<sup>55</sup> In *Sensational Designs*, Jane Tompkins reads the character of Carwin in *Wieland* as "the quintessential child of revolution, a self-made man who changes his religion, his nationality, his occupation, his social position at will" (52). However, Pedrillo does not operate in quite the same way because he does not shift identities throughout the novel; instead, his identity is fixed while it is slowly revealed to the other characters and the reader.

family of good Americans simply serve to illustrate to Sedgwick's readers the possibility of anyone succumbing to a lack of control. This revelation relocates origins of the source of villainy, lawlessness, and corruption from outside of the United States to inside the United States. Unlike *The Red Rover*, which redirects violence, or *Hope Leslie*, which tries to rid itself of the unrestrained characters, *Clarence* discovers origins of corruption and destruction in the United States through Pedrillo, which makes piratical behavior a problem within the United States, rather than a foreign one. By establishing Pedrillo as a foreigner and then revealing his American origins, Sedgwick builds on reader expectations of the dangerous foreign pirate and uses the reversal to underscore the argument that these dangerous qualities can be found in Americans just as much as foreigners. Read alongside *The Red Rover*, *Clarence* creates a parallel to the reader slowly discovering the Red Rover's patriotic origins. Cooper started with the Rover's reputation as a fearsome pirate and slowly built back to his origins as a heroic patriot embodying a form of American manliness. Sedgwick offers a critique by establishing Pedrillo as a dangerous foreigner before revealing his American origins, thereby presenting a model of American masculinity that is neither restrained nor desirable.

In all three novels, the piratical characters serve to connect masculine violence back to the United States, either by writing the characters into the origin story of the country or by revealing that the villain's roots were there all along. For Sedgwick and Cooper, the problems posed by the expansion of legitimate violence represented by the election of Andrew Jackson must be addressed through individual choices, rather than any sort of legal mechanism. Both novelists present solutions of how to address violent

behavior. Cooper provides his male readers with a role model—sometimes criminal but always patriotic—in the person of the Red Rover while assuring female readers that men will keep them safe by restraining other men. Sedgwick, on the other hand, sees women as playing a necessary role in restraining masculine violence, because often they are the only ones in the position to do so, and they cannot rely on men, or the law, to protect them. Taken together, Sedgwick and Cooper establish a false dichotomy, wherein female authors set assertive female characters in opposition to irredeemable male villains and male authors include passive women alongside redeemable and heroic male villains. The authors who followed would disrupt this dichotomy by building upon, reworking, or rejecting the formula of their predecessors by presenting their own solutions to the problem of violence within the United States.

## Chapter 2: “Dark Passions” and “Home-Bred Virtues”: Gender and Genre in Reimaginings of Pirates in New Orleans

In an 1831 review of Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s novel *Clarence* (1830), author and editor George Stillman Hillard presents his critique of what he sees as Sedgwick’s failure to stay within feminine genres:

The least efficient portions of the book are those in which the author has attempted to give a tragic grandeur to the workings of dark passions, and to thrill us with the fearful collision of guilty minds. To do this with success, requires not only a peculiar and masculine talent, but a familiarity with all the dark corners of the human heart, and a cool observation of the language and conduct of men, in such circumstances, and under such excitements, as no respectable woman has ever an opportunity of remarking. The most valuable and characteristic scenes are those in which the lash of playful satire is applied to the lesser foibles of life, and the unostentatious home-bred virtues are set forth and eulogized; for these are the traits which women have the most frequent opportunities of observing, and are the most skilful in catching and delineating. (457)<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> George Stillman Hillard, *The North American Review* 32.70 (January 1831): 73-95 in appendix to critical edition of *Clarence; or, A Tale of Our Own Times* edited by Melissa J. Homestead and Ellen A. Foster.



This passage creates a gendered binary between acceptable topics, and by extension acceptable experiences, for women and men. Hillard indicates that only men can write about the darker aspects of the lives and minds of men, which, through his reference to “guilty minds,” he links to the violence of *Clarence*’s villain Pedrillo, while women should restrict themselves to writing about domestic life. This division implies that if a woman writes about villainous and violent men, she is not “respectable.” If women are barred from understanding and writing about violent men, it would make it difficult for them to participate in the conversation surrounding this problem of violence. This gendered exclusion, of course, does not accurately reflect the writing of antebellum women. As the narratives in this project, including *Clarence* itself, demonstrate, women were very much a part of this conversation, and as the later chapters will illustrate, both female and male authors were exploring solutions that place female characters in opposition to violent men.

By exploring contrasting solutions to this problem of violent men, Chapter 1 highlighted a false dichotomy in which male authors, represented by Cooper, offer masculine solutions with sympathetic villains wherein men police other men and violence is redirected, and female authors, represented by Sedgwick, thoroughly villainize violent male characters, leaving them to be thwarted and destroyed by independent female characters in such a way that highlights the problem-solving possibilities of female agency. The novels discussed in this chapter, J. H. Ingraham’s *Lafitte: The Pirate of the Gulf* (1836) and Eliza Ann Dupuy’s *The Pirate’s Daughter* (1845), illustrate that

antebellum pirate stories were not so neatly divided along gender or genre lines.<sup>57</sup> The pirates in both novels cannot be categorized as entirely redeemable or completely villainous, and while some of the female characters attempt to oppose them through appeals for morality and picking up knives, they are not given the opportunity to follow through, which prevents the novels from fully embracing the idea of violent womanhood.

Not only do Ingraham and Dupuy offer less clear cut solutions to the problem of violent men than either Sedgwick or Cooper, but they do so by mixing the genres that Hillard in his review of *Clarence* thought should be so clearly divided. At first glance, *Lafitte* and *The Pirate's Daughter* both have a clear dominant genre; however, upon closer examination, neither can be entirely contained by its generic conventions.

Although in the broadest sense, *Lafitte* is a sprawling sea adventure centered on a fairly conventional male pirate, most of the story takes place on land and much of the plot is concerned with a family drama, including two love triangles. To some extent, *The Pirate's Daughter* is a straightforward marriage-plot novel, but it begins with a father who abandons his daughter to go pirating, and ends with her death after she breaks her father out of prison and sacrifices her life for his. Although they are different in many aspects, both novels include the figure of the pirate and because of the New Orleans setting, both evoke the historical pirate Jean Lafitte, even though *The Pirate's Daughter* was also referencing the historical pirate François Le Clerc.<sup>58</sup> The novels borrow from the

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<sup>57</sup> The title page of *The Pirate's Daughter* lists the author as "The Authoress of 'The Conspirator,'" which, although anonymous, still clearly identifies the author as female.

<sup>58</sup> Ida Raymond's biographical sketch in *Southland Writers* (1870) indicates that Dupuy had given an early copy of *The Pirate's Daughter* to Ingraham who never returned it and then used it to write *Lafitte* (88). More recently, J. S. Hartin in *The Lives of Mississippi Authors* has argued that this is unlikely since Dupuy would have been in Kentucky when Ingraham wrote *Lafitte* (147). Hartin's version fails to consider the

other's generic conventions, which complicates the dichotomy of sea adventures—and the sea itself—being a masculine domain and domestic fiction, which usually takes place on the land, a feminine one.

Some of the evidence for problematizing the portion of this genre division which focuses on the sea as a masculine space and the land as feminine one can be found in the novels of Sedgwick and Cooper as well: Cooper devotes a significant portion of his narrative to having his characters, including the pirate, remain on land trying to outmaneuver one another in order to gain possession of the female characters while Sedgwick ultimately solves her main conflict violently with a woman blowing up a ship on the water. With Ingraham and Dupuy, the borrowing of genres works toward illustrating the shortcomings of Cooper's and Sedgwick's solutions, offering instead the suggestion that sometimes violent men are not consistently heroic or villainous, and therefore, women must be prepared to fight back even if the man seems like a gentleman.

Although both authors were popular in their time, neither J.H. Ingraham's *Lafitte* nor Eliza Ann Dupuy's *The Pirate's Daughter* is widely read or studied today. Perhaps this lack of recent attention is indicative of the fact that neither novel fits squarely into its genre, making them seem less relevant to scholarly conversations, which have a tendency to be categorized by gender. Both Ingraham's and Dupuy's popularity in their own time demonstrates, however, that these types of stories were of interest to antebellum American audiences. In addition to detailing the various periodicals and publishing houses that printed Ingraham's work, Mary Noel quotes Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as

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possibility that Ingraham and Dupuy corresponded through the mail, and if Raymond's claim is accurate, it would mean that Ingraham and Dupuy were originally drawing on the same source material.

having written in an 1838 letter to a friend that Ingraham “is tremendous—really tremendous. I think we may say that he writes the worst novels ever written by anybody. But they sell” (18). In this assessment, Longfellow addresses two common features of those who discuss Ingraham’s work—it was not particularly well written, but it was popular. In *Hemispheric Regionalism*, Gretchen J. Woertendyke concludes that despite those who criticized the quality of Ingraham’s writing, he “was considered a benchmark for the reading marketplace” (142-143). Although there is less information available in terms of reactions to Dupuy’s work, she wrote over twenty novels with one selling over 25,000 copies, and she later signed contracts for two novels a year with Robert Bonner of the *New York Ledger*, a weekly story paper that is known for publishing E. D. E. N. Southworth and Fanny Fern (Raymond 88; Noel 88). It is possible that fluid genre categories or the quality of writing, as Longfellow suggests, is the reason that both of these authors have received little critical attention. However, I would like to offer a third possibility, one that takes into account the ways in which the pirate stories are not easily confined to a single genre.

Some of the neglect of the pirate story in general is likely due to its uncomfortable relationship with land and sea narratives, because it has a tendency to combine the two. Recently, Oceanic Studies has begun to push against the dominant narrative of American literature being one that focuses on land.<sup>59</sup> Instead, in *The View from the Masthead*, Hester Blum contends that “Rather than experiencing the sea as a nautical version of the puritanical howling wilderness, or as an inspiration for metaphor, nineteenth-century

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<sup>59</sup> For a broader overview of Oceanic Studies, see *PMLA* 125.3 (May 2010).

sailors saw the ocean instrumentally. By this I mean that the ocean primarily functioned for sailors as a site of labor” (7). In her discussion of narratives written by sailors, most of which are nonfiction, Blum focuses on the ways in which sea fiction is unique and distinct in its own right, arguing that it deserves just as much attention as land based narratives.

This desire among critics to separate the land and sea intersects with an attempt to gender sea narratives as exclusively male. As Burwick and Powell note, “The sea was not a space much filled with human females,” which causes studies of nonfiction to necessarily center on male authors and masculine concerns (102). However, Margaret Cohen, who wants to “move beyond our long-standing prejudice that those processes and events defining the modern novel occur on land,” recreates this gender divide in her examination of adventure fiction (13). Cohen argues “sea fiction gives pride of place to communities of laboring men, bonded in the struggle for the survival, rather than communities of private sociability, strongly associated with women, shaped by passion, virtue, and taste” (11). In contrast, Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling, editors of the collection *Iron Men, Wooden Women*, maintain the focus on prioritizing sea fiction while problematizing the “view of the ocean as a single-sex masculine space, in contrast to a feminized and domesticated society on land,” which they feel is often replicated in scholarship on sea literature (ix, x). However, most of these scholars are interested in sea stories more broadly including a significant amount of nonfiction, rather than the pirate story specifically.

Recent scholarship focusing on British history and literature has worked toward a better understanding of how women factored in to the lives of men at sea, in particular, pirates, even if the women were not sailors or pirates themselves. John C. Appleby's *Women and English Piracy* argues that "indirectly many women were closely involved in the business of piracy. As agents and victims, the record of their relations with sea rovers provides an unusual but illuminating perspective on the wider ramifications of English and Anglo-American piracy" (7).<sup>60</sup> Because of his responsibility to historically documented piracy, Appleby draws connections between women and male pirates but is unable to completely collapse the binary, concluding that "the number of women pirates was exiguous" (7). Burwick and Powell agree that "pirate culture itself was widely perceived to be thoroughly masculine," but they argue that when it comes to literary treatments of pirates, "they [the authors] simply add women to their narratives, no matter how historically improbable," which results in an ambivalence about the ability of women and pirates to exist alongside one another (102-103, 118). Therefore, fiction focusing on pirates must contend with both pirates and women, which often results in stories that do not fit comfortably within their dominant genre.

While pirate stories could easily take place almost entirely on the sea, antebellum American authors tend to set their stories in port cities and just off the coast, allowing them to move between the land and the sea, incorporate male and female characters, and bring together the genres usually attached to them. Burwick and Powell note that "In the

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<sup>60</sup> Mark G. Hanna's *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* also asks his readers "to focus their attention...upon the symbiotic relationship between maritime marauders and landed communities," but without Appleby's emphasis on women's role in this relationship (416).

nineteenth century...it is relatively uncommon to see pirates actually being pirates—that is, to see pirates at sea,” which demonstrates that antebellum pirate stories were likely part of a larger trend of occupying this liminal space (117). Instead of depicting pirates attacking other ships for their goods, American authors have their pirates take to the land, usually in pursuit of women.<sup>61</sup> Although pirate characters sometimes use disguises or deception, they most often offer a fairly straightforward threat to women, even to the point of naming themselves villains. As a result, pirate stories place a hypermasculine man in opposition to a woman positioned as a damsel, which leads to constant mixing of marriage plots with criminal chases, family drama with patriotic redemption arcs, pirating various things that are not ships, and pushing the boundaries on how women are permitted to respond to violent men. Furthermore, because these narratives often focus on a man trying to kidnap a woman, the anxiety of violence directed at women and the invasion of domestic spaces by violent men is central to many pirate stories.

In particular, *Lafitte* and *The Pirate's Daughter* evoke concerns surrounding the multicultural New Orleans. I have chosen to focus on these two novels in particular because of their setting in a liminal space at the edge of the land and sea. Unlike the other novels by both authors, including Ingraham's numerous pirate stories, this setting allows for a blending of gender and genre that highlights the question of when women are allowed to be violent. As Mary P. Ryan notes in *Civic Wars*, “Even the national affiliation...was a recent, fragile, and reversible creation” in New Orleans which had just

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<sup>61</sup> In this project, Cooper's Red Rover is one of the few male pirates who manages to acquire women on the sea, but he must first maneuver the women onto the ship from the land, and when he finally does obtain them, it is because their ship was destroyed by a storm and not because he took possession of it.

officially come under the control of the United States in 1804 (11-12). Within the popular imagination, Thomas Ruys Smith argues in *Southern Queen* that New Orleans was viewed as having “a variety of abiding discomforts, dangers and moral hazards” (72). Perhaps more so than other pirate stories that remain near the shore, these novels set in New Orleans focus on a city that is uniquely transitional between the land and the sea since it was built below sea level and frequently flooded (Ryan 26). In terms of culture and geography, the New Orleans setting offers the ideal space for anxieties about violence that require mobility between land and sea in order to position violent men of the sea in opposition to women in domestic spaces. This multifaceted setting encourages the novels to blend different genres—adventure and domestic—which, in turn, makes it easier for authors to begin to map conventionally male attributes, including the capacity for violence, from the masculine adventure hero onto their female characters.

### **J. H. Ingraham’s *Lafitte*: Domestic Concerns in an Adventure Novel**

*“A Vacillating Villain”: The Inconsistent Heroics of Ingraham’s Pirate*

In *Lafitte*, Ingraham attempts to position the novel’s protagonist within two different versions of pirate stories simultaneously, which results in a character that does not entirely embody the redeemable pirate who redirects his own violence or the irredeemable one who must be destroyed. Cooper’s model, as established by *The Red Rover*, involved a pirate that consistently exhibited loyalty to his country of choice and eventually redeemed himself for his crimes by redirecting his violent tendencies toward its enemies. With a different approach, Sedgwick’s novels depicted pirates as dangerous



men who refused to restrain themselves in any way and could only be stopped through death. The models established by Cooper and Sedgwick imply that while the pirate can be a hero in a sea adventure, he is more likely to be positioned as a dangerous outsider in a land-based domestic story, even if it contains adventure elements. Perhaps in an effort to appeal to multiple audiences, Ingraham draws from both of these versions in order to characterize Lafitte, resulting in a protagonist that is depicted as worthy of admiration even though many of his actions prevent him from comfortably fitting into the role of the hero. As a result of this conflicting characterization, *Lafitte* undermines Cooper's argument that violent men could be redirected toward a more worthy cause, replacing Cooper's determinedly patriotic Red Rover with the emotional and impulsive Lafitte.

This contrasting depiction could originate in an effort to stay true to the actions of historical Lafitte, and indeed, in broad strokes, many of the plot points match with events in his life. Historical Lafitte actually consisted of two brothers, Jean and Pierre, who were not rivals like their fictional counterparts, but were business partners. Together, they ran a privateering and smuggling operation outside of New Orleans. Because Pierre "would always be a land-bound merchant" while Jean "walked the decks of the ships," fictional accounts often ignore the merchant brother in favor of the sea captain (Davis 25). By the War of 1812, Jean had a price on his head and Pierre had been arrested. After the Americans attacked their operation and captured many of their men, the brothers approached the Louisiana government with an offer to fight on behalf of the United States in exchange for pardons. For their participation in the Battle of New Orleans, the charges against the brothers and their men were dropped, but before long, they were once

again involved in smuggling and semi-legitimate privateering.<sup>62</sup> It is clear that Ingraham was trying to at least present the illusion of adhering to history because his epigraphs in the latter portion of the book are pulled from Marboi's *History of Louisiana*. Therefore, some of the fictional Lafitte's inconsistent depiction can be attributed to the actions of historical Lafitte. However, Ingraham clearly shaped his version. For example, fictional Lafitte dies and does not have the opportunity to follow in his historical counterpart's footsteps by returning to piracy after the Battle of New Orleans. When discussing his novel in 1852, Ingraham wrote that it was "*impossible* to arrive at the truth of his life," and Lafitte's "only biographer at last must be the romancer" (424; emphasis in the original).<sup>63</sup> Since he believed himself to be writing romance as much as biography, Ingraham could have easily ignored historical accuracy entirely and presented fictional Lafitte as consistently heroic throughout the novel, which would have allowed him to undermine the threat posed by violent men in a similar manner to that of Cooper's Red Rover.

Readers and critics alike often comment on Ingraham's popularity along with the lack of quality in his writing, as Longfellow did in his letter to a friend, but this criticism also extends to the constructions of his heroes and villains.<sup>64</sup> This conflicting characterization of the protagonist is addressed extensively by Edgar Allan Poe in his

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<sup>62</sup> For a thorough and well-documented history of the brothers Lafitte, see William C. Davis's *The Pirates Lafitte*.

<sup>63</sup> See "4.—Lafitte—Professor Ingraham's Letter" in *De Bow's Review of the Southern and Western States*.

<sup>64</sup> See Woertendyke's *Hemispheric Regionalism*, 141-142 for a discussion of critiques of Ingraham's work, including those of Longfellow and Poe. For additional information on Ingraham's popularity and output, see Noel's *Villains Galore*, 18-20.

1836 review of *Lafitte*, in which he criticizes Ingraham for telling the reader that Lafitte is the hero, but showing him to be the villain through his actions:

Our principal objection is to the tendency of the tale. The pirate-captain, from the author's own showing, is a weak, a vacillating villain, a fratricide, a cowardly cut-throat, who strikes an unoffending boy under his protection, and makes nothing of hurling a man over a precipice for merely falling asleep, or shooting him down without any imaginable reason whatsoever. Yet he is never mentioned but with evident respect, or in some such sentence as the following. "I could hardly believe I was looking upon the celebrated Lafitte, when I gazed upon his elegant, even noble person and fine features, in which, in spite of their resolute expression, there is an air of frankness which assures me that *he would never be guilty of a mean action,*" &c. &c. &c. (115; emphasis in the original)

In this passage, Poe touches on many of the inconsistencies in Lafitte's character, claiming that Ingraham tells the reader one thing and shows another. Even Poe's word choice of identifying Lafitte as a villain signals the confusion surrounding the character because his actions are neither consistently villainous nor heroic. In *Bodies of Reform*, James B. Salazar provides two definitions of character in nineteenth-century America, one of which might account for Poe's discomfort with Lafitte: "the material product of a process of self-mastery and self-formation...which ranked individuals within a hierarchical scale of social value legitimated by the attribution of 'merit'" (10). This definition indicates that an inconsistent character like Lafitte's would demonstrate that he had not achieved self-mastery which limits his ability to fulfill the role of a gentleman.

Without a consistent character arc, Lafitte aspires to but fails to comfortably occupy the role of gentleman pirate utilized by Byron and Scott, and deployed in an American setting by Cooper, but neither does he fall into the role of irredeemable villain that Sedgwick uses to repeatedly draw attention to the danger posed by violent men.

This characterization allows Ingraham to appeal to multiple audiences, including those who would want to read about independent women opposing violent men and those who prefer redemptive tales of men overcoming their violent tendencies in order to be heroic. Furthermore, Lafitte's "vacillating" nature evokes anxieties surrounding strangers and the inability to know whether or not a person is being sincere. Since Lafitte is not depicted as being deliberately deceptive, he does not quite represent the "fear of hypocrisy" as discussed by Karen Halttunen in *Confidence Men and Painted Women* (xv). At the same time, his lack of consistency works toward illustrating the anxiety that one cannot truly know another person. In Lafitte's case, it is unclear in any given situation whether he will act the part of the villain or the hero. As a result, he continuously poses a threat to the female characters, even if he repeatedly treats them with respect.

In addition to moving between opposing characterizations of the pirate, Lafitte does not remain contained to the violent masculine space of the sea. Instead, the novel borrows from multiple generic conventions and different versions of the pirate story in order to create a world in which the problem of violent men represented by the figure of the pirate is not easily solved by destruction or redemption, and women take an increasingly active role in opposing the pirate. Rather than participating in the usual

piratical activities of boarding another ship and stealing its goods, Lafitte, like so many other pirates in American fiction, spends much of his time on the land, although he is not initially chasing a woman. While the narrative starts with Lafitte's childhood in which he rashly nearly kills his brother over the woman they both love, the main portion of the narrative begins when Lafitte and his crew rob the vault of a rich old Spanish man, and Lafitte uses the man's daughter, Constanza, as a shield during their escape. After that, Lafitte must decide what to do with the now captive Constanza and her fiancé who attempts to rescue her. Much of the early narrative is devoted to efforts on the part of Constanza and others to convince Lafitte to change his ways, which offers the possibility of redemption as a method for dealing with the violence Lafitte represents. When the British approach Lafitte and suggest that he could regain his honorable name by fighting on their side during the War of 1812, Lafitte is offended and offers his services to the Americans. The Americans, however, distrust him, and destroy his fleet and pirate base, but Lafitte maintains his devotion to his country of choice and offers once again to fight with the Americans. As a result, Lafitte participates in the Battle of New Orleans, not as the captain of a pirate fleet, but as an artilleryman. Although Lafitte's story ends on a ship after the battle is over, it is in the middle of a family drama that brings the conflict between the brothers in a full circle to the events of the first chapters.

*Lafitte* includes two beginning moments—the childhood of the man who will become Lafitte and the moment when Lafitte appears in the text as the feared pirate captain—and both of these moments work to destabilize his characterization as a hero. The opening section of the novel takes place entirely on land and is centered on

interpersonal relationships between family members, which revolve around Gertrude—the object of affection for the twin brothers, Achille, who will become Lafitte, and Henri. When he realizes that Gertrude prefers Henri over him, Achille becomes the “impulsive murderer” of his brother (1.47). The impulsiveness of this decision will be reiterated several times during the remainder of the novel, along with the idea that Achille’s “first mad crime has been the prolific parent of all [his] subsequent ones” (1.62). Although the impulsive murder of Henri is blamed for Achille’s eventual pirate career as Lafitte, the narrative does not present it as a straightforward fit of passion.

Instead, Achille’s attack on his brother is constructed as premeditated, which would lend itself more to the actions of a villain than a hero. Prior to confronting his brother about Henri’s and Gertrude’s mutual love, Achille spends a great deal of time thinking about revenge: “Hour after hour passed away, and he had given himself up to the guidance of the dark spirit he could not control, and had purposed revenge, ‘The exulting boy shall feel what it is to cross my path. He shall die! by heaven, he shall die!’” (1.45). This forethought would seem to imply a more cold-blooded than impassioned and impulsive murder, which muddies his supposedly spontaneous attack. Like those identified by Poe, this instance is another where the narrative explicitly tells the reader that Lafitte acted on impulse, but the actual construction of events demonstrates how he thought about his crime beforehand in fairly villainous terms. Therefore, even prior to becoming the feared pirate Lafitte, the narrative fails to establish Lafitte as clearly heroic or villainous, but it does position him as unquestionably violent. This violence works toward reinforcing the division between familial and affective relationships occurring on

land while unruly and violent men are exiled to the sea, which is reinforced when Achille flees in a small fisherman's boat after committing the crime of fratricide (1.48). In this manner the novel does not shy away from violence in the more domestic setting of land, but at the same time, it refuses to allow the perpetrator of violent behavior to return to the family and domestic space, banishing him, instead, to the sea.

This correlation is further reinforced by the fact that Achille's decision to flee to the sea sets him on a path to become the feared pirate Lafitte. However, for the reader, this transition is presented in a narrative gap, removing the emphasis from the deeds which earned Lafitte a reputation as a feared pirate in much the same way that rumor undercuts the Red Rover's reputation as a dangerous man. *Lafitte* is divided into two volumes with Volume I being separated into Book I that is devoted to the rivalry between Achille and Henri and Book II, which begins with Lafitte leading his crew on a raid without an explanation of how Achille became Lafitte. In fact although the connection can be inferred through many of the events in the narrative, the transition from one to the other is not explicitly stated until the last page of the novel when the narrator explains, "Achille, after exiling himself from his native land, assumed the name of Lafitte, by which and no other, he was known to his adherents, and to the world" (2.212). Well after the abrupt shift takes place between Books I and II in the first volume, the narrator summarizes his transition from fratricide to pirate, but for the reader at the beginning of the story, Lafitte becomes a pirate in the space between the pages. Instead of using the adventures that occurred to turn Achille into a pirate and his piratical activities after

becoming Lafitte to explore masculine communities or the violent space of the sea, Ingraham chooses to position his protagonist within the domestic space of his family.

When the reader finally receives the account of Lafitte's turn to piracy, it is presented as the result of his circumstances for the most part, rather than a conscious choice to be a criminal, thereby maintaining the threat of violence that he represents while suggesting the possibility that he could be redeemed. The narrator summarizes Lafitte's recollection of his past experiences:

His voyage to the Mediterranean seas—his capture by the Algerines—his imprisonment and escape, by the aid of a Moorish maiden, whom he dishonoured and left—his fatal recontre in landing—his imprisonment and escape in an open boat for Ceuti, and a second capture by the rovers—his union with, and subsequent command of, their vessel... Then came his capture by the Turks—his freedom, and rapidly rising distinction in their navy—and he pressed his temples violently, when he remembered he had changed the cross of his religion, for the turban of the Mussulman. He was now chief of an armed horde, and now a combatant in the ranks of the Egyptians, against his invading countrymen. Once more he was on the sea, and an Algerine rover called him its commander! Then he was the captive of the Spaniard, and the Moro of Havanna became his prison. Liberated, again the quarter-deck of the pirate became his home, and the flag of Carthage waved the breeze above his head! (1.113-114)

For a pirate, Lafitte's origin story has a surprising lack of commitment to piracy—he turns to piracy several times, but it appears to be the result of being captured and living



among pirates. Indeed, as the last line indicates, he was technically a privateer on behalf of Carthagen, and this aspect of his character was drawn from the life of the historical Lafitte, who turned to privateering several times. As Davis notes, almost anyone who was willing could become a privateer on behalf of Carthagen, which was trying to win its independence from Spain (68). In fact, many pirates during Lafitte's time were "legitimate" in this manner. As Davis writes, "after 1800 piracy was almost unnecessary, for any men so disposed could easily legitimize their calling and protect themselves from the hangman by taking letters of marque" (29). It is interesting, then, that Ingraham chooses to downplay this feature of Lafitte's life by labeling him a pirate throughout the narrative, rather than trying to emphasize the legitimacy of his piratical activities, which would make it easier to position him as heroic. Instead, Ingraham uses both beginning moments—the actual start of the novel and when Achille returns as Lafitte—to position Lafitte within a dramatic family history and an invasion of domestic space.

While much of the opening of the novel works to position the sea as a place that encourages violent criminality among men, the second beginning moment, which occurs after Achille has transitioned to Lafitte, uses the figure of the pirate to bring that masculine violence into a domestic space, and eventually positions piratical violence as being less of a threat than the potential seducer already within the home. The narrative returns to the only instance in the novel where Lafitte and his crew are robbing something, and because they are robbing the vault below the home of a rich old Spanish man instead of another ship, this act cannot be considered piracy. Even though the pirates are trying to obtain the man's valuables, Lafitte himself is not positioned as desiring

treasure. Given Peter T. Leeson's argument in *The Invisible Hook* that "Material concerns gave birth to pirates and profit strongly motivated them," Lafitte's lack of economic motivation goes against the general understanding of historical piracy as well as the specific history of the Lafitte brothers, who were businessmen and continuously looking for ways to make a profit (5). Instead, fictional Lafitte is depicted as reluctant to undertake this mission, indicating that he only does so because "past losses" have "tempted the crew to mutiny" (1.59). He tells them: "I have yielded to your wishes on this occasion, not, you well know, because I feared to withstand them, although it is against my own feelings to rob an old man of his horded ingots" (1.60). In this passage, Lafitte explicitly positions the desire for the gold with his crew, rather than himself.

Much like Cooper with the Red Rover, this reluctance to rob an old man gestures toward the gentleman pirate by placing Lafitte in a morally superior position with regard to his men, who want riches regardless of the cost. However, unlike the Red Rover, Lafitte is not depicted as having complete control over his crew. Although the crew does not mutiny when they fail to secure all of the old man's gold, the narrative later demonstrates that Lafitte's fear of a mutiny is well-founded when a portion of his crew tries to take over the pirate base while Lafitte is away on business. Lafitte explains that "should I abate for a moment, a feather's weight of my discipline or authority. I should lose my command or my head" (2.72). This description of the crew echoes that of Cooper's *The Red Rover* with one important deviation—the Rover believed he could control his crew absolutely as long as he was present, whereas Lafitte feels that he can scarcely control his men. As his decision to rob the vault demonstrates, he is sometimes

driven to go against his own moral compass in order to appease them. Like Scott's pirate Cleveland, this contrast with his crew calls into question Lafitte's participation in past piratical activities because they too could have been driven by the men that he cannot fully control.

In fact, one of the few examples of Lafitte's specific past actions supports the idea that he is more heroic than villainous. As the narrator explains, Lafitte captured Cudjoe from "a slaver, and subsequently saved him from an imminent and revolting death," and as a result, "Gratitude to his master...had bound him to him with a faithfulness and attachment nothing could diminish, and death only terminate" (2.36). In addition to replicating the grateful slave trope, the language of master and slave continues to be applied to their relationship, making it unclear whether Lafitte freed Cudjoe when he saved him.<sup>65</sup> This racist and classist trope of a man freeing a slave who then becomes his servant refers back to *Robinson Crusoe*, and was often employed in order to highlight the rescuer's good qualities. With Lafitte, this trope becomes more problematic considering the fact that many historical pirates, including the Lafitte brothers, were also involved in the slave trade. A portion of the Lafittes' early smuggling operation included slave trading, and they discouraged harboring runaway slaves in the territory they controlled (Davis 76, 155). After the War of 1812 when they established a new privateering operation, they captured cargoes of slave ships and smuggled the slaves into Louisiana to be sold (Davis 326). This often-overlooked connection between piracy and the slave trade was not unique to the Lafittes. As Burwick and Powell explain, "At a time when many

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<sup>65</sup> For more information on the grateful slave trope, see George Boulukos's *The Grateful Slave*.

British ships were employed in the brutal but lucrative slave trade, pirates might liberate the shackled prisoners or sell them, or the slaves themselves would overwhelm the slavers and take command of the ship” (46). In addition to pirates who were also involved in the slave trade, slave trading actually became legally defined as piracy in America in 1820 (Ficke 120).<sup>66</sup> However, the creators of fictional pirates tend to ignore the historical details connecting pirates to the slave trade in order to present their pirates in a positive light, which works by simultaneously sidestepping historical facts and reinforcing racialized stereotypes. This omission also speaks to a broader trend of ignoring or glossing over the negative descriptions and actions of historical pirates in order to present them as heroes in fiction. For the novel, this element of fictional Lafitte’s past further illustrates his conflicting characterization because, if viewed as heroic, his rescue of Cudjoe conflicts with his own description of his past actions as villainous. Unlike the Red Rover who does not seem to change while his redemption-worthy story is slowly unveiled to the reader over the course of the novel, Lafitte presents conflicting attributes, some of which align him with the gentleman pirate and others that call into question his redemption arc.

In addition to drawing attention to the conflicting characterization of Lafitte, the vault robbery is not interchangeable with a sea robbery because the vault is underneath the rich man’s house where he lives with his daughter, which brings the violence from the sea in the form of the pirate in direct conflict with a woman in a domestic space. Once the

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<sup>66</sup> For additional information on the historical connections between piracy and the slave trade, see Sarah H. Ficke’s “Pirates and Patriots,” Gesa Mackenthun’s *Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature*, and Maggie Montesinos Sale’s *The Slumbering Volcano*.

pirates are discovered, Lafitte flees to the main house, encountering Constanza and her father, who exclaims “Oh, take all, take all—gold, jewels, all, but leave me my Constanza—my only child! the blest image of her mother!” (1.85). However, Lafitte does not pose the only threat to Constanza. In fact, the narrative makes a case for women being in as much, if not more, danger within domestic spaces through the character of Velasquez, Constanza’s cousin, who wants to steal her father’s money and marry her. Lafitte looks down upon Velasquez for his “secret machinations” and betraying his uncle, arguing that it is worse to betray the trust of a relative than to be a more straightforward criminal like a pirate (1.62). Therefore, because Lafitte himself acts like a gentleman toward Constanza, the greater danger in this scenario can be found living within the domestic space, pretending to be a friend, rather than invading it from the outside as the pirate did.

Lafitte partially fulfills the usual role of a pirate who kidnaps women when he carries Constanza off with him as he leaves her father’s house, stopping to fight another man along the way: “In his left arm [Lafitte] supported Constanza, her unconscious head laid upon his shoulder, while he wielded his formidable cutlass in his right hand, upon which he received the ringing steel of the officer” (1.94). This scene could be read as fairly similar to other kidnappings of women by pirates; however, Lafitte has not carried Constanza off in order to force her into marriage. Instead, he has decided “This fair girl must be my breast-plate,” and is using her as a shield without any particular romantic investment in her well-being (1.100). While his actions do technically result in him kidnapping her, and later, his interest takes a more romantic turn, Lafitte also

inadvertently saved her from the advances of her cousin, who would have had more power over her after the death of her father during the fight. The danger to Constanza remains focused on her cousin, rather than Lafitte, who demonstrates his lack of interest in her physical safety by sword fighting while carrying her. His lack of concern for Constanza prevents him from fully occupying the role of the rescuing hero, which is further emphasized by his contrast with the man he is fighting, the nobleman betrothed to Constanza, Count D'Oyley, who "would, in the eyes of a romantic maiden, have been the Raleigh of the days of Elizabeth—the Ivanhoe of chivalry" (1.100).<sup>67</sup> As a result, Lafitte cannot be ranked among the best or worst of men in the novel. Lafitte continues to suggest established pirate roles of dangerous foreigners and villains kidnapping women, but refuses to commit to these types through his lack of complete romantic investment in Constanza and the fact that her cousin presents a greater danger to her. As it brings the masculine violence of the sea into the domestic space of the home, this lack of commitment questions the earlier depictions of pirates as either gentlemen criminals or irredeemable villains.

*"The Angel that Would Guide Me Back to Honour and Virtue": Redeeming Lafitte*

Just as Lafitte does not line up with earlier versions of the pirate, Constanza, the central woman in the novel, does not follow the model of either Cooper's or Sedgwick's female characters. For Cooper, the women in *The Red Rover* were constructed primarily as objects to be possessed through power struggles between the male characters to the

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<sup>67</sup> Although a hero to the English, Raleigh was a pirate from the perspective of the Spanish, which makes this description less straightforwardly heroic as well.

extent that it is not clear what the Rover plans to do with the women once he possesses them. While Mrs. Wyllys did play a role in reminding the Rover of his family connections, Cooper's women are not depicted as being particularly effective redeemers. Sedgwick, on the other hand, presents Hope Leslie as being able to set one of the least villainous buccaneers on the correct path, which models what Barbara Cutter identifies as redemptive womanhood.<sup>68</sup> However, Sedgwick does not limit her women to playing the redeemer as Hope also actively works to free the wrongly accused from prison, and ultimately, Rosa stops the buccaneers by blowing up their ship with them onboard. As with Lafitte, Ingraham draws from both of these traditions to create the central female character in *Lafitte*. Constanza, the woman that Lafitte rescues and kidnaps from her father's house, is initially presented as having the capacity to redeem Lafitte, but eventually, she takes on a more unconventional and potentially violent role.

