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Manly Natures: Masculinity and Environment in American Literature, 1782-1806

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James E. Bishop

Dr. Cheryll Glotfelty/Dissertation Advisor

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JAMES E. BISHOP

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Cheryll Glotfelty, Ph.D., Advisor

Michael P. Branch, Ph.D., Committee Member

Jane Detweiler, Ph.D., Committee Member

Scott Casper, Ph.D., Committee Member

Mary W. Stewart, Ph.D., Graduate School Representative

Marsha H. Read, Ph. D., Associate Dean, Graduate School

August, 2010

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter One: A Feeling Farmer: Masculinity and Nature in Crèvecoeur's <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i>	39
Chapter Two: "Men in every Sense": William Bartram's Mediating Manliness	84
Chapter Three: Jeffersonian Masculinity and the Journals of Lewis and Clark	125
Conclusion	168
Works Cited	179

Abstract

This project calls for a re-examination of the relationship between cultural constructions of masculinity and representations of the natural world. Focusing on the first half-century after the American Revolution, this study contends that the ways that male authors have written about “manliness” and about nature are fraught with more anxiety and uncertainty than previous scholarship on the subject has acknowledged. Utilizing close readings of the works of Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Thomas Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, James Fenimore Cooper, and Washington Irving, I show that these texts, rather than representing monolithic views of masculinity and nature, tend to be characterized by ambivalences and contradictions, often within the same chapter and within the same character or narrative persona. Crèvecoeur, for instance, writes that the frontier must be cleared and tamed in order to make way for farmers, but he also expresses deep uncertainty about this civilizational project and nostalgia for the masculinity embodied by Native Americans and frontiersmen. At the same time that the roots of our contemporary environmental crisis can be seen in representations of masculinity during the early years of the American republic, sustainable models of human engagement with nature can be also found within the same texts, frequently alongside notions of gender that constitute alternatives to the dominant ideologies of the time.

Introduction

A lone horseman rides across a newly cleared field. His appearance is elegant by the standards of his day: he wears a black tricorne, a matching dress coat, and a white ruffled shirt. His saddlebags are regal red, lending him an air of nobility. The horse and rider move along a rough path bisecting the clearing. All around them are stumps; those in the foreground are so enormous that the trees themselves must once have been hundreds of years old and hundreds of feet high. A few low bushes, autumn red, have begun to spread around the bases of the stumps. A small pond sits off to the rider's left. Ahead of the rider are two small buildings: a rustic log cabin just ahead and a clapboard farmhouse tucked among trees at the edge of a dense forest. A puff of smoke emanates from the farmhouse's chimney. The clearing is surrounded by a mixed forest of pine and hardwoods. The leaves are changing to brilliant shades of orange and yellow and vermilion; some of the trees have begun dropping them. Several trees at the edge of the field are dead. On the ridge behind the farmhouse are jagged rock outcroppings, and beyond the clearing is a notch where two ridges meet. A few wisps of mist slightly obscure a rugged mountain peak in the distance. The sky is blue, although a storm cloud, dropping cold rain, is either advancing or receding over the mountains. The tableau is simultaneously bucolic and foreboding.

The scene described above comes from Thomas Cole's 1839 painting, *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains*. It contains several archetypal images that feature prominently in this study of nature and masculinity in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century American literature. First, it shows a landscape that is both spectacularly wild and partially altered by humans. The gigantic size of the stumps in the painting's foreground is both a celebration of the triumph of human will over a rugged natural landscape and an elegy for the

magnificent forest that had been there only a short time ago. Cole described the White Mountains as “a union of picturesque, the sublime, and the magnificent,” where “the bare peaks of granite, broken and desolate, cradle the clouds; while the vallies and broad bases of the mountains rest under the shadow of noble and varied forests” (6), although one can already see Cole’s ambivalence about the changes brought by the intrusion of white settlers. Cole’s placement of the stumps in the immediate foreground, where their presence cannot be missed, emphasizes both their positive and negative significance: a dual significance, as we shall see by examining the literature of the period, of which men were well aware of the end of the eighteenth century. Second, the scale of the rider in relation to the rest of the painting emphasizes the smallness of humankind when compared to the whole of nature, a mindset that caused Americans to treat the natural landscape with awe and reverence, and yet to subject it to unrestrained exploitation, under the impression that its scale was limitless and its resources inexhaustible. Finally, the appearance of the rider suggests that what is at stake on the American frontier in the days of the early American republic is not only the fate of the landscape, but also the future of American manhood. The horseman’s distinguished attire serves as a metaphor for the tension between the refined manliness that most men of the period associated with Europe and the rugged masculinity that was seen as the hallmark of American frontiersmen.