Although Lafitte does not take Constanza for straightforward romantic reasons, he fairly quickly decides that he is in love with her, which positions her to fulfill the conventional role of the morally good woman who must convince the bad man to mend his ways. Constanza's fluid characterization is reflected in her complex racial positioning. She is referenced as Castilian, which would make her Spanish, but later, the other characters specifically reference her white skin (2.181). According to Julia Stern, "a Spanish gentleman traveling in nineteenth-century America would hail from Castile and possess white skin" (110).<sup>69</sup> By this reasoning, Constanza, who is also Castilian, could be

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<sup>68</sup> See *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*.

<sup>69</sup> However, in "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," Stern also notes that the average American might not differentiate the Spanish gentleman from the exotic (and less-white) image of the Spaniard in the American imagination (110). Shelley Streeby adds in *American*

read as white. This racial positioning allows Constanza to embody the exotic Spanish woman and the virtuous white woman simultaneously, emphasizing her desirability and her chastity as she is placed in opposition to Lafitte. Lafitte himself adopts the idea that Constanza has the potential to assist him as a redemptive woman: “You are the angel that would guide me back to honour and virtue” (1.127). This passage problematically places the responsibility of Lafitte’s future actions on Constanza, who is depicted as being morally pure and capable of convincing the fearsome pirate to mend his ways. Constanza, however, does not respond positively to Lafitte’s desire for her to redeem him, explaining: “Let your desire to return to the paths of honour, depend upon no contingency in which I am involved. Go forward, Señor, independently of extraneous circumstances, and make your own just perception of duty your guide, and you may yet be what you wish to be—what the world would desire to have you—what I sincerely pray you may become” (1.129). In this passage, Constanza shifts the responsibility back to Lafitte, preventing him from blaming her or his circumstances for his actions. In this manner, the narrative suggests the idea that a woman could redeem a violent man, but undercuts it by having the woman point out that the man should take responsibility for his own actions.

Initially, Constanza’s refocusing of responsibility back to Lafitte seems to be successful in getting him to change his ways, which would support the idea that even the reluctant woman could be a successful redeemer. He abandons his efforts to win her love and informs her:

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*Sensations* that mid-century authors suggested “that ‘Spanish blood,’ whether ‘pure Castilian’ or ‘mixed with other races,’ is a curse” (35). Given the conversations of the other characters regarding Constanza’s skin color, she seems to fit Stern’s original assessment of the racial identity of a Castilian in the nineteenth century.



No more may I look upon you but as a distant worshipper upon the shrine of his idolatry. A few short hours have changed me, lady!—For your sake, I will seek a name of honour among men; and when hereafter you shall learn that Lafitte, the outlaw earned laurels and a name, and perchance a death, in honourable war—remember it was your love that guided his bark out of the gulf of crime—your love that wafted it on to honour. (1.129-1.130)

The trajectory that he describes—death in honorable war—echoes the end of both the Red Rover and Cleveland from Scott's *The Pirate*. Since Lafitte cannot win the woman he loves, he instead plans to honor her wishes for him to be a better person, which also reinforces the idea that women are responsible for the morality of the men in their lives, but in a way that holds Constanza much less personally accountable for Lafitte's actions. More indicative of his commitment to redemption than his words, Lafitte does let Constanza go once, putting her on a ship and sending her back to her friends (1.133). However, the ship is wrecked in a storm and she returns to the pirates, giving Lafitte a second opportunity to demonstrate his commitment—or lack thereof—to his change.

Before he can act on that opportunity, the narrative further destabilizes the idea that a morally pure woman is the only thing that can redeem the fearsome pirate by having others respond to Lafitte in the same way as Constanza. When Constanza rejoins the pirates after her ship is wrecked, she finds that her fiancé, Count D'Oyley, has also been captured by Lafitte's men. When D'Oyley learns of Lafitte's respectful treatment of Constanza, he exclaims, "I must meet this man—there is a nobleness about him that captivates me, and the more so, that it was unlooked for. Now that you are safe, dearest

Constanza, my revenge is gone—I would know and redeem this extraordinary man” (1.176). While the count’s desire to redeem Lafitte adds weight to the idea that the assistance of another might be necessary to change one’s ways, it also suggests the possibility that it does not really matter who that helper is—it can be the woman who loves him or his former enemy. Although D’Oyley’s words shift the emphasis from Constanza’s role to Lafitte’s extraordinary character and redeemability, she is still central to this scenario since her treatment is the reason that D’Oyley changed his mind about Lafitte. This shift demonstrates that although Ingraham problematizes the trope of women as the moral redeemer, he is still highlighting women’s central role as a motivator of men within the adventure story.

D’Oyley’s desire to redeem Lafitte is not depicted as adding any additional weight to Lafitte’s resolution to be good for Constanza’s sake, but all the same, Lafitte does resolve to release them once again, crediting Constanza for his action: “She shall respect—if she cannot love me—only with gratitude shall she remember Lafitte! They shall both be free, and this very day will I myself take them to Port-au-Prince” (1.198). While his previous willingness to send Constanza back to her friends seems to support the idea that he would follow through on his promise this time as well, he does not get the opportunity. D’Oyley has a repeated bad dream and decides that it is an omen not to trust the pirate’s promise, convincing Constanza to escape with him instead. Despite the fact that he was planning to let them go anyway, Lafitte becomes angered when he finds out they escaped because they doubted his word. He exclaims:

They have escaped me then! she whom I worshipped has doubted my faith—no! no!...she has not; it was he—*he!* I will pay him back this deed. Curse, curse the fates that are ever crossing me! Here I have been humbling my passion to his—schooling my mind to virtuous resolves, for the happiness of this woman who despises me. For the bliss of this titled fool who doubts my word, I have let slip the fairest prize that ever fell into the possession of man. But the charm is broken—now will I win her! There are now no terms between him and me. I will pursue him to the death, and her I will win and wear. She shall yet become the bride of the detested outlaw. (2.15)

As Lafitte shifts the blame for the escape to D'Oyley, his language begins to shift toward the more common attitude of a pirate viewing a woman as an object when he refers to her as “the fairest prize.” In this manner, women become objectified prizes in conflicts between men in both *Lafitte* and *The Red Rover*, whereas, when Constanza stands up to Lafitte later in the narrative, she remains a person with whom he has to contend. Lafitte’s sudden change and disproportionate anger demonstrates his lack of commitment to his redemption, which in turn, undermines the idea that women can be effective redeemers, suggesting that they should not be held responsible for the actions of villainous men.

While Lafitte’s interactions with Constanza demonstrate that relying on women to redeem violent men is not a consistently effective option, the narrative does eventually redeem Lafitte in a way that suggests that perhaps the quality a redeemer needs is not morally pure womanhood, but a close personal connection with the person that is to be redeemed, indicating that villainous men can still be convinced to change their ways. The

person who eventually persuades Lafitte to restrain himself in this situation is his ward, Théodore. Like Constanza, Théodore is presented as morally superior to Lafitte, and the narrator explains that he often attempted to temper the actions of Lafitte and his crew:

Sometimes [Théodore] modified his obedience to the instructions of his friend and chief, and occasionally he had dissuaded him from insisting upon the act... Whenever he thought his own presence would diminish the amount of human suffering, he would often with the hope of doing good when evil was intended, overcome his own repugnance, and himself voluntarily become the agent of the outlaw. (2.16-2.17)

To some extent, Théodore occupies more the position of the gentleman pirate than Lafitte himself. His role specifically echoes that of Cleveland in Scott's *Pirate*, who participated in actions that he did not agree with in order to restrain and redirect the actions of his more violent and bloodthirsty men. Although Théodore occupies a subordinate position to Lafitte in this narrative, Ingraham wrote a sequel to *Lafitte*, entitled *Theodore, the Child of the Sea; or, the Adopted Son of Lafitte* (1844) with Théodore as the more straightforward heroic protagonist, adding to the contrast between him and his guardian. Lafitte's death at the end of his own story leaves the more morally grounded Théodore to embody the next model of American manhood.

While the previous passage demonstrated that Théodore had long made an effort to mitigate the actions of Lafitte without drawing too much attention to himself, he is finally successful in convincing Lafitte to change his ways when he decides to address the problem outright. After Constanza and D'Oyley escape and Lafitte decides to go after

them, Théodore argues on behalf of letting them go, “For my sake...if you regard me—for her sake, if you love her, pursue them no farther” (2.24). Much like D’Oyley’s previous resolve to redeem Lafitte, Théodore’s request is centered on Constanza and Lafitte’s love for her, but it begins with “For my sake...if you regard me,” which also places an emphasis on male friendship and Théodore’s father-son relationship with Lafitte. Lafitte responds to Théodore’s plea just as enthusiastically as he responded to that of Constanza: “I will Théodore, I will! you have conquered!” (2.26). However, unlike his conversation with Constanza, Lafitte follows through on his word to Théodore, and allows the escapees to sail out of his reach. While this is not the first time Lafitte has restrained his behavior at the request of someone else, it is the first time he was able to maintain that restraint, and Lafitte does not go back to his old ways for the remainder of the novel. By having Théodore redeem Lafitte, the narrative removes the burden of redemptive womanhood from Constanza, who had already verbally rejected it in her conversation with the pirate leader.

*“Timidity Had Given Place to Resolution”: A Potential for Female Violence*

In addition to not requiring Constanza to play the role of redeemer to Lafitte, Ingraham positions her at different moments in the narrative both in the role of a woman as an object to be possessed, which was utilized by Cooper, and as having the potential for violence, although he does not allow her to act on that potential. As previously mentioned, shortly after being introduced into the narrative, Constanza is carried off by Lafitte and she remains his captive for a portion of the story while he attempts to be

redeemed by her, and she tries to get him to release her. Much of this initial characterization, especially after D'Oyley arrives as Lafitte's flesh-and-blood rival for her affections, appears to be in the service of positioning her as an object in a contest between men without allowing her much agency to make her own choices. However, a few instances in the narrative suggest her potential for a more active role. Almost immediately upon her capture by Lafitte, she tries to stab herself with a stiletto, exclaiming, "Holy Virgin, forgive me!—but thus I can save my honour!" (1.120). She is prevented by Lafitte's timely intervention: "the glittering dagger was descending into her breathing bosom, when her captor sprang forward, and the weapon was sheathed in his intervening arm" (1.120). Her attempt to end her life demonstrates that a woman in the possession of a violent man would have very few effective options against him. At the same time, it undermines the possibility of successfully deploying less violent options, such as relying on the goodwill of one's captor. Although it is accidental, this scene does result in Constanza using violence against her captor when he intervenes and she stabs him in the arm, which foreshadows her agency in her next potentially violent encounter with Lafitte.

During a key moment in her captivity, Constanza adopts some of Lafitte's attributes, resulting in a characterization that suggests her potential for just as much agency, including that which takes the form of violence, as him. While both Constanza and D'Oyley are captives of Lafitte, an American ship chases Lafitte's ship back to its base and the fight spills onto the land, placing the captives in the middle of the battle.

Constanza screams when she sees Lafitte in the process of attacking D'Oyley (without knowing who he is), and the narrator explains:

The pirate started at the shriek and figure of the maiden, indistinctly seen in the obscurity of the cavern, and suddenly arrested his weapon, but too late to withhold the blow, which descended with half its original force upon the defenceless head of the count. He staggered and fell into the arms of Constanza, who, with an eye in which timidity had given place to resolution, caught his head upon her bosom, over which sprinkled the warm blood of her lover, and erecting her figure to its full height, with her disengaged arm, she drew a pistol from his belt, and leveled it at the heart of the buccaneer. The motion brought her brow under the full light of the lamp, and he, with an exclamation of surprise, as he recognized in those full features, stamped with heroic energy and woman's self-devotion, the fair Castillian, for whom, but a few days before, he had made magnanimous sacrifice of his love. (1.188)

This scene is most striking for its parallel to Lafitte's earlier scene where he held Constanza while sword fighting with D'Oyley. In this inverted scenario, Constanza has stepped into the role that Lafitte was occupying while D'Oyley has fallen into her damsel role. By pulling a pistol on Lafitte in defense of her lover, Constanza claims some of the assertiveness of the masculine adventure hero who is willing to use violence in defense of others. Furthermore, this passage illustrates a change that takes place in Constanza as her timidity is replaced with resolution. No longer the fainting damsel, or even the self-destructive maiden, she is now "stamped with heroic energy" and willing to defend her

lover against the attacking pirate. However, unlike Lafitte, who earlier simply fought his way out of his situation, Constanza takes a different approach. As soon as Lafitte recognizes her, he tells her she should kill him for attacking her fiancé. Instead, she defuses the situation by dropping the gun, chastising Lafitte, and working with him to tend D'Oyley's wound. In this manner, the narrative realigns her with more conventional—and less violent—womanhood by having her refuse to commit a violent act and in doing so, deescalate a potentially volatile situation. At the same time, her willingness to step into a conventionally masculine role cannot be ignored, regardless of its brevity.

Although Constanza does not permanently shift to a more central role with unconventional qualities, her newfound agency is reinforced when she and D'Oyley escape from Lafitte's base. Constanza takes a knife with her explaining it as "My last hope on earth, if yon outlaw had retaken us" (2.9). Given her earlier actions, her statement would seem to mean that she once again intended to take her own life if they were recaptured; however, the narrative does not provide additional explanation of her intentions either way, leaving open the possibility that she intended to use it to fight back against her captors. Regardless of her intentions, Constanza's forethought with bringing a knife along indicates that she learned from her previous encounters with the pirate and plans to be prepared should she encounter the violence of him or his men again. The fact that she does not tell her fiancé until they are almost away from the base indicates that she is acting independently in making decisions regarding her own safety, reinforcing the idea that a woman could not rely on others to protect her.



Despite Constanza's moments of agency, the narrative reinforces the idea that Constanza is primarily an object of male desire when one of Lafitte's men, Martinez, sees Constanza and decides "I would possess her" (2.177). When questioned, he explicitly states that he does not wish to marry her, allowing him to play out the path of the unrestrained and sexually violent pirate that Lafitte did not take (2.176). He enlists the help of Oula, a woman who practices Obeah and is described as having a face "more demonic than human" (2.174).<sup>70</sup> Oula agrees to help Martinez, and she does so by telling Cudjoe, who comes to her for help with revenge on those of Lafitte's men who have slighted him, that she needs the heart of a white woman who has never had a husband in order to give him the power for his revenge (2.181). Because Oula repeatedly draws attention to Constanza's whiteness, the narrative establishes this conflict in racial terms. In *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong*, Beverly Guy-Sheftall notes that "Black women continue to be portrayed as the antithesis of white womanhood" (27). Ingraham replicates this problematic division with a focus on potential violence, positioning not only black womanhood, but multiple nonwhite individuals, as a threat to the life and virtue of the white woman.

Like many other representations of threats to virtuous women, this conflict is ultimately, and violently, resolved by the male characters. Cudjoe learns that Oula is manipulating him and returns, killing her, her son, and Martinez. For Martinez in particular, his death is described as the consequence of his desire for Constanza: "the

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<sup>70</sup> In *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, Barbara Bush defines Obeah as "a term used by contemporaries to describe the 'pagan' religious practices of the slaves" and that "a significant proportion" of the practitioners were women, although it was practiced by both men and women (73-74). Furthermore, Bush connects the practice of Obeah to subversion and rebellion in slave communities, which could contribute to Ingraham's desire to depict it and Oula as evil and dangerous.

impatient Spaniard darted forward to seize his prize...Instead of the maiden's lovely form, he met the herculean shoulders of the slave, whose long knife passed directly through his heart" (2.185-2.186). In this passage, what appears to be Martinez claiming his prize becomes Cudjoe taking his revenge, which makes Martinez's impatience to possess Constanza seem just as much a cause of his death as his earlier insults to Cudjoe. The explanation for Cudjoe's motivations also centers on Constanza. As the narrator explains, he was "[i]ndignant at this treachery towards one whom he regarded as his master's lady, and enraged that the old woman should thus use him as the tool for the Spaniard" (2.187). This passage gives equal weight to Cudjoe's desire to protect Constanza on behalf of Lafitte and his anger at being manipulated. The potential violence of Oula and Martinez as well as the actual violence of Cudjoe works to reinforce racist stereotypes that nonwhite people are more violent.<sup>71</sup> However, the fact that Cudjoe's violence is in the service of protecting a woman disrupts this stereotype by aligning him with heroic white men, such as D'Oyley. As a result, Cudjoe, like many of Ingraham's other characters, embodies multiple established types: because he acts on behalf of Lafitte in defense of Constanza, Cudjoe's heroics are complicated by his role as a grateful slave, but he also acts on his own behalf in revenge for past insults by Martinez and against the manipulation of Oula. Therefore, Cudjoe's actions could be read as either asserting his own agency or simply embodying an extension of Lafitte's will.

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<sup>71</sup> As Guy-Sheftall points out, racial stereotypes of violent tendencies were often constructed differently for men and women with women being associated with unrestrained sexuality (25). However, the distinction at work in this scenario is that of women orchestrating and men carrying out violent acts.

On the edges but key to this scenario is Juana whose role suggests the possibility for a nonwhite woman to have a different type of agency that capitalizes on the tendency of others to overlook her, thereby affording her more mobility than Constanza, whose movements are constantly restricted by the male character's desire to possess her. Juana is described in the narrative as a "faithful slave" with a husband on Lafitte's crew. It was she who overheard the plan and told Cudjoe that Martinez and Oula were trying to trick him into helping them harm Constanza (1.178, 2.187). Without her help, Cudjoe would have been their unwitting pawn and Constanza would most likely have not been saved. Furthermore, this scenario was not the first instance in which Juana worked on behalf of Constanza. When Constanza and D'Oyley made their escape from Lafitte's base, they used a plan that Juana had been instrumental in executing (1.208). Juana drugs a drink and gives it to the guards, which allows the couple to slip away with D'Oyley disguised as Juana and Constanza as Théodore (2.3). Not only was Juana instrumental in the success of their plan, but D'Oyley had to use her identity in order to escape, an escape which involved both captives cross-dressing while D'Oyley also had to pass as a black woman. Their disguises highlight the historical tendency, noted by Bush, to erase black women in this era (8). At the same time, this invisibility allows Juana to go where others cannot in order to overhear plots and execute escapes. This escape is reminiscent of Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* (1835), where Rose, the former slave and now servant of the Linwood family orchestrates and carries out a jailbreak, which requires the young Herbert Linwood to disguise himself as her while she physically subdues the guard, tying him up with her garters (326-329). Like many of its other characterizations, *Lafitte* does

not present a straightforward depiction of black womanhood as it perpetuates some stereotypes through the violent and superstitious Oula, but has Juana take the more unconventional role of using others' inability to see her in order to outsmart them and guide the events of the narrative. Regardless of Ingraham's intention, Juana's central role in this scenario can be read as subversive and extending some measure of agency to nonwhite women.

In keeping with its dominant genre of sea adventure, *Lafitte* does not include a multitude of female characters, and the ones it does contain at least partially reinforce stereotypical roles. This depiction is most clearly demonstrated in the characterization of Lafitte's cousin, Gertrude. Initially, she appears to be almost interchangeable with Constanza while her cousins, Achille and Henri fight for her love. In fact, because Achille became Lafitte and D'Oyley is revealed at the end of the novel to be Henri, Constanza and Gertrude are even being fought over by the same men. However, Gertrude's depiction is more problematic because rather than telling the brothers that they are responsible for their own actions like Constanza does to Lafitte, she blames herself for being the reason Achille nearly killed Henri. She explains that she became a nun because she was the "ill-fated cause of all your quarrel," and when Lafitte asks why she did not marry his brother, she says, "As an atonement—the only atonement I could make, for the mischief of which I was the unintentional cause—I renounced all worldly hopes and became a bride of the church" (2.157). These passages indicate that she has adopted the problematic rhetoric, which Constanza rejected, that a woman is responsible for the actions of men who are in love with her. Additionally, she plays the redeemer role better

than Constanza when she is reunited with Lafitte after he is wounded in the Battle of New Orleans, and she urges him to repent (2.156). Although Lafitte has already changed his ways, he resolves “as far as lies in my power, I will devote the remainder of my life to penance and prayer” and agrees to return the wealth that he has taken from others (2.160-2.161). In addition to exhibiting the established role of redemptive womanhood, she eventually helps to reunite Lafitte with his family by informing him that he did not succeed in killing his brother, and Henri is still alive. Her actions in the novel do not demonstrate as much agency as even Constanza; however, Gertrude models a different choice by not marrying either of the men who are trying to win her, and instead, remaining single and devoting herself to serving the good of others. In this way, she is similar to many of Sedgwick’s secondary characters who choose to remain single and be of assistance to more people.<sup>72</sup> On the whole, the female characters in *Lafitte* adhere more closely to stereotypical depictions than not; however, a handful of moments hint at the potential for greater agency.

*“My Country Shall Have My Arm and Single Cutlass”: Pirate Turned Patriot*

Following the tradition of Cooper more so than Sedgwick, Ingraham attempts to capitalize on the legacy of *The Red Rover* by grounding Lafitte’s good deeds in American patriotism, which would allow him to continue Cooper’s construction of a more positive American masculinity founded on patriotic rhetoric. However, Lafitte’s displays of

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<sup>72</sup> See Jennifer Camden’s *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth Century British and American Novels*, 121-144. For more on Sedgwick’s attitude toward the value of marriage or single life, see Deborah Gussman’s “‘Equal to Either Fortune’: Sedgwick’s *Married or Single?* and Feminism” in *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*, 252-267.

patriotism are far less consistent than those of his earlier counterpart, and eventually, they are overshadowed by the family drama begun by his conflict with his brother and the continued anxieties over the threat Lafitte posed to Constanza. After Théodore convinces Lafitte to change his ways, his redemption is put to the test when the British approach him, asking for his help taking New Orleans from the Americans during the War of 1812. This scenario draws from the life of historical Lafitte, who was approached by the British in a similar manner and turned them down (Davis 166-172). In the novel, the British officer outlines the benefits of accepting the offer: “But consider the advantages which will result sir... You will be restored to the pale of society, bearing an honourable rank (pardon me, Captain Lafitte) among honourable men... I beg of you sir, do not permit this opportunity of acquiring fortune and honour to yourself... escape you” (2.49). In this passage, the British officer emphasizes the honor and rank that Lafitte will achieve by assisting the British. However, Lafitte responds:

[H]ave I not power, fame and wealth as I am? Is the reward of ambition greater than this? what will it gain me more? Honor? desire of an honourable name?

Alas! *that*, I have not. That—that indeed, were a spur to drive me to your purpose. But will men confer honour upon dishonor? Will a pardon, a title, a station, make men think better of me? the despised, the feared and cursed of men? No—no—no! (2.49)

In his response, Lafitte points out that he has most of these things: power, fame, and wealth, and the offer of honor is not so easily achieved because others will still judge him on his past actions as a pirate. Much like Cooper’s Rover and Scott’s Cleveland, Lafitte

can be redeemed by changing his ways and dying heroically, but he would not be likely to be accepted into society. Furthermore, this passage denies the possibility of redeeming a violent and feared pirate like Lafitte because he would never be accepted by society.

Despite the suggestion that Lafitte cannot be redeemed, he appears to follow the Red Rover's example as he chooses to align himself against the British as "the outlaw who refuses to betray his country" (2.54). However, unlike the Red Rover, who had defended the colonies against insult in his youth, Lafitte's decision appears to be impulsive and more to spite the British than for any deep love of the countrymen that he had been robbing for years. As Davis points out with regard to the historical Lafittes, "like most of French blood, they felt an ancestral enmity for Britain" (173). Therefore, the motivation of the historical Lafitte brothers could be read as more in line with acting against Britain than on behalf of the United States as well. Since in the fictional version, Ingraham mentions but does not dwell on the fact that Lafitte is French, his decision to help the Americans is less in the service of identifying international rivalries and more invested in aligning him with patriotic ideals in order to make his character more clearly heroic. Despite his initial impulsive decision, Lafitte follows through on his resolution by sneaking into New Orleans and offering his services to the American commanders. Once again he claims a love of country, adding, "I am willing to make some atonement for the violence done to your laws through my instrumentality" (2.107-2.109). Lafitte's words claim the country as his own, but not "your laws," indicating that his patriotism is somewhat selective. Although they also aided the Americans, these patriotic motives are not applicable to the historical Lafittes, who Davis describes as feeling "no patriotic

affection for the United States sufficient to make them obey its laws” (173). Therefore, this moment in the story is one in which Ingraham has chosen to embellish historical events with unlikely motivations in order to align Lafitte with Cooper’s more patriotic and redeemable Rover.

While the reader has not been given any indication to the contrary, the response to Lafitte’s offer calls into question whether or not his patriotism is genuine, which suggests a parallel to Lafitte’s early inconsistent efforts at redemption through Constanza. Only one of the American officers is impressed that Lafitte chose to place himself “in the power of the executor of the laws” he violated, and this officer concludes: “I know not the motives which induced you all at once to adopt this honourable course. I am willing to attribute it to the best...to the patriotism of a good citizen” (2.108, 2.114). However, the rest of the Americans do not believe that Lafitte is telling the truth, and they send a military expedition to attack his base, burning many of his ships as well (1.136-1.137). Lafitte had been struck by lightning and was recovering elsewhere when the attack took place, and thus, he hears about it after the fact. Given his piratical reputation, one would expect him to swear revenge, as he had numerous other times in the novel. But instead, Lafitte responds to the news with “It is right... It would be stranger if they should have believed me...this shall not change me; they shall yet know and believe, that I acted from motives they must honour. They shall learn that they have injured me by their decisions. Injured! But let it pass—my country shall have my arm and single cutlass, if not more!” (2.138). While the exclamation of “Injured!” gives some indication that he is struggling to control his anger, Lafitte once again maintains his resolution as he “returned to the



city, and again offered his services to his country, with those of as many of his former adherents as he could assemble” (2.142). Unlike the earlier scenario in which D’Oyley’s lack of faith caused Lafitte to break his promise to let his captives go, Lafitte follows through on his commitment to change his ways. The parallels between this betrayal and the earlier one place Constanza and the United States in similar positions, drawing connections between the treatment of women and patriotism toward a nation as Lafitte takes the lesson Théodore taught him with regard to Constanza and applies it to the Americans who distrust his word.

Not only does Lafitte persist in offering his services to his country, but he ultimately fights on its behalf. Much like the earlier moments in the story where the narrative focused on land-based and domestic concerns, the Battle of New Orleans finds Lafitte once again fighting on land rather than where one would expect to find a pirate on the sea. He is positioned as part of the ground defenses, firing an artillery piece with “fatal skill and activity” (2.144). While this scenario demonstrates that Lafitte is just as capable of fighting on the land as the sea, it undermines the idea that pirate stories exist primarily as sea adventures. Furthermore, it once again deviates from the path laid out by historical Lafitte. According to Davis, Jean Lafitte was sent to help position artillery near their old smuggling establishment for the battle while Pierre assisted Jackson and his officers in defending New Orleans (213). Although some of the Lafittes’ men commanded artillery during the battle, Jean’s role is less clear. Davis writes that “no participant recalled with certainty that Jean was present during the battle, and a few testified later that they did not see him anywhere on the battlefield” (223). Therefore,

Ingraham went out of his way to place Lafitte as an active participant in the battle and in a way that is unexpected for a pirate, which both reinforces (he is still engaged in the masculine endeavor of battle) and disrupts (it is on the land rather than the sea) the typical relationship between gender and sea stories.

This trend of being less invested in sea battles continues as the ending of the novel brings the events in a full circle back to the original family drama of the conflict between Lafitte and his brother over the love of their cousin. During the Battle of New Orleans, one of the attacking officers singles out Lafitte, shouting, “Give way to my revenge! Pirate, Lafitte! ravisher! murderer! I dare you to single combat!—coward!” (2.147). Already before the identity of this attacker is revealed to be D’Oyley, who thinks Lafitte ran off with Constanza, his words, “ravisher” in particular, indicate that his revenge might be on behalf of a woman’s honor. While Ingraham holds up the possibility of Lafitte having a redemption of dying heroically on behalf of his country like the Red Rover, D’Oyley’s attack brings the focus back to violence directed at women. After being wounded by D’Oyley during the battle and nursed back to health by Gertrude, Lafitte is pardoned (2.213-2.214). Without relying on Scott’s suggestion in *The Pirate* that masculine violence must be restrained by the law, Ingraham uses the law to acknowledge the change that has already occurred in the pirate, and he includes the pardon of historical Lafitte in an appendix to the novel, thereby adding weight to this claim. To all appearances he plans to follow through on his resolutions to be a better man as the narrative explains that he “has purchased that vessel, formerly his own, and is going—they say, now he has received his pardon—to spend his days in the West Indies, or in

France” (2.193). When Constanza hears of Lafitte’s plans, she raises “her eyes with devotional gratitude to heaven, while all the woman beamed in them, as she reflected how far she had contributed to this change. And she sighed, that she could not requite love so noble and pure as his” (2.200). Although Constanza is misremembering the success of her efforts to redeem Lafitte, this passage serves as a reminder to the reader that while women have played key roles in this story, none of them have ended up romantically involved with the protagonist.

The end of the novel reinforces the importance of romantic and familial connections as D’Oyley once again attacks Lafitte, despite Lafitte’s efforts to explain that Constanza “is safe, and in honor” (2.207). This interaction returns the focus of the conflict between men to a woman, echoing the initial encounter between Lafitte and his brother. Eventually, D’Oyley mortally wounds Lafitte, and an old man steps forward, recognizing D’Oyley as Henri, his son, which means that he is also the brother that Lafitte had only recently learned was alive (2.209). As soon as he makes the connection, Lafitte exclaims: “Henri! It is indeed *my brother!*...forgive me, Henri, before I die!” (2.209; emphasis in the original). Unlike Sedgwick’s irredeemable pirates, Lafitte seeks forgiveness from his brother, his father, Constanza, and as he is dying, God. Much like Cooper’s Red Rover and Scott’s Cleveland, Lafitte must die so that he is not given an opportunity to return to his old life of crime. However, it is important not to overlook the fact that fictional Lafitte did not die fighting heroically for his country, but instead, for a crime (running off with Constanza) that he did not even commit. At the same time, this repeated ending suggests that while violent men might be redeemed, there is no guarantee

that they will be able to maintain that redemption, and therefore, it is better for them to die as heroes.

The dangerous possibility of Lafitte remaining alive is modeled by his historical counterpart. Like fictional Lafitte, historical Lafitte was pardoned by President Madison for aiding the Americans during the Battle of New Orleans (Davis 224-225). However, as Davis indicates, the Lafitte brothers' patriotism was "limited by convenience" (477). After the war ended, the brothers became involved with independence movements for various Latin American countries, using their connections to spy on these groups for Spain while establishing a new base for smuggling and semi-legitimate privateering out of Galveston (Davis 257-324). The narrative strategy of the pirate's death, used in *Lafitte*, allows the author to control how he is remembered and sidestep the practical question of whether or not such a vacillating villain, as Poe calls him, would really change his ways.

Unlike the similar endings of *The Red Rover* and *The Pirate* where the pirate's death is presented as a follow up to the main plot, *Lafitte's* ending is essential to the story because it resolves the original conflict between brothers. As a result, the ending shifts the emphasis of the story from sea adventure to family drama, where it is concerned with who will become a family after the story ends. With Lafitte dead, it is D'Oyley and Constanza who adopt Théodore and form a family, which puts an end to the possibility of a redeemable criminal, and instead holds up the more morally grounded individuals in his place. This new family is illustrated in the conclusion where D'Oyley and Constanza are depicted sitting on a porch with their three-year-old daughter on her grandfather's knee while Théodore and Juana are nearby (2.211). However, this idyllic family scene is

followed by a quote from Byron's *The Corsair* (1814), which provides the final lines for the novel. Considering *The Corsair* ended with the pirate abandoning his men to return to the sea, this quote causes dissonance with the previous image of the happy family. In many ways *Lafitte* draws from the depictions of pirates in stories established by Cooper and Sedgwick, and although the result might be, as Poe notes, inconsistent characters, the narrative also undermines the tidy solutions presented by Cooper—that a pirate's violence can be redirected—and Sedgwick—that a pirate's violent villainy will destroy him—and instead, offers the uncomfortable resolution that people do not change so easily, nor can they be so easily contained. In order to present his response to Cooper and Sedgwick, Ingraham offers a blend of conventional and unconventional roles for both women and pirates.

### **Eliza Ann Dupuy's *The Pirate's Daughter*: Adventure in a Domestic Novel**

*"The House Itself Was to Become the Object of Attack": Pirates Invade Domestic Spaces*

Eliza Ann Dupuy's *The Pirate's Daughter* (1845) presents a different mixture of genres by borrowing from the sea adventure tradition in order to address the problem of violent men within her novel's primarily domestic genre. Like Ingraham's *Lafitte*, *The Pirate's Daughter* draws on elements of earlier pirate stories as represented by the work of Cooper and Sedgwick, but this novel is unique for asking the question that none of the earlier novels were willing to address, which is how the unruly and violent man functions within a family, and in particular, what happens when he becomes a father. Unlike *The Red Rover* and *Lafitte*, *The Pirate's Daughter* does not position its pirate within national

and familial contexts simultaneously, and aside from setting the story in New Orleans, it pays little attention to situating the narrative within a particular time period or in relation to historical events. Rather than allowing the pirate to be contained by the law as Walter Scott did, be redirected toward a patriotic cause like Cooper, or be destroyed through his own schemes as Sedgwick's buccaneers were, *The Pirate's Daughter* considers the implications for those around him, including those with familial obligations to him, if the threat of the piratical character is not neatly contained by the narrative. In doing so, the novel creates a generational divide in which the mistakes of the previous generation outlaw a man who has no employable skills, resulting in a dangerous pirate that cannot be contained. At the same time, the current generation seeks to address these shortcomings by becoming independent women and self-sufficient men who work to thwart masculine violence through redemption and violent opposition.

While the New Orleans setting and the similarly constructed names indicates that Dupuy's pirate Le Clerc was likely somewhat based on historical Lafitte, the name more specifically references the sixteenth-century pirate François Le Clerc, who began as a pirate but was later officially sanctioned as a privateer. Le Clerc is known for burning several port towns in the Caribbean in the sixteenth century.<sup>73</sup> If Raymond's claim that Ingraham reworked an early draft of Dupuy's novel to create *Lafitte* is true, it would make sense that Dupuy would feel the need to avoid using the famous New Orleans pirate Lafitte and choose a different French pirate for her novel. Complicating this characterization further, however, fictional Le Clerc is the child of a Spanish

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<sup>73</sup> David S. Berry, "French Pirates and Privateers" in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law* edited by Bardo Fassbender and Anne Peters, 595.

noblewoman and a French gentleman, which prevents him from drawing too close of a connection to historical Le Clerc. Like many of the later popular stories, *The Pirate's Daughter* took several forms. A version of it was originally published in 1837 in the *Southern Literary Messenger* as "The Curse," which Dupuy reworked and expanded into the novel, *The Pirate's Daughter* in 1845. In 1849, the novel was retitled *Celeste: The Pirate's Daughter*, but the text remained unchanged. It is difficult to determine whether these varied forms can provide any indication of the popularity of the story—expanding "The Curse" into *The Pirate's Daughter* seems to be a move that would give the audience a fuller version of a story they enjoyed; however, retitling it *Celeste* could be an effort to rebrand it and increase sales or shift the focus to better describe the story. A note from the author at the end of *The Pirate's Daughter* indicates that the character of Celeste is based on a real person, and "The Curse" is framed as an aunt telling a story to her niece. However, the names change from one version of the story to the next, making it impossible to verify any historical connection.

Following the trend discussed by Burwick and Powell that in nineteenth-century fiction it was increasingly unlikely to see pirate characters acting like pirates, *The Pirate's Daughter* does not contain much in the way of actual pirating, but perhaps that is to be expected in a narrative that would be primarily categorized as domestic fiction. The story opens with Celeste having been raised in a convent and unaware that her father is the feared pirate Le Clerc. Her friend Isola convinces Celeste to come live with her, and much of the novel is concerned with who these young women will marry. Celeste refuses to commit herself to the man that she loves because she does not know her parentage and

worries that it would injure her future husband's reputation, while Isola is manipulated into believing that the man she loves does not return her affections. On the margins of this domestic drama lurks Le Clerc who makes most of his early appearances in the novel by showing up to watch his daughter at various social functions (1.86). But even when he is not present, his constant threat is represented through the letters of Celeste's love interest, Harry Sinclair, who is in the Navy and is called away to pursue Le Clerc (1.125). At the end of the novel, Le Clerc is captured, but Celeste, upon learning that he is her father, helps him escape and then dies trying to shield him from his enemies. The ending is unusual for including the death of the virtuous, and now happily married, female protagonist, but illustrates the dangers of committing oneself too much to the ideals of the previous generation.<sup>74</sup>

Although, as with *Lafitte*, the reader hears of the daring and fearsome deeds of Le Clerc, nothing in the novel is pirated in a sense of one ship attacking and stealing the cargo of another. While the pirates do not attack another ship in this manner, they do attack a plantation in order to free one of their captured crew members (1.191-1.196). Because nearly all of the female characters in the story are visiting the plantation at the time, this scenario, like the vault robbery in *Lafitte*, highlights the lack of division between adventure settings and domestic spaces. The narrator explains that "the house itself was to become the object of attack" by the pirates, demonstrating that violent men could threaten domestic spaces on land just as easily as ships on the sea (1.191).

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<sup>74</sup> In her introduction to *Famous Last Words*, Alison Booth discusses the common endings of marriage or death for women in "traditional" novels (8-9). *The Pirate's Daughter*, however, ends with both marriage and death for the protagonist.



The range of responses by female characters to the attack draws parallels with *Lafitte* by suggesting, without acting on, the possibility of violent womanhood. The narrator describes the scene:

[T]he scream had proceeded from Laura Duvernay, who kneeled at her mother's feet uttering the most pitiable cries. Pale as death, Madame Duvernay sat motionless with her hands clasped around her daughter's neck.

Mrs. Ernest was supporting the fainting form of Celeste, and Isola with cheek, lip, and brow, as white and nearly as cold as marble, stood beside her with a knife in her hand, which she appeared to have snatched from the table. (1.194)

In this scene, two of the young women react to the attack in less productive and feminine ways by screaming and fainting while the older generation in the form of Madame Duvernay and Mrs. Ernest provide them with support and comfort. Isola, however, chooses an unconventional and potentially violent response of arming herself with a knife. Like Constanza concealing a knife during her escape in *Lafitte*, it is not clear what Isola plans to do with it because before she can act, Le Clerc recognizes his daughter and calls off the attack (1.195). However, through Isola's reaction, Dupuy is able to suggest the possibility that a woman would match violence with violence, rather than scream or faint. Although *The Pirate's Daughter* does not act on this potential, many of the pirate stories that followed did not shy away from depicting violent women. Through this scenario as well as other moments of violence in the text, the narrative brings the threat of violence that accompanies the figure of the pirate into domestic spaces on multiple occasions, blurring the possible division between public and private while the responses

of the female characters expand the range of possibilities for women to respond to violence.

*“Breaking Every Link that Bound Me to Society”: Pirate and Father*

Although Poe did not review *The Pirate’s Daughter*, many of his critiques of Lafitte could also be applicable to Le Clerc, who is presented as both a much-feared pirate and a devoted father. However, unlike Ingraham, Dupuy provides Le Clerc with a clear reason for his inconsistent actions—as a pirate, he has declared war on the world, but he promised on his wife’s grave that he would keep their daughter safe. While Ingraham’s Lafitte summarized his turn to piracy after the fact, Dupuy provides a detailed account of Le Clerc’s decision to become a pirate, which mostly focuses on his wife and familial connections. Le Clerc himself blames the man he believes to be his father, who is actually his mother’s second husband whom she was forced to marry after her father killed her first husband. Le Clerc’s father disinherits and curses him after he chooses to marry a poor woman of whom his father does not approve. The curse reads: “*may all you desire be withheld—may those you love be blasted in your sight, and every hope of happiness withered, by that God who is about to judge my soul,*” and Le Clerc traces all of the bad things that happen to him to that moment (2.30; emphasis in the original). In a manner that is reminiscent of Lafitte’s inability to take responsibility for his own actions, Le Clerc chooses to blame a curse, rather than his choices.

In reality, the events that cause Le Clerc to become a pirate have more to do with his decision to defend his honor, than with his father’s decision to disinherit him.

Drawing on the origin story of Cooper's Rover, Le Clerc kills a man in a duel. However, his motivation was very different from the Red Rover's patriotic defense of the colonies. When asked if he had killed the other man without provocation, Le Clerc responds, "No—not without bitter provocation: not in cold blood, for mine was at fever heat...he refused me his hand in open day, and muttered—'I clasp not hands with the accursed.' I sprang on him and struck him to the earth. We met the following day, and at the first fire, he fell dead. His brother lives, and his inquiries have never slept—if I remain, it would be to infamy and death" (2.28-2.29). From Le Clerc's perspective, this duel, which makes him an outlaw, stems from his father's decision to disinherit and curse him. However, this duel grounds Le Clerc's actions in a specific culture of masculine violence, which is often associated with a southern honor code (139). While this reaction would seem to place Le Clerc within the regional culture of the novel's setting, Amy S. Greenberg argues in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* that this "understanding that violence was an appropriate means for proving their manhood" was pervasive throughout the north and south and was not limited to a particular ethnicity or class, although the violence itself might take forms other than dueling (139). While Dupuy does not use the narrative to condemn or cast judgement on Le Clerc's actions, the novel does illustrate the widespread and destructive ramifications of this violent masculinity. When Le Clerc's wife dies shortly after the duel, he attributes her death to the curse coming true, and he embraces his criminal life, explaining, "I found savage joy in breaking every link that bound me to society" (2.31). Le Clerc decides to avoid further human attachments in order to prevent others from falling victim to the curse, but the fact

that this change is initiated by his wife's death offers the possibility that removing the woman—and the moral influence that she represents—from his life caused him to choose a more isolating and violent path.

In addition to the curse and the lack of moral influence from women, the narrative suggests but does not dwell on the possibility that losing the economic capital of his father's wealth, which caused him to have to rely on himself for his income, contributed to Le Clerc's decision to become a pirate. Another character points out: "[Le Clerc's] early history I know nothing of, except that he was born a gentleman, and was disinherited by his father. He did not know how to work, and could not beg, and so he turned pirate" (2.173). This passage places the blame not on his father, the duel, or his wife's death, but on his station and his lack of marketable skills. In this manner, *The Pirate's Daughter* can be contrasted with sea fiction, which according to Cohen in *The Novel and the Sea*, prioritizes "[t]he heroism of skilled work" by placing an emphasis on the labor and craft of sailors (11). Le Clerc's upper class gentlemanly upbringing did not prepare him to work in order to support himself, and thus he had to turn to illegal means to obtain financial support. As Leeson notes with regard to historical pirates, "Sea marauding could be a lucrative business" (11). While Ingraham rejected this economic motive for Lafitte, Dupuy offers it as one possibility among many for Le Clerc's turn to piracy. With this version, Le Clerc becomes the gentleman pirate because as a gentleman he has no skills that would be beneficial in acquiring more legitimate employment. This class critique, although mentioned only briefly, is unique among the other pirate stories

discussed in this project, which tend to reinforce class divisions by presenting characters as worthy of different statuses.

However, Le Clerc's version of events, which provides the curse with a central role and is emphasized by the novel, is inextricably tied to both his daughter and his dead wife, who are in many ways presented as interchangeable, not the least of which being that they have the same name. Like many other pirate characters, Le Clerc is depicted as having the potential to be redeemed for the sake of a woman, but in Le Clerc's case, it is fatherly love for his daughter, rather than romantic love for a woman. He offers to redeem himself and "sever myself from my present associations for ever" if his father will acknowledge her and support her with a portion of his wealth (1.13). Had this scenario played out, Le Clerc's daughter would have been the cause of his redemption, but in a very different way than the usual redemptive womanhood. When his father refuses his offer, Le Clerc returns to his life as a pirate, which although the narrative does not explicitly state it, is presumably at least partially to provide for his daughter. Therefore, a female character, in the form of the pirate's daughter, is held up as a possible reason for redemption, but the narrative does not allow the easy solution; instead, it asks what happens when a pirate has a family to support.

In addition to his unique status as father, Le Clerc is unusual among fictional American pirates for not being focused on kidnapping a woman. Instead, in one of the few instances he is depicted as actively pirating, he captures a group of young men who have set out to hunt him. After hearing that some plunder from one of Le Clerc's attacks has been sold nearby, a handful of men plan to capture him in a ship that supposedly

survived the pirate's attack. However, the ship turns out to be Le Clerc's while the recruited captain and crew are him and his men—the expedition had been designed by Le Clerc to capture and ransom the young men. Although it is not described, they are presumably ransomed without difficulty, because they eventually return to their families (2.94). This scenario emphasizes the pirate's use of disguises and deception, rather than violence to achieve his ends. The kidnapping of the novel's young men also inverts the gender of the usual damsel scenario, and although the kidnapper is still a man, he achieves the same end—money—as many of the piratical villains who wish to force rich heiresses into marriage. On the whole, this scenario serves to destabilize the stereotype of the pirate as a violent man who carries off women.

In keeping with the usual reputation of the gentleman pirate, Le Clerc is depicted as being morally superior to his crew, although the novel devotes less time to this distinction than some of the others. After one of Le Clerc's piratical attacks, the people agree that his conduct “was in keeping with many of his actions: at times yielding to the wildest excesses of his lawless band, and again, the generous protector of those who unhappily fell in their power” (2.3). In this passage, it is not Le Clerc himself oscillating between wild excesses and generous protection; instead, the negative qualities of an inability to restrain oneself are attributed to “his lawless band” while as an individual, he gets to be “the generous protector.” In many ways, Le Clerc embodies the morally ambiguous pirate type that allowed Cooper to redeem his Rover and caused Poe to object to Ingraham's characterization of Lafitte; however, unlike those other characters, Le Clerc finds himself in a domestic novel more along the lines of those written by

Sedgwick, where the pirate is usually the unquestioned villain, rather than the adventure stories of Cooper and Ingraham where he can be the hero.

*“She Can Trample on Impossibilities”: A New Industrious and Self-Sufficient Generation*

Throughout *The Pirate’s Daughter*, and in particular with regard to Le Clerc’s history, Dupuy depicts the older generation’s ideas about romantic and marital choices as being outdated and potentially destructive, especially to the younger generation. Intertwined with the older generation’s ideas about marriage is the belief that women can provide moralizing influences on violent men, especially within domestic spaces. For Le Clerc, his wife is presented as “my guardian angel” who “might have saved me—from myself” (1.11). Like Lafitte, this passage places the responsibility for redeeming a violent man on the woman he loves. This implication is carried through when Le Clerc’s wife dies, and he explains that he “felt as an alien to my species: henceforth the world was nothing to me—I had forever lost all sympathy with its petty cares and mean ambition” (2.30). Much like the Red Rover, who said that he had been deprived of the society of women, Le Clerc feels like he loses his humanity without his wife to provide a moral compass for his actions. As Marcus Rediker explains, pirates were often depicted as being enemies of humanity; however, *The Pirate’s Daughter* specifically links that positioning to a lack of women in the pirate’s life.<sup>75</sup> Le Clerc’s reaction to his wife’s death takes the idea of women’s moral power to the extreme because women are depicted as not only guiding men but also anchoring them to humanity. However, the fact that

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<sup>75</sup> See Rediker’s *Villains of All Nations*.

most of the novel's conflicts arise from the efforts of the older generation, represented by the parents and guardians of the main characters, to adhere to outdated notions of class and gender roles, along with the fact that much of the destruction stems from Le Clerc putting his faith in his wife's ability to restrain him, demonstrates that the older generation may be misguided in their adherence to outdated gender roles.

Within the younger generation, which is made up of the young adults in the novel, the female characters are explicitly written as displaying more unconventional roles and as revising older notions. The two central women are depicted as having contrasting personalities with Celeste being described as "this shrinking, yielding creature" while Isola believes "she can trample on impossibilities" and is "naturally of a fearless disposition," an idea that was illustrated in her response to the attack on the plantation (2.53, 1.35, 2.107). The contrasted pairing of passive Celeste and assertive Isola references the work of Walter Scott, to which both Cooper and Sedgwick were responding as well. Although Cooper and Sedgwick were closer contemporaries of Dupuy, she was explicitly addressing Scott's novels as demonstrated through her characters' decision to attend a masquerade as the central cast of *Waverley* (1814). Celeste goes as Rose Bradwardine, the passive and practical woman who marries Edward Waverley, and Isola attends as Flora McIvor, the highland chieftain's sister who is more adventurous and has romantic ideals but ultimately remains single (1.117). These choices accurately match the characters of *The Pirate's Daughter* with their *Waverley* counterparts based on personality. Although *Waverley* is not a pirate story, Scott's *The Pirate* contains a similar contrasting pair of women.



By establishing the clear allusion to Scott's novels, Dupuy was able to respond to his idea, which was depicted at the end of both *Waverley* and *The Pirate*, that the passive woman should marry while the assertive woman remains single. Specifically, the assertive woman remains single because she also internalizes a romantic ideal that no man—not even the gentleman pirate, Cleveland—can live up to, which results in pairing of independent women and impossible aspirations that implicitly condemns the former along with the latter. In both cases, it is the female character's choice to remain single, but it is not necessarily presented as a universally positive option. Dupuy briefly considers the possibility of following Scott's formula when she has Isola declare that she will remain single. Thinking that her suitor has betrayed her, Isola decides that "She might lighten the cares of others—might become a ministering angel to the wretched and destitute" (2.130). In the original version of this story, "The Curse," the characters that would become Celeste and Isola both love the same man, and this early version of Isola remains single when he chooses the other woman. Like Sedgwick does through many of her characters, Dupuy suggests that a single woman can be useful to those around her, which argues that a woman's usefulness is not limited to her reproductive capabilities. While Dupuy offers the possibility of Isola remaining single, she ultimately revises Scott's formula in a different direction by having assertive Isola marry and have a family, thus suggesting that assertive women need to survive, reproduce, and raise the next generation of Americans.

Furthermore, although Dupuy acknowledges the belief that women can redeem villainous men through Le Clerc and his wife, she does not require her young female

characters to fulfill this role. Like her mother, Celeste comes the closest to being placed in this role when she asks her father to renounce his piratical life for her sake: “Father, if you would have me live you must renounce your past career...I cannot live, and know what you are” (2.211). However, the narrative undermines her willingness to make herself the reason he will change his ways when Le Clerc responds: “Your words were not needed, Celeste, to point out the path I must pursue. Already is my solemn vow registered on high, to live a life of penitence” (2.211). Unlike Lafitte who had multiple individuals trying to convince him to change before he finally listened to one, Le Clerc decided on his own to mend his ways, which removes the responsibility from his daughter to take up her mother’s role, while reiterating Cooper’s solution that violent men can redirect themselves.

While Celeste seems willing to do what she has to in order to redeem her father, Isola is never asked by the narrative to fulfill a similar role. Ernest, the non-pirate villain of the novel, expresses a belief that constant association with Isola might make him better: “I do believe, mother, that she might even mould *my* intriguing spirit into a resemblance of her own noble one, if we were constantly associated with each other” (2.54; emphasis in the original). However, Isola rejects Ernest’s advances, and the narrative never suggests that she would agree to marry him in order to redeem him. Furthermore, nothing in the novel supports the idea that such a redemption effort would be successful. Both Ingraham and Dupuy construct scenarios in which a violent man believes that he can be redeemed by the woman he loves, but the woman refuses to fulfill that role and the narrative supports her refusal. While Dupuy presents this option of

women redeeming men, she devotes more of the narrative to demonstrating the dangerous consequences of a violent man who relies on the woman he loves to restrain him, which suggests that this system is a relic of the older generation and needs to be revised for the current generation.

Rather than require the young women in the novel to be redeemers, Dupuy offers the possibility that men should be responsible for themselves and accountable for their own actions. Through this reasoning, *The Pirate's Daughter* demonstrates that domestic novels are just as concerned about the roles of men as adventure novels are interested in defining roles for women. Part of this investment in creating a model of American manhood lies in rejecting the older generation's investment in status, reputation, and inherited wealth. Harry Sinclair falls in love with Celeste, whom everyone believes to be an orphan, but his uncle, who is his guardian, fears that she is "the daughter of some low fellow" and wants him to marry the heiress, Isola Moreau, in a match arranged by both of the young people's guardians (1.50). Isola objects to the marriage on the basis that she does not want to be "considered as a sort of commodity to be bartered away at the will of others" (1.32). Sinclair also refuses, echoing Isola's sentiment, "I am to be won, not commanded; besides Miss Moreau has been taught to consider me her lawful property, and I do not choose to be so considered" (1.48). In particular, the language Sinclair uses of being considered Isola's "lawful property," which is similar to Isola's complaint of being a "commodity," would be more commonly found referring to the woman's position in the relationship, rather than the man's. This mutual protest to a marriage arrangement

that the older generation had considered a good match argues for every individual being his or her own agent, capable of making decisions, rather than the property of another.

For *The Pirate's Daughter*, a key component of successful self-reliance for a young man is having a profession, which also places him in a position to be responsible for himself and his finances. When Sinclair's uncle threatens to cut him off and leave him to starve if he marries Celeste, Sinclair responds: "Of that, sir, there would be little danger, while I have a profession" (1.131). This scenario draws a parallel with that of Le Clerc when his father disinherited him for marrying against his wishes; however, unlike Le Clerc, Sinclair, as an officer in the United States Navy, has the ability to support himself without relying on his uncle's wealth. In this manner, Sinclair's words argue that the less explicitly class-based America is superior to class-divided Europe in that America requires its young men to have professions while Europe allows upper class men like Le Clerc to grow up with no marketable skills or backup plan should their wealth fail.

This idea of American industriousness is further reinforced by the character of Charles Langley, who along with Harry Sinclair, creates a pattern of young men with careers rather than inherited wealth.<sup>76</sup> As a lawyer with a steady income, Langley is able to reject the idea of a mercenary marriage with the heiress, Isola: "Not for her fortune ten times told would I sell myself while I have a hand and a brain to guide me to independence" (1.90). Similar to Sinclair, Langley's word choice of selling himself

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<sup>76</sup> In *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth-Century America*, Matthew G. Hannah claims that this type of "'self-made man' rose to prominence as a cultural ideal with the decline of landownership" in the nineteenth century (87). Karen Halttunen adds in *Confidence men and Painted Women* that by 1840, the "American cult of the self-made man was entering its heyday" (28).

places him in the objectified position that women often occupy in pirate stories. Furthermore, in direct contrast with Le Clerc's backstory, Langley has already given up an inheritance prior to the beginning of the novel. As the narrator explains, "he relinquished his right to his portion of the patrimonial inheritance, to an only sister, who is a widow with several children. Since his fortunes have prospered, he allows her in addition to that, such as a stipend as will enable her to educate her children liberally, and live in comfort herself" (1.94). This description of Langley's actions not only reinforces the idea that American men should rely on their own skills and education to acquire meaningful employment, but it also highlights the fact that women are not given similar options when it comes to questions of employment versus inherited wealth. Together, Sinclair and Langley are presented as the desirable young men in the novel, thereby making the argument through their contrast with Le Clerc that American men must be industrious and skilled, which will prevent them from being put in a position where they have to resort to a life of violent crime in order to support themselves.

Placed in opposition to these young men is Richard Ernest, who is depicted as having similar behaviors and actions as the irredeemable pirate, demonstrating that ordinary men can be worse than the feared pirate lurking on the edges of society. Although Le Clerc is the named pirate in the novel, he does not occupy the usual piratical role of trying to kidnap a woman and force or persuade her into marriage. Even though he is not in any way connected to Le Clerc and his crew, Ernest is described having "placed himself beyond the pale of honorable men" (2.181). While Ernest shares the trait of violent and unrestrained behavior with irredeemable pirates from earlier narratives, such

as the buccaneers in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*, he is presented as more villainous than the actual pirates in *The Pirate's Daughter*. Believing he has tricked a woman, Annette, into thinking she married him prior to the start of the novel, Ernest refuses to acknowledge her, but convinces her to live with him in secret by claiming his mother would scorn her, while he pursues another woman (1.69-1.70). Like Sinclair and Langley, Ernest has a profession, but although he is a lawyer, "the pleasure of the moment outweighed the future advantage, and he had long felt assured that a marriage of convenience was the only means of attaining that independence he so ardently desired" (1.68). In contrast to his actions, Ernest is described by the narrative as "universally popular—especially among women; for his voice was one of rare melody, and he was acquainted with all the arts of flattery, which were doubly effective coming from one who piqued himself in his reputation for sincerity" (1.67-1.68). More so than the pirates themselves, Ernest's character exhibits undesirable and violent male behavior and functions as a warning for young female readers to not fall victim to a handsome flatterer. In this manner, Ernest is more dangerous than Le Clerc because he can use his reputation to his advantage, whereas Le Clerc's reputation appears to make him out to be worse than he really is.

The novel reinforces the idea that Ernest is a negative example of American manhood by having his schemes and plans bring about his own destruction. Dupuy establishes a typical seduction plot by having Ernest trick Annette into thinking she married him, and then disrupts it when Annette learns that she actually did marry him. Annette explains that the priest told her "that he had been employed by Richard [Ernest] under the belief that he was only preparing to take orders, but had not actually assumed

them. Finding that treachery was mediated [the priest] would not undeceive [Ernest], and she thanks “heaven that in the sight of God and man, I am his lawful wife” (2.150). While Ernest believed that he held all the power over Annette, the fact that the priest is willing to come forward and confirm their marriage gives Annette some agency and the ability to unveil Ernest’s treachery to others. By having Ernest’s plans thwarted in this unconventional manner—rather than one or both parties being punished through death, as is more common—Dupuy not only adds the weight of outside authority to Ernest’s deplorable actions, but she also gives legitimacy to Annette’s position, removing from her the stigma of being a fallen woman.

Furthermore, this revelation produces a change in Annette, who up to this point is by far the most passive of the young women in the novel. Most of her characterization is devoted to demonstrating how she is a submissive wife to Ernest; however, after learning that he had only married her because he himself had been tricked, she stands up to him when he confronts her about exposing him:

Annette stood in his iron grasp perfectly passive for some moments, but as she looked on him, and remembered all her wrongs, a feeling of resentment arose toward him, and with a degree of firmness that surprised herself, she replied...Ernest gazed on her with surprise at her daring—she was no longer the meek, loving wife, but the outraged and incensed woman, determined to assert her own rights at whatever cost to him. (2.184)

Ernest responds to this change by trying to murder Annette, but is prevented when her brother stabs him, causing his death (2.185). Ultimately, Ernest’s machinations brought

about his downfall, and although Annette is not the one who kills him, her willingness to stand up to him inadvertently leads to his death, which supports the idea that women are essential to thwarting violent men. It is important to note that the novel only brings about Ernest's death after it has thoroughly demonstrated that his actions were wrong, even to the point where his mother, who had been his ally, acknowledges Annette as her daughter-in-law and brings her into her home (2.187). As a result, no one is left to sympathize with him, making it difficult to view him as remotely redeemable. Ernest represents unrestrained and violent masculinity, which is countered by the other characters, including his wife, while the other young men, in the form of Sinclair and Langley, provide a contrasting model of industrious American manhood that relies on a profession rather than marriage for an income.

*“‘Tis Not on the Sea”: A Violent End for the Pirate's Daughter*

While Ernest's destruction illustrates the dangers of violent behavior in the younger generation, Le Clerc's end depicts the equally destructive potential of adhering to outdated notions and the consequences of living one's life without restraint. However, unlike Ernest, who only manages to destroy himself, Le Clerc's destructive potential extends to those around him. Despite one of the central players being a pirate, the main climax of the novel takes place on land, and it is unusual for the marriage-plot genre in that it takes place after one set of main characters—Celeste and Harry Sinclair—have married and during the wedding of the other couple—Isola and Charles Langley. The final conflict is presented as being between Le Clerc and Sinclair who tells Celeste that



he has “one more service to perform—‘tis not on the sea” because the pirate and a few of his men have escaped from their ship to the land (2.158). As with the conflict between brothers in *Lafitte*, this opposition pits two men against each other with a woman in the middle. After a chase through the woods, Le Clerc is captured when one of his men betrays him and is condemned to death for his crimes (2.168). Although the conflict was initially established as being between men and between the law in the form of naval officer Harry Sinclair and the outlaw as represented by Le Clerc, the focus shifts to center on family relationships when Le Clerc sends for Celeste and reveals that he is her father.

With this shift, the final pages focus on Celeste’s role in her pirate father’s life because Le Clerc does not simply ask to see her in order to unburden his secrets, he requests her assistance in breaking out of jail, telling his daughter, “as you love me, fail not in your endeavors to save me, for on you alone I depend” (2.200). This passage places Le Clerc’s life in Celeste’s hands, giving her a central role in the fate of the pirate, but Le Clerc does not ask for her to use disguises along the lines of Sedgwick’s heroines in order to break him out. Instead, “A file is all I ask. With unfettered limbs no prison walls can hold me. A brief concealment in some unsuspected place, and I am safe” (2.199). The narrative downplays Celeste’s role in this escape because it does not describe it or even provide details about how she gets a file to him, but the fact remains that without Celeste’s assistance, Le Clerc would have died for his crimes. This scenario also makes the unusual move of placing the more passive of the paired heroines in an active role, and the role she plays is not thwarting the violent man but assisting him.

Despite the hints that Celeste has the potential to exercise more independence, the novel ultimately forecloses those possibilities by having her die at the end of the story. When the authorities track Le Clerc to the summer house where Celeste is trying to conceal him, he attempts to escape and one of his pursuers shoots at him. The shot is prevented from reaching its target when Celeste “rushed forward and threw herself before her father. True to its fatal mission, the ball pierced the bosom of the gentlest and most affectionate of human creatures” (2.213). This passage indicates that the shot was no accident or stray bullet; instead, Celeste deliberately threw herself in front of her father. Although she played a relatively minor role in her father’s earlier escape from jail, Celeste very actively sacrifices herself to save him in the end. In terms of pirate stories, this death is a deviation from the pattern because, whether heroic or not, the pirate leaders in the novels by Scott, Cooper, Sedgwick, and Ingraham, all die at the end of their story. But in *The Pirate’s Daughter*, it is the female protagonist, rather than the pirate, that meets a violent end. While women occasionally die in domestic novels, it is usually from making poor romantic choices, rather than a violent and self-sacrificial death.

Because of Le Clerc’s escape from jail and the authorities following Celeste’s death, the novel avoids Walter Scott’s solution of the law as a method for dealing with violent men. For the characters watching the scene, Celeste’s death is proof “that the criminal had already been punished by a higher power, more heavily than by human laws” (2.217). The implication of this passage is that Celeste’s death is punishment for her father’s piratical life and crimes, which is closer to Sedgwick’s reasoning that violent men will cause their own destruction than Scott’s faith in the law to restrain criminal

behavior. By killing Celeste rather than Le Clerc himself, Dupuy criticizes an investment in the ideals of the previous generation, especially the idea that one's reputation and family station are important. Furthermore, Celeste's death reverses Scott's paired heroine formula, thus, eliminating the more passive heroine, and leaving assertive Isola as the primary female role model for the next generation.

While the story reverses the ending for Scott's heroines, the rejection of Scott's legal solution to the problem of the pirate is not complete. François, the pirate who betrayed Le Clerc, received a light sentence and "conducted himself in so exemplary a manner, that the term of imprisonment was shortened by the clemency of the Governor" (2.223). Although this reduced sentence might seem to be redemption through the justice system, François is not being punished for being a part of Le Clerc's crew; instead, his sentence is for the crime of killing Ernest in defense of his sister, Annette. His betrayal of Le Clerc is also mitigated by the fact that he did so in order to gain enough time to confront Ernest on behalf of his sister. Therefore, his actions were already being depicted as heroic before he received the sentence, and no mention is made of punishment for his crimes as part of the pirate crew. While Le Clerc is presented fairly ambiguously as having possibly changed his ways, François's future is much more explicit when the narrator explains that he and his girlfriend "occupy the tavern, which is much improved in character and appearance" (2.223). By this novel's standards, François appears to be on the proper path to becoming a successful man in this society because he has switched from pirating to being an honest businessman.

In contrast with François, Le Clerc simply fades away from the narrative without being positioned on another career path. When Le Clerc tries to blame Celeste's death on his father's curse, Sinclair asks: "Have you not yourself wrought out the fulfillment of those awful words?" (2.220). This passage shifts responsibility for his own actions, which up to this point the pirate has never acknowledged, back to Le Clerc, and the pirate agrees: "God is just—I am rightly punished. I will devote the wretched remnant of my life to penitence" (2.220). However, this passage is rather vague about what form that penitence will take. Earlier, Le Clerc had told Celeste that he intended to leave, and "Free as the forest child, I'll roam, unfettered by the laws that man has made. In the deep solitudes of nature I will teach myself the lesson of repentance" (2.211).<sup>77</sup> Although Le Clerc's plan expresses a desire for redemption, he does not seem to have the intention of changing many aspects of the way he lives—he will still be beyond the law—instead, he plans to remove himself more effectively from society. However, the narrative notes: "Since that night the pirate has never been heard of," leaving open the possibility that Le Clerc went back to his criminal ways, which would be more in keeping with actual pirates like historical Lafitte who received a pardon but did not maintain the good behavior that was part of its terms (2.220). Whether he changes or not, Le Clerc represents the idea that violent men without respectable skills do not have a place among the industrious and self-sufficient current generation.

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<sup>77</sup> This desire to erase his life of crime echoes one rumor about historical Jean Lafitte, in which Davis explains that some believed "the absence of definitive word of Jean's death was proof that, ashamed of his past crimes, he had changed his name and profession after leaving Galveston and begun a new life" (468).

For the younger generation, the novel suggests possibilities for a single man to have a fulfilling life while emphasizing the pairing of an independent young woman with an employed young man who can sustain the family that will be the next generation. Other novelists, such as Sedgwick, are known for including capable women who remain single as a demonstration that marriage is not the only option for a fulfilling life for women. However, in *The Pirate's Daughter*, it is one of the young men who remains single. After Celeste's death, Sinclair returns to his profession of being a naval officer, and the narrator explains: "In the solitude of night, on the wide ocean, with the stars of heaven as the sole witnesses of his emotion, the proud man of the world suffers the mask to fall, and the grief that never dies, to wring from him expressions of sorrow at the tragical fate of his first and last love" (2.221). This passage not only highlights the fact that Sinclair will not love another woman, but also that the ocean is the place where he can let down his guard and express his emotions, making the sea seem more isolated and private than the violent masculine space established at the beginning of *Lafitte*. Additionally, because Sinclair has a profession, he is able to devote himself to something useful, rather than succumbing to his grief, which is an option that his female counterparts would not necessarily have unless they could find sufficient work to support themselves or had an additional source of income.

As previously mentioned, Dupuy reverses the fate of Scott's paired heroines, and it is the assertive Isola who lives, marrying Charles Langley even as her friend is

sacrificing her life for her father.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, the narrative explicitly discusses the fact that Isola and Charles have children, explaining that Isola's "husband has attained a distinguished station, but the applauses of the world have never sounded sweeter to his ear than the 'still small voice' of domestic love. In his home, with his fair wife, and lovely children, Langley acknowledges that the purest happiness he has ever known, has been found" (2.222). While it is not unusual that the ideals of the time would assume that domestic happiness would be the greatest achievement of a woman, this passage emphasizes that it is also a greater achievement for a man than either elevated social status or the approval of others. Of the central couples, this is the only one that survives to produce children. As a result, assertive Isola and self-sufficient Charles will be raising the next generation, rather than the more submissive women or the less restrained and less industrious men.

While *Lafitte* and *The Pirate's Daughter* are clearly constructed in different genres, they both draw from the other—and from the formulas of Scott, Cooper, and Sedgwick—in order to create narratives that are invested in defining the roles of men and women as well as collapsing the divide between domestic and public spaces. Although this mixture might result in characterizations that are less clear than their predecessors, both Ingraham and Dupuy reject the tidy solutions to the problem of violence presented by the previous generation of authors, considering, instead, the consequences for a pirate who is not easily redeemed or who has a family. In doing so, both novels, to different

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<sup>78</sup> In "Identifying a Voice: Novelist Eliza Ann Dupuy and the Nineteenth-Century South," Allison Simmons has argued that emphasizing "the value of female autonomy" was one of Dupuy's objectives throughout her work (97).

degrees, illustrate the possibility of more assertive models of womanhood, although neither fully embraces a version that allows women to commit acts of violence. The pirate stories of the 1840s and 1850s would build on these ambiguities to create different models of assertive womanhood that allowed the woman to become the pirate and exhibit the behavior, including violence, usually associated with the male adventure hero.

### Chapter 3: “We’ll Be Our Own Masters”: Lady Pirates in *Fanny Campbell* and the Shilling Novelettes

As a teenager in the 1850s, Sarah Emma Edmonds read Lieutenant Murray’s [Maturin Murray Ballou] popular shilling novelette, *Fanny Campbell, the Female Pirate Captain: A Tale of the Revolution* (1844). In 1884, she reflected on that childhood experience in a newspaper interview:

That was the most wonderful day in all my life. The battle of Bull Run was a circumstance to it. Surely I must have been inspired! I felt as if an angel had touched me with a live coal from off the altar. All the latent energy of my nature was aroused, and each exploit of the heroine thrilled me to my finger tips. I went home that night with the problem of my life solved. I felt equal to any emergency. I was emancipated! And I could never again be a *slave*. (6; emphasis in the original)<sup>79</sup>

The language and emphasis in this passage draw parallels between women in a patriarchal society and enslaved African Americans.<sup>80</sup> By conflating two oppressive systems, Edmonds uses the rhetoric surrounding abolition, which contributed to the Civil War, to highlight the seriousness of the problem of women’s position in society and the

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<sup>79</sup> See “A Remarkable Career” in *Fort Scott Weekly Monitor* on January 17, 1884.

<sup>80</sup> For a brief discussion of the connections between the women’s rights and antislavery movements, see Larry J. Reynolds’s *Righteous Violence*, 7. The overlaps between these movements demonstrates that the systems oppressing women and African Americans were often intertwined within American political thought.



inability to escape or fight back. When near the end of the narrative, Fanny Campbell tells her husband “[W]e’ll be our own masters,” she evokes a similar language connected to slavery to demonstrate the potential for independence on the sea (105).<sup>81</sup> Although she did not go to sea, Edmonds herself used Fanny as a role model when she dressed as a man in order to work as a traveling agent selling Bibles, rather than allowing her father to “marry [her] off” (6). However, Edmonds is most famous for her next adventure. When the Civil War broke out, she wanted to aid the Union and reasoned that she “could best serve the interest of the Union cause in male attire—could better perform the necessary duties for sick and wounded men, and with less embarrassment to them and to myself as a man than as a woman” (6).<sup>82</sup> As a result of this realization, she maintained her male disguise and enlisted as Frank Thompson in the Union army, where she not only served as a nurse but also a soldier and a spy.

Edmonds’s reaction to *Fanny Campbell* is certainly intense and the story’s impact on her life might be unusual, but the fact that it stuck with her for decades after she read it indicates the powerful possibility of such stories to resonate with their readers. The assessment of Miss F. L. Townsend provides a broader perspective on how the narrative might have inspired transgressive behavior. In her 1850 article “Women in Male Attire,” Townsend singles out several stories including *Fanny Campbell*:

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<sup>81</sup> In *Villains of All Nations*, Marcus Rediker argues that different individuals found historical piracy appealing for its ability to challenge unjust systems of class, race, and gender (6). Although he is not discussing fictional pirates, the widespread capabilities of historical pirates to disrupt the status quo that Rediker identifies can be found in many of these fictional pirate stories as well.

<sup>82</sup> Edmonds was from New Brunswick, Canada; however, she moved to Connecticut when she became a traveling agent and she was a strong supporter of the Union cause, despite not being born in the United States. At the same time, based on this interview, it seems as though the primary appeal of *Fanny Campbell* was one of freedom of gender roles, rather than patriotic rhetoric.

The story of “Fanny Campbell” has also exercised its share of evil, by its glowing accounts of female adventure on the ocean in the guise of a sailor. Indeed, scarcely a novel is now written, in which the heroine is not made to figure in “a buff waistcoat with gilt buttons,” or “a military frock buttoned to the chin.” This is the spirit of the age; and it will result, unless seasonably checked, in the toleration, if not the sanction, of female pantaloonery. (178)

Although Townsend’s criticism of *Fanny Campbell* demonstrates that the story did not resonate with all women, it indicates substantial anxiety about the widespread appeal of such stories, which gives some sense of their popularity. Furthermore, Townsend suggests that this popularity might inspire emulation, not in the extreme illustrated by Edmonds, but in smaller ways, such as wearing pants while maintaining a female identity.

Both the positive and negative responses to *Fanny Campbell* work together to demonstrate that nineteenth-century fiction did not present a one-track model for women’s lives. Scholarship on women writers has explored how nineteenth-century women, and by extension their female characters, used conventional feminine traits as sources of agency to create the groundwork for extending the influence of women into masculine public spaces.<sup>83</sup> According to Boylan, “By 1815 or 1820, the experience of twenty (or more) years had shown evangelical women how to ‘merge the domestic domain with...the new ideology...of civic virtue,’ not alone as wives, mothers, and

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<sup>83</sup> See Anne M. Boylan’s *The Origins of Women’s Activism*, Mary Kelley’s *Private Woman, Public Stage* and *Learning to Stand and Speak*; Amy Kaplan’s *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*, Mary Ryan’s *The Empire of the Mother*.

daughters, but also together, as members of women's organizations" (7). This critical narrative maintains that the public lives of nineteenth-century women remained closely connected to their origins in morality, virtue, and domestic life.