These various influences—the American landscape itself, Americans’ perceptions of the natural world, and the evolving ideal of American manhood—are deeply interrelated in the half century before Cole painted his famous image at Crawford Notch in the White Mountains, and how the interrelationships of these three factors were manifest in the literary texts of the period. This project, then, reads male-authored texts—particularly those interested in the natural

world—from the Revolutionary and Federalist periods through the theoretical lenses of environmental history, ecocriticism, and gender studies.

The early American republic is especially worthy of attention because this is the period during which many characteristically “American” cultural traditions and practices were established, and in order to understand where our ideas about men and nature come from, we need to examine these early “American” cultural ideals. When Americans today speak reverently of the country’s “Founding Fathers,” they literally mean the men who rebelled against the tyranny of Great Britain and declared their independence on the basis of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Implicitly, though, they also are referring to the beliefs and ideologies that these men left as a legacy to future generations of Americans. Some of these are political, as found in the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the legislation and court rulings of the day. Others are cultural, as in the particular qualities and characteristics associated with gender—for example, the idea of “national manhood,” a term coined by literary critic Dana D. Nelson to denote “an ideology that has worked powerfully since the Constitutional era to link a fraternal articulation of white manhood to civic identity” (ix). In addition, early Americans left their footprint on the North American landscape: they plowed and irrigated fields, built roads and canals, and hunted game. Theirs is a legacy not only of yeoman farmsteads, but also of logged forests, dammed and polluted waterways, eroded hillsides, and soils depleted by poor crop rotation and shortsighted overuse. These ecological effects are the result of the ways in which early Americans saw themselves, and how they perceived their relationship to the natural world. In particular, because men were so directly engaged with their local environments, this study focuses on how these men saw themselves interacting with the natural world *as men*. These

actions—and the attitudes underlying them—can be illuminated by examining texts, both literary and nonliterary, written by men during this period.

I have generally confined my discussion to texts from the period 1782 to 1806. Focusing on this period enables me to examine the development of the ideal of manhood as America transitioned from the colonial period into the early republic, and how this affected—and was affected by—male engagements with the natural world. Certain kinds of human interaction with nature (farming and exploration, for example) are included, while others (gardening, the establishment of national parks) are largely excluded either because they are of a later period or because they are not considered essentially masculine activities. The texts foregrounded here—J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, William Bartram’s *Travels*, and *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*—are especially helpful because they indicate change over time. Crèvecoeur’s notions of both manhood and the treatment of landscape emerge from a colonial mindset that valued family and community over individual achievement, and by the time Lewis and Clark chronicle their expedition across the American West, they are already alluding to a nascent ideal of frontier manhood that becomes emblematic later in the nineteenth century. All of the authors discussed in this study subscribe to what R. W. Connell calls “hegemonic masculinity,” but a close investigation of these texts suggests that all have ambivalent understandings of the meaning of masculinity, and all imagine relationships between men and nature that are more intimate and more respectful—and more fraught with internal tensions—than facile depictions of masculine hegemony might suggest. These tensions and uncertainties form the basis of this study.

In a 1933 book on game management, Aldo Leopold wrote that ecosystems “can be restored by the *creative use* of the same tools which have heretofore destroyed it—ax, plow,

cow, fire, and gun” (xxxix). These tools may be seen as symbols of conventionally masculine engagements with the natural world that were prominent during the late eighteenth century—forestry, farming, animal husbandry, woodcraft, hunting—each of which, as Leopold points out, carries both a destructive potential and a restorative potential. Although Leopold was not writing about gender when he made his observations about managing game species, he easily could have been; indeed, his list of implements for engaging with the natural world make a useful metaphor for thinking about gendered relationships with the natural world. Masculinity, manliness, and manhood are ideas that similarly can be both harmful and beneficial, both to society and to the natural world. This study re-examines the familiar assumption—articulated most famously by Annette Kolodny in her groundbreaking studies *The Lay of the Land* and *The Land before Her*—that male-authored texts tend to reinforce “the essence of the pastoral paradox: man, might, indeed, win mastery over the landscape, but only at the cost of emotional and psychological separation from it” (28). I argue that these texts do not, as a general rule, tend to validate men’s emotional separation from the land, but that a central characteristic of these texts is their ambivalent treatment of masculine ideals and of male connections to nature, and therefore that a more nuanced approach to male authors of this period is needed if we hope to understand the ways that men understood their relationships with—and their responsibilities to—nonhuman nature.