Because agency through conventionally feminine traits has become the dominant narrative surrounding women's writing in the nineteenth century, scholars have a tendency to approach fiction by and about female pirates with that narrative in mind, rather than exploring the ways in which these figures might push the boundaries of conventional womanhood and offer alternate models in their place. Both Katherine Anderson in "Female Pirates and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Fiction" and Holly M. Kent in "'Our Good Angel': Women, Moral Influence, and the Nation in Antebellum American Pirate Novels" propose arguments centering on how these narratives undermine the piratical female characters' potential power and agency by having them make choices that result in abandoning their piratical activities in favor of some form of marriage or domestic life. Specifically, Kent argues that "the authors write narratives designed to at once confront and dismiss emerging ideas about women's public power...these narratives quickly quash all of their subversive potential by insisting that their heroines would like nothing better but to change their 'unnatural' public roles for the pleasures of domesticity" (51). Anderson presents a more complex argument that "Fanny represents a threatened victim merely seeking to defend, or fulfill, her natural, inherent rights. Cross-dressed as Captain Channing, Fanny symbolizes a vulnerable yet victorious soft conqueror, at once colonized victim and (absent) imperial perpetrator" (105). Although the lady pirates—counterpart to the gentleman pirates that populate the

novels of Byron, Walter Scott, and James Fenimore Cooper—do choose to marry or join families at the end of their stories, to say that their domestic choices undermine or negate their agency would be to ignore their actions throughout the stories and how unconventional their domestic arrangements are at the conclusion.

Instead of presenting a narrative arc that constructs female agency as an extension of domesticity or constrains potential agency within a marriage plot, I argue that these lady pirates are displaying a different model of womanhood, a model that incorporates some conventional feminine traits of virtue, moral influence, and redemptive womanhood, but also draws on the masculine, and sometimes violent, attributes that are usually ascribed to the white male hero. While Chapter 2 considered how the novels were using a blend of genres to highlight anxieties about the threat of masculine violence within domestic spaces and gesture toward the possibility of a woman taking action in defense of herself, many of the divisions between roles of men and women on land and sea were maintained. In this chapter, I will explore lady pirates found in the shilling novelettes of the 1840s that collapsed the division between masculine and feminine traits, creating instead a model of womanhood that draws upon both in order to demonstrate the heroic potential, which did not remain limited to nonviolence, of women.

This model reflects the thinking of Margaret Fuller, whose ideas were circulating during the time in which these shilling novelettes were written. Specifically, Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) was originally published in 1843 as "The Great Lawsuit. Man versus Men. Woman versus Women" in *The Dial* with the book form appearing in 1845, which places its publication on either side of *Fanny Campbell* in

1844.<sup>84</sup> Of gender binaries, Fuller writes: “Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman” (68-69). In this passage, Fuller claims that there is always a blend of masculine and feminine traits within men and women, and this idea is reflected in the characterization of many lady pirates, including Fanny Campbell who captains a ship *and* becomes a wife and mother. In the stories that followed, such as *The Queen of the Sea* (1848) and *Antonita* (1848), the lady pirate continued to exhibit this dualism while extending the legitimacy of female violence and agency beyond white womanhood.

In order to create their fictional lady pirates, Ballou and other shilling novelette authors draw on the combination of masculine and feminine traits that were often emphasized in depictions of historical female pirates. Current scholars argue about whether or not many female pirates actually existed and in what numbers, especially during the eighteenth century when many pirates operated in the Caribbean.<sup>85</sup> Anne Bonny and Mary Read, who sailed with the same pirate crew in the early 1700s, are perhaps the least disputed and most discussed female pirates. I am less interested in their

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<sup>84</sup> While I do not wish to suggest that Ballou was necessarily directly responding to Fuller’s work with *Fanny Campbell*, his later writing indicates that he was familiar with her work and admired her. In *Genius in Sunshine and Shadow* (1886), Ballou notes that Margaret Fuller “was one of the most gifted literary women of America” (42n1).

<sup>85</sup> For this discussion, see Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell’s *British Pirates in Print and Performance*; John C. Appleby’s *Women and English Piracy*; Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling’s *Iron Men, Wooden Women*, which includes Marcus Rediker’s article, “Liberty beneath the Jolly Roger,” focusing on Bonny and Read; and Grace Moore’s *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century*. Most scholars who address pirates and piracy tend to weigh in at some point on how many or how important female pirates were, which demonstrates the significance and intrigue associated with figuring out what role female pirates have played in history. However, scholars often conclude that because so many stories of female pirates are based on legends or blend fact and fiction, it is difficult to determine the extent of their piratical careers (or in some cases, their very existence) without verifiable evidence.

actual lives and adventures than in how they continued to be remembered in the American popular imagination throughout the nineteenth century. The most popular version of the story originated with Charles Johnson's *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724).<sup>86</sup> While the trial of Bonny and Read can corroborate their existence and some of the details, scholars agree that Johnson embellished many of the events found in their origins and exploits. In Johnson's version, the story of each woman begins with a parent disguising his or her illegitimate daughter as a boy in order to pass her off as a legitimate male relative, and both women choose to replicate this disguise as adults—Bonny in order to leave her husband and run off with the pirate Jack Rackham, and Read to become a soldier and then a sailor. In the end, both women were depicted as more vicious than their male counterparts, with Johnson's Bonny telling Rackham after their capture that "if he had fought like a Man, he need not have been hang'd like a Dog" (165). At the same time, Johnson highlights their gender when both women "pleaded their Bellies" by claiming to be pregnant in order to get out of hanging (152). Therefore, much like their fictional counterparts, this semi-historical version of Bonny and Read embodies both conventionally white masculine traits of leadership and violence and white feminine traits of romantic desire and motherhood.

Although Bonny and Read continued to be the most famous female pirates throughout the nineteenth century, the early nineteenth-century newspapers demonstrate the idea of female pirates in the antebellum American imagination extended beyond them. An article that appeared in the *New Jersey Journal* in 1811 describes a woman

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<sup>86</sup> At times, Johnson's *A General History* has been attributed to Daniel Defoe; however, the current consensus among scholars has moved away from this interpretation (Rediker 179-180n24).

“who at present commands a French privateer on our coast” who deposits “a large quantity of doubloons and other specie” in a bank, and the article implies the possibility of piracy by saying, “Whether this property had been robbed from American citizens or not we cannot say” (2).<sup>87</sup> Versions of this article appear in several different papers, and are followed in the early 1820s by articles recounting the life of Avilda, a female pirate from ancient Scandinavia.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the previously discussed popular history of pirates, *The Pirate’s Own Book* (1837), contained not only accounts of Bonny and Read, but also of Alwilda [Avilda] and Mistress Ching, and Johnson’s *A General History* was still circulating as well. Although historical female pirates might not have existed in large numbers, they were certainly active in the imaginations of antebellum Americans.

Building on a tradition of heavily fictionalized versions of the lives of actual female pirates, Ballou, using the pen name “Lieutenant Murray,” wrote the first extremely popular American story focusing on an entirely fictional female pirate.<sup>89</sup> After its first appearance in 1844, *Fanny Campbell* sold 80,000 copies in the first few months and stayed in print for several decades.<sup>90</sup> As Anderson claims, *Fanny Campbell* certainly held appeal for its patriotic rhetoric and nostalgia, which also served the imperialist agenda of its current time; however, I would like to extend this exploration to consider the ways in which the story’s popularity might have been aided by its unconventional treatment of gender roles. In *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*, Barbara Cutter links

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<sup>87</sup> See “A Female Pirate” in *New-Jersey Journal* on November 5, 1811.

<sup>88</sup> The same article appears in several papers in 1820 and 1821. For an example, see “Royal Female Pirate” in the October 28, 1820 issue of the *Boston Intelligencer*.

<sup>89</sup> As Anderson explains in a footnote, a scholar misidentified Fanny as a historical figure and as a result, several scholarly pieces have replicated the mistake, but she was not, in fact, a real person (98).

<sup>90</sup> For more details on the publication history of *Fanny Campbell*, see Anderson’s “Female Pirates and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Fiction.”

these aspects, arguing that “Histories and novels about heroic women encouraged ordinary women to believe that they could and should perform heroic actions as part of their duty to preserve the moral and religious health of the nation” (17). In this manner, heroic womanhood and nationalism work together to promote active and independent women alongside the national agenda. By designing a female hero who embodies attributes usually associated with the male hero, including violent patriotism, but without abandoning many of her conventionally feminine roles, Ballou is able to create a protagonist that can be interpreted as either enforcing or opposing the status quo, which likely aided its appeal to a broad audience. Perhaps inadvertently, Ballou formulated a model of womanhood that suggests what many of the previous stories were willing to gesture toward without committing to—that in certain scenarios with limited options, women must be allowed to be violent in defense of themselves.

When these lady pirates, including but not limited to Fanny Campbell herself, find themselves in scenarios similar to women in earlier pirate stories where they are threatened by violent men, they respond, not like those earlier women, but like the white male adventure hero, meeting violence with violence in displays of martial masculinity. However, because they also maintain elements of conventional femininity, including romantic desire, marriage, family, and female friendships, it is possible for anyone who did not approve of this unconventional model of womanhood to dismiss them as actually aspiring to domesticity and femininity. While this interpretation is possible, it ignores the ways in which these lady pirates embody masculine and feminine traits simultaneously, highlighting typically feminine concerns, such as sexual violence directed at women, and



adopting the usual masculine solutions, unlike most of the women discussed in previous chapters who were willing to pick up a knife, but unwilling to use it.

**Maturin Murray Ballou's *Fanny Campbell: The Lady Pirate Model of Womanhood***

*"I Alone Am Responsible for What Has Been Done": Lady Pirate as Patriotic Leader*

Ballou collapses the usual division between active female characters and heroic rescues by male characters, which are often not found in the same story, by making the active woman the one who accomplishes the heroic rescue plot and does not hesitate to meet violence with violence. Written on the eve of the Mexican-American War in 1844, but set during the American Revolution, *Fanny Campbell* tells the story of a woman who disguises herself as a man in order to become a sailor and rescue her fiancé from a Cuban prison. Her actions mirror the American Revolution as she, masquerading as a sailor named Channing, single-handedly carries out a mutiny against a British captain and then proceeds to take prize ships on her way to and from Cuba. In many ways, Fanny is building on previous male pirates, especially in terms of how they are closely associated with patriotic rhetoric and motivations. In fact, the first half of the narrative leaves open the possibility that Channing might actually be a man by maintaining male pronouns and offering the suggestion that Fanny has commissioned someone else to rescue her fiancé on her behalf.<sup>91</sup> However, the story's subtitle—*The Female Pirate Captain*—provides a fairly clear indication that the mysterious Channing is Fanny in disguise.

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<sup>91</sup> Even after the narrator explicitly states that Channing is Fanny, male pronouns are used because as the narrator claims that Captain Channing "was still the same to the crew" (56).

At the same time, the actual mechanics of Fanny's disguise are reserved for later in the narrative, which obscures the fact that she altered her skin color in addition to adopting male attire. When she adopts her disguise, Fanny's actions are not made explicit to the reader. Instead, she disappears and Channing appears within the narrative. This omission is similar to the move made in *Lafitte* where Achille becomes the pirate between chapters. Halfway through the narrative, Fanny and William discuss how Fanny darkened her skin using a stain in order to prevent him from recognizing her. She tells him: "No wonder, you thought me as dusky as a negro," and he responds, "I did not once suspect that you were colored" (54). While it is clear that she altered her skin color in order to accomplish her disguise, their exchange does not contain a consensus on how she would be read racially. In her analysis of E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Hidden Hand* (1859), Katharine Nicholson Ings discusses how Southworth describes her female protagonist in terms of blackness, arguing that the novel destabilizes "readers' expectations for a sentimental heroine" (148). In many ways, Fanny Campbell matches Sherrie A. Inness's description in *Acton Chicks* of a tough woman character as "predominantly white, upper or middle class, attractive, feminine, and heterosexually appealing" (8). However, Fanny deviates from this characterization by staining her skin, which makes it possible, in conjunction with her male disguise, to act in a manner that would not be considered acceptable for a white woman. For Fanny, this racial passing allows a greater freedom of action, but it also anticipates a trend in the lady pirate novelettes that followed, which extended the legitimacy, and the capacity for violence, established by the white lady pirate to nonwhite women.

In order to establish Fanny's legitimacy, the narrative draws on the precedent established by Cooper and J. H. Ingraham, with the pirate turned patriot. Cooper's Red Rover began his criminal career after loyally defending the colonies from the insults of a superior officer. In a similar manner, Fanny's criminal activity is constructed in opposition to a corrupt captain. After disguising herself as Channing, Fanny applies for the position of second mate on the *Constance*, which is outfitted as a privateer and bound for the West Indies. The ship's name suggests fidelity and faithfulness, which is at odds with the image of its first captain, but in line with its second (Fanny), adding to the impression that she is more deserving of command. The captain is described, much like Catharine Maria Sedgwick's buccaneers in *Hope Leslie* (1827), as being unrestrained in every way: "a tyrant in his disposition and much addicted to the intemperate use of spirituous liquors" (26). Since the captain is British, this passage draws parallels between Fanny's opponent and those who opposed the colonies during the American Revolution. In *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell discuss this trend in pirate stories where a lawful sea captain is presented as being worse than the pirates, which they call "'satirical pirating' because the prime function of the pirate here is to be the lesser of evils" (112). With regard to *Fanny Campbell* specifically, Anderson argues, "The novel's unsympathetic portrayal of the mother country encourages an American readership to imagine the David-and-Goliath scenario of Revolutionary times, as though Britain's looming new-world presence threatened that nation's very viability" (103). While the satirical pirate described by Burwick and Powell makes a distinction between lawful and unlawful seamen, Anderson outlines her

differentiation in gendered terms. These rhetorical constructions both support a patriotic reading in which the new model of womanhood that Fanny represents is placed on a parallel trajectory with the idea of America as a new country. This new version of womanhood suggests that women should not be limited to raising sons for the nation, as republican motherhood requires, but instead, they should play an active role in the formation of the nation.<sup>92</sup>

Beyond simply being British, the corrupt captain represents a specific history of seafaring violence between the British and the Americans, thus grounding this fictional version of America's origins within a past of violent masculinity. The ship's official orders are to privateer, taking "any vessel belonging to the enemies of England" on its way to the West Indies, making it ironic when the ship, under Fanny's command, takes English vessels on behalf of America (26). However, the captain, who had deliberately selected sailors from the colonies to crew his ship, only intended to touch down before taking "them home to England and receive the bounty money upon each one who would be immediately pressed into the British Navy" (31). When the captain decides to press his crew into the British Navy, it is not just a matter of bad leadership, it also draws on historical tensions between the British and the Americans surrounding the American Revolution and the War of 1812.<sup>93</sup> By rescuing the crew from this fate, Fanny confronts

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<sup>92</sup> In *Revolutionary Backlash*, Rosemarie Zagarri discusses women during the American Revolution and the War of 1812 who threatened to fight on behalf of their country if men were too timid, indicating that "The prospect of women in arms would shame the men into defending their country" (109-110). This discussion demonstrates that the idea of martial womanhood, if not the practice, was present in the early American imagination.

<sup>93</sup> Impressment was a practice prior to the War of 1812, and in *Villains of All Nations*, Marcus Rediker identifies it as one of the practices that drove sailors to become pirates or join pirate crews. However, for Americans the problem of impressment is primarily connected to the tensions leading up to the War of

and corrects injustices that were specifically directed at sailors and tied to tensions related to both of the major conflicts in which the United States had been involved. Because of the story's setting, she seems to be carrying out a smaller parallel version of the American Revolution—for the purposes of the story, the actual American Revolution occurs while she is off on her rescue mission—but her opposition to impressment draws more clearly on historical tensions connected to the War of 1812, which would have been more recent for the readers of *Fanny Campbell* and further emphasizes her patriotism.

Several of the previous male pirate stories downplayed the criminal and violent activities of the pirate either by relegating them to rumor as in *The Red Rover* or glossing over them as in *Lafitte*, but *Fanny Campbell* provides a much more immediate experience of the protagonist's turn to piracy. This more detailed version works to legitimize her activities, which would have been unnecessary for the male pirates who would be expected to be aggressive and violent. Fanny succeeds in taking both the captain and the first officer captive without any assistance from the crew. When she has completed her task, Fanny addresses the crew:

Well my boys...I have got some news for you. The captain is disarmed and locked in his cabin as my prisoner; so is Mr. Banning, the mate. I have done this because I am determined to have possession of this brig myself. She's a British brig, you are all, or nearly so, Americans; I am also an American, and this brig must belong to Americans. I am alone responsible for what has been done. You are now without a captain. How many of you will ship under me? (33-34)

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1812 when the British Navy would press into service any sailor who seemed British, including many Americans.

Fanny's logic in this passage is entirely grounded in patriotic rhetoric, rather than a legal or moral justification, and it hinges on the idea that the crew would be patriotic as well in order to buy into her logic that because they are all Americans, the ship should belong to America. Although her reasoning also sidesteps the fact that her actions amount to "the two greatest sins that a sailor is taught to dread, Mutiny and piracy," this passage also echoes the popular version of how pirate crews choose their captain through a fairly democratic voting process (32).<sup>94</sup> But the crew of the *Constance* does not simply follow Fanny because she is the embodiment of American virtue or has a good handle on patriotic rhetoric. As the second mate, she had already demonstrated that she knew proper sailing techniques and how to maintain discipline, earning the crew's respect before she carries out her mutiny.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, her position as leader is also constructed in a similar manner to the earlier gentleman pirates, and Fanny (in her disguise) is described as "a gentleman, though, every inch of him" (50). Because Fanny is liked and respected by the crew, they decide to join her, which suggests that she is a better leader than the corrupt captain and also problematically implies that her patriotic logic on which she founded her leadership is sound, meaning that anything a group of Americans want, they deserve to have.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> For more information on connections between piracy and democracy, see Marcus Rediker's *Villains of All Nations*.

<sup>95</sup> In *The Novel and the Sea*, Margaret Cohen argues that Bonny and Read were used to illustrate the idea that "The meritocratic craft of the sea is available to anyone who has the ability—and the opportunity—to learn and master its demanding capacities, even women" (97). Fanny displays similar capabilities in terms of sea craft.

<sup>96</sup> Anderson argues that this patriotic rhetoric tied to imperial endeavors is part of what made Fanny Campbell so wildly and enduringly popular: "That the novel circulated throughout these years – an extraordinary achievement for a dime novel – suggests that it held an unusually strong appeal for the popular fiction readership of a young nation fast becoming an empire" (97).

Fanny's connection to the earlier gentlemen pirates as well as patriotic and masculine seamen is cemented when the narrative draws an explicit parallel between her and John Paul Jones. Another character tells Fanny and William the story of a captain who pardons a man that his crew wants to hang, which is very similar to one of the episodes in Fanny's own adventure, revealing at the end that this man is Admiral John Paul Jones. The seemingly coincidental nature of this parallel near the end of *Fanny Campbell* provides support for Fanny's already heroic depiction, rather than suggesting that she modeled her life off of male heroes of the Revolution. The connection between the two is not left for the reader to make, as the narrator explicitly mentions the characters' acknowledgement of the similar scenario: "Fanny and her husband had heard this chapter in the life of the great naval hero with no small emotion. There was a point involved in it which nearly touched their own feelings, and the circumstances relative to the pardoned Englishman on board her own brig the Constance, were brought strongly to her mind" (114). By connecting Fanny with John Paul Jones, the story adds legitimacy to her status of heroic lady pirate by taking an established historical hero and demonstrating that Fanny was unwittingly following in his footsteps all along. This parallel, which also connects Fanny directly to Cooper's patriotic pirates through his use of John Paul Jones in *The Pilot* (1823), relies on previous historical and fictional violent and patriotic men in order to build a violent and patriotic woman.

Because Ballou maintains Fanny's position as a virtuous and respectable woman, who should have high moral standards according to the nineteenth century, he cannot present her piratical activities as criminal. At the same time, like Ingraham with Lafitte,

Ballou could have labeled her a privateer, but instead, he chooses to call her a pirate. Although the narrative does not waver from presenting Fanny as a morally just heroine, it does take the time to address potential reader concerns about the legality of Fanny's actions. According to Margaret Cohen in *The Novel and the Sea*, sea fiction encourages readers to take an active role in reading, which integrates readers into "an imaginary community of labor" (146). Therefore, Ballou could have been anticipating objections, since according to Cohen, readers in this genre tended to be more engaged. An entire conversation between crew members is devoted to discussing whether or not their captain, whom they still believe to be a man, is a pirate. When asked if it ever occurred to him that the captain is a pirate, one crew member responds that she is not and bases his argument on the logic that justifies privateers, which only sail against their countries' enemies: "How the deuce can you make that out?...Ain't the Colonies honestly at war with the English? and have we been cruising against any other nation but them?" (71). This reasoning assumes a legitimacy that the United States would not have within the story because it had not yet won the war and could not authorize privateers, which made them pirates instead. Ultimately, the narrator sidesteps the issue of the legality of what Fanny is doing by claiming that the state of war between the Americans and the British justified Fanny's actions (41).<sup>97</sup>

Despite this evidence, which clearly demonstrates that Fanny's positioning is intertwined with her patriotic motives, contemporaries and modern critics alike have a

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<sup>97</sup> Kent claims that "So successful are Fanny's efforts that the British puts out a warrant for her arrest, denouncing her as 'a Female Pirate Captain,'" but in truth, she is never identified as a woman on such a large scale in the narrative and no warrant is ever issued (52).



tendency to focus solely on the fact that Fanny's stated goal is invested in romantic love. Even though Sarah Emma Edmonds celebrated the liberating nature of the story, she too was concerned about why Fanny did what she did. In the interview, Edmonds explains: "The only drawback in my mind in regard to the book, was this: The heroine went to rescue an imprisoned lover, and I pitied her that she was only a poor love-sick girl, after all, like so many I had known, and I regretted that she had no higher ambition than running after a man. Perhaps later on in life, I had more charity, and gave her a credit mark, for rescuing anybody—even a lover" (6). Edmonds wants her heroine to have a higher ambition than love, but she fails to take into account Fanny's secondary motivations and adventures. Likewise, Anderson and Kent dismiss Fanny as reinforcing gender stereotypes because of her romantic objective. To accept this argument made by contemporary readers and modern critics alike would be to ignore significant moments in the narrative where Fanny blends aspects of conventional femininity with heroic masculinity in order to rescue William and accomplish tasks that have nothing to do with him.

I contend that even dismissing the rescue because of the heroine's romantic motivations would also overlook several significant aspects of that portion of the story. A woman going out of her way to disguise herself as a man, rather than out of necessity, and setting out to rescue someone from prison is a fairly unique plot arc for nineteenth-century America. Edmonds celebrates this uniqueness when she explains: "When I read where 'Fanny' cut off her brown curls, and donned the blue jacket, and stepped into the freedom and glorious independence of masculinity, I threw up my old straw hat and

shouted” (6).<sup>98</sup> Because Fanny plans to rescue William, rather than a female friend or relative, the story is able to reverse the genders of the typical damsel and hero roles. The narrative makes it clear that had Fanny not rescued William, he would not have been freed by other means when William’s friend tells him: “To be sure you are, you may give him [Fanny-as-Channing] all the thanks that you are not rotting in that cursed prison yonder at Havana, this very hour” (51). William fulfills the role of the captive lady who waits for a knight to rescue her while Fanny plays the role of the knight, transferring the masculine characteristics associated with that role to her, which gives her a very different positioning than the role of the love-sick girl that Edmonds ascribes to her.

Specifically, this version of masculinity that Fanny embodies is constructed in opposition to the Cuban men guarding the prison. Although the rescue party has to subdue one sentinel, “The other three soldiers were caught sleeping as had been predicted, and each was secured and gagged without noise” (48). Not only are the guards depicted as being inept at their jobs, but it is also assumed that this will be the case because they “sleep half the time upon their posts” (45). While discussing later representations from the Spanish-American War near the end of the century in *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*, Kaplan explains that journalism represented “the Cubans as cowardly, undisciplined, and unsoldierly—in short, unmanly,” which allows it to showcase American masculinity (132). In the case of *Fanny Campbell*, this representation works to not only elevate white American masculinity at

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<sup>98</sup> It should be noted that what Edmonds describes never actually happens in the story. Fanny disappears from the narrative and reappears as Channing. There is no explicit scene of Fanny cutting her hair and putting on man’s clothing. However, Edmonds’s misremembering indicates that she took an unclear aspect of the narrative and filled it in with an even more transgressive scenario.

the expense of Cuban masculinity, but it also aligns Fanny in the guise of Channing with that masculine identity. Furthermore, this episode works to connect the story to the present moment of its publication, rather than the historical time period of its setting. In *Hemispheric Regionalism*, Gretchen J. Woertendyke argues that popular romances “created a space in which readers could conjecture about would-be political and social arrangements between the United States and Cuba, without taking any explicit position, or advocating for any particular course of action” (99).<sup>99</sup> Like Cohen’s assertion about the active readership of sea fiction, Woertendyke proposes that readers of romances would be engaged in the story’s commentary on the present moment. Through this rescue scene, *Fanny Campbell* implies that Cuba would be easily invaded since its men lack the attributes of martial masculinity without advocating an actual conflict. However, while significant, this portion of the story is downplayed by its brevity—it occurs in the space of less than a page—which works to deemphasize Fanny’s motivation of romantic love in favor of her patriotism.

While Fanny does set out to rescue William as soon as she learns that he is being held in a Cuban prison, she chooses to go about her rescue in a way that indicates she has additional motivations. Fanny could have shipped out on a vessel sailing directly for Cuba or even commissioned a ship and crew in order to accomplish her objective as quickly as possible. Instead, she deliberately selects a ship whose captain has a bad reputation and intends to press its sailors into the British Navy, and she plans to save the

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<sup>99</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Cuba’s historical positioning in relation to the United States during this time, see Woertendyke’s “Geography, Genre, and Hemispheric Regionalism,” 218-219. As she mentions, Ballou published a travel narrative entitled *History of Cuba; or, Notes of a Traveller in the Tropics* in 1854.

crew from the fate of impressment with the hopes that they will aid her in her rescue of William. Although rescuing the crew ultimately helps her to rescue William, Fanny clearly does not have the single-minded desire to reach and free William as quickly as possible. This multifaceted goal and desire to be heroic is further emphasized by how Fanny chooses to rescue the crew. As the narrator explains, Fanny acts alone in her mutiny because “it would be far more noble in him [Channing-as-Fanny] to accomplish that which was to be done with his own hands” (32-33). Fanny does not carry out the mutiny on her own because it was safer, easier, or more likely to succeed, but because it was “more noble.” Fanny’s reasoning behind her actions points toward a noble heroic ideal, rather than exclusively limiting her to a romantic one. In addition to carrying out the mutiny against the British captain, Fanny also takes prize ships on behalf of the colonies, demonstrating that she does not lose her patriotic motivations once she has obtained assistance for her rescue plans. This positions her as an unofficial privateer on behalf of the American colonies, rather than an individual with an exclusively personal motivation.

Ballou removes any possibility that Fanny could be read as only taking on these more masculine characteristics when capable men are absent because Fanny retains command even after William, who is also an able sailor and officer, is rescued. At first William does not know that Channing is Fanny, but even after she reveals her disguise, Fanny remains in command of the *Constance*, appointing William to be her first mate and putting him in charge of one of the prize ships. The fact that Fanny is truly in command, and not simply maintaining the appearance of it for the sake of her disguise is illustrated

when she and William are alone in her cabin and William tells her, “You have done nobly, my dear girl.” Fanny responds, “What, sir?” to which he apologizes: “I beg pardon—*sir*, I mean your conduct is deserving of all praise, Captain Channing” (69; emphasis in the original). The narrator explains that William’s apology is given with “a mock show of respect,” indicating that perhaps he does not take her seriously at that moment. William’s remark highlights the complications of embodying masculine and feminine characteristics at the same time—Fanny’s crew, who believes her to be a man, does not question her leadership, but William, who knows her to be a woman, must be convinced of her capabilities. Ultimately, he is convinced, which reinforces the idea that women are capable of fulfilling such roles. Even during this private interaction, Fanny ensures that she remains in command, and that she is addressed in a befitting manner. While this insistence does work to maintain her disguise, she could have easily given command to William without exposing her identity. Instead, William tells her that she is “still master and commander here, and will, I hope, continue so” (54).

Even though much of Fanny’s focus remains on William, the narrative does not in any way indicate that she is anything but a competent commander. In addition to reinforcing her patriotism, Fanny’s taking of prize ships demonstrates her capability as a seaman and a captain, even in the masculine space of the sea, and illustrates that she is not in need of protection from a man. When William tries to get Fanny to go below deck during a battle, she responds: “What! skulk below?...No no, I have seen this game before” (56). If she were embodying a conventional model of womanhood or if her command was simply a ruse to aid her disguise, one would expect Fanny to follow

William's suggestion. Instead, Fanny not only remains above decks but also indicates that she is used to this sort of danger. In this instance, Fanny is displaying the daring and disregard for physical danger commonly found in the male adventure hero.

*"Though I Am a Woman, I Am Not a Defenceless One!": Lady Pirate Redeemer*

Edmonds's interpretation of Fanny as both a love-sick girl and an individual who dons independent masculinity draws attention to the fact that Fanny is not constructed as completely masculine or feminine in the narrative. Action heroines, in a broader sense than lady pirates, are often criticized for simply embodying the same characteristics of action heroes. Although she is primarily interested in more recent representations of women, Sherrie Inness addresses this issue in *Tough Girls* when she writes that the tough woman's "association with masculinity is one reason [she] is disturbing to society, because...she challenges the notion that there is a 'natural' connection between women and femininity and between masculinity and men" (21). Rather than trading one conventional gender role for the other, Fanny challenges this natural connection by blending elements of both roles. Despite the many parallels between Fanny and the earlier fictional male pirates, she does not completely abandon the characteristics exhibited by women in earlier pirate stories. Those women functioned as objects to be captured, potential redeemers, and occasionally gestured toward the possibility of violent womanhood without actually acting on it. For the first half of *Fanny Campbell*, William fulfills the role of captured object. But Fanny takes on and complicates the role of

redemptive womanhood even as she fully commits to a model of womanhood that allows the woman to be violent in defense of herself.

As Fanny occupies the role of redeemer multiple times over the course of the narrative, she provides revisions to earlier versions by shifting the power dynamic, relying on logic over emotion, and ultimately, demonstrates the need for violence in certain scenarios. The female characters in earlier pirate stories appealed to their pirate captors on the basis of humanity and gentlemanliness with varying degrees of success. One of Fanny's prize ships includes an English sailor whose conduct seemed "to be of the most blood-thirsty and vindictive character," and he attempts to burn the *Constance* in retaliation for his capture (62). Fanny holds a council with her officers, one of whom is William, and both officers agree that the Englishman must be executed as an example against further rebellion. Unlike the earlier pirate crews who exceeded their leaders in terms of bloodthirstiness and a capacity for violence, the "very natures [of Fanny's crew] were revolting within them at the proposed *murder*, for so must ever seem the preconcerted taking of human life" (63; emphasis in the original). Although Fanny allows preparations for the execution to be made, she overcomes "all of her woman's feelings" and orders the Englishman to be brought before her, where "her voice did not tremble, her hand was firm, and she was a man at heart. The woman feeling which was so lately called into action in her breast, was banished, and nothing save stern justice might be expected to come from out of those lips which displayed at that moment a decision of purpose and character" (65-66). In this scene, Fanny goes from having woman's feelings to being a man at heart, demonstrating that she is capable of embodying both gender

roles. This passage separates Fanny's emotions, which are described as female, from descriptions of her resolution as grounded in her physical body, which is biologically female but performing a version of masculinity. Likewise, while she is in the process of fulfilling the typical role of a female character by redeeming a man, she is doing so through unconventional means because the power dynamic has shifted—as the captain of the ship, Fanny holds the power, whereas the previous pirate stories would have the woman as the captive of the pirate. This scenario removed a second key component from earlier stories by not having the Englishman be in love with Fanny, which causes the threat of sexual violence to be replaced with a different dynamic of warfare founded on violence between countries.

Fanny's method of redeeming this violent man is based on a combination of “kindness and reason,” which further highlights her ability to embody and enact dual gendered characteristics (68). After talking to the Englishman, Fanny orders him unbound, and says “if I have read you aright, it best behoves us to hold converse with such as thou art on *equal* terms. You are now *free*!...I would *reason* with you” (67; emphasis in the original). On the one hand, Fanny is following the example of Constanza in *Lafitte* by choosing a nonviolent method of resolving the situation, which would seem to be more in alignment with femininity. However, as she indicates, she is using reason and logic, or intellect, which Fuller describes as “cold” and “ever more masculine than feminine” (61). Following this declaration, Fanny proceeds to make a case for why Americans were justified in rebelling against the British, further reinforcing her positioning as the spokesperson for the United States, and the Englishman agrees, telling



her, “I feel that I have erred!” (68).<sup>100</sup> Unlike many of the earlier women, who only temporarily redeemed or made unsuccessful appeals to their pirate captors, Fanny is successful in convincing the Englishman of the error of his ways. The narrator explains: “A stubborn spirit was conquered by kindness and reason, the only weapons that one responsible being should use with another” (68). This passage indicates that kindness and reason, which could be read as a combination of feminine and masculine traits, should be used by any “responsible being” when dealing with another. The gender neutral language of this statement does not limit this strategy to men or women. Fanny, as a woman acting the part of a man while fulfilling the typical role of fictional women using a method that is usually reserved for men, would seem to be the perfect individual to embody this blending of gendered approaches.

While none of the earlier women were entirely successful in changing the pirates they attempted to redeem, Fanny is very successful in her redemption of the Englishman, a fact that the narrative spends some time spelling out. The initial success is demonstrated when the Englishman volunteers to man the ship’s wheel when Fanny’s crew is short-handed during a battle. He refuses to fight the British, since he still considers them his countrymen, but he agrees to aid Fanny’s crew in this nonviolent manner. After the war, he briefly joins the household of Fanny’s family “until a favorable opportunity should offer to ship for his home” (102). Finally, the enduring success of Fanny’s redemption is demonstrated when Fanny encounters the Englishman near the end of the

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<sup>100</sup> Additionally, this event is the one that is presented as being parallel with the actions of John Paul Jones—he too redeemed a man that he intended to hang—further emphasizing the complicated blending of gender roles because while women are the usual redeemers in pirate stories, in this particular story, Fanny’s ability to redeem others aligns her with a male hero.

story, and his family offers her hospitality and a place to stay while she recovers from an injury (117). As a result, Fanny's combination of kindness and reason, feminine and masculine, is presented as more effective than the earlier emotional and moral appeal utilized by other women in pirate stories.

A second scenario in which Fanny is placed in the role of redeemer illustrates the problematic nature of many of the more passive solutions to masculine violence by demonstrating that sometimes the woman cannot rely on the goodness of men—either as rescuers or reformed attackers—to save her from violence. After Fanny sends William home in a prize ship, her ship is attacked by a British Navy vessel. Following some heavy fighting, Fanny surrenders her ship, not because she is losing the fight, but because she and the other ship's captain recognize each other, and she does not want him to give away her disguise (90). The other captain, Burnet, had briefly been presented as a potential love interest for Fanny early in the story, but she turned him down, and they remained friends. Initially, their interaction after Fanny's capture mirrors that of earlier pirate stories where violent men pursue women. Burnet asks Fanny to marry him, and she reprimands him, pointing out, "Am I not your prisoner?" (98). Despite Fanny being below his station in terms of social class, he finds her heroism, character, and beauty attractive and insists that he loves her by arguing: "Nay, Fanny, I am *thy* prisoner, for in thy keeping rests my future happiness" (98; emphasis in the original). As with the Englishman earlier, Fanny attempts to reason with him on the basis of the class divide, explaining: "You are high born, hold a captain's commission from the King and are rich, honored and honorable; such a man deserves to be united to a woman who shall be

entirely devoted to him, who can give him her undivided and whole love. Mr. Burnet, I am not that woman!” (98). Implied in her reasoning is that he is a gentleman and should behave as such.

Furthermore, Fanny follows this with a speech that seems to echo Constanza’s appeal to Lafitte, where she tells him she cannot marry him, but she would think more highly of him if he behaved better. Fanny reasons: “the path of fame and glory are open before you. You have rank, opportunity, every necessary possession whereby to lead thee on to honor and distinction. Fanny’s prayers shall ever be raised for thee” (99). Much like Lafitte, Burnet seems to respond to this appeal, and he tells her: “Oh! each word you utter but shows me the more clearly what I have lost. Yes, you speak truly...fame must be my future mistress; I can love no other” (99). This interaction seems to make a similar argument to many other stories during this time period, that women could use their moral superiority in order to influence men in a positive manner. As a result, the blame for the potentially violent man’s behavior is shifted to his potential victim because she has the responsibility of redeeming him; however, *Fanny Campbell* ultimately denies this solution and this responsibility by showing that Fanny’s moral influence is insufficient to counteract Burnet’s violence.

While the beginning of this interaction shares many parallels with earlier pirate stories in which the pirate is fairly restrained in his interactions with women, Burnet’s attitude shifts when he learns how badly Fanny beat him in the battle. Burnet leaves Fanny to check on those of his crew who were wounded in the battle with her ship. The narrator explains his reaction to the surgeon’s report: “He was prepared for a great loss as

to the number of his crew, but not for so large a sacrifice as he now saw had been made; he looked into the matter personally and was exercised with not a little fear for his own reputation in being thus severely handled by a half-dozen men, commanded by a female” (99). This passage indicates that Burnet seems most concerned for his reputation if others were to find out that his crew had lost so many to a female captain, and after he dwells on his losses for a while, “Everything seemed to perplex and annoy him, and he was, indeed, hardly himself” (100).<sup>101</sup> The narrator describes Burnet a second time as unlike himself, saying that “He looked like another being from him who had left [Fanny] but a short time before” and reiterates that his recent losses and disappointments were the primary cause of his “morose and hardened state of feelings that showed themselves at once in his countenance and manner” (100). In the span of just a few pages, Burnet shifts from being attracted to Fanny but willing to respect her wishes to being morose and hardened about how badly she has beaten him and anxious about how his reputation might suffer. In addition to his own character arc, Burnet’s transition echoes earlier fictional pirates, especially Lafitte, who promise reform and then quickly go back on their word. However, in the case of Burnet, the change is a direct result of a woman being competent at activities, in this case warfare, that are usually reserved for men. As a result, some of Burnet’s anger could be the result of Fanny challenging and undermining his masculinity.

Kent argues that Fanny exercises “her powerful moral influence” over Burnet, which confines Fanny to the role of moral exemplar commonly found within redemptive womanhood and ignores the fact that eventually Fanny uses violence to stop Burnet

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<sup>101</sup> It should be noted that as far as Burnet knows no one will ever know that he lost so many men in a battle with a woman. Unless he gives away her secret, no one has to know that Channing is actually Fanny.

(53).<sup>102</sup> When Burnet returns, asks Fanny for “some token of [her] kindness,” and grabs her, she tries once again to reason with him: “remember, I am your *prisoner*—completely in your power” but without pause she adds a warning: “Nay, then...though I am a woman, I am not a defenceless one!” before escaping from his grasp and retreating to the other side of the room (100-101; emphasis in the original). Although this interaction includes a brief hint of the previous reason-oriented Fanny, the warning indicates that reason is not her only resource, which is supported by her next words: “I bid thee fairly to keep thy distance...For I am able, and will defend myself!” (101). In this scene, Fanny is limited by the fact that she does not want to call for help or make too much noise and risk exposing herself to the crew. Fanny quickly abandons the idea of convincing Burnet with words as she did with the Englishman earlier: “Burnet again seized her, and endeavored to confine her hands. In the same instant her right arm was raised above her head, and descended quickly to the breast of Burnet, who immediately staggered back and fell upon the couch” (101). Through this violent action, Fanny takes on a role that was gestured toward but not enacted by the virtuous women in pirate stories before her. After stabbing and nearly killing Burnet, “for Fanny’s dagger was sharp and pierced deep” (101), Fanny climbs out through one of the windows, drops into a boat, and sails for the shore, which

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<sup>102</sup> According to Kent, Fanny’s and Burnet’s final meeting focuses on Fanny’s efforts to convince him to switch sides from the British to the American cause, and this is the reason that Burnet transfers away from the colonies (53). However, taken in context, the dialogue Kent quotes as patriotic rhetoric is clearly concerned about whether or not Burnet deserves sexual favors from Fanny. While the redemptive power of Fanny’s counterattack could be considered “moral influence,” it comes in the form of her violently stabbing a man with a dagger. Furthermore, Fanny had no need to convince Burnet to be sympathetic to the Americans since early on, the story established that Burnet “who was an American by birth and whose heart was indeed with his native land, was yet obliged to support the side with which he fought” (13). He had always been sympathetic to the Americans and only supported the British because he was in their Navy.

she reaches safely (100). In this situation, it is not only Fanny's violence that saves her, but also her sailing skills that allow her to completely escape the ship.<sup>103</sup>

Her reaction to Burnet's unwanted advances suggests a very different method for how women should deal with violent men than the previously discussed pirate stories. Fanny first attempts a combination of reason and honorable appeals, but when those do not work, she resorts to violence. Throughout Fanny's efforts at fulfilling the role of redemptive womanhood, the narrative presents a range of options, including compassion and reason, for women dealing with violent men; however, ultimately, it concludes that in some scenarios women are left with no choice but to respond to violence with violence of their own. This response is tempered by the fact that the constructed scenario clearly leaves Fanny with no other choice, positioning violence as a last resort, rather than encouraging women to use violence as a problem-solving technique in all scenarios.

Although her methods are very different from the usual models of redemptive womanhood outlined by Barbara Cutter in *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*, Fanny does manage to accomplish the redemption of a violent man in this scenario as well.<sup>104</sup> When Burnet recovers from the dangerous fever that he experienced as a result of his wound, he "deeply regretted the headlong spirit which had actuated him, and prompted the conduct he had displayed; it was deep and bitter disappointment" (101). The narrative makes it clear that this time his reform is not a temporary change of heart either:

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<sup>103</sup> This demonstrates that she has actual sea knowledge, unlike the women in *The Red Rover* where Gertrude knows nothing, Mrs. Wyllys just a little, and the admiral has actively taught his wife incorrect knowledge of sailing.

<sup>104</sup> For Cutter's discussion of how redemptive womanhood relates to an "increased acceptance of women's public action and even violence in the defense of righteousness," see 16-17.

Soon after he recovered from the effects of his severe wound, he applied for a change of station...He was soon ordered on to the English coast, and greatly distinguished himself there, in the war with the French, and several other important engagements, until step by step, he became an Admiral, and for some gallant act, was knighted by his King. He was true to his promise to Fanny Campbell, and was wedded to fame only, but therein he chose a distinguished mistress, and one that did him full honor. (119)

Unlike Scott's Cleveland or Ingraham's Lafitte, both of whom died before they could go back to their old ways, Burnet actually gets to play out keeping his word. However, like both of those pirates, Burnet's redemption hinges on redirecting his violence toward a better cause, rather than having him learn not to be violent in the first place. The narrator comments on this directly, indicating that "Such men [as Burnet] will make great naval heroes, but bad fathers of families" (120). This passage emphasizes the idea that violent men do not mix well with families or make good husbands, which is supported by the other pirate stories in this project in that all of the pirates remain unmarried after becoming pirates, and most die before the end of their stories.

While the redemptions of the Englishman and Burnet by themselves could be read as indicating that Fanny only used violence as a last resort, Fanny's actions throughout the narrative demonstrate that she used violence when necessary. Furthermore, taken along with her defense against Burnet, these scenarios demonstrate that both Fanny as herself and Fanny in her Channing persona are willing to use violence; and therefore, violence is not only the result of her performing a male identity. Prior to either of her

other reform efforts, Fanny was forced to use captured crew members to man her prize ships. One of these men attempts to incite a mutiny, and when confronted by Fanny, he threatens to cut part of the ship's rigging. Fanny warns him that she will kill him if he does. Although the narrative explains that this prompts the man to pause and consider, he then "cut the rope, which caused the ship to broach to at once; but it was the death signal of the mutineer. Channing, taking a step or two towards him, sent a ball direct to his heart, the man gave a terrific scream of agony and pain, and leaped into the sea a corpse" (43-44). The narrative gives no indication that this man was armed, and although he was threatening the ship, Fanny and her loyal crew probably could have overpowered him without killing him. According to the narrator, the crew supports Fanny's decisive action, claiming: "It was a critical moment, a single mis-step would have lost all and perhaps have been the signal for [Channing's] own death. It was no time for blustering, but for cool and decided action, which re-established his authority and showed the men that he was one not to be trifled with" (44-45). Taken together with her decision to pardon the Englishman, who posed an equal and possibly greater threat to the ship in his attempt to burn it, this instance demonstrates that Fanny's successful leadership is grounded in her ability to decide when to use words and when to use violence to defuse situations.

Furthermore, this scenario illustrates that Fanny is not simply an aloof captain, giving orders from a distance and letting her crew fight on her behalf. Anderson argues that the crew seldom sees its captain, but they hear him, which allows Fanny to use the influence of her voice without displaying her physical body (109). I agree with Anderson that the reader does not see detailed interactions between Fanny and her crew, but I



maintain that passages detailing her active involvement in the fighting indicate she does not hesitate to physically participate in the running of her ship. During battle when her crew is shorthanded, Fanny oversees the management of one of the guns herself, where she displays a “noble scorn of danger beaming from her face as she watched the rise and swell of the sea to get an aim at the Dolphin, and applying the match with her own hands” (86). And when her ship is boarded by Burnet’s crew, she participates in the hand-to-hand fighting: “Fanny’s pistol had taken the life of one of the enemy, and the other was presented to the breast of the Captain of the Dolphin, whose sword was also upraised to strike her” (90). Even at the beginning of the story, shortly after her mutiny on the *Constance*, she is prepared to defend herself during an attempt to overthrow her by the British captain and his mate. The captain and the cook, who is acting on behalf of the mate, sneak into Fanny’s cabin in the middle of the night with the intention of killing her. Instead, they kill one another, but when lights are brought on the scene, “Channing stood with a pistol cocked in either hand ready to defend himself if necessary, but now seeing the true state of the case he coolly remembered that there were two the less of them, and ordered the bodies removed” (36). Despite not having to use her weapons, Fanny is prepared to defend herself—even from a nighttime attack on her person—in this passage.<sup>105</sup> Together, this evidence creates a pattern by which Fanny does not use violence as a last resort or only in certain circumstances. Consistently throughout the

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<sup>105</sup> Much like some of the other active women in pirate texts—Isola in *The Pirate’s Daughter*, Constanza in *Lafitte*, and Clara from *The Bandit of the Ocean* who will be discussed in Chapter 4—the narrative does not require Fanny to defend herself since her attackers kill each other first. Unlike the other women, Fanny is shown fighting and even killing a man at other instances in the story. Therefore, it is easier to read her as capable of following through on her intention to defend herself.

story, she exhibits the key characteristic of a lady pirate modeled on a male adventure hero by risking physical danger to defend herself, her ship, and her crew.

While Fanny takes on many aspects of the earlier male pirates found in fiction, she deviates from their example in that she does not have to be redeemed, excused, or punished for her criminal activities of mutiny and piracy. In fact, she escapes punishment specifically because her male persona does not exist to be punished for his actions. In addition to the previously discussed conversation in which her crew considers whether or not Fanny is a pirate, Fanny's family worries that she will be tried as a pirate when she returns home. However, the narrator dismisses this possibility because she had been pirating during the American Revolution, which meant that the laws of the new United States were not yet in place for her to break, and besides, "Captain Campbell could nowhere be found, for only her family knew the secret" (102).<sup>106</sup> But Edmonds introduces the possibility that it is actually Fanny's gender transgression that would be considered a violation of the law. In her 1884 interview, Edmonds explains of her own life:

After a year's absence I went home to see my mother, I could not stand it any longer, even at the risk of detection and imprisonment—no doubt you are aware that the British laws, as well as the laws of this free (?) and happy country, punish with imprisonment so great a crime as any infringement on the rights and privileges of the 'lords of creation,' even so small a matter as the fashion of their

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<sup>106</sup> Although this is likely a simple typo, this passage refers to Fanny as "Captain Campbell" rather than "Captain Channing," which is how the narrator refers to her throughout the text. If the error is deliberate, it could indicate that Fanny as herself, rather than Channing, deserves to be given credit for her piratical actions.

most lordly garments. This is what I call masculine law and masculine justice meted out with a vengeance. (6)

Therefore, by bringing up the possibility of Fanny being tried as a pirate, the narrative might also be implicitly trying to address whether or not she needs to be tried for masquerading as a man.<sup>107</sup> Whatever legal possibility it referenced, the fact remains that the narrator dismisses the idea of Fanny being held legally accountable for her actions as Cleveland was in Scott's *The Pirate*, which continues the precedent established by Cooper and Sedgwick that pirates in American fiction were not held accountable by the law. Unlike most of those pirates, Fanny survives her story, indicating that she does not need to be punished in any way for her actions or contained within the confines of the narrative.

*"Not to Overstep the Modest Bounds of Nature": The Exemplary Everywoman*

The narrative implicitly endorses Fanny's gender blending by not punishing it, which suggests that other women could follow in her footsteps. However, the narrative is less clear about whether she is being presented as a role model for other women. By positioning Fanny as distanced by the historical setting, the narrative makes it possible to dismiss her—and her heroic womanhood—as a relic of another time. However, by the end of the story, the narrative clearly states that it views her as within the bounds of what is possible for women in its current time. The narrator's initial introduction of Fanny sets

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<sup>107</sup> For a discussion of the historical precedent for a disapproval of cross dressing women, see *Women Pirates and the Politics of the Jolly Roger* by Ulrike Klausmann, Marion Meinzerin, and Gabriel Kuhn, 204.

her apart from “modern belles” who are “delicate and ready to faint at the first sight of a reptile” (9). Fanny, on the other hand, “could row a boat, shoot a panther, ride the wildest horse in the province, or do almost any brave and useful act,” and these physical activities are balanced by the fact that Fanny “could write poetry too, nay, start not gentle reader, her education was of no mean character” (9-10). This description is given before Fanny has even undertaken her mission to rescue William, demonstrating that Fanny was well-fitted to the task of a heroic adventure even before it became necessary. In addition to the comment about “modern belles,” the narrator further emphasizes that this active independent womanhood can be partially attributed to the dangers of the times, which “gave rise to a stern and manly disposition even in those of the gentler sex who formed a part of the community” (8). This passage in particular evokes nostalgia for the past in which all individuals, regardless of gender, were capable of responding to danger. In “Geography, Genre, and Hemispheric Regionalism,” Woertendyke discusses the historical romance’s ability to “move back and forth in time,” which invites the reader to make connections between the past and the present (217). While seeming to relegate adventurous womanhood to a previous era, the reference to earlier models of womanhood in *Fanny Campbell* could also be read as demonstrating that all women are capable of Fanny’s independent action and violence if their circumstances demanded it of them.

While the narrative makes a point to have multiple characters, one of whom calls her “most singular,” praise Fanny’s achievements, her extraordinary abilities do not negate the fact that the narrative grounds her exceptional qualities in learned skills and practical knowledge (98). When William asks how Fanny gained her seafaring abilities,

she explains that as soon as he went to sea, she started seeking out knowledge and skills related to it by going fishing with her father, helping him manage his schooner, reading every nautical work she could obtain, and learning navigation from a friend (55). As a result, this new model of womanhood that Fanny embodies is grounded in nautical craft and knowledge, rather than solely relying on bold heroics. It is not simply good fortune or narrative construction that allows Fanny to accomplish what she does. Instead, the story clearly establishes that Fanny put in hard work to learn how to be a sailor, making it seem like anyone—woman or man—who is willing to dedicate the time to gaining skills and knowledge could follow in her footsteps. By explaining how Fanny acquired her skills and knowledge, the story invites the reader to follow her example, and given Cohen's assertion that readers of sea fiction were actively engaged, this type of invitation might have resonated with readers of *Fanny Campbell*. Furthermore, the fact that Fanny is a woman prevents this possibility from being limited by gender.

While Fanny is by far the most prominent woman in the narrative, it does make some efforts, through stories and legends, to illustrate that this model of womanhood is not necessarily specific to her, or even to white women. Although these women are fairly minor characters, their actions draw parallels with Fanny's assertive independence, which illustrates that Fanny is not an anomaly. The first of these women, Moll Pitcher, is, like Fanny, described as "singular" multiple times.<sup>108</sup> After a high ranking English officer

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<sup>108</sup> Moll Pitcher seems to be a clear reference to the Revolutionary War heroine, Molly Pitcher, who earned her name by carrying water to artillery men. However, in *Revolutionary Mothers*, Carol Berkin notes that "Molly Pitcher simply did not exist;" instead, it was a name used for any woman who carried water to soldiers (xi). Whether Moll Pitcher in *Fanny Campbell* refers to a specific historical woman or not, the legend surrounding Molly Pitcher aligns her with Fanny Campbell's active womanhood during armed conflicts.

seduced, “ruined her, and then forsook her,” she “resorted in her half deranged state to fortune-telling, and through her shrewdness and peculiarities gained ample and sufficient livelihood” (95). Although her half-deranged state would prevent her from being a likely candidate for emulation, it is still significant that Moll is able to maintain an independent livelihood. Furthermore, during the siege of Boston she became a spy for Washington, and the narrator explains: “To be sure, she was well paid in gold for the information thus obtained by personal hazard—but General Washington was often heard to say Moll wouldn’t work for *British* gold, though she did not refuse the pay of the Colonists in the secret service she rendered the American army” (96).<sup>109</sup> Even if she initially made her living by fortune-telling, Moll eventually obtains her income through aiding the colonial army, making her activities parallel Fanny’s in their patriotism as well as their independence. Additionally, since Moll Pitcher is based on a woman who at the time was considered a historical figure, she serves a similar purpose to the story about John Paul Jones in that her alignment with Fanny gives the story’s heroine historical weight, and it is important to note that the narrative is drawing on both male and female historical figures to accomplish this support.

While Moll Pitcher emulates Fanny’s patriotism and independence, the narrative also tells a story of a Native American woman who has a similar dual gendered characterization and matches Fanny’s capability of solving the problem of violent men with her own violence. One of the sailors tells a story about two Native American sisters

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<sup>109</sup> Moll’s backstory (which is not matched by the semi-historical Molly Pitcher) alludes to Cooper’s *The Spy*, in which the spy of the title refuses to be paid by Washington because he believed patriotism to be its own reward. However, Ballou shifts this role to a woman, aligning her patriotism with that of Fanny Campbell.

to the rest of the crew. The older of the two who is the “prettiest and gentlest creature” gets seduced by an Englishman, and when she finds out that she was deceived, she tells her sister and throws herself off a cliff (80-82). The younger sister, who is also described as pretty “though her sort of beauty was altogether a different kind. She was all, every inch, Indian, bold, fearless, and more like a man than a female,” curses the Englishman and then hunts him down, shooting him in the heart with a poisoned arrow (80-82). In this story, it is the passive sister who dies while the more active sister accomplishes her goal, survives, and marries at the end. Much like the paired heroines in Eliza Ann Dupuy’s *The Pirate’s Daughter* in which the active woman lives while the passive woman dies, the survival of the active sister implicitly suggests that the active, problem-solving, and violent woman raise the next generation.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, these stories, along with Fanny’s interaction with Burnet, create a pattern of English men seducing (or attempting to seduce) women, which emphasizes the capacity of white masculinity to pose a threat of sexual violence to women, regardless of race. This pattern could suggest a patriotic reading; however, the inclusion of a Native American woman prevents this pattern from fitting comfortably into this interpretation, thereby shifting the emphasis to women having to respond to violent white men.<sup>111</sup> This pattern of attempted or successful

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<sup>110</sup> As with Dupuy as well, this type of pairing is in contrast to those found in Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans* and Scott’s novels. For Cooper, the active sister dies, and in Scott, she remains single, while Dupuy and Ballou create pairings where the active woman survives and thrives.

<sup>111</sup> The patriotic reading would be possible, however, if the Native American women were read as a symbol of American independence. When discussing depictions of Native American men, Richard Slotkin claims in *Regeneration Through Violence* that “With the gradual vanishing of the Indian populations east of the Appalachians, it became possible to romanticize the Indian as the noble savage and to employ him as a symbol of American libertarianism and independent patriotism” (418). Through this reasoning and her parallels with Fanny and Moll Pitcher, the Native American woman could be similarly read as being used as a symbol of independent American womanhood, but it does not negate the fact that this independence is in response to violent white masculinity, rather than a political threat.

seductions also places an emphasis on these characters' womanhood while their responses—fighting and spying—would be more expected of a male hero. Thus, they combine the masculine and feminine duality discussed by Fuller and modeled by Fanny.

With regard to Fanny, this duality is maintained throughout the story, despite the tendency among scholars to read the ending as a relinquishing of her active womanhood. Because the main rescue plot ultimately moves Fanny toward marriage to William, it could be argued that the narrative is primarily concerned with domestic goals. Indeed, Anderson claims that "Their marriage marks Fanny's entrance into domestic life" while Kent interprets this ending as Fanny realizing "that the life of a captain could never make her happy, and that what she truly desires are 'the calm and peaceful joys of a quiet and retired life'" (110; 53). The narrative itself, however, does not present this sharp of a divide between Fanny taking on masculine roles on the sea and reserving feminine roles for the land.

Immediately after their return to Boston, the narrative briefly offers the possibility of containing Fanny to domestic life. It is William, not Fanny, who outfits the *Constance*, renamed the *Fanny*, for the purpose of privateering (102). This renaming would seem to erase Fanny as the active sea captain and reduce her to being the inspiration for the name of a man's ship. Furthermore, after the war, "Fanny and her husband were settled in domestic enjoyment, and thrice happy were they in the love of each other, a love which had been proved in storms and in calms, in peace and in strife" (104). If the story ended there, this passage might suggest that any woman—even the adventurous ones—could only find true fulfillment in marriage and the home. However, the narrative itself is less



than willing to negate all of Fanny's adventures in favor of a conventional marriage and a domestic life. While William is the one who obtains the letters of marque necessary for privateering, "Fanny, by her own solicitations, was permitted to accompany him, and she was not only his companion, but counsellor also, in many a hard-fought contest" before "[William] and his noble wife retired for a while to enjoy the sweets of domestic happiness" (103-104). This passage indicates that Fanny did not remain home while William was off privateering, but instead, she accompanied him, and it would be hard to believe that the woman described throughout this story would sit idly by while her husband was involved in "many a hard-fought contest." Additionally, after the war, both Fanny and William retire, which indicates that they would both have occupations in the first place. After Fanny rescues William, they model a romantic relationship that involves the man and the woman being equal partners, regardless of which is officially named the captain. Even though Fanny's activity is no longer presented in detail, enough of the narrative has established her active independence that one cannot assume that she has simply abandoned it. In fact, Woertendyke argues in "Geography, Genre, and Hemispheric Regionalism" that historical romances like *Fanny Campbell*, which thrived on "open-ended potentiality," encouraged readers to become involved in the story through their "natural tendency to conjecture" (213, 217). Because it is not explicit, this omission allows the reader to interpret Fanny as either reinforcing the status quo by choosing marriage and relinquishing activity on the sea to men or pushing against it in that she accompanies her husband and continues to participate in masculine activities.

The suggestion that Fanny did not drastically change her ways is further supported by her response to retired life. After Fanny and William settle into “domestic enjoyment,” Fanny informs her husband that she misses the sea, explaining: “I think we might love each other just as well were we to be on the element we have both proved so successful upon” (105). In this passage, Fanny makes a case for the mutual love of the couple being more important than the domestic space that they occupy. When William suggests that they buy a yacht, Fanny agrees, adding, “Let it be a small one, such as can be worked by a few hands, William; we’ll be our own masters” (105).<sup>112</sup> Not only is Fanny the one to initiate transferring their domestic happiness to the sea, but she is also emphatic that they are able to “be our own masters.” In contrast to the arguments of Anderson and Kent, Fanny does not dramatically change her character after her marriage. Even as a married woman, she values independence and wants to continue some of the activities that she has come to love, including sailing with her husband on the sea.<sup>113</sup> In a similar manner to her activities throughout the story, Fanny’s retirement models a version of womanhood that blends masculine and feminine desires.

As Anderson explains, the journey that the couple takes, traveling to many different parts of the world on their yacht, extends the established patriotism of Fanny to serve an imperialist purpose by implying that the world can achieve the same independence that Fanny fought for alongside the colonies. She writes: “By unmooring

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<sup>112</sup> They name their yacht the *Vision*, which seems optimistic and forward-looking, and can be interpreted as referencing the pro-America message or the new model of womanhood presented by the narrative (106).

<sup>113</sup> In *Writing Beyond the Ending*, Rachel Blau DuPlessis argues that in nineteenth-century fiction female quest narratives are set aside or repressed in favor of an ending that forecloses those possibilities with marriage or death (3-4). However, I contend that *Fanny Campbell*’s ending leaves open the option of a quest within a marriage plot.

national space from geographical place, Fanny and William's itinerant household evokes the possibility that any place could be that of American national feeling. This is not simply an image of a nation shrunk to a single household, but an image of a household inscribing its national – 'domestic' – feeling all over the world" (111). Because these imperialist implications are founded in aspects of Fanny's patriotic character, which is closely aligned with her love for William, this model of American national feeling brings with it egalitarian love and violent womanhood. As a result, the story obscures the violence of historical imperialism by locating the violent acts of the characters within the patriotic national narrative before having the central couple peacefully tour the rest of the world. Kaplan echoes Anderson's argument more broadly when she claims writing in the mid-nineteenth century suggests "that 'woman's true sphere' was in fact a mobile and mobilizing outpost that transformed conquered foreign lands into the domestic sphere of the family and nation" (26). In this manner, *Fanny Campbell* invokes what Kaplan calls "imperialist nostalgia...for an imagined past of the imperial nation" and erases the unique subject positions of people across the world in favor of this singular model of American individualism without violent attacks, overthrows, or oppression associated with historical imperialism (98).

In addition to spreading their model across the world, the narrative also implies that Fanny and William will serve as role models for the next generation through their children. The narrator explains: "It was while on an excursion with her husband, and far out of sight of land, that Fanny gave birth to her first child, a noble and robust boy" (118). Although it could be argued that Fanny is simply fulfilling conventional roles of

becoming a wife and mother, she does so in an unconventional manner by giving birth on the sea. Furthermore, Ballou wrote a sequel to *Fanny Campbell*, entitled *The Naval Officer; or, the Pirate's Cave, A Tale of the Last War* (1845), which focuses on Fanny's son and clearly states that Fanny did not change her independent ways after becoming a wife and mother. One of her son's crew members tells another: "I have seen Mrs. Lovell [Fanny] handle [the yacht] like a toy in a gale of wind" (12). In a note, Cohen argues that *Fanny Campbell* solves the problem of women and shipboard labor "by allowing women into the community of craft when they cross-dress" (258n59). However, with the additional evidence from *The Naval Officer*, it is clear that Fanny's skills and sea craft were not abandoned with her disguise. Several of the events in *The Naval Officer* are parallel to the events in *Fanny Campbell*, but at the end of the story, the narrator declares:

How similar had Lovell's life been to that of his mother, The Female Pirate Captain, yet perhaps less daring, like his father's too—more particularly, for like him, he lay for a considerable period in a damp and dreary dungeon or prison—his father at Havana, as the reader of the Female Pirate will remember, and himself in the prison at Bristol, England. His own escape was through cunning and ingenuity, while his father was liberated by force and surprise, and that too by his own mother, then scarcely more than a mere girl, and yet in command of a crew of as daring and desperate men as ever handled a boarding pike. (93)

On the one hand, this passage operates as a sort of advertisement for *Fanny Campbell* by trying to convince the reader of *The Naval Officer* that this character's mother is impressive enough that one should buy her story too. At the same time, Ballou did not

need to downplay the adventures of William and their son in order to elevate Fanny's—he could have claimed that they were all equally heroic and adventurous, but that would not have been true to *Fanny Campbell* because if their actions are weighed against one another, Fanny is clearly the most active and heroic of the three. These stories refuse the sharp divide, often reinforced by critics, between woman and hero—Fanny is both. By the end of her story, Fanny is able to embody the gendered dualism of both masculine and feminine roles.

Ultimately, even though the narrative makes some suggestion that Fanny is singular or difficult to emulate, the ending reiterates the idea that Fanny is realistically drawn. At the very end of the story, the narrator explains “We have endeavored in Fanny Campbell to portray a heroine who should not be like every other the fancy has created; we have strove to make her such an one as should elicit the reader's interest, and have yet endeavored in the picture not to overstep the modest bounds of nature” (120). While Fanny was exemplary in many ways, the narrative clearly states its investment in keeping her within “the modest bounds of nature,” or within what is actually possible. Although it is worded as making an effort to maintain a realistic depiction, this statement is potentially radical for implying that violence in women, which is often considered unnatural, is in fact not out of the ordinary.<sup>114</sup> On the whole, the story presents a model of womanhood that is invested in both marriage and independence, a model which emphasized action and assertiveness in addition to domesticity and family.

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<sup>114</sup> For more on violence in women being considered unnatural, see Ann Lloyd's *Doubly Deviant, Doubly Damned*, 36 and Patricia Pearson's *When She Was Bad*, 21.

### **“She Never Can Become What She Once Was”: Fanny Campbell’s Legacy**

While it is difficult to speculate on the popularity of any one story, the stories that followed *Fanny Campbell* indicate that the lady pirate maintained a prominent position in the American imagination throughout the 1840s. Furthermore, the lady pirates that followed *Fanny Campbell* did not simply replicate her character and plot, they continued to push boundaries by offering additional examples of unconventional womanhood, and eventually, they worked to make moves, however minor, to extend this option of legitimate female violence beyond white womanhood. But first, in order to understand how widespread this figure became, we turn to one of the later novels by James Fenimore Cooper, *Jack Tier; or The Florida Reef* (1848).

While Cooper is credited with helping to establish the American pirate story, he also constructed a particular type of passive womanhood with those early sea tales. With *Jack Tier*, however, he turns to a more piratical female character. The title character is the wife of the pirate, Captain Spike, and after he leaves her, she disguises herself as a male sailor and joins his crew, eventually revealing herself after many adventures to be Mary Swash. According to Cooper’s preface to *Jack Tier*, he published the story serially under the title, “Rose Budd,” which is the name of the woman that both the protagonist and the antagonist are attempting to possess, who fulfills a role similar to Cooper’s women in *The Red Rover* (3).<sup>115</sup> By shifting the title to *Jack Tier*, Cooper shifted the focus to the more

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<sup>115</sup> According to Jeffrey Walker in “Reading Rose Budd; or, Tough Sledding in *Jack Tier*,” the serial publication of *Jack Tier* occurred simultaneously in American and England. The American version in *Graham’s Magazine* was titled *The Islets of the Gulf; or, Rose Budd* and appeared between November 1846 and March 1848 while the British version in *Bentley’s Miscellany* was titled *Captain Spike; or, Islets of the*

active, less conventional character. Not only is Jack Tier unusual for her disguise, but she also does not want to give up her male identity and name at the end of the story. The narrator declares, “She never can become what she once was” (511). In *Jack Tier*, the assertive gender-bending character (Jack Tier) exists alongside the woman-as-object-to-be-possessioned plot (in the form of Rose Budd).<sup>116</sup> Furthermore although Cooper wrote the entire novel prior to the appearance of the first installment, the novel was published serially; and therefore, Jack Tier’s gender was not revealed until the final installment (Walker). For the serial reader, then, *Jack Tier* appeared to be a conventional pirate story with a damsel (Rose), two heroic men (Harry and Jack), and an evil pirate (Spike), until the very end where Cooper complicated this typical gender division by revealing Jack to be a woman, and thus all of her heroic activities belonged to an unconventional woman, rather than a heroic man. Much like those writing shilling novelettes and story paper stories, Cooper was likely attempting to balance the appeal of active female characters without losing the rescue plot.

Even though Cooper shifted to include more unconventional women in his novels, many authors of pirate stories continued to write male-centered adventures along the lines of those established by Cooper’s early novels, where the pirates are redeemable—or victims of circumstance—and the women primarily function as objects to be possessed in power games between the male characters.<sup>117</sup> At the same time, a handful of stories

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*Gulf*. The completion of the serial was soon followed with the publication of the complete novel as *Jack Tier; or, The Florida Reef* in 1848.

<sup>116</sup> This configuration of female characters is technically true of *The Red Rover* as well; however, Roderick of *The Red Rover* is less involved in the events of the plot and is less explicitly identified as a woman.

<sup>117</sup> An example of one such story is Ned Buntline’s *The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main; or, The Fiend of Blood, A Thrilling Story of the Buccaneer Times* (1847).

modeled on *Fanny Campbell* made significant departures as they used the lady pirate to extend respectability—and the right to wield legitimate violence—to a broader range of women, including nonwhite women. In this way, they functioned in a similar manner to the gentleman pirate, which could be used to give a lower class man like the Red Rover upward mobility within a merit-based hierarchy.

Ned Buntline's *The Queen of the Sea, or, Our Lady of the Ocean: A Tale of Love, Strife, and Chivalry* (1848) focuses on a lady pirate that shares many similarities to Fanny but has a mixed English and Spanish ancestry.<sup>118</sup> Some scholars, including Anna Brickhouse and Reginald Horsman, have claimed that when Anglo-American authors create Spanish female characters, they do so in order to fulfill the erotic fantasies of male readers by depicting “exotic, receptive Mexican women” (Horsman 234).<sup>119</sup> Perhaps in an effort to appeal to multiple audiences, Buntline tried to make his protagonist exotic through her Spanish ancestry but without relinquishing the prototype of white womanhood established by Fanny Campbell. As a result, this inadvertently extends the legitimacy and agency of the white lady pirate to the nonwhite woman. However, this reading is also complicated on the one hand, by the idea discussed in Chapter 2 that a woman descended from Spanish nobility would be read as white, and on the other hand, by the fact that nonwhite women were often figured as more transgressive and violent to begin with.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ned Buntline was a pseudonym for E. Z. C. Judson. For more on his life and reputation, see R. Clay Reynolds's introduction to *The Hero of a Hundred Fights*.

<sup>119</sup> See Anna Brickhouse's *The Unsettling of America* and Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny*.

<sup>120</sup> For the discussion of Spanish women descended from nobility being read as white, see Stern, 110. For Spanish blood being constructed as deviant regardless, see Streeby, 35.



Alongside this complex racial identity, Sada, the lady pirate protagonist in *The Queen of the Sea*, combines masculine and feminine traits in such a way that seems to create a binary between violent Spanish womanhood and nonviolent English womanhood. However, this binary is disrupted when Sada's piratical attributes are connected to her mother. Sada's initial introduction aligns her angelic beauty and virtue with her English mother while her position at the head of a pirate band has been inherited from her Spanish father. The narrative eventually uses this positioning of Sada's background to formulate a model of womanhood that is equally capable of angelic moral influence and destructive violence. For the first half of the story, Sada's pirate base is described as a peaceful utopia with her as its benevolent leader. The narrative does reference a past incident in which Sada killed one of her captains for mistreating a woman in his power, but even this instance presents her as the avenging angel of virtue. Kent uses Sada's depiction as both a desirable and an effective leader to place the responsibility for creating and countering obsessive desire on women: "Although it is women's femininity which gives them their saintly ability to influence men, the same femininity also creates obsessive, violent, and destructive male sexual desire" (55). However, I read this characterization as an attempt to illustrate the difficulties of dealing with unrestrained and violent men as a female leader.

The second half of the story places more emphasis on Sada's Spanish heritage, as she discovers previously unknown relatives of her father's, and it is also where Sada joins her men in taking up arms in defense of their base. By contrasting Sada's Spanish heritage and her martial activity with the emphasis on her angelic features inherited from

her English mother at the beginning, the narrative seems to be setting up a binary between the peaceful Anglo utopian leader and the violent Spanish lady pirate. However, one detail, downplayed by the story due to its brief description and late introduction, undermines this binary construction of angelic-Anglo, violent-Spanish womanhood. Near the end of the story, the reader learns that Sada's father was not originally a pirate—but her mother was. Her mother, the self-styled “Lady of the Flood,” captured her father, who then fell in love with her. Her mother was unwilling to leave the sea, and her father was unwilling to leave her mother, so they married and he took over the pirate band (69). Sada's English mother was the original pirate in the family. Therefore, Sada's unconventional behavior did not originate solely with her Spanish blood, but also with her piratical English mother. Through Sada's lineage, Buntline complicates the clear division between Spanish and Anglo womanhood, first by giving Sada mixed parentage and then further by making her mother the original pirate. As with Fanny Campbell, Sada's piratical capacity is grounded in white womanhood, but through her mixed parentage, the narrative suggests the possibility of extending the justification for legitimate violence to nonwhite women.

Although *The Queen of the Sea* makes an effort toward using the figure of the lady pirate to extend legitimate violence beyond white women, it does not fully commit to this model since the protagonist is half English as well. Lorry Luff's *Antonita: The Female Contrabandista, A Mexican Tale of Land and Water* (1848) is more explicit about

transferring the attributes of the lady pirate to Spanish women.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, *Antonita* pushes the boundaries of acceptable womanhood through the narrative's lack of condemnation for her transgressive sexual choices as well. Several direct addresses from the narrator to the reader, such as "And now, dear reader,—(that term, *dear*, only applies to the *lady* readers, remember)," indicate that at least a portion of the audience was expected to be women (18). *Antonita* follows the title character, who is the commander of a smuggler band, through the adventures which result from her decision to rescue Charles Hawkins, a Texan captain with whom she eventually falls in love only to find out that he is already married. At the same time, she must evade those connected to the Mexican authorities who want to prosecute her for her successful smuggling operation.