In this study I explore several related questions: in what ways did white male authors in the early republic imagine masculinity and nature, and where do these concepts overlap? How are these relationships represented in literary texts from the period, and how are they in dialogue with the wider culture within which they were produced? What ideas about manliness and nature predominated during this period, and how are these represented in literature? How are they

inflected by race and class? Do these texts assume that there are dominant ways of thinking about men and nature, or do they imagine a multiplicity of such ideas? What are the implications of the ways that early American literary texts depict the relationships between men and the natural environment that sustains them? Finally, in what ways is masculinity—an idea that changes over time and that differs from author to author—a positive force, and in what ways is it destructive? Such questions are best answered, I think, by an approach that takes advantage of hindsight—the lessons learned by looking back at history—as well as a real sense of what Americans of the time period meant by describing particular interactions with nature as “manly.” In order to address these questions, this project relies not only upon historical perspective, but also upon the tools of literary theory and gender theory.

Scholars of the literature of the early American republic have a special role in helping to understand how the ideology of this period shapes Americans’ thinking even today. As ecocriticism has emerged as a viable subfield of literary studies over the past few decades, some scholars have addressed contemporary environmental problems by studying the ways in which these problems are represented in literature of the early republic and what these texts—and the environmental attitudes represented therein—tell us about the culture in which they were produced. Studies that have focused on gender tend to fall into one of two camps: they tend either to ignore the ways that cultural constructions of masculinity affect people’s relationship to the natural world, or they tend to assume that masculine engagements with nature are, and have always been, destructive. This project draws from recent work in ecocriticism, gender theory, environmental history, and cultural history—a range of approaches that, when placed in conversation with one another, provide new insights into this literature. I argue that eighteenth-

century texts, particularly those that have been read as stereotypically masculine¹ in their orientation toward nature, offer a richer, more complex, and sometimes more respectful view of the natural world than has been previously acknowledged.

This project is both an outgrowth of, and an attempt to complicate, the work of literary critic Annette Kolodny, whose main contribution has been to show the ways in which male authors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries figured the American landscape as female, and to show that Americans' destructive treatment of the natural world has been a direct consequence of these metaphors. In her study *The Lay of the Land*, Kolodny argues that male writers had "a need to experience the land as a nurturing, giving maternal breast because of the threatening, alien, and potentially emasculating terror of the unknown" (9). She provides a compelling framework for the study of nature and gender in these early texts; her readings of Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, James Fenimore Cooper, and Washington Irving have had a profound influence on many critics' thinking about these writers, including my own. She has shown forcefully and persuasively that the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women often emerge from the same troubling ideologies, and she was among the first critics to identify these writers' ambivalences and contradictions as a salient feature of their writing. Her argument, however, is sweeping in its repudiation of male-authored texts, painting all such texts with the same patriarchal brush. In this dismissal, Kolodny forecloses the possibility of what Van Wyck Brooks famously called a "usable past," a way of mining the past for useful memories that might contribute to contemporary consciousness. This project builds upon Kolodny's argument by

¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* provides the following rather circular definition of masculinity: "The state or fact of being masculine; the assemblage of qualities regarded as characteristic of men; maleness, manliness." The word, derived originally from the French, was not in common usage during the time period discussed in this study, either in America or in England; it began to appear in the latter half of the nineteenth century. I discuss later in this chapter how I use the term "masculinity" for the purposes of this project; I use it retrospectively, as a way to understand eighteenth-century American lens through a contemporary analytical lens.

reading these texts as offering constructive models even as they reinforced harmful ideas about both landscape and gender.

The way that men's sense of their masculinity affects their relationship to the natural world is complex, contradictory, and often surprising. While it is true, as Kolodny points out, that men often used the language of maternity to represent nature—the phrase “alma mater,” used to describe the American landscape, appears in more than one text discussed in my study—it would be an oversimplification to suggest that such gendered language proves that male authors viewed the exploitation of nature in positive terms. What is striking about these writers' works, in fact, is the pervasive ambivalence and uncertainty with which they represent both their own masculinity and their treatment of the land. The authors I discuss in this study reveal this struggle by vacillating between seemingly contradictory visions of both their masculinity and their relationship to nature, often within a few pages of one another in the text. It is the inconsistency, ambivalence, and uncertainty expressed in these texts that is their most salient quality. One of the main purposes of this study is to understand the causes of these apparent contradictions, and how they played out in white America's treatment of the land during this period. I highlight both the positive and negative aspects of manhood as men of the early American republic experienced it, in order to better understand how both environmental crises and their potential solutions can be seen in ideals of “manhood” and “manliness” during this period.