Like Sada and *Lafitte*'s Constanza, Antonita is identified having the "blood of proud, *dear* Arragon" (21). Being descended from Spanish nobility places her atop a status hierarchy even as it allows her to be exoticized. According to Antonia Castañeda's "The Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Stereotypes of Californians," representations of Mexicans in California were divided as "elite Californians were deemed European and superior while the mass of Mexican women were viewed as Indian and inferior" (225). A similar hierarchy appears to be at work in *Antonita*, and as a result, Antonita draws on the established figure of the gentleman pirate. This lineage is closely

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<sup>121</sup> It was later republished in 1850 as *The Texan Captain and the Female Smuggler, A Mexican Tale of Land and Water*. As with *The Pirate's Daughter*'s reissuing as *Celeste*, it is unclear whether this republication under a different title is an indication of popularity due to demand for another addition or an effort to rebrand it due to a lack of popularity. In this case, the title change also shifts the emphasis from Antonita herself to Antonita and Hawkins, which could be an effort to appeal more directly to a mixed-gendered audience. Lorry Luff is likely a pseudonym because no person by this name exists in the U.S. Census during the time period in which the story was published. Furthermore, Luff is a sailing term that can be used to mean lieutenant or is related to altering the course of a ship, which follows a trend of authors, including Buntline and Harry Halyard who will be discussed in Chapter 4, of sea adventures using pseudonyms that include sea terms (definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary*).

connected to Antonita's capacity for violence as she declares, "I am a true Da Costa. Where danger thickest is, there seek I for pleasure" (21). Her upper class ancestry and willingness to commit dangerous acts position her as being superior to her crew, much like the earlier gentleman pirates found in *The Red Rover* and Scott's *The Pirate*. When the ship needs to be repaired during the storm, Antonita is the only one who is daring enough to "[snatch] a battle axe from the arm-rack" and climb into the rigging, rebuking the crew as she does so "Cowards, is this your obedience? Must I here lead the way as I have done before, when armed men stood before ye!" (4). In this scene, Antonita's declaration is supported by her actions as the narrator describes: "when the cheek of her crew blanched with terror, she was equal to the emergency" (5). Antonita's status as a lady pirate is coupled with her active agency in a crisis, which is illustrated through her superior knowledge of sea craft.

Although many of her actions are similar to that of Fanny Campbell, Antonita deviates on one important point—Antonita acts as herself while Fanny remains in the guise of Channing. In a nod to the trope of a woman disguising herself as a man to fulfill a man's role, Antonita briefly disguises herself for her initial interaction with Hawkins, but she does not try very hard to conceal her identity. When her friend calls her "Donna Antonita" after only a few paragraphs, she tells Hawkins, "I am a woman—the daughter instead of the son of Da Costa!" before leaving to change back into her feminine attire (13). While she performs a different gender than her predecessor, Antonita follows Fanny's example by combining masculine and feminine traits as she continues to exhibit martial characteristics, including a willingness for violence, while dressed as a woman.

During battle, Antonita “was ever where the danger was most apparent—now forward, then aft, encouraging her crew by word and deed all the time” (42). This passage indicates that she commanded verbally and by her own example. Nor is this an isolated scenario as the narrative indicates that Antonita is ever “ready for a desperate hour” because she has prepared a match rope, which leads down from the couch in her cabin to the magazine below deck, giving her the option of blowing up the ship at any moment (41). While Rosa in *Hope Leslie* and Cooper’s Rover both found it necessary to blow up their ships, Antonita is essentially sleeping on top of a powder keg.<sup>122</sup> Much like Fanny Campbell, Antonita is not a distant captain who stays out of danger while giving orders from a safe distance. Instead, she embodies the ideals of the male adventure hero by putting herself in physical danger and leading by the example of her own bravery. However, unlike Fanny, Antonita performs these acts of bravery and violence as a woman, rather than in the disguise of a man.

While the first half of *Antonita* shares many similarities with *Fanny Campbell* in terms of balancing its lady pirate’s masculine and feminine characteristics, the second half deviates from the formula established by its predecessor by abandoning many of its protagonist’s active attributes once she becomes sexually transgressive. After falling in love with Hawkins and finding out that he is married, Antonita, much like Lafitte and Burnet who realize they cannot have the women they desire, declares her undying love for Hawkins and agrees that they should remain friends (26). Hawkins, for his part, wants her to come home with him and meet his wife, “and he doubted not that they would love

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<sup>122</sup> She does not find herself in a position to activate this failsafe, but she does leave orders should the battle turn against them, and her cousin lights the match on her behalf, blowing up the ship.

each other” (71). Hawkins’s manipulation of Antonita builds throughout the narrative as she repeatedly asks to leave the ship while he convinces her to remain and continues to insist on their ability to remain friends. Before long, he succeeds in seducing her in a scene that is unclear, but she never gives explicit consent. Hawkins’s continued manipulation adds an element of force to the relationship.

After Hawkins seduces Antonita and she becomes dependent upon him, she loses much of her active agency. The narrator describes the change in Antonita: “All the rich tenderness of her nature had been called into action, and now she was no more the heroine. She was all woman, with the clinging, devoted, yet burning affection of her sex,” which reinstates a sharp divide between woman and hero (75). While Kent reads this scenario as Antonita losing “all reluctance to abandon her exciting, seafaring life for domesticity” and choosing to become the mistress of Hawkins, I do not see the situation in such a clear cut manner (54). Whether or not Antonita initially consented to becoming Hawkins’s mistress, she is certainly aware of the situation in which she finds herself as she asks: “Am I not now a poor degraded creature? An outcast—dependent upon the charity, the pity, of one who is married, too” (78). The change described in the previous quote could then be considered the result of Antonita’s change in position—she has not necessarily chosen domesticity over independence, but now that she has given up her virtue, she no longer has the option of being independent, according to nineteenth-century standards.

Possibly the most unconventional aspect of *Antonita* is the ending, which Kent strangely describes as Antonita finding “true contentment in an American family” (54).

Technically, Antonita does end up in a domestic setting that consists of a family, but it is far from the type of family one would expect to see in antebellum literature. After living with Hawkins and his wife Sabina for a time, Antonita learns that Sabina knew about her husband's affair before he returned home with Antonita. Antonita tells Hawkins, and they decide to beg forgiveness of Sabina, whom they describe as an angel and "no mortal woman" (88). Sabina responds to their confession:

If you have learned that there is a love which mocks at human rules and customs—which recognizes no conventional jealousies and revenges, remember that that love is also in perfect harmony with the plainest dictates of reason and common sense. Be not surprised that I have scorned to have recourse to that base hypocrisy which talks of dishonor, and seeks revenge only to gratify selfish pride or wounded lust. My lovely Antonita, you crave pardon for having loved my Charles; but did I not set you the example? You have only done as I did before you. You, dear Charles, think it unpardonable to bring your loved one to this house. Should I have esteemed you more if you had seduced this poor unfriended orphan, and then left her to the scorn of the world and returned to me alone? Yet that is often done by you gentlemen of the sea. You have indulged in pleasure abroad. Surely you have acted a nobler part than others, for you have brought the wounded dove home to be healed by the love of my heart; and oh! there is balm enough in this Gilead for you both! Believe me, I have never entertained the remotest feeling of bitterness to either of you! (88-89)

Her reasoning involves a transcendent love that is elevated above romantic love, but it also urges taking responsibility for one's actions. In particular, Sabina calls attention to the fact that "gentlemen of the sea" might not be considered gentlemen if they seduce and abandon women. The second half of *Antonita* is a seduction tale in which the seduced woman does not die, and all of the people involved must decide how they are going to deal with one another.

Despite Sabina's tranquil understanding of the affair, the ending of the narrative is rather vague about how their household will function from that point forward. The narrative ends with: "From that hour, there was peace and joy in the abode of Hawkins. The heavenly Sabina had redeemed them both into a higher nature, by the power of her loving heart; and the affectionate Antonita has been heard to say that there is a power on earth stronger than that of swords and cannons, and a moral courage that puts the warrior to the blush" (89). In this passage, Sabina functions as the redeeming angel, occupying the common character type for women in pirate stories; however, it is unusual that she is redeeming an adulterous couple, rather than a villainous man. It is important to keep in mind Sabina, like Antonita, is of Spanish descent, rather than American as critics have suggested.<sup>123</sup> Thus, both the transgressive and redemptive female characters occupy the same position as potentially being read as white (because they are both descended from Spanish nobility) and being exoticized. If they have all been elevated to a higher nature that transcends the passionate love of the affair, then this household appears to be a

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<sup>123</sup> Kent describes Sabina as "a loving, domestic American woman" (54), but Hawkins's story of his first wife's adultery identifies his second wife as having Spanish ancestry. While it is possible that Sabina is Spanish-American, her ancestry does not match with usual depictions of moralizing white womanhood.



chaste utopia. However, there are several descriptions of both Antonita and Hawkins being in love with Sabina prior to the ending that leaves open to the reader's interpretation whether the characters are modeling a chaste or polyamorous household. Either version would be unconventional for the time, creating a different model of domesticity developed from a transgressive version of *Fanny Campbell's* lady pirate.

Although the stories all take different paths in the end, narratives that feature lady pirates as protagonists draw on the ideals of the male adventure hero in order to construct alternate models of womanhood, which blend together masculine and feminine traits. Fanny Campbell, Sada, and Antonita were neither virtuous heroines transplanted to the sea, nor cross-dressing women acting as placeholders in male roles. Even though all three women end their stories in domestic settings of sorts, each is different and emphasizes the unconventional potential of the lady pirate. By modeling their Spanish women off Fanny Campbell, Buntline and Luff were able to extend the potential for legitimate violence to nonwhite women. Additionally, both Fanny and Antonita formulate relationships that are mutually beneficial with all parties involved operating as a unit. With the pirate stories of Benjamin Barker, which will be discussed in Chapter 4, this model of lady pirates partnered with equally capable men would be replaced with a repeated narrative that illustrates the potential of a variety of women to solve conflicts, sometimes with violence, without requiring men to play a prominent role in the story.

#### Chapter 4: “Let Them Be Sea-Captains”: Women and Violence in Benjamin Barker’s Pirate Tales

While discussing the capabilities and potential roles for women if they were to be given greater freedoms, Margaret Fuller writes in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845):

But if you ask me what offices they may fill; I reply—any. I do not care what case you put; let them be sea-captains, if you will. I do not doubt there are women well fitted for such an office, and, if so, I should be glad to see them in it, as to welcome the maid of Saragossa, or the maid of Missolonghi, or the Suliote heroine, or Emily Plater.

I think women need, especially in this juncture, a much greater range of occupation than they have, to rouse their latent powers. (102)

Aside from pointing directly to the possibility of women being sea captains, which would put them in close proximity to the fictional lady pirates of the last chapter, Fuller emphasizes that women are capable of “a much greater range of occupation than they have.”<sup>124</sup> She is not arguing for a single role or even a set of similar roles; instead, her dismissive “I do not care what case you put” addresses the fact that all women do not share the same characteristics and qualities, and therefore, a single model of womanhood

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<sup>124</sup> See Larry J. Reynolds’s *Righteous Violence* for a discussion of Fuller’s reputation, 39-44, and her influence on Louisa May Alcott’s attitude toward heroic violence, 142-148.

will not fit every woman. Furthermore, Fuller's statement does not preclude women from masculine spaces and occupations. In fact, the women that she references evoke a pattern of violent womanhood, justified through nationalistic causes, from multiple places around the world in the early nineteenth century.<sup>125</sup>

As this project has shown, the figure of the gentleman pirate was often used to legitimize the violence of white men by redirecting it toward a patriotic cause. Drawing on a gendered dualism similar to the one laid out by Fuller in the previous chapter, the authors of lady pirate stories used the model of the gentleman pirate to extend this legitimate violence and active agency to virtuous white women, and later elite Spanish women. Fuller, in turn, is using this justified violence of women who fought on behalf of their countries to suggest a broader range of occupation for women, not limited by place or nationality. The authors of pirate stories in the 1840s and 1850s followed a similar logic by modeling various versions of active and independent womanhood on the male adventure hero in order to illustrate women in a broader range of roles.

On a smaller scale, this broader range of occupation for women is reflected in the pirate stories of Benjamin Barker. Barker's work addresses the problem of violence in antebellum America by specifically exploring the question of what ordinary women can do to oppose violent men when they do not have access to the more conventional options of redeeming the villain or being rescued by heroic men. While Fuller embraces violent womanhood across the world, Barker is more reserved in his endorsement. He does

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<sup>125</sup> According to the note in the Norton Critical Edition, all of these women fought on behalf of liberty: "Saragossa is a Spanish city invaded by the French in 1808-09. Missolonghi is a Greek town besieged by the Turks in 1822-23 and 1825-26. Suli is a Greek island that rebelled against the Turks in 1820. In the late 1820s, Plater led the Polish rebellion against Russian rule" (102n5).

depict some virtuous women as violent, but more often, his stories link sexual transgression to violence, although neither their sexual transgression nor their violence precludes them from occupying a heroic role in the story. Because some of his stories do include violent virtuous women, Barker's work as a whole presents a variety of women with varying degrees of active agency and willingness toward violence without limiting it to those who are already figured as transgressive. While they are somewhat contained within an unwillingness to fully embrace transgressive sexual behavior, the outcomes of these fictional scenarios suggest that any woman, regardless of age, race, or sexual history, might find it necessary to occupy a variety of roles and use violence in order to oppose violent men.

Building on the earlier pirate stories, Barker's work between 1845 and 1855 presents a significant revision of the lady pirate popularized by *Fanny Campbell* (1844). While Barker includes a variety of active and independent female characters—some ladies, some pirates—they rarely overlap to form the lady pirate established by Maturin Murray Ballou. Barker's work commits to what Ballou and the shilling novelette authors discussed in the previous chapter would not—that any woman, not just those who are “singular” or virtuous have the capacity to take violent action in defense of themselves and others. By presenting repeated scenarios in which women are not only involved, but necessary to thwarting masculine violence, Barker implies that ordinary women could be heroic in a variety of ways, which more broadly endorses violent womanhood than any of the previously discussed pirate stories. In doing so, Barker shifts the focus of the pirate story away from the gentleman pirate explored by Byron, Walter Scott, and James

Fenimore Cooper, and its counterpart the lady pirate in order to give a variety of female characters the opportunity to demonstrate Fuller's much greater range of occupation. I argue that Barker draws on the characterizations and plot devices used repeatedly in earlier pirate stories to consistently highlight the need for female agency. In order to position female characters in this way, he constructs villains as completely irredeemable and incapacitates the male heroes, which creates a narrative space where the female characters have no other option than to oppose the violent men themselves. Like many of the authors discussed in the first half of this project, Barker seems reluctant in many of his stories to allow virtuous heroines to follow through on their violent potential; however, his larger body of work demonstrates that he does not dismiss this possibility entirely.

Despite presenting alternative and unconventional models for the roles of women and men through his stories, Barker's work has been ignored by scholars in part because it was published in the ephemeral formats of story papers and shilling novelettes, which were cheaply made and do not survive well over time. As a result, many of his stories are impossible to locate outside of archives and private collections, making them less accessible to scholars. Most story papers were "an eight-page weekly periodical that resembled a newspaper in format while offering the kind of miscellany found in monthly literary magazines," and the most popular "claimed sales of hundreds of thousands of copies of each issue" (Thomsen 84, 91). This popularity was due, in part, to a wide network in which the story papers were distributed through wholesale agents to several cities across the United States, including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and

Cincinnati (D. Cohen 9).<sup>126</sup> Between 1845 and 1848, Benjamin Barker wrote stories that were published by Frederick Gleason's publishing house and in his popular story paper, *The Flag of Our Union*.<sup>127</sup> Daniel A. Cohen calls *The Flag of Our Union* "the most popular and best-paying story paper in Boston at midcentury" while Shelley Streeby claims that it "dominated the field of cheap literature" (52n25; 85). The wide distribution and popularity of *The Flag of Our Union* makes it ideal for exploring gender roles and character types in the antebellum American imagination.

While work has been done on dime novels, far less scholarship has addressed story papers or shilling novelettes. Many scholars, such as Michael Denning in *Mechanic Accents*, attempt to sort through the various forms of popular fiction "that are lumped under the term 'dime novel'" in an effort to position the dime novel within other forms of popular fiction; however, for Denning, this analysis tends to move toward understanding "the formulas and figures that recur in these dime novels" (2, 5).<sup>128</sup> Some scholars, such as Daniel Cohen, have begun to recover the works by lesser known authors, illustrating that mid-century story paper fiction offers a unique opportunity to examine an emerging market that had not yet settled completely in terms of genre, audience, and authorship.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> For more on the general innovations for distributing fiction, see Ronald J. Zboray's *A Fictive People*, 12-14. For Gleason's distribution in particular, see Anderson's "Female Pirates and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Fiction," 114.

<sup>127</sup> Some of these stories appeared in both formats with the shilling novelette being a reprint of the serialized story paper version, but others were only published as shilling novelettes. *The Bandit of the Ocean; or, The Female Privateer* (1855) was the only Barker title not published by Gleason. In 1854, Gleason sold *The Flag of Our Union* to Ballou.

<sup>128</sup> Despite different opinions how to determine where dime novels end and other mediums begin, most agree that the dime novel began with the first book in *Beadle's Dime Novels* series, Ann S. Stephens's *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter* (1860). For Denning's discussion of what he identifies as the three main formats, see *Mechanic Accents*, 10-12. As Denning points out these formats often overlapped, and sometimes, the same story could appear in more than one version.

<sup>129</sup> See Daniel Cohen's "*Hero Strong*" and *Other Stories*."

Cohen argues that “many story papers of the 1850s sought to incorporate a variety of genres geared to both sexes and a multitude of tastes encouraged ambitious would-be authors to experiment with different styles and voices and, in the process, to transverse traditional literary and gender lines” (35). Sari Edelstein agrees in *Between the Novel and the News*, indicating that “papers did not want to alienate any group of readers” (78). Furthermore, Edelstein argues that story papers “provide a singular point of entry” for exploring anxieties surrounding gender conventions and the nation (67-68). Because they offer a level of experimentation not found in other mediums during this time period, story papers deserve more critical attention in terms of what they can illustrate with regard to shifting attitudes toward gender, genre, audience, and authorship.

In addition to the medium and genre being unsettled in the mid-nineteenth century, the authorship of these stories, as Daniel Cohen notes, was mixed in terms of gender and further obscured by the fact that an unknown number wrote under gender-crossing pseudonyms. In his introduction to *“Hero Strong” and Other Stories*, Cohen traces the changing authorship of story papers, which initially relied on material taken from English and French papers, but shifted to original American stories in the 1840s (7). The demand for stories became such that “editors increasingly reached beyond their circle of male associates to obtain fiction from a wider range of contributors, including women and teenage girls of genteel or middle-class backgrounds” (8). The combination of female contributors and frequent use of pseudonyms opens up the possibility that more women were writing for story papers than can possibly be traced. In the case of Benjamin Barker, Joseph Flibbert suggests that “the emphasis upon women as the works’ heroes

may suggest a woman author” (180).<sup>130</sup> Barker’s stories share numerous similarities with the stories written by Harry Halyard, including the prevalence of female heroes, and there is some evidence that both sets of stories were written by the same person.<sup>131</sup> The prevalence of authors writing under other names raises the possibility that Halyard was a pseudonym for Barker or even that both names were pseudonyms for someone else entirely.<sup>132</sup> Additionally, at least one of Barker’s stories—*Coriila, or The Indian Enchantress*—was later published with the author identified as Miss Amelia Montague. Based on my correspondence with Brenna Bychowski, the cataloger for this collection at the American Antiquarian Society, it seems more likely that this was a later reprint in which the publisher misidentified the author in order to avoid copyright issues; however, the point still stands that the publisher did not think the reader of this later edition would find it unusual for having a female author. While Barker could have been a woman writing under a man’s name, he could also have been a male author who was simply blending genres in order to appeal to different audiences as we have seen with the texts in

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<sup>130</sup> Flibbert discusses this possibility of the author being a woman in his entry for *Encyclopedia of American Literature of the Sea and Great Lakes* on Harry Halyard, in which he also suggests that Barker and Halyard could have been the same author writing under two names.

<sup>131</sup> The most compelling evidence for this assertion surrounds the publication of the story *Heloise; or, the Heroine of Paris*, which originally appeared in *The Flag of Our Union* beginning April 22, 1848 and was attributed to Harry Halyard. Later in 1848, the same story appeared as supplemental material along with two other stories in a reprinted edition of Ballou’s shilling novelette *Red Rupert*, but this time it was attributed to Benjamin Barker. While it is always possible that the editor simply made an error, the fact that this story was published twice in the same year by the same publisher with different authors supports the argument that both of those names belonged to the same person.

<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, Halyard, which is a nautical term for a rope used to adjust the sails on a ship, fits the pattern mentioned in Chapter 3 wherein pseudonyms for authors of sea adventures tend to include nautical terms. A few scholars, including Barbara Cutter in *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*, have assumed that Barker was another pseudonym for Ballou; however, I have found no evidence to support this conjecture. Barker and Ballou have different writing styles, and many of Barker’s stories consistently present active and independent female characters while sidelining the male “heroes,” a move which none of the previously discussed male authors make, even when their protagonists are female, making it unlikely that any of them were writing under Barker’s name.



Chapters 2 and 3. The use of pseudonyms by story paper and shilling novelette authors and the questions surrounding Barker's identity in particular cautions us from making assumptions about the author's agenda based on his or her apparent gender.

While the gender of many story paper authors cannot be determined with certainty, there are some clues about the intended audience of story papers. Toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, story papers came to be associated with male audiences, and many of them were even called "boys' papers."<sup>133</sup> Although this association did not necessarily apply to the earlier story papers, it is important to note, as Lori Merish points out in "Story Papers," that identifying an explicitly male audience does not necessarily prevent others from reading these texts, and constructing certain genres of fiction as having exclusively masculine audiences "ignores the ways female readers might find in such literature of adventure rich forms of imaginative and social 'escape'" (51). However, most sources agree that the intended audience of the early story papers, which were often called family papers, was not so rigid.<sup>134</sup> In *American Sensations*, Streeby argues that relying on the hierarchy of domestic/middlebrow/female and story papers/low/male adopted by twentieth century critics is somewhat anachronistic when applied to mid-century popular fiction. Instead, she claims that there was "considerable overlap between the two worlds in the 1840s" (90). In addition to targeting a wide readership, most story papers also "professed a very high moral tone," which would set them apart from any later publications that wished

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<sup>133</sup> Daniel Cohen, drawing on primary research and Brodhead's *Cultures of Letters*, identifies the 1870s as the point at which story papers became consistently associated with a "low brow" male audience (36).

<sup>134</sup> For more information on the intended audience of story papers, see Daniel Cohen, 7; Masteller, 267 and 274; Streeby, 87; Thomsen, 85. With regard to *The Flag of Our Union* specifically, the masthead reads "A Literary and Miscellaneous Family Journal" (See February 10, 1849, vol. IV, no. 6 for this example.)

only to entertain (Thomsen 85). In fact, an unsigned editorial in *The Flag of Our Union* praises romances, such as those that appear in its pages, for their ability “to inculcate a high order of morality, and to show, by contrast, the hideousness of vice and the loveliness of virtue” (3).<sup>135</sup> While many of the stories found in its pages are sensational, this passages suggests that there was also a moral component to this particular story paper’s agenda.

Combined with the proclaimed desire to convey moral lessons, early story papers offered a unique medium that included both fiction and news. According to Streeby, “Although the story papers claimed to be politically independent or neutral and tried to appeal to a diverse audience, during the late 1840s they included many stories, editorials, and reports about the [Mexican-American] war” and engaged with other foreign and domestic topics (86). As a result, story paper readers would be confronted with current events in addition to, and sometimes as a part of, the fictional pieces in the paper. Along with the official conflict of the Mexican-American war, which took place between 1845 and 1848, Americans participated in filibusters, “patently illegal, privately organized and funded military expeditions against foreign territory,” which “became a staple of American life in the 1850s” (Herring 214).<sup>136</sup> In “Geography, Genre, and Hemispheric Regionalism,” Gretchen J. Woertendyke connects these campaigns to print culture, arguing that it “functioned as the foremost medium for circulating stories of filibustering expeditions and advocating for national expansionism” (215). Although Barker’s stories

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<sup>135</sup> See “Novels and Romances” in *The Flag of Our Union* on August 25, 1849.

<sup>136</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, the term “filibuster” comes from the same root as a Dutch word meaning pirate, and Herring discusses this connection as well (214). For a discussion of the relationship between filibusters, competing versions of masculinity, and the law, see Greenberg’s *Manifest Manhood*, 152.

specifically are less explicit or consistent in their agenda than some of the previously discussed stories, such as *Fanny Campbell*, the story papers as a whole encouraged readers to think about America's position within the world, and in particular, its hemisphere.

The majority of Barker's work was published during the Mexican-American war, and while most of his stories take place in American settings, he included references to popular history and news stories. For example, *The Bandit of the Ocean* is set during the War of 1812 in Massachusetts, but within the story, one of the characters reads a tale, the text of which is reproduced for the reader, that takes place in Cuba and involves an officer in the Columbian independence movement. The final section of this story identifies itself as taking place in 1824, meaning that it could not possibly have occurred prior to the setting of *The Bandit of the Ocean* in order to be printed in a book for its characters.<sup>137</sup> Although she is specifically making a claim about the genre of romance, Woertendyke argues that stories with "a sense of history simultaneously with a present and future orientation" are "well suited to negotiate the regional tensions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (217). Perhaps, then, Barker's inclusion of this anachronistic story within his story is not simply a mistake, but an invitation to the reader to engage with a sense of history in order to apply the past depicted in the story to the

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<sup>137</sup> The story is taken verbatim from "A Sketch in the Tropics: From a Supercargo's Log," which was published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1843. An earlier version, upon which this story seems to be based, appeared in *The American Monthly Magazine* as "A Story of Gratitude" in 1829. Therefore, although this story would not have been directly related to current events, it did represent popular history that continued to circulate throughout the mid-nineteenth century.

present.<sup>138</sup> In particular, his inclusion of various violent and active roles for female characters in the past could be an invitation for women in the 1840s and 1850s to consider alternate roles for themselves.

Barker's work—twenty-six stories in total with an additional fourteen if he was also writing under the name Harry Halyard—covers a range of characters, eras, locations, and scenarios. My discussion will focus on *The Bandit of the Ocean; or The Female Privateer* (1855) while giving a sense of Barker's larger body of work by considering some of his other pirate stories, including *The Nymph of the Ocean; or, the Pirate's Betrothal* (1846), *The Indian Bucanier; or, the Trapper's Daughter* (1847), *The Land Pirate; or, the Wild Girl of the Beach* (1847), and *The Pirate Queen; or, The Magician of the Sea* (1847). Throughout this selection of stories, Barker establishes a pattern of active and independent women, irredeemable villains, and incapacitated or absent heroes. Although I have chosen to focus on this group of stories because they contain pirates and best illustrate my argument, Barker wrote a number of stories that do not include this same pattern. A few stories lend themselves to the conjecture that Barker only placed his active female characters in opposition to pirates. However, *The Gold Hunters; or, the Spectre of the Sea King* (pirates but no active women) and *Heloise; or, the Heroine of Paris* (active woman but no pirates) demonstrate that this is not the case. Rather than undermining my argument, this lack of an all-encompassing pattern demonstrates that Barker was not adhering to a single formula—he was trying different combinations of

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<sup>138</sup> In many ways, *The Bandit of the Ocean* illustrates the validity of criticism about the quality of the writing in popular fiction. In addition to the chronology error, it contains hasty mistakes, such as fluctuations in how the villain's name is spelled (Foscara/Fiscara) and a character that might marry her uncle (if not, there is a coincidence of names). However, I am less interested in the aesthetic aspects than the characterizations and plotlines.

characters, locales, and genres, perhaps in an effort to appeal to the wide audience of story paper readers, and yet he repeatedly chose to include villainous pirates, incapacitated heroes, and heroic women.

While each of these stories contains certain elements that are relevant to the discussion of Barker's work as a whole, *The Bandit of the Ocean* includes multiple characters that illustrate variations on each of the types that I will be discussing, making it the most representative of Barker's work. Additionally, as the last story written by Barker and the only surviving story which contains both Barker's and Halyard's names, it would seem to be a culmination of his work.<sup>139</sup> In *The Bandit of the Ocean*, Barker suggests but ultimately rejects the more common solutions for fictional women confronted with villainous men, which include using the power of her moral influence to redeem the violent man or waiting for a heroic man to rescue her. Instead, he presents a variety of virtuous heroines and heroic women, who remain undisguised as they actively work to solve the conflicts in the plot. While these female characters are somewhat constrained by an unwillingness to deviate completely from conventional representations of womanhood, they consistently exhibit a willingness to act in heroic, and sometimes violent, ways.

### **Benjamin Barker's Rejection of Redemption and Rescue**

*"Being Unwilling, However, to Restrain Myself": Irredeemable Piratical Men*

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<sup>139</sup> According to WorldCat, there is a copy of *The Bandit of the Ocean* that is attributed to Harry Halyard on the title page but has Barker's name on the cover; however, this copy was auctioned as part of the Driscoll Piracy Collection in 2001 and is likely in the hands of a private collector now, making it impossible to confirm this information.

While most of the pirate stories discussed in this project, including the lady pirates of the last chapter, present variations of the gentleman pirate, another trajectory for the figure of the pirate was established by the novels of Catharine Maria Sedgwick in Chapter 1. Sedgwick's buccaneers in *Hope Leslie* (1827) and Pedrillo in *Clarence* (1830) were characterized as completely irredeemable and unrestrained in every way. Although many of the pirate stories that followed drew on those characterizations to add a dangerous and unpredictable element to their male pirates, very few adopted Sedgwick's critique of the gentleman pirate, which depicts violent men as having no redeeming qualities. On the whole, Barker's work adheres more to Sedgwick's model than that of the positive version of the gentleman pirate. Much like Sedgwick aligning the buccaneers with her main villain, Philip Gardiner, Barker draws parallels between pirate and non-pirate villains in order to emphasize that he is considering questions of violent men, rather than the crime of piracy specifically. Completing the formula of Sedgwick's model, Barker depicts piratical men as needing to be destroyed, rather than redeemed.

In addition to referencing pirates in earlier stories, this characterization aligns Barker's work with the previously mentioned moral agenda of *The Flag of Our Union*, by presenting "the hideousness of vice" in the form of a pirate who is not heroic or redeemable. Along with anxieties about how to deal with violence, antebellum Americans held deep concerns about how criminal behavior was depicted. The contemporary critic, Edwin P. Whipple, expresses these anxieties in his 1850 essay "Romance of Rascality" when he writes: "[T]here is a great difference between exhibiting criminals as they are in themselves, and exhibiting criminals as proper objects

of esteem and moral approbation,” to which he adds that depictions of criminal behavior, “rather increase our natural abhorrence of evil, by increasing our knowledge of its essence” (79). While the destruction of the pirate presents a clear moral message about criminal activity, it also removes the necessity of having the female characters play the role of redeemer. In fact, even the version of violent but redemptive womanhood modeled by Fanny Campbell and discussed in Chapter 3 would be unlikely with such a depraved villain. Because Barker also eliminates the option of waiting for rescue by depicting heroes that are quickly incapacitated or absent altogether, his female characters, like Sedgwick’s, must find alternative solutions, some of which are violent, in order to thwart the plans of the piratical villains.

Building on Sedgwick’s version of the pirate story, Barker uses his piratical villains to create scenarios that suggest women must take action to rescue themselves and others. While attempts to kidnap women are common in pirate stories, Barker’s narratives construct scenarios that use the common spaces associated with pirates, such as ships and hidden land bases, in order to isolate the female characters where they cannot reasonably hope for rescue, thereby justifying their proactive, and sometimes violent, response. Unlike earlier pirate stories that offer the possibility that a woman without hope of rescue can still redeem the pirate with the power of her morality, Barker preemptively forecloses this possibility by creating villains who are utterly irredeemable. As a result, he avoids placing the responsibility of redeeming the villain on the heroine and eliminates the option of redirecting violence to create a redemption arc along the lines of Cooper’s Red Rover.

The construction of *The Bandit of the Ocean*'s title signals the fact that this story will include unconventional roles for women. The full title—*The Bandit of the Ocean; or the Female Privateer*—appears to provide two descriptions of the same character, which implies a female protagonist who is both the female privateer and the bandit of the ocean. However, the characters referenced in the title actually establish the main conflict between a violent male pirate and an equally violent female privateer. This title construction references the story's efforts to carve out a space for heroic women by placing them in opposition to villainous men, and many of Barker's other titles mirror this format. Set during the War of 1812 but without actually depicting the war, the story centers around the efforts of privateers to capture Foscara, the pirate known as the Bandit of the Ocean. Intertwined with this objective are two plots to kidnap the same woman, Clara Winslow. With the help of the fortune-teller, Ernestine, Foscara plans to kidnap and seduce Clara. Ernestine, on the other hand, intends to use the kidnapping to aid Clara, who is her daughter, in acquiring her inheritance, and eventually, she assumes the persona of the Female Privateer in order to assist the privateers in defense of her daughters. The other kidnapping plot focuses on the efforts of Henry Warton, a rich noble, to kidnap Clara and force her to marry him. While both kidnapping plots offer threats of sexual coercion or violence, the female characters also take up arms in defense of others during a battle between two groups of violent men, which illustrates that the women are not restricted to responding to threats against their virtue.

Along with the male pirate villains in *The Land Pirate*, *The Pirate Queen*, and *The Nymph of the Ocean*, Antoine Foscara is depicted as a villain who has no possibility



for redemption, which helps to create a space for the female characters to actively oppose him, rather than trying to convince him to change his ways. The narrative indicates that he has acquired his criminal tendencies from his father, who is referred to as “an old grey-headed Pirate” and his violent inclinations from his Spanish blood when the narrator explains, “the violence of his passions when roused to action fairly illustrated the cruel and revengeful spirit of his country” (87, 32). In *Manifest Manhood*, Amy S. Greenberg claims that Latin American men were both “stereotyped as cowardly but also, at times, as overly brutal” with the latter version being grounded in “a Protestant perception of the depravity of the Spanish who colonized the region, as well as the Indian cultures they subdued” (103). As a result, Foscara can be considered part of a larger trend of depicting Latin American men as unmanly, which we saw in *Fanny Campbell*, or as irredeemable villains. According to Amy Kaplan in *The Anarchy of Empire*, one of the roles of women’s sphere was to police “domestic boundaries against the threat of foreignness” (28). Therefore, by positioning Foscara as a dangerous foreigner, Barker is using an established convention to place him within the realm of women’s responsibilities, which further legitimizes the female characters who thwart his plans.

Other characters reinforce his position as a dangerous antagonist by describing him as “that blood-thirsty monster” while one confirms that he has “done more real damage to our shipping and seamen, than our open and declared enemy” (21). Unlike several earlier pirate stories, including Cooper’s *The Red Rover* (1827) and J. H. Ingraham’s *Lafitte* (1836), that obscure or omit the crimes of the pirates, *The Bandit of the Ocean* explicitly establishes Foscara as a dangerous criminal who has had a negative

impact on others. Not only do other characters identify Foscara as the worst of villains, but he describes his own past as “forty years devoted to crimes of the deepest and blackest dye” (82). Since Foscara is speaking in this passage, which demonstrates that he is aware of his own villainy, it removes any possibility of misunderstanding him as anything other than the villain. As with the clear identification of his crimes, the narrative is equally clear about his intentions toward Clara. Unlike *The Red Rover*, which is evasive about the pirate’s plans once he acquires the women, *The Bandit of the Ocean* has one of the other characters clearly state Foscara’s intention “to ruin [Clara], soul and body, under the specious plea of passion and illicit love” (83). Although Foscara does not know it at the time, Clara is his daughter, which suggests the idea that sexual violence can lead to incest, thus making the participants’ crimes even worse.<sup>140</sup> All of these factors taken together produce a character that in his reputation, his past, and his future plans presents a danger, particularly to women, and is unlikely to be convinced to change his ways.

On the whole, most of Barker’s stories support the characterization that the pirate is universally irredeemable; however, one notable exception indicates that for Barker, the irredeemability of the pirate might stem from his willingness to commit unacceptable violent acts, in particular threatening women. Although the pirate leaders in other Barker stories are consistently constructed as villainous, the pirate in *The Indian Bucanier*, Captain Darlington, is frequently described as not being as bad as one would expect,

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<sup>140</sup> For example, William Hill Brown’s *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) centers around the potential of affairs and secret relationships to lead to unwitting incest as the main couple are revealed to be half-siblings, a revelation which eventually results in both of their deaths.

which recalls elements from the characterization of both the Red Rover and Lafitte. This idea is reinforced near the end of the narrative when one of the English sailors reluctantly admits that the pirates had not murdered the crew of any of the vessels they had taken, adding “but for all that, the English law makes them pirates” (46). In addition to not having murdered anyone, Darlington is one of the few pirates in Barker’s work who is not depicted as posing a threat to women—he has no agenda to kidnap them, and in fact, he takes one woman under his protection after her father dies. Therefore, Darlington’s unusual characterization is likely the result of him not exhibiting the behaviors of violent crimes and threats to women that Barker’s other pirates embody.