One approach that has helped me to discover constructive and sustainable models of human interaction with nature, even in the most stereotypically “masculine” texts, has been that of ecofeminist literary critics. In the introduction to their volume *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism*, editors Greta Gaard and Patrick D. Murphy define ecofeminism as “a practical movement for

social change arising out of the struggle of women to sustain themselves, their families, and their communities. These struggles are waged against the ‘maldevelopment’ and environmental degradation caused by patriarchal societies, multinational corporations, and global capitalism”

(2). While this definition is broad, it identifies several key elements of ecofeminism.

Ecofeminism arises out of a “movement” whose goal is to liberate both women and nature from patriarchal domination; therefore, it has implications for both the social and political spheres. In addition, ecofeminism identifies patriarchal systems—political, economic, and cultural—as the root cause of the degradation of both women and nature. It does not explicitly blame *men* for these problems (although some ecofeminists might, particularly those who embrace a sex-essentialized incarnation of ecofeminism), but rather a system of patriarchal hierarchies in which men and women both participate. One way that ecofeminism helps us to complicate simplistic notions of gender relationships is its sensitivity to dualisms. Ecofeminists argue that dualisms—particularly man/woman and culture/nature—inherently set up hierarchical relationships, privileging one term in each pairing over the other. In the previous pairings, for instance, “woman” is subordinated to “man,” and “nature” is subordinated to “culture.” Glynis Carr points out that these are not the only dyads constructed by patriarchal systems; we also have “white/black, colonizer/colonized, heterosexual/homosexual,” and “adult/child” (17). The effect of these dualisms is heightened when they are associated with one another—for example, when we associate “male” with “culture” and “woman” with “nature.” Ecofeminists, therefore, have helped to identify the ways in which the figuring of nature as female has sanctioned the degradation of both women and nature. Several of the texts in this study demonstrate clearly how this dynamic operates, particularly when the domination of nature accompanies the domination of women.

Ecofeminism is a diverse movement, however, and certain elements of ecofeminist thought continue to be debated among ecofeminist scholars. Probably the most contentious of these unresolved issues is the question of gender essentialism. Val Plumwood, for example, seeks to “dispel the fog of charges that essentialism, biologism and reverse sexism are inherent in ecofeminism” in her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (33). Certainly Plumwood does not engage in reverse sexism; however, she is not entirely willing to repudiate the notion—held by some ecofeminist thinkers—that women enjoy a special relationship with nature that is inaccessible to men: “the argument that women have a different relationship to nature need not rest on either reversal or ‘essentialism’ . . . Such differences may instead be seen as due to women’s different social and historical position” (35). While Plumwood’s appeal to social construction and historicity is more compelling than some ecofeminists’ appeal to biology, it is nevertheless deterministic: women’s biological sex in her formulation still produces a privileged relationship to the natural world.

Carolyn Merchant has more explicitly rejected essentialism as a feature of her ecofeminist vision, which “draws on feminist theory and on women’s experiences of and historical connections to the environment, but it does not claim that women have a special knowledge of nature or a special ability to care for nature” (*Earthcare* 222). She articulates a compelling “partnership ethic,” which she defines as “an ethic of earthcare based on the concept of a partnership between people and nature,” as an alternative. Merchant further clarifies her definition: “Rather than seeing nature as more powerful than and dominant over human beings (whether as goddess or witch), as was usually the case in premodern societies, or seeing humans as dominant over nature through science and technology, as has been the view of most modern societies, a dynamic balance may be attained through a partnership ethic” (*Earthcare* xix).

Merchant's approach is more rigorously theorized and nuanced than many dualism-centric ecofeminist approaches. Focusing too narrowly on binaries leads too readily to cartoonish renderings of male authors of the early American republic, many of whom did indeed think in terms of black-versus-white dualisms, but in a more complex way than this sort of analysis is able to describe.² A more instructive picture—one more attuned to ambivalences and contradictions—emerges when we examine these texts in terms of relationships, and Merchant's "partnership ethic" is among the most useful strategies for recovering both positive and negative models of masculinity from these early texts.