The idea suggested by Darlington that Barker attaches the inability to be redeemed to certain misogynist behavior, rather than the figure of the pirate, is reinforced with his characterization of the other villain in *The Bandit of the Ocean*. Fulfilling a similar role to Sir Philip Gardiner in *Hope Leslie*, Lord Henry Warton is connected to Foscara through one of the men on his crew who used to sail with the pirates; however, unlike Gardiner, Warton has his own agenda, which although parallel in purpose to Foscara’s, is entirely separate. Described as “the cold-blooded villain” by others, Warton begins the novel with connections to most of the young women: he is formulating plans to kidnap Clara, he has made arrangements with the uncle of Helen Winchester to marry her, and he has already tricked another woman, Loretta, into thinking that she married him prior to the start of the story (79). Warton demonstrates that he, like Foscara, is aware of his villainy as he explains that when he met Clara, he was “unwilling, however, to restrain myself from pursuing a loved and coveted object” even though her affections

were preoccupied (73). As with Foscara, this acknowledgement works toward the stated purpose of teaching morals in story papers by helping to guide the reader's interpretation with an explicit statement of villainy. More so than Foscara, Warton represents a critique of the gentleman criminal because he is a gentleman in terms of nobility and economic class, but his actions align him with the violent criminals in the narrative.

While *The Bandit of the Ocean* ultimately rejects the common plot construction of women redeeming violent and villainous men, it does briefly suggest the possibility only to dismiss it as an ineffective solution. Warton declares that "if it were possible for me to win Clara Winslow's love, I could repent, reform, be virtuous and happy" (73-74). By itself, this passage offers the possibility that Warton could change his villainous ways if Clara loved him in return, which shifts the responsibility for his actions to her, and evokes the model of redemptive womanhood discussed by Barbara Cutter (7). Several other stories discussed in this project, such as Constanza in *Lafitte* and Celeste in *The Pirate's Daughter* (1845), also include these scenarios without following through, and Fanny Campbell fulfilled this role in an unconventional manner by redeeming Burnet through violence. Barker undercuts this possibility by not asking Clara, or any other woman, to fulfill this role. Warton's logic is further destabilized by the fact that he, a self-proclaimed villain, is the one proposing this solution. The unlikelihood of success is illustrated when Warton's friend asks what he will do if he cannot win Clara's love, he responds, "I am determined to succeed—peaceably, if I can, forcibly, if I must," and then he proceeds to lay out his plan to kidnap Clara (74). Warton's determination to proceed forcibly if he must demonstrates that a woman's love most likely cannot convince him to

change. If the power of Clara's moral goodness would truly be enough to keep a villain like Warton in line, then it should be enough to prevent him from kidnapping and forcing himself on her. Even though the narrative considers the role of women as the redeemer, the idea is presented in such a way as to demonstrate how unlikely it is to succeed. Along with the characterization of both villains, this undeveloped option works to generally deny the possibility of redeeming villainous men.

Although Barker rejects the option of women as redeemers throughout his work, he does briefly consider the possibility of redemption through legal correction in some of his other stories. However, in a similar manner to Darlington, these characters are constructed as not being a danger to women, and furthermore, they are relatively minor, which distances them from direct involvement in the piratical activities. Barker does not extend this option of legal redemption to the primary antagonists in any of his pirate stories. One of these minor characters, Arnold from *The Pirate Queen* declares that he has "not yet become so thoroughly steeped in villainy [*sic*] as to be guilty of assaulting or using force towards any young and unprotected female" (64). This passage establishes Arnold, regardless of his other crimes, as not being a threat toward women. As the story wraps up, he receives a small redemption arc. While the rest of the pirates are preparing to fight the Navy, Arnold kills one of the other pirates for calling him a coward and surrenders with the explanation: "There is my sword sir, stained by the by the [*sic*] first blood I ever have shed" (67). The fact that Arnold's sword has not shed other blood indicates that he was likely not involved in the violent crimes of the pirates either. After the pirates are defeated, he is the only one who "was reprieved and finally received his

Majesty's pardon" (68). Because only a few of these minor pirate characters, including Arnold, earn redemption, Barker's work suggests that it is possible for a villainous man to change as long as he has not committed too violent a crime, such as murder or assaulting a woman. The thoroughly villainous pirate leaders, on the other hand, all die. Together with their characterizations, their violent ends indicate that there is no option for women to redeem villainous men, which denies the tendency to shift blame for the villains' actions onto the women they pursue.

*"Some Fruitless and Impotent Resistance": Incapacitated and Absent Heroes*

In addition to removing the option of redemption, Barker's work illustrates that heroic rescues by male heroes are also not always an option for women. One of the most unusual aspects of Barker's writing is that he labels male characters as heroes and then incapacitates or removes them when the action begins, preventing them from demonstrating their heroism within the stories. While discussing a story from later in the nineteenth century, Lori Merish explains that "conventions from popular fiction—especially romantic conventions that depict men as protectors and rescuers of embattled heroines—are at once invoked and ironized throughout" (58). Barker's work makes a similar move, but the irony is not highlighted in any way by the narrative. The men are still presented as heroic; they are simply removed from the story. This inversion is not completely unprecedented—after all, *Fanny Campbell* temporarily incapacitated William by having him spend the first half of the narrative in prison. However, William's participation increases after his rescue and throughout the story until he is in a fairly

equal partnership with Fanny by the end. Barker's stories, on the other hand, clearly identify certain men as the "heroes" before removing them for the bulk of the story, leaving them to rejoin the main plot at the conclusion when most of the conflicts have been resolved, which eliminates the possibility of the heroines being rescued by a man. Like many of the earlier pirate stories that combined genres and character traits in order to appeal to multiple audiences, Barker most likely did not want to alienate male readers altogether. By stating their heroism and giving them heroic pasts, Barker could maintain conventional male roles while moving the male characters aside in order to showcase the capabilities of the heroines.

More so than the other men in *The Bandit of the Ocean*, Robert Selwyn is built up to be a hero through his past efforts to rescue one of the women from drowning and his present desire to offer her protection from her uncle. After Selwyn accepts Helen Winchester's request for sanctuary, they discover that he is the stranger who saved her from drowning three or four years ago (38). This story places Selwyn and Helen in fairly typical hero and damsel roles with regard to one another, but the fact that it is narrated as a past event, rather than happening within the story itself gives it less immediacy. By emphasizing Selwyn's heroism in the past, this story deemphasizes his heroism in the present because he does not succeed in fulfilling a similar role within the story itself. As a result, the story is able to not only provide a masculine hero, but also allow him to step back and make room for new heroic characters within the story itself. This image of Selwyn as heroic in the past is reinforced by him having "an interesting little negro girl, whom he had previously bought out of slavery in the West Indies" on his ship attending

to Helen (36). This detail in Selwyn's past is designed to make Selwyn seem like a benevolent protector, and much like Ingraham's description of Lafitte rescuing Cudjoe, it is less interested in advocating freedom for enslaved individuals or even a change in race relations. In fact, like Cudjoe, it is difficult to tell whether or not this young woman is still legally enslaved or simply employed by Selwyn as a servant.<sup>141</sup> While the narrative obscures and dismisses this character, she provides key illustration for how heroic white masculinity was being constructed by saving a character who, as an enslaved woman, is vulnerable in multiple ways.

While the narrative does spend time establishing Selwyn's heroic past, he is not permitted to continue in this role throughout the story. Almost immediately after attacking Foscara's ship, Selwyn is wounded (43). This wound ends Selwyn's active role in the narrative as he is carried to his cabin where he remains for the majority of the story. Thus, while Selwyn's initial introduction and his history construct him as a potential hero, the story denies him the opportunity to act on his heroic impulses, which helps to eliminate the option of the heroic man rescuing women. The ineffectiveness of this option is further reinforced with the repeated removal of the other potential heroes as Selwyn's first and second mate each take over command and are also wounded severely enough to be taken out of the fight. This repetition illustrates that none of the heroic men are in a position to save the female characters.

Furthermore, since the second mate was the love interest of one of the young women who was kidnapped by Foscara, this pattern specifically rejects the possibility of

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<sup>141</sup> For a discussion of the earlier foundations of the grateful slave trope with regard to the intersections of race and class, see Roxann Wheeler's "Powerful Affections."



relying on the woman's established male protector. The denial of love interest as protector is emphasized by Clara's betrothed who does not even appear in the story. At first, Clara does not seem to be romantically attached to anyone, but then the reader learns that she is engaged to a naval officer "who was then attached to a squadron that had just sailed on a three years' cruise to the Pacific" (73). This explanation takes place over halfway through the story, demonstrating a lack of investment in developing Clara's love interest as any sort of partner or potential rescuer. Aside from the late introduction, the fact that he is halfway around the world firmly establishes that he could not come to Clara's aid, and indeed, he does not appear in the story until their wedding, which takes place in the conclusion. Along with the irredeemable villains, this pattern of incapacitated or absent men removes two of the primary nonviolent options for women opposing violent men—they cannot hope to redeem such self-proclaimed villains, and they cannot hope for rescue from their love interests or other heroic men.

With the characters in *The Bandit of the Ocean*, Barker is able to produce a small pattern of unavailable heroes, but this pattern also extends throughout his work. In all of the stories with active female characters, Barker finds a way to move the identified heroes out of the main plot, thus requiring the women to rescue themselves and others.<sup>142</sup> The men are incapacitated in a variety of ways: in *The Land Pirate*, the hero is falsely accused of murder and is being held in jail (38); *The Pirate Queen* has its heroes on another ship trying to locate the pirate ship containing the kidnapped women, but the

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<sup>142</sup> As mentioned previously, not all of Barker's stories contain this structure of active women and incapacitated men. Some of Barker's stories rely on the plot structure of damsels in need of rescue and the heroes who rescue them, but in the stories where the women play active roles in resolving the conflicts, the heroes are removed across the board.

“disappointed expectants...saw nothing, no, not even a small fishing boat” (53); the hero of *The Indian Bucanier* is both wounded and being held as a hostage to be traded for someone else (27-28); and in *The Nymph of the Ocean*, “after some fruitless and impotent resistance, [the hero and his friend] were heavily ironed, and afterwards thrust into the fore-hold, where they were left for the time, in a state of dreadful suspense and horrid anticipation” (33). The methods of removing the hero from the main conflict are not always violent, but they do always leave the female characters vulnerable to violent men. However, it is important to note that all of these “heroes” are trying to be heroic—most are attempting to rescue women or actively opposing the pirates—when they are removed from the main plot. Through their intentions, Barker is able to establish these characters as heroic without allowing them to demonstrate their heroism. By allowing the men to still be heroes, Barker’s stories recognize that a narrative does not have to put down men in order to support increased roles for women.

On the whole, this removal of the heroes is important because it allows the stories to highlight the agency of the heroines, but it also addresses the question that many of the earlier pirate stories did not want to address—what happens when a woman is confronted by a violent man and no other man is around to save her? This scenario eliminates the possibility of Cooper’s solution, which required men to police other men, and Barker has already demonstrated that these villains cannot be redeemed through the moral superiority of the woman. By constructing the villains as unredeemable and making it clear that however willing, the heroes are unable to help, Barker creates a space where the female characters have no other options than to address the problem of violent men

themselves, and more so than the other pirate stories, Barker's work commits to the idea that women must use violence to oppose violent men.

### **Benjamin Barker's Model of Heroic Womanhood**

*"The Determined, Hopeful, and Active Woman": Heroines at the Threshold of Violence*

By removing the options of redeeming villainous men or waiting for a heroic rescue, Barker is able to create scenarios in which the female characters must take action themselves. To this end, the narrator makes a statement about the capabilities of women:

That men, generally speaking, possess more physical courage than women is a truism we shall not attempt to deny, although in justice to the opposite sex, we feel constrained to assert that in moral fortitude (a far higher grade of courage, in our estimation, than the utmost extent of mere physical daring) and patient endurance of all the various and inevitable ills to which both alike are subject, women are the superiors of their self-styled lords and masters. We speak of this as being generally the case, though we cheerfully admit that there are many exceptions. (50)

The limitation of women to moral fortitude and patient endurance in this passage is in direct contrast with most of Barker's work, which depicts women as equal to men in terms of physical daring as well. At the same time, Barker's female characters do not lack moral fortitude; instead, they draw on the idea presented by Fuller that women have moral power. David S. Reynolds uses Fuller's idea to define his "moral exemplar" character type, which he further divides into the "adventure feminist" type (342).

Reynolds explains that the “adventure feminist” appears in stories where “the moral exemplar is so sturdy that she confronts severe physical perils and survives them dauntlessly” (345). However, according to his formula, these female characters usually disguise themselves as men, but Barker’s heroines do not. Instead, Barker provides a range of active women that remain undisguised as they work to thwart violent men.

In *The Female Hero*, Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope distinguish between female heroes and heroines, who bring with them “patriarchal sex-role assumptions into the discussion of the archetypal hero’s journey” (4). However, because Barker incapacitates his male heroes, the heroines are not playing supporting roles to the male characters.<sup>143</sup> Instead, they are frequently overshadowed by other female characters who are more violently heroic and more successful in solving the conflicts of the plot. While Barker’s heroines are often assertive and independent, many of his stories seem, like *Lafitte* and *The Pirate’s Daughter*, reluctant to commit to a model of womanhood that is both violent and virtuous. As a result, several of his heroines display the intention to match the violence of the male characters or heroically rescue others by joining battles, but they are prevented by the plot from acting on those intentions. With *The Bandit of the Ocean* in particular, following through on violent intentions is reserved for the more transgressive women in the story. However, a few stories in Barker’s body of work break this pattern and depict the virtuous heroine occupying this role of violent womanhood.

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<sup>143</sup> As a result, I have chosen, unlike Pearson and Pope, to continue referring to these women as heroines, rather than female heroes because that is how they are referred to in the stories, and it distinguishes them from the heroic women who are not labeled heroines.

In *The Bandit of the Ocean*, Barker presents a trio of heroines, who eventually learn that they are sisters, that creates a pattern of active and virtuous womanhood, but draws the line at permitting them to follow through on violent intentions. Following the formula of Scott and Cooper, Barker presents two of these women, Clara Winslow and Alice Carr, as paired. This characterization recurs in Barker's work with the heroines being depicted as opposite of one another where one woman is more timid and passive while the other is adventurous and active. The names of Barker's characters indicate that he is specifically responding to Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which contained the characters of Alice (passive) and Cora (active).<sup>144</sup> Across Barker's work, there is a pattern of paired heroines with names that begin with "A" and "C," including *The Bandit of the Ocean*, and most, if not all, of these women match Cooper's characterization—the "C" name is more active than the "A" name. The difference is that for Barker both women survive the story while Cooper's Cora dies at the end of the novel. Therefore, Cooper imagines a world in which the passive woman survives and the active woman dies, and Barker revises that world to contain a variety of capable, problem-solving women.

In *The Bandit of the Ocean*, the paired heroines, Clara and Alice, are initially presented as close friends, although they later find out that they, along with Helen Winchester, are actually sisters.<sup>145</sup> The narrator explains that they have completely different personalities, and Clara's adventurous character is established by her first line of

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<sup>144</sup> For a broader discussion of the female characters in Cooper's frontier stories, see Nina Baym's article "The Women of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales."

<sup>145</sup> All three are the daughters of Ernestine: Clara, as Foscara's daughter, is a half-sister to Alice and Helen.

dialogue: “Oh, Alice, how I wish I could be a sailor” (9). Alice responds by suggesting that perhaps Clara would rather be a sailor’s wife than a sailor; however, the narrative does not require Clara to answer because her friend asks her another question first. This conversation echoes the one between Gertrude and Mrs. Wyllys in *The Red Rover* in which Mrs. Wyllys tells Gertrude that she shows the capabilities to become a seaman’s wife. While *The Red Rover* illustrates that Mrs. Wyllys is correct in her supposition about Gertrude, *The Bandit of the Ocean*, which places Clara’s and Alice’s perspectives in opposition to one another, leaves open the possibility that Clara could be right—under different circumstances, she could occupy the conventionally masculine role of a sailor, rather than a sailor’s wife.

Furthermore, Clara’s declaration signals that she will go against the convention identified by Sara Crosby in “Female Heroes Snapped into Sacrificial Heroines” that “female heroes do not want their transgressive toughness. They want to give it up and be ‘just normal girls,’ to let the men do the heroics” (155). From her introduction, Clara is not depicted as wanting to be a normal girl, which implies that she will not step aside and let the men be the heroes of the story. Alice, as the one who suggests the possibility of becoming a sailor’s wife, is associated with the more domestic and conventional option for women. The narrator describes Alice as being “Far different, though by no means inferior” to her friend (8). This passage is an important point of clarification because unlike Scott and Cooper, and even Eliza Ann Dupuy who reverses their model by leaving the active woman alive, Barker does not choose one model of womanhood over the other—both Alice and Clara survive and marry; therefore, it falls to both of them to raise

the next generation, which highlights the idea that there is not a monolithic model of womanhood.

While the story is certainly invested in whom the young women will marry, there is also an emphasis placed on female friendship. Although she is discussing a more modern context, Sharon Ross asserts that stories “that feature a community of women demonstrate the viability of female bonding as a sight of unorthodox modes of communication and action, particularly when women talk with other women” (233). Therefore by prioritizing female friendship, Barker disrupts the typical modes of constructing heroes and love stories within the adventure setting. When Clara considers “the dreadful uncertainty” of her present position in society as a result of not knowing who her parents are, she does not worry that she will be an unfit wife for the man she loves as a similarly circumstanced Celeste does in *The Pirate’s Daughter*. Instead, Clara worries, “Whether, indeed, my dear Alice, if the secret of my parentage was known, I should ever be a fit companion for you” (31). Coupled with the fact that the narrative has neglected to even mention Clara’s fiancé at this point in the story, the relationship that is prioritized is the friendship between women, rather than the romantic love, which is reinforced by women rescuing other women later in the story. In Clara’s case, her character’s romantic relationship (her desiring other men as opposed to men desiring her, which happens throughout the narrative) is downplayed until it is almost nonexistent, leaving space for her to demonstrate the heroic aspects of her character. As a result, Barker deviates from Rachel Blau DuPlessis’s theory that for female characters in nineteenth-century literature, the quest plot is usually foreclosed by marriage or death (3-

4). Although Barker seems to adhere to the idea that the quest and love plot cannot coexist, he chooses to prioritize the quest or adventure plot while repressing the love plot, ending with a marriage that does not overshadow the heroine's actions within the story.

For the majority of the narrative, Clara and Alice illustrate different levels of active agency and a willingness to risk danger or even fight, but ultimately, the narrative does not require either of them to follow through on these intentions. Both Clara and Alice are kidnapped by Foscara and taken onto his ship, and when a fight breaks out between the pirates and the Selwyn's privateers, Clara tells Alice, "Lay still there, sister...whilst I go into the main cabin, to learn if possible what has occasioned the present horrid tumult" (66). In this passage, Clara is unwilling to wait to find out what is happening; instead, she leaves the relative safety of the cabin to investigate without even knowing who is fighting with the pirates—it could simply be a drunken brawl among the unruly crew. At the same time, the reader knows that what the women have heard is the privateers starting to lose the fight after they lose yet another leader when the second mate (Alice's love interest Alcott) and Foscara crash below decks. After Clara leaves the cabin, the story checks in with characters elsewhere, and this is the last time Clara appears in its pages until a woman joins the fight, declaring herself the Female Privateer and rallying the losing privateers. Ultimately, this woman is not Clara, but the way the narrative is structured and the established characterization of Clara strongly suggests that it *could be*, drawing a parallel between Clara and the Female Privateer, who turns out to be Ernestine, Clara's mother. While the narrative is not willing to let the virtuous Clara



be the transgressive Ernestine, the parallel implies that Clara could one day become her mother.

This potential for a violent heroine is further emphasized by Clara's willingness to join the fight as a participant after she leaves the cabin where she is being held with Alice. In doing so, she moves fractionally closer to violent womanhood than the women in earlier pirate stories who picked up knives without clear intentions. When Clara encounters the fight between Alcott and Foscara, the narrator explains her reaction:

Although Clara had no personal acquaintance with Alcott, and had never seen him except on one occasion, she, nevertheless, recognized him at once as the acknowledged and betrothed lover of fair Alice Carr. She saw that he was in danger, too, and imagining that she could help him at this critical point, when he seemed about to be overwhelmed by the great odds against which he was bravely contending, seized a naked cutlass that had fallen just before from the hands of a wounded Pirate, and heroically rushed forward to the midshipman's rescue. (77)

In this passage, Clara not only picks up a weapon, but rushes to the aid of a man whose only connection to her is that he is important to her friend. Regardless of whether or not she follows through, the wording which indicates that Clara imagined she could help, clearly signals that Clara believed herself capable of joining this fight. The woman described here, who had earlier declared her desire to be a sailor, is not one who buys into the conventional ideas that women should be passive or reserved. Instead, she finds a weapon and with the intention of assisting, plans to rush into a fight between two men. While discussing how stories of female warriors inspired women during the Civil War,

Cutter argues that “Such models allowed female workers to believe they had a vital role in the war effort, even on the battlefield,” encouraging them to take on a range of roles that included fighting (165). Although Clara does not succeed in her rescue attempt, her willingness to fight could provide the same type of inspiration that Cutter describes.

Although they begin the story with contrasting descriptions, Alice undergoes a transformation in order to occupy a similar, if less extreme, position than her sister. In their initial encounter with Foscara’s men, the narrative reminds the reader of their contrasting natures: “the gentle and timid Alice Carr, when seized by the ruffians placed in ambush by Foscara for that purpose, shrieked, and swooned away, whilst her more courageous companion...resolved, to make an almost supernatural effort to stifle the strong feelings of fear and dread naturally enough caused by their sudden abduction” (50). This passage positions Alice as screaming and fainting, much like the more passive women in *The Pirate’s Daughter*, which places her in opposition to Clara’s courageous resolve. If the narrative were to follow the pattern established by Cooper, Alice should continue to fulfill the passive role.

However, Alice departs from this pattern by undergoing a change that brings her characterization more in line with that of her sister. After Clara leaves her in the cabin, Alice hears and recognizes Alcott’s voice, and the narrator explains: “In a minute, as it were, Alice, seemed to become transformed from the timid, trembling, and dependent girl, to the determined, hopeful, and active woman. Suddenly she appeared to be overshadowed by a power, that not only made her wish—nay resolve to act, but also took away her fear, and caused her to become at once calm, resolute, and firm” (66). This

passage demonstrates that even the timid and dependent Alice is capable of becoming a determined and active woman. The narrative is vague about what Alice actually does in her effort to aid Alcott, but in explaining how he underestimated her, Foscara states: “I knew her only as the humble companion of Clara Winslow, who, by placing herself madly between me and my enemy, threw herself without the pale of Foscara’s mercy,” which seems to indicate that she demonstrated physical bravery by stepping between the men who were fighting (85). Her action recalls Sedgwick’s *Clarence* (1830), in which Gertrude placed herself physically between the villain and her friend. Unlike the earlier authors who maintain a binary between active and passive womanhood, Barker undermines the idea that women must be one or the other by demonstrating that Alice, who spent the first half of the narrative in her more adventurous friend’s shadow, can also take action when the circumstances demand it of her.

Despite Barker’s inclusion of multiple virtuous heroines who are willing partake in violence, he draws the line within this story at having them actually commit violent acts. After Alice throws herself between the pirate and her lover, Foscara picks her up, carries her above deck, and throws her over the side of the ship (66). Clara suffers a similar, if less deliberate, fate. The narrator explains that after she picked up the cutlass: “Unfortunately, however, her movements were observed by two of the Pirates, who, in the hurry and excitement of the occasion, sprang between her and the combatants—one knocking the cutlass from her hand with a blow aimed at her from his own, whilst the other seizing her fair form with his brawny hands, lifted her from the deck and threw her with great force over the vessel’s side into the sea” (77). Although they begin with active

intentions, both women end up being tossed off the ship. However, their heroic, and in Clara's case, violent, intentions remain important because as Pearson and Pope claim: "Simply by being heroic, a woman defies the conditioning that insists she be a damsel in distress, and thus she implicitly challenges the status quo" (9-10). At the same time, the fact that both Clara and Alice attempt to intervene in a fight and instead end up in the sea sends a clear message that although they might be capable and willing, virtuous women do not belong within the masculine realm of violent conflict.

This unwillingness to allow the heroines to participate in violent resistance is further illustrated by Clara's role in the second kidnapping plot carried out by Warton. After being rescued from the sea, she finds herself on the beach with Warton, who proceeds to kidnap her and drive away in a carriage. The narrator explains that the events she had experienced thus far had "destroyed for the time being her uncommon fortitude, and finally left her, bereft of strength and motion, in the complete power of her relentless persecutor" (78). While the destroyed fortitude mentioned in this passage signals that this behavior is out of the ordinary for Clara, she is still very different from her earlier self during this carriage ride. In a manner very unlike the young woman who picked up a cutlass on the ship, the narrator indicates that Clara's "first impulse, as a correct idea of her present defenceless situation dawned upon her mind, led her to shriek as loudly as her exhausted physical strength would permit, for help" (78). It is possible that the difference in this passage is that she has no weapon to use against Warton, whereas some were available on the pirate ship. This idea is supported as the narrator continues: "Finding shrieks of no avail, the distressed maiden next sought amongst the folds of her damp

dress, as if hoping to find some friendly weapon wherewith to avenge her bitter wrongs, by taking on the spot the life of her ruthless abductor; but she sought in vain” (78). This passage highlights Clara’s lack of weapons, which in turn limits her options. It presents a slight contrast to the scene in *Lafitte* where Constanza tries to take her own life upon finding herself the captive of a pirate in that Clara intends to use the knife on her captor, rather than herself. Taken together, Clara and Alice demonstrate the potential for any woman—timid or adventurous—to take an active and heroic role in defense of herself and others. At the same time, Clara and Alice also illustrate Barker’s refusal in this story to allow his virtuous heroines to act on their potential for violent resistance.

The third virtuous heroine, Helen Winchester, does not match her sisters in violent potential; however she is the only one of the three who manages to get herself away from the men who wish to coerce and manipulate her, thereby illustrating the idea that although certain scenarios allow for a violent response, women can problem solve in a variety of ways. Prior to the start of the story, her uncle, whom she later discovers is her father, is trying to force her into a marriage with Lord Warton. Her uncle explains her response: “she cried, and I stormed; then she swooned, and I swore: and finally the vixen went into the worst kind of hysterics” (48). As soon as she is able to, Helen runs away from her uncle’s house, and encountering Selwyn, the privateer captain, in the street, she begs his protection: “Now, if you are a man, and willing, as such, to save a poor weak girl from dishonor, shame, and death, give me, I conjure you, a present shelter on board of your beautiful vessel” (13). While Helen’s initial reaction of crying, fainting, and hysterics positions her as exhibiting a typical female response to danger as established by

*The Pirate's Daughter*, she is proactive in her efforts to leave her uncle's house and seek protection. At the same time, her appeal to Selwyn as a man who would save a girl from dishonor and death evokes the possibility of men rescuing women, which is ultimately denied by the story.

Although Helen does not take action beyond her escape to oppose her uncle's plans, the narrative hints that her capacity for strength and agency is equal to the other women. When one of the Selwyn's crew members comments that Helen is "Rather dark-complexioned," stating instead that "*I like light-complexioned beauties. They look so soft, so feminine, and so womanly. But these dark-eyed beauties, I'm a little afraid of. There's too much of the devil, as a general thing, in their eyes. Then, again, they are apt to be passionate and artful, and altogether too masculine*" (54-55; emphasis in the original). This division of light- and dark-complexioned women reflects a duality found in many stories, but Barker's version draws on Cooper's paired heroines in particular. As Nina Baym argues in "The Women of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales," by making Cora in *The Last of the Mohicans* "not in any meaningful sense a bad woman," Cooper revises the more common duality of contrasting heroines who embody good and bad characteristics (704). Barker offers a similar theory through this character's assessment of "dark-complexioned beauties," but although this passage seems to support the speaker's opinion that a dark complexion signals devilish qualities, the conversation as a whole sides with Mr. Brown, who thinks that Helen is handsome, and light-complexioned beauties are too delicate. Even though the speaker does not prefer dark-complexioned women, this passage implies that Helen, who fits into this category, also has the potential

to be dangerous without being undesirable. It is worth noting as well that Clara and Alice both have dark hair too, although in general Clara's features, which likely result from her Spanish father, are darker than her sister's: Clara is described as having black or brunette hair, black eyes, and a brown complexion while Alice has auburn hair, blue eyes, and snowy white skin (8). Furthermore, this pattern follows the formula established with *Fanny Campbell* where bodily darkness in a white woman is used to allow her more room for deviance. Although her role in the story is very different, Helen, like the other two women, shows more potential for assertiveness than she is permitted to act upon.

Even though the relationship between Helen and Selwyn remains close to a conventional scenario with a male protector and a female damsel, the narrative is careful to explicitly acknowledge that Helen still has agency within the relationship. Selwyn repeatedly tells Helen's uncle that he will only return his niece if she consents to go with him, and in the final iteration, he steps aside, says, "As I said before...your niece can speak for herself. She is now here. If she chooses to return to your protection, she is at perfect liberty to do so. Let her decide," and lets Helen voice her own objections (62). On the one hand, this statement suggests that Selwyn, not Helen, has the power to affect her mobility. On the other hand, Selwyn makes it clear that this decision is Helen's choice, even though he is in the position of physical power with his ability to protect Helen from her enemy. This interaction illustrates the aspect that is missing when an actual kidnapping plot occurs—the woman's consent and the man's desire to have the woman's consent. By having Selwyn express a desire for Helen's consent, he acknowledges the unequal power dynamic but still maintains the possibility that each individual can be

treated with respect and given the ability to make his or her own choices. Even though Helen is not as aggressive as the other young women, she does succeed in her goals to escape her uncle and thwart Warton, who complains: “I find I have been most egregiously *jackassed* by the beauteous, and I must add, sensible Helen Winchester” (72; emphasis in the original). Clara and Alice, on the other hand, both fail to assist Alcott and escape Foscara, despite their more independent agency. At the same time, Pearson’s and Pope’s argument that “Whether explicitly feminist or not...works with female heroes challenge patriarchal assumptions” indicates that their heroic intentions are important for disrupting prevailing notions of gender roles (12). Furthermore, the eventual lack of success does not negate the fact that Barker is modeling women who are able to problem solve in a variety of ways.

*“The Power and Ability to Enforce the Command”: Variations on Violent Womanhood*

While Barker prevents his virtuous heroines in *The Bandit of the Ocean* from following through on any violent intentions, he does allow women who are already constructed as transgressive to commit violent acts. Although this contrast works to associate transgression with violence, thus making female violence seem monstrous or unnatural, it also expands the heroic model of womanhood to women who are not young, virtuous, and white.<sup>146</sup> With regard to some of these transgressive female characters, Barker builds on the model established by the later lady pirate shilling novelettes, which depicted female characters of Spanish descent as being upper class, which allows them to

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<sup>146</sup> For more on female violence as unnatural, see Ann Lloyd’s *Doubly Deviant, Doubly Damned*, 36 and Patricia Pearson’s *When She Was Bad*, 21.



adopt the gentleman pirate model. Barker does not completely endorse these violent and transgressive women, as evidenced by their lack of identification as heroines and their deaths at the end of the story. At the same time, however, he draws on earlier pirate stories in order to characterize them as heroic and able to solve the major conflicts within the narrative. These women are the most active participants in opposing the villains, and without their actions, which include violence, the stories would not be resolved in a positive manner.

Even though he characterizes her as sharing many of the lady pirates' traits, Barker does not make any effort to associate Loretta with Spanish nobility, which would allow her to be read as white.<sup>147</sup> Instead, one of the other characters describes her as "Spanish all over—love one minute, and revenge the next; such is our national motto" (46). While Barker uses Loretta's Spanish blood to justify her determination for revenge and willingness to resort to violence, he does not do so in order to present her as an alternate model of womanhood. Instead, Loretta is constructed mostly as a warning to the reader. She believed herself to be married to Warton, but since he tricked her with a false marriage, she would be considered a fallen woman. As the narrator describes her: "This was Loretta, the disgraced—the sorrowing—the ruined victim of Warton's unhallowed and vicious passions" (45). As Reynolds explains, "The fallen woman...was in certain popular writings a cautionary figure intended to warn women against wily men and teach them noble endurance" (363). While Loretta's sexual transgression can be read as a

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<sup>147</sup> In addition to the sources discussed in Chapter 2 regarding whether or not Constanza can be read as white, Greenberg asserts that "there was a long precedent in both places [Texas and California] for Mexican women becoming "Spanish" and thus white, once they married Anglo men" (122). However, since Loretta's marriage to Warton turns out to be false, she cannot be read as shifting racial identifiers through her marriage either.

warning against similar behavior, the narrative also positions Warton as being responsible for making their relationship transgressive by manipulating and only pretending to marry her. Thus, it also provides a warning against rakish behavior in men as well.

Although she is not depicted as heroic or valorized, Loretta exhibits the same active agency as the virtuous heroines, and she does not stop at the threshold of violence. Immediately after learning that their marriage is false, Loretta attempts to kill Warton, and while she is thwarted the first time, she succeeds in the second attempt. She confronts Warton, informing him: “Your time has come. No earthly aid can help you now. You must die” (91). Loretta follows through on this threat when “as with the rapidity of thought she drew a loaded pistol from beneath the folds of her dress,” and after she repeats Warton’s part in her ruin, the narrator reports that “Warton fell upon the deck, shot through the brain!” (92). Unlike the virtuous heroines, Loretta not only threatens but also carries out the act of violence. Her emphasis of Warton’s role in her ruin suggests that seducers should be held accountable for their actions as well. In *Seduced, Abandoned, and Reborn*, Rodney Hessinger argues that seduction narratives often missed opportunities for holding men accountable for their actions by placing the responsibility on the women to stay away from evil men (29). Barker moves away from this model by having Loretta confront, and ultimately kill her, seducer. Furthermore, the narrator notes in an aside: “(for so effectual had the shot proved, that he lived but a moment or two after it was fired)” (92). This side comment indicates that not only had Loretta been willing to take up arms in this particular situation, but also that she knew how to use the pistol effectively. This scenario demonstrates the wronged woman’s capacity for violence,

which contributes to the interpretation that it is acceptable for virtuous women to consider violent action, but only transgressive women are permitted to follow through. This differentiation perpetuates the idea that violence is natural for transgressive women while a respectable woman would not find herself in a position where she needed to commit a violent act, obscuring the fact that these female characters are rarely in control of whether or not they find themselves in these situations.

While Loretta clearly embodies the wronged woman, her attack on Warton is also in defense of another, which moves her closer to the realm of hero. Her action echoes that of Rosa in *Hope Leslie* who could be read as blowing up the buccaneer ship out of jealousy or an effort to save Hope from becoming Gardiner's mistress. However, unlike Rosa's unclear motivations, Loretta explicitly states that she was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to save Clara from a similar fate. When Clara suggests that Loretta should have left vengeance to God, Loretta responds, "Aye, and left you, too, perhaps, to suffer as I have...I knew of your coming here,— heard him talk of it only a few hours ago, with another villain like himself. I heard them deliberately plan your ruin, as, I have no doubt, they had previously planned mine. Soon as I overheard this, I resolved to kill that man" (92). Although her explanation is wrapped in parallels to her own story, Loretta claims that she did not decide to take revenge until she learned that Clara was going to suffer the same fate as she did. It is only after she hears this conversation that Loretta resolves to kill Warton; therefore, at least some of her motivation was in defense of Clara. Since this scene takes place near the end of the story after Warton has successfully kidnaped Clara and brought her aboard his ship where she is isolated from any potential

rescue, Loretta is Clara's only option for escaping Warton. While this scenario does evoke the rescue option, it has different connotations from the rescue of a woman by a man. Loretta's actions illustrate that in some scenarios women cannot rely on men to protect them, and instead, violent men must be stopped with violence.

Although Loretta acts the part of a hero by defending another person, the narrative does not completely endorse her heroics, and instead, follows the more common trajectory of suggesting that sexually transgressive women must die as punishment for their actions. After killing Warton, Loretta returns to the deck and Clara follows her, reaching it "in season only to catch one fitful glimpse of the white drapery fluttering wildly in the solemn night wind,—to hear one loud, deep, piercing shriek, and a dead, sullen plunge in the water. Then all was still" (92). It is unclear whether Loretta kills herself because Warton has ruined her reputation or to avoid any consequences for murdering a man. While discussing vengeful female poisoners in *Poisonous Muse*, Crosby develops the idea that the vengeful woman is "safely and conventionally contained by execution or suicide" (152). However, Loretta's containment is not complete because while she is erased from the narrative with her death, she leaves behind another woman, one who has demonstrated a capacity for violence, in her place. At the same time, Loretta's death indicates that the type of woman she represents—violent and fallen—cannot be permitted to survive the story.

This characterization of nonwhite women as violent heroic rescuers and sexually transgressive women is found in Barker's other stories, in particular, with Georgette in *The Pirate Queen*. Georgette shares many similarities with Loretta, including sexual

transgression, but unlike Loretta, who believes herself to be Warton's wife, Georgette is voluntarily the pirate's mistress. Georgette is identified by the narrative most often as a creole woman. Although the story's description of her skin color indicates that Georgette has mixed ancestry, Jennifer L. Morgan defines creole in *Laboring Women* as referring to "enslaved persons who either had children or were themselves acculturated to the Americas," which indicates that Georgette is likely from the Caribbean (128). In a manner similar to some of the previously discussed stories and Sarah Emma Edmonds's reaction to *Fanny Campbell*, Georgette describes her position in terms that draw parallels between the position of women in a patriarchal society and enslaved individuals: "I am a slave, although not perhaps in the way and manner which your question seemed to imply. I am and always have been an abject slave to my passions, and this species of slavery has caused me to become what you see me, a bondwoman of the devil" (36). This explanation obscures whether or not Georgette is actually legally enslaved and in love, or simply in love. In *Marital Cruelty*, Robin C. Sager notes that advocates for both abolition and women's rights, such as the Grimké sisters, "compared marriage to a state of slavery and drew attention to the intersecting cruelties of both systems" (4). However, Barker seems to be conflating the two with less of a clear purpose since Georgette does not accuse the pirate of tyrannical oppression; instead, she claims that her position has resulted from her own passion. This displacement of blame removes the responsibility from either the master or the lover for maintaining the uneven power dynamic. Although she has to be persuaded to turn on her lover, eventually Georgette takes action similar to Loretta and "quicker than thought, the creole woman...plunged a dagger in the pirate's

breast” (58). Following Loretta’s pattern, she jumps over the rail of the ship and into the ocean; although unlike Loretta, Georgette clearly does so to avoid the violent vengeance of the pirate’s crew (59). Together Loretta and Georgette form a problematic pattern in which a non-Anglo woman is presented as inferior in terms of virtue and superior in a willingness to use violence, and ultimately, this woman acts in defense of another woman before taking her own life.<sup>148</sup> This pattern implies that while virtuous women can be capable of violence, they do not need to follow through on their intentions, whereas non-Anglo women have a greater capacity for sexual transgressions and violence. While the non-Anglo woman’s violence might be grounded in heroic motivations, Barker does not allow her to survive the story.

Ernestine, the other violent and transgressive woman in *The Bandit of the Ocean*, complicates this pattern because she is of English descent, but also closely aligned with the pirates based out of Cuba, and she was a devoted wife and mother before she became another man’s mistress. At her initial introduction into the story, Ernestine seems to be aligned with the pirates and appears to be aiding Foscara in his efforts to kidnap and ruin Clara. Because of this characterization, she shares some traits with Reynolds’s “feminist criminal,” which he describes as “the abandoned woman who avenges wrongs against her sex by waging war against society, especially against men and against proper women” (363). While Ernestine is, at times, motivated by revenge, she never wages war against society, and she defends the “proper women” of the story because they are her daughters. The complex position that she occupies places Ernestine at the radical edge of possibility

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<sup>148</sup> Since one of the rescued women, Clara, is Spanish Foscara’s daughter, this pattern does not quite align with transgressive non-Anglo women acting on behalf of virtuous white women.

for Barker's adventurous women as she embodies most of their character traits over the course of her lifetime. As a result of these background elements as well as her actions within the story, Ernestine occupies a space that is neither wholly heroic, nor entirely villainous.

These contrasting elements are not clear at the beginning of the story where her character is shrouded in mystery. Known as "a remarkable foreteller of future events," it is Ernestine who lures Clara into Foscara's trap, causing Clara and Alice to be kidnapped by the pirates (19).<sup>149</sup> But even before Ernestine's agenda is clear, the narrative indicates that she believes she has a capacity for violence and power in her relationship with the pirate when she states that if Foscara ever harms Clara, "I will crush him to the earth, and revel in the awful writhings of his last mortal agony" (30). This passage not only hints at Ernestine's potential for violent retribution, but also a mother's imperative to take violent action in defense of her daughter.

Barker characterizes Ernestine in such a way that draws parallels with the male heroes in this narrative and the heroic pirates in other narratives. Like Selwyn, Ernestine is depicted as rescuing and protecting an enslaved character, which aligns her not only with one of the story's heroes, but also with the redeemable pirate Lafitte whose earlier rescue of another character from slavery signals his potential for goodness and redemption. While Ernestine is depicted as protecting Sambo from Foscara, it is also clear that he is still legally enslaved by Foscara (29). Therefore, Ernestine is not

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<sup>149</sup> In this way, she recalls Norna from Scott's *The Pirate* (1822), who is presented as possibly being a madwoman or a woman who can prophesize the future. As it turns out, Norna is also scheming on behalf of her children, but she plays a much less significant role in the outcome of the novel than Ernestine does in her story.

exhibiting the same level of power as Lafitte and Selwyn who could either free the enslaved individuals or take them into their own service. Furthermore, Ernestine is using her ability to protect Sambo from Foscara to manipulate Sambo into helping her, which undermines the benevolence of her protection.

Even before it introduces her as the Female Privateer, the narrative gives Ernestine specific attributes of earlier gentleman pirates, which work to both add legitimacy to her position and also to underscore her ability to disrupt gendered expectations. As Burwick and Powell note, the female pirate “is a figure who violates, however temporarily, multiple norms of gendered living” (138). Like Cooper’s Red Rover and Ingraham’s Lafitte, Ernestine has a treasure room, which the narrator identifies as being “furnished with almost oriental splendour and magnificence” (29). The description of this room includes a variety of expensive luxuries from around the world and evokes the mobility of pirates. In this case, it transfers that mobility to female pirates, even though Ernestine is not depicted as traveling within the story. While the treasure room draws attention to other locations around the world, it does not have as clear of an imperialist agenda as *Fanny Campbell*. At the same time, Ernestine’s treasure room is in her house, placing emphasis on her domestic space, whereas the male pirates’ treasure rooms are found on their ships. This detail supports the idea that although Ernestine embodies many of the male pirate tropes, she is doing so in a way that does not forget the fact that she is a woman.

Like much of her characterization, Ernestine’s backstory works to provide a layered notion of heroic and violent womanhood that is both criminally active but also



devoted to the roles of wife and mother. In a similar manner to Loretta, Ernestine's story demonstrates that husbands often held the power to declare whether or not a marriage was legal. Cindy Weinstein discusses this uneven power dynamic in her article "'What did you mean?'" and points out that "When a man says 'I do,' his wife is rendered completely vulnerable. He is not" (47).<sup>150</sup> Because Ernestine and her husband, Scoville, had a private marriage with no witnesses, her husband was able to "unscrupulously dissolve the matrimonial connection which then existed" just before the birth of their second child (84). Although the story presents Loretta's marriage as false and Ernestine's as legitimate, the outcome is the same with the husbands declaring whether or not they intend to honor their marriage vows. After informing Ernestine that he really loves another woman, Scoville leaves her under the pretense of settling business in the West Indies while she is "recovering from a severe attack of brain-fever" and "hovering between life and death" (84). He takes the child who was just born and leaves Ernestine a note dissolving their marriage (85). The fact that Ernestine's eventual deviant behavior is initially in response to Scoville dissolving their marriage and taking one of the children, gives him some responsibility for the situation as well. Without his action, Ernestine might have continued to fulfill the conventional roles of wife and mother. Their relationship, from its initiation through mutual attraction to its end in mutual forgiveness, illustrates the idea addressed by Sager in *Marital Cruelty* that in the 1840s and 1850s "a new set of companionate ideals" were emerging to take the place of coverture (138).<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> To illustrate her point, Weinstein mentions the extreme reactions of several fictional wives, that are not unlike Ernestine's, when their husbands disappear or try to dissolve their marriages.

<sup>151</sup> Mary Kelley defines coverture in *Learning to Stand and Speak* as "a tradition that submerged a wife's legal identity in her spouse" (43).

Ernestine is clearly depicted as her own entity within the relationship, and the successful parts of their marriage are connected to mutual love while the disruptive portions stem from an uneven legal power dynamic.

At the same time, Ernestine's reaction to Scoville's decision illustrates that she always had the potential to be a violent woman, even before she became connected to Foscara's pirate crew. After she reads Scoville's letter, she explains in her retelling of her own history:

On my bended knees, with this letter laying open before me, and its contents searing and withering what had been a woman's, but was now a DEMON'S heart, I swore an oath of vengeance against that man, and to devote the remainder of my life to its dread, unhallowed cause. Resolving not to be impeded in the pursuit of my vindictive object by the least incumbrance, I determined to sacrifice my only remaining child, the last cord that bound me to humanity and love, on the altar of my stern revenge. (85)

Rather than being driven by love to reconcile with Scoville, Ernestine swears vengeance. Her phrasing of sacrificing the last cord that binds her to humanity echoes Le Clerc's declaration in *The Pirate's Daughter* that his wife's death severed his connection to humanity. Additionally, the transition from a woman's to a demon's heart seems to signal a clear downward trajectory into vice and criminality. Crosby traces this trajectory in E. Barclay's *The Female Land Pirate* (1847), who starts out as "an innocent, impoverished orphan" and becomes an "avenging poisoner" after her "whole nature was changed" when she learns that she has been seduced by a married man (150). Even at this

early point in her history, Ernestine is depicted as a woman of action when she does not simply swear vengeance, but follows Scoville to the West Indies “not to win back his recreant love, not to seek from his grudging hand any pecuniary aid,—but for the purpose of wreaking upon him the vengeance I considered due for this fatal and irreparable wrong I had received at his hands” (84). Ernestine’s reaction to Scoville’s betrayal, which is similar to Loretta’s, complicates the idea, suggested by the text, that Loretta’s violence could be attributed to her Spanish blood. Ernestine, an Englishwoman now living in the United States, has a similar reaction to the man who wronged her, which emphasizes their shared state of wronged womanhood, rather than racial tendency toward violence.

Unlike Loretta, Ernestine is unable to carry out her plan for revenge immediately, and instead, her situation highlights the idea that a woman abandoned by her husband has very few options. She meets Foscara, and as she explains, “Feeling myself wronged and cruelly betrayed, and utterly disappointed at the important results of my first effort for revenge, and being alone and unprotected in a strange land, was it strange, think you, that I listened with a favorable ear to Foscara’s words of love?” (87). It is not until after “this unhallowed union was consummated” that Foscara informs her “that he was by profession a pirate captain” (87). In Ernestine’s version of events, Foscara asks her to accompany him and his crew on their voyage and “Situated as I was at that time, his will was, of course, my law” (87). As Ernestine mentioned previously, without family or friends, she had no one to rely on, which caused her to value the offered protection of her new lover. In her discussion of domestic abuse, Clare A. Lyons argues that “if men did not justly use the power granted by law and custom, wives might justly claim the

prerogatives of resistance and rebellion” (50). By this reasoning, because Ernestine’s husband did not do his duty toward her, she would be justified in seeking other protection or protecting herself. With vague details, it is difficult to determine whether Ernestine actually participated in the pirate crew’s activities, although the skills she demonstrates within the story indicate that she learned how to fight as well as to command and sail a vessel at some point. Her only description of her time with the pirates states: “Sufficient to say that, during [the voyage’s] continuance, many vessels were taken and robbed, and the crews of which were never suffered to escape with life, that they might tell the horrid tales of blood” (87). The grammatically passive construction of this passage could be a simple omission or it could be working to shift the focus away from Ernestine’s role in the piratical activities, especially since she does not position herself as an observer of these events either. While it is unclear what role she played when she sailed with the pirates, Ernestine’s backstory highlights the fact that women had relatively little power in marriages even to the point of being unable to declare them real. As a result, the narrative presents it as logical that a woman, such as Ernestine, might want to regain some measure of control by making her own choices and aligning herself with a pirate.

Although *The Bandit of the Ocean* remains vague on whether or not Ernestine directly participated in Foscara’s piratical activities, another of Barker’s stories, *The Pirate Queen*, is less ambiguous. Ella, who is constructed in a very similar manner to Ernestine, is clearly stated as participating in pirating alongside her lover. While explaining why she is called the Pirate Queen, one of the other characters recollects: “in all the numerous bloody and bold expeditions of her paramour, she kept constantly by his

side, and performed many deeds of courage, and dressed in male attire, she often acted in the capacity of his lieutenant,” to which he adds that she showed “great courage and prowess in action” (51-52). While this passage indicates that Ella dressed as a man in order to fulfill these roles in the past, neither she nor Ernestine is depicted as putting on a male disguise in their own stories. Due to the other parallels in their characters, Ella’s actions make a stronger case for the possibility that Ernestine was also actively involved in Foscara’s piratical activities.

As a whole, Ernestine’s backstory shifts from the conventionally feminine roles of wife and mother to acquiring attributes usually associated with the male pirate. Ernestine occupies an equally liminal position within the story as she participates in a plan to kidnap Clara but does so in order to help her daughter claim her inheritance. Ernestine insists that she is motivated by helping others several times throughout the story. Ernestine explains that she took on the guise of the Female Privateer “to shield those dear ones [Clara and Alice] from [Foscara’s] power” (89). When the privateers attack the pirates, she “seized the opportunity thus accidentally offered, to interfere in behalf of my children against the criminal machinations of the ferocious Bandit of the Ocean” (89). While a woman might be expected to be motivated by family connections, Ernestine’s methods for defending her family are fairly unconventional. Ernestine illustrates the idea that for a mother to truly protect her children, she cannot be confined to the domestic space of the home, which could bring her in line with what Cutter describes as “a reaction against the exclusion of women from public life embedded in that earlier ideology” (9). However, at the same time, her decision to dress up as a female privateer and attack the

pirates with weapons is not a conventional method for a mother to protect her daughters against violent men, and it proves more effective than attempting to plead on their behalf as Mrs. Wyllys does in defense of her son in *The Red Rover*.

Although Ernestine does adopt a disguise, she does not disguise herself as a man, which prevents her actions from being undercut or attributed to her male persona rather than herself. She appears on deck just as the privateers are about to run or surrender and rallies them to continue to fight the pirates. The narrator describes her appearance from the perspective of the privateers: “to their utter astonishment, the tall figure of a woman, fancifully dressed in a silk tunic, and Turkish trowsers of the same rich material, and armed in a like manner with themselves, suddenly stalked into their midst, exclaiming loudly as she did so,—‘Rally lads, rally, I say, and fight to the last under the guidance of the FEMALE PRIVATEER!’” (68). As previously mentioned, it is not clear at this point in the story that the female privateer is Ernestine, and the sequence of the narrative suggests that it could even be Clara. According to Ernestine, she chooses to disguise herself because she knows “well the influence of *effect* on the minds of men, under certain circumstances” (89). However, unlike Fanny Campbell, whom Katherine Anderson argues acquires an allegorical quality through her male disguise, Ernestine does not choose to disguise the fact that she is a woman. By her naming herself the *female* privateer, she emphasizes her womanhood even as she calls the privateers to fight under her leadership (108). In this manner, *The Bandit of the Ocean*, like some of the pirate stories that followed *Fanny Campbell*, is more comfortable with a violent woman playing her part as a woman.

Ernestine embraces both the leadership role and her gender as other characters call attention to the dual gender aspects of Ernestine's female privateer persona as she leads the crew. Without any hesitation following her appearance, one of the officers orders the privateer crew: "Follow her lead, boys...for he who would not spill the last drop of blood for a second Joan of Arc, like this, deserves to be pitched overboard in short particular metre" (68). This passage simultaneously places Ernestine in a leadership position with the privateers and also highlights her womanhood. Identifying her as a second Joan of Arc would link her to a history of fighting woman, much like those referenced by Fuller in the opening passage of this chapter. The emphasis shifts from female leader to male leader when Ernestine gives the privateers an order, and an officer responds, "Ay, ay, sir," as the narrator explains "using precisely the words that he would have uttered in reply to an order of Captain Selwyn's" (69). In this interaction, Ernestine has completely slipped into the role of the captain of the privateers, and she commands their respect without needing to assume a disguise as Fanny Campbell did. At this point, Ernestine embodies the possibilities laid out by Fuller, not only demonstrating that she is capable of being a sea-captain, but also illustrating a greater range of occupation, including the conventionally masculine positions of leadership and authority. At the same time, the narrative never completely forgets that Ernestine is a woman even when she occupies the role of the hero. When Alice is about to be thrown off the ship by Foscara, she appeals to Ernestine's womanhood when pleading for rescue: "Save me, oh God! save me, if you are a woman" (69). Alice's words reference similar pleas by female

characters to heroic men, which reinforce the idea that Ernestine is being positioned as a heroic male character while retaining her female identity.

Like her lady pirate predecessors, Ernestine is depicted as being a competent seaman and commander of a vessel, giving her access to what Margaret Cohen identifies as the primarily masculine realm of craft (96). When a gale threatens the ship, she commands the crew in order to maneuver and avoid destruction (70). Furthermore, the narrator reinforces her seamanship by adding approval to her decision to cut away the main mast (82). Throughout the portion of the story in which she appears in the role of the female privateer, Ernestine exhibits knowledge and authority, demanding and receiving respect from those around her. When Foscare asks who dares to speak to him, Ernestine responds: “One who has the power and ability to enforce the command she has thus given” (69). Her statement does not consist of empty words; Ernestine’s actions within the story continue to support the idea that she is capable of achieving her declared goal of leading the privateers to victory.

Despite not being explicitly labeled as such, Ernestine is the character who most consistently occupies the position of the hero within the story—she opposes and is ultimately responsible for destroying two of the major villains, and she rescues the entire privateer crew, which would have undoubtedly been defeated without her. In addition to embodying the conventionally male characteristics of leadership and sea craft, Ernestine does not shirk from hand to hand combat, and in this endeavor, she is more successful than any of the men declared heroes by the story. By the time Ernestine joins the privateers, one of the pirates, Montano, had rallied the others, and she attacks him first.



When he tries to shoot her, she “quickly anticipated his murderous intentions, drew a similar weapon from the girdle that encircled her slender waist, and, after taking deliberate aim, fired!” (68). By wounding Montano, Ernestine throws the pirates into disarray, allowing the privateers to defeat them. Later in the story, a combination of these wounds and his own desire for vengeance kills Montano as he tries to stab Ernestine, but instead, “the red blood gushed simultaneously from his mouth and nose—he staggered—reeled—fell—groaned—and died at the feet of the FEMALE PRIVATEER” (85). While she does not strike him in this scene, Ernestine caused his death by shooting him earlier, and his exertion at trying to kill her causes him to succumb to his wound. Similarly, she mortally wounds Foscara. In an attempt to save Alice as Foscara is throwing her over the side of the ship, Ernestine shoots Foscara (69). Like Montano, Foscara does not die immediately, but dies later from his wounds. While she does not succeed in preventing Alice from being thrown in the sea, Ernestine violently stops two of the major villains from causing more harm. Furthermore, Ernestine and Loretta, who are the least acceptable women in the story by nineteenth-century standards, are responsible for violently destroying all of the villains and solving the major conflicts in the plot. Without them, most of the characters would have been destroyed in combat, a storm, or in the case of Clara, carried off by villainous men. While Barker is unwilling to completely reconfigure gendered understandings of morality by explicitly naming these transgressive women as heroines, he positions them in such a way that they are fulfilling the roles of heroes within the story.

Despite accomplishing the objectives of the hero, the narrative implies that Ernestine, like Loretta, cannot be permitted to survive the story. As Pearson and Pope point out in *The Female Hero*, “The author may portray a heroic woman, and demonstrate the problems she encounters by virtue of being unconventionally heroic and female, and still be unable to imagine a narrative framework in which to resolve the dilemma” (11). This inability to solve the dilemma results in the character’s death; however, unlike Loretta, Ernestine does not take her own life. Instead, she is wounded in the fight with Montano, and as she explains “I received a wound, which, I feel well assured, will, ere the morrow’s sun has set, prove mortal” (85). While both women die, the variation in the cause of death is important. Lori Merish argues that the stories found in story papers presented more complicated perspectives than the typical formula of seduction equaling death (55). Loretta’s decision to take her own life follows the more common formula and gives weight to the idea that it is her irreparably damaged reputation that causes her death while Ernestine’s wound emphasizes her willingness to heroically fight on behalf of others. Her death is also closer to the heroic death of a gentleman pirate, including Scott’s Cleveland, Cooper’s Red Rover, and Ingraham’s Lafitte, who die after being redeemed, but must be contained by the narratives with their deaths.

While Ernestine’s death from battle wounds could potentially align her with the villainous pirate leaders from this story and others, Ernestine’s death is set apart by her opportunity and willingness to ask forgiveness for her past mistakes. She is reunited with her husband, Scoville, at the end of the narrative and asks: “Henry, can you forgive your

erring, but now repentant wife?” (114). He responds by asking her forgiveness, and when they both agree to forgive the other, he, who had otherwise been perfectly healthy, dies (114). Scoville’s unexpected death underscores the idea that no one who has grievously wronged another should live. This idea receives additional reinforcement from Ernestine’s final words: “Remember, my children, that in this solemn scene, you see exemplified God’s holy truth, which, speaking from the Bible, says,—THAT THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH” (114). In this passage, Ernestine herself identifies her death as punishment for her sins, but this self-condemnation is undercut by her embodiment of the qualities that Cutter associates with redemptive womanhood. In *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels*, Cutter argues that explanations of female crime in the antebellum era “centered on the degree to which the accused criminal displayed the attributes of redemptive womanhood,” including moral and nurturing qualities (38-39). While Ernestine is not a redemptive woman in the sense of redeeming villainous men, she does display these attributes within the story, which would allow her to be viewed as less depraved. Although her final words indicate that Ernestine’s story functions as warning against taking the wrong path, the narrative’s final mention of her is to state: “The Female Privateer was DEAD” (114). By identifying Ernestine as the Female Privateer, rather than by her name, the narrative emphasizes her final heroic actions, rather than her piratical past.

Although Ernestine dies at the end of the story, she does something that none of the male pirates who were contained by their deaths did—she leaves behind children to learn from her example. Specifically, all of the women who survive—Clara, Alice, and

Helen—are her daughters. Most of these revelations occur in the latter half of the narrative, but Ernestine tells Foscara that Clara is their daughter, and she informs Scoville that Alice is his first-born daughter while Scoville, in turn, announces that Helen is his daughter with Ernestine, rather than his niece (83, 113, 114). Even Loretta, who was revealed to be Foscara’s niece, was under Ernestine’s care between the ages of three and twelve. When Loretta’s father remarried and took her back into his care, Ernestine explains that she “had loved Loretta with almost a mother’s love” (89). Therefore, Ernestine, the unconventional woman who is willing to use violence to solve problems, is a mother figure to the majority of the other women in the story, and those who survive—her biological daughters—are her legacy. As Mary P. Ryan points out in *The Empire of the Mother*, family “may be the most important social determinant of gender roles,” and she discusses how literature on childrearing from the 1850s claimed the “mother had complete control over her child’s moral development...in the womb,” making “a child’s moral birthright” the responsibility of the mother (6, 103). As a result, it would not matter whether Ernestine played an active role in raising her daughters, she would have influenced all but Loretta before they were born. All of these young women exhibit varying degrees of assertiveness and independence, and while this story maintains an unwillingness to depict the virtuous heroines following through on their capacity for violent resistance, if they take their mother as their role model, they would be equal to almost any task required of them. By creating a void that the male hero would ordinarily fill and having socially unacceptable women occupy that space, Barker makes a case for the inclusion of a different model of heroic womanhood than any of the lady pirate stories

that were being written at the same time. Furthermore, the fact that neither Loretta nor Clara is white and Ernestine is not young suggests the possibility for heroic womanhood to be expanded beyond the conventional young white heroine even though the story does not fully commit to these possibilities.

While *The Bandit of the Ocean* creates a pattern in which transgressive women use violence on behalf of virtuous heroines, this depiction does not carry through to the rest of Barker's work where he includes virtuous heroines being violent themselves. In *The Nymph of the Ocean*, the pirate is holding the heroine, Mina at gunpoint in order to get her to consent to marry him when he sets down the gun and "Quicker than lightning, our heroine, as her last chance, snatched the fatal weapon from its resting place, and with a loud shriek, uttered the words, 'the hour has come,' she fired, and the next moment, Walton fell, having received the contents in the left side, fatally wounded" (48). In this scene, Barker demonstrates a willingness to commit to what his other stories would not—a virtuous white woman who violently kills another man in order to defend herself. Mina deviates even from the example set by Fanny Campbell in that she kills her attacker, whereas Fanny only wounds, and thus is able to redeem, hers. This deviation is important because it illustrates a scenario that so many other stories seem to shy away from—what happens when redemption (he is an irredeemable pirate), rescue (the male heroes are confined and in irons elsewhere on the ship), or escape (they are isolated on a ship) are not options, and *no one* is around to save the threatened woman? By implementing this violent option, *The Nymph of the Ocean* demonstrates if a man is unrestrained, a woman—any woman—might have to resort to extreme measures to stop him, and

furthermore, the woman cannot always rely on the man's willingness to restrain himself or others' ability to do so for him.

Although all together Barker's pirate stories contain less violent and virtuous heroines than heroines who are willing to initiate but not follow through with violent acts, *The Nymph of the Ocean* is not a solitary anomaly among Barker's work. In *Heloise, or, The Heroine of Paris* (1848), the villain informs Heloise's father that he will not leave the house without the object of his visit—Heloise herself—but “he advanced towards the fair girl with the intention of clasping her in his arms, when, with the rapidity of lightning, she drew a pistol from her bosom, and the next moment the count fell bleeding to the floor” (99). *Heloise* is one of Barker's few stories that contain assertive and independent women but are not pirate stories. However, it is important because it demonstrates that while the isolation of the ship can help to create this type of scenario where the woman must resort to violent measures, the same danger from violent men can occur within the domestic setting of the home. *The Nymph of the Ocean* and *Heloise* extend the pattern of independent, assertive, and sometimes violent women to include all women and not just those who are already figured as transgressive in some way.

Even examining a small portion of Barker's work establishes a pattern of exhibited traits and implied possibilities that make a case for all women to be assertive and independent problem-solvers who are capable of violence. Within this pattern, Barker depicts each woman as having a different combination of these attributes, but together, they resolve all of the conflicts in the story. The conclusion of *The Bandit of the Ocean* reinforces the idea that the women who survive are the ones who will reproduce

and raise the next generation of young men and women. At the end of the story, Helen and Selwyn, who are already married, attend the double wedding of Alice and Alcott and Clara and her Navy suitor, which takes place in Ernestine's house, thereby reminding the reader of Ernestine's connection to all three of these women (115). In addition to these marriages, the conclusion discusses one more union which has already taken place: Ezekiel P. Snodsgrass (Zeke) shows up at the wedding of Ernestine's daughters and announces that he has married his girlfriend, adding: "She belongs tew me neow. She's my property" (115). If taken at face value, this statement could undermine the message of independent womanhood conveyed by the actions of the rest of the characters throughout the story. However, Zeke operates within the story as a comic relief character, often making incorrect statements for the amusement of the audience and the reader; therefore, by this point in the story, the reader is probably not meant to take any statements he makes seriously. Reading it ironically, then, results in a sharp contrast between the assertion, reinforced by nineteenth-century coverture laws, that married women are property of their husbands and the independent actions of all of the other women in the story, including two who were willing to kill villainous men that they considered to be their husbands. As a result, this statement, with its placement after all of these moments of assertive womanhood have been depicted, suggests that women are independent agents and that any man who thinks otherwise is as foolish as Zeke.

By reaching back to the more common model of piracy popularized by Scott and Cooper, Barker formulates various versions of heroic womanhood different from that of the lady pirate established by Ballou in *Fanny Campbell*. Although Barker does not

require his female characters to redeem villainous men, he carries through some of the dual gender composition found in *Fanny Campbell*. By constructing villains as irredeemable and confining male heroes to the margins of the narrative where they cannot be of help, Barker creates stories that require active, and sometimes violent female characters. While Barker exhibits a reluctance to fully commit to a violent virtuous heroine, his larger body of work demonstrates that reluctance does not equal refusal as a few of his heroines find themselves completely isolated with the only option of using violence against the villain. Far more common is Barker's tendency to have women rescue women, with Ernestine being the culmination of this positive depiction of a violent and powerful woman. Her character construction echoes that of the gentleman pirate, but because she is a woman, the emphasis is placed on how she is able to oppose violent men, rather than anxieties of how to contain her violence.

Barker's work collectively suggests that the many options for dealing with violent men offered by previous pirate stories, including men policing themselves and other men, relying on a woman's ability to appeal to a man on moral grounds, redirected violence, and punishment through the law, are not always possible or effective. Rather than support these earlier solutions, Barker makes a case for women—and not just young white women—who are capable of a greater range of occupation and thus are able to deal with a variety of situations, including violent men. Building on *Fanny Campbell* and the other lady pirates, Barker's work demonstrates that antebellum Americans experimented with multiple models of womanhood in order to consider solutions for violence directed at women. These narratives, along with the lady pirates discussed in Chapter 3, illustrate a



shift in pirate stories, which increasingly depicted scenarios where rescue or redeeming the villain were not options, making it necessary for female characters to take an active role in their own protection, even if that meant using violence in defense of themselves and others.

### Conclusion: “That’s an Entirely Different Story”

As unlikely as it might seem, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) is the modern version of the type of pirate story explored in this project because it blends genres and gender roles, ultimately making a case for a female action hero whose violence is every bit as legitimate as the male hero. When asked in an interview about the feminist agenda in *Fury Road*, George Miller describes the creative decisions he made as a director that resulted in what is widely seen as a feminist action film, but he claims that it had not initially been his intention to make a feminist film. Instead, he explains that his central premise involved a chase, and “the thing that people were chasing was to be not an object, but the five wives. I needed a warrior. But it couldn’t be a man taking five wives from another man. That’s an entirely different story. So everything grew out of that,” including the unconventional decision to make the primary action hero a woman (quoted in Pantozzi). Miller emphasizes how the gender and choices of the characters affect the implications of the plot—it matters that the female warrior, Furiosa, rather than Max, the male protagonist of the franchise, fulfills the role of violent action hero. According to Alexis de Coning in “Recouping Masculinity,” this “self-conscious repositioning of a masculine hero into a female character assisting other women is progressive in itself” (175). Before and after its release, *Fury Road* was both celebrated and condemned for its uncommon take on the genre of action flicks. A portion of the male audience lamented

the fact that a feminist agenda had taken over an otherwise decent action movie by replacing the male star of the franchise with a woman, while other men and women defended the innovative portrayal of gender roles as well as other departures from traditional conventions. Whether threatening to boycott or rejoicing, most audience members agreed that this movie brought new elements to an established genre.

Much like the stories with heroic, and sometimes violent, female characters discussed in the latter half of this project, *Fury Road* offers a different type of action movie centered on the lives of multiple women who are capable of taking action to save themselves and others. At the same time, the film peripheralizes without eliminating the male hero, Max. While *Fury Road* is not a pirate story, it positions Furiosa as a sort of land pirate when she steals the wives of her boss, the corrupt ruler of an outpost, and leads his army of “war boys” on a car chase across the post-apocalyptic wasteland. As de Coning points out, *Fury Road* is innovative not only for its prominent female characters but also for its depiction of masculinity. She writes: “In one of the film’s most compelling scenes, for example, [Max] hands a rifle to Furiosa after missing twice; she then successfully takes the shot. This gesture, whereby a male character acknowledges his female counterpart’s superior skill, is fairly novel in a genre where women—even tough ones—are often relegated to the role of sidekick or sex object” (175). While in many ways, they share the lead role, Furiosa is the driving force of the film—it is she who chooses to take the wives, setting the events of the plot in motion—and Max repeatedly acknowledges her competence as a leader and a fighter.

Much like the work of Benjamin Barker discussed in Chapter 4, *Fury Road* moves aside its male characters in order to highlight the roles of the heroic women in the story. Taking this a step further, *Fury Road* has its male protagonist demonstrate confidence in the female hero—particularly a confidence in her ability in the typically male arena of violence. Barker wrote scenarios that prevented his male heroes from assisting the women through no fault of their own, but *Fury Road* illustrates the fact that the capabilities of the female hero are worthy of admiration. Even though the male character is present, she is better suited to the task at hand. In this manner, *Fury Road* moves beyond the conventions of popular fiction in the nineteenth century. In the twenty-first century, even more than in antebellum America, pirates are not a direct threat to most of the film's audience, but pirate stories continue to captivate readers' and viewers' imaginations and push at the limits of genre and convention.

At the beginning of this project, I sought to use the pirate story in order to explore how antebellum Americans were answering the question of who is allowed to be violent, in particular in defense of women, and when women are allowed to be violent themselves. This investigation proved fruitful in demonstrating the ways in which pirate stories are rarely about questions of pirates and piracy. The antebellum American authors were less concerned with how and why pirates were criminals, and more concerned about how they embodied anxieties about violent men, especially in terms of how that violence might impact women. These antebellum authors used the figure of the pirate to address anxieties about expanded democracy and gender roles, which resulted in experimenting with different mediums of publication and blending genres to create new models of

heroic womanhood. Although many of the cheap popular forms of fiction became more formulaic and more explicitly directed at an audience of boys toward the end of the century, they should not be dismissed from the discussion of what Americans were reading and writing. Instead, we need to further explore the fiction from this era, where authors experimented with what resonated with their audiences and cheaper printing methods increased the availability and variety of stories.

The stories discussed in this project demonstrate how extensively authors both borrowed from other genres and worked against the conventions of their dominant genres in order to appeal to multiple audiences or create different implications for their narratives. Sedgwick and Dupuy both wrote domestic novels but borrowed the pirate character from predominantly male adventure stories. Cooper and Ingraham mostly adhered to the more common male-centered adventure, but at the same time, their characters and their narratives were always exhibiting anxieties about women and domestic spaces. The lady pirates completely collapsed many of the genre distinctions by making the formerly male hero a woman, and Benjamin Barker continued to extend this trend by placing a greater variety of female characters in central roles while peripheralizing the male hero. On the whole, this genre sharing demonstrates that all the stories in this project, whether targeted to a male or female audience, are interested in defining roles for both women and men.

The pirate story and the figure of the pirate position the hypermasculine man in relation to female characters who are either objects to be possessed, heroic opponents, or sometimes both. Therefore, in the male character centered novels of Cooper and

Ingraham, the roles of women are being defined as potential redeemers and objects in contests between men. These stories are not simply concerned with how to restrain violent men; they are equally concerned with what role women will play in that restraint. Early pirate stories offer the possibility that men must police other men, possibly even directing their violence toward a better cause, and that women can exert moral influence to redeem violent men, or that women must think their way out of difficult situations. Eventually, this model is challenged by scenarios in shilling novelettes and story papers in which women cannot rely on redemption or outside means of restraint to protect them, and thus, they too must resort to violence themselves. Therefore, it is within the pirate story that the women become piratical by adopting the tactics of their opponents, and as a result, they present a model of womanhood that has significantly more agency than that of the women in the early male-centered pirate stories.

Many of the stories discussed in this project contain innovations beyond simply making their main characters female. By presenting unconventional roles for women, several of these narratives illustrate a combination of conventionally masculine and feminine traits, which overlaps the gendered dualism endorsed by Margaret Fuller in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Fanny Campbell is not only a pirate captain, but also a wife and mother. Several stories, including the works of Catharine Maria Sedgwick, and less conventionally *Antonita*, offer models where women remain single while still contributing to a household or society as a whole. Despite these single women, there is a fairly typical trend toward having women marry at the end of their stories; however, some characters, such as Ernestine in *The Bandit of the Ocean*, offer models of older

women, who were already married and had children prior to the beginning of the story, gaining agency later in life. In general, these stories model a version of womanhood that supports the idea that a woman should become a wife and mother, but within (and sometimes, outside of) those constraints, they offer many different variations. Running alongside this multitude of endpoints is a variety of ways in which women can be heroic or momentarily adopt heroic, and sometimes violent, traits by thwarting villains while saving others and themselves.

The trajectory of my project, which builds from more traditionally canonical transatlantic texts, demonstrates that if we were to restrict our conversations to the texts that are more commonly discussed in our era, we would get a very limited view of how nineteenth-century authors were thinking about gender roles in relation to addressing the problem of violent masculinity. Cooper and Sedgwick present two opposing solutions to this problem—Cooper suggests that men should police themselves and other men, relegating women to the position of prizes to be won, while Sedgwick requires women to be actively involved in this policing of men who are depicted as irredeemable. Dupuy and Ingraham borrow heavily from their predecessors and offer less clear cut solutions; however, the more unconventional variations occur within the most ephemeral texts of the time—story papers and shilling novelettes. Within these pages reside the lady pirates, the cutlass-wielding virtuous ladies, and the female privateers. Collectively, these texts work to destabilize the idea that there was a monolithic version of womanhood in antebellum America, and instead, propose a range of female activity that encompasses conventional masculine and feminine traits.

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