Ecofeminist literary criticism contributes to the larger ecocritical enterprise in several significant ways. First, it offers new approaches to examining canon formation, both within the genre of environmental literature and within literary studies as a whole. Since it challenges hierarchies, it helps ecocritics to challenge conventional notions of "literary art" to include female authors and authors from diverse racial and ethnic groups. Second, ecofeminist principles focus attention on the ways in which "otherness" is represented in literary texts. As Gaard and Murphy point out, "the 'other' must be rethought through grounding it in physical being. One aspect of such grounding is to reject the notion of absolute difference and the binary construct of inside and outside" (5). Ecofeminist literary analysis thus acts as a corrective to hierarchical ecocritical practices that have tended to privilege wilderness spaces over urban spaces, outside

² While Merchant does not fixate on dualisms in the same way as have some other ecofeminist critics, she does argue that "nature and culture, women and men, [are not] binary opposites with universal or essential meanings. Nature, wilderness, and civilization are socially constructed concepts that change over time and serve as stage settings in the progressive narrative" (50). Merchant's "partnership ethic" is a particularly useful tool for literary critics seeking sustainable models within texts that have been previously dismissed as excessively "masculine." Rather than placing ecofeminist ecocritics in the awkward position of policing binaries, this critical strategy enables them to look for ways that humans and nature exist in a cooperative relationship. It preserves the possibility of an ecocentric perspective, but it doesn't ignore issues of race and gender. Merchant contends that a partnership ethic "admits that humans are dependent on nonhuman nature and that nonhuman nature has preceded and will postdate human nature" (217). By definition, then, it is a humble approach to the relationship between people and nature, and it calls for voluntary restraint on the part of humans.

spaces over indoor ones, and other formulations that may exclude women and ethnic minorities. It enables us to examine the ways in which “others” of various kinds—woman as “other,” animals as “other,” racial minorities as “other”—are treated in similar ways by a patriarchal master narrative. Third, ecofeminism is a way in which ecocritics can acknowledge the independent agency of the physical world. Donna Haraway notes that “ecofeminists have perhaps been most insistent on some version of the world as active subject, not as resource to be mapped and appropriated in bourgeois, Marxist, or masculinist projects. Acknowledging the agency of the world in knowledge makes room for some unsettling possibilities” (199). Haraway’s statement is really a restatement of what ecocritics have been up to all along: to give the natural world a voice, to place ecological concerns alongside other, anthropocentric ones. Examining the relationship between gender and nature allows us to see how these cultural constructions occur in tandem with one another.

As environmental historian William Cronon and others have shown, the notion of what constitutes a “natural” space, much like cultural constructions of gender, is a historical development. “Natural space,” in this context, refers to a concept similar to the idea of “place” that Carol H. Cantrell articulates in her essay, “The Locus of Compossibility.” Cantrell writes, “Unlike ‘landscape’ or ‘wilderness,’ ‘place’ necessarily includes the human presence and in fact is centered around it. At the same time, ‘place’ is where our embodied selves experience the world, and through which we receive the sources of energy and nurturance which keep us alive and in which our activities make themselves felt most immediately” (34). Cantrell’s definition is useful for my discussion because it imagines a dialectic relationship between the place itself and the human dramas that play out there. Places, in the literature we loosely define as “nature writing” or “environmental literature,” are not mere stage settings for human activities, but active

agents that interact with human beings and other creatures in ways that are meaningful and reciprocal. Thus, in the narratives that form the body of this study, natural spaces are not merely fields waiting to be plowed or forests waiting to be felled (although, it is true, some authors did imagine natural spaces in this way), nor are they mere objects onto which men projected their fantasies and desires (although this did occur). Places have always had a profound effect on the American imagination; the influence has never flowed only in a single direction. The phenomenon of nature influencing culture may be seen, for instance, in Cole's painting, in which the artist is awestruck by the grandeur of the environment, thus shaping the particular way in which he represents the scene. Putting Cronon's and Cantrell's definitions together, nature is both "real" and "constructed."

Cronon's assertion about the constructedness of nature, then, is hardly radical, though it has been widely misunderstood. His essay "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," the first in his anthology *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, takes aim at the concept of wilderness. Cronon argues that the idea of wilderness is particularly tempting because it appears to be so natural, so free from human influence. But he demonstrates that "[a]s we gaze into the mirror [wilderness] holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires" (69-70). The cultural construction of wilderness, Cronon argues, is particularly insidious because it emerged from a perception on the part of European-American settlers that the landscape was virgin and untrammled when they moved into it. In most cases, however, these landscapes had been inhabited for thousands of years, and the reason they seemed uninhabited to settlers was because the Native Americans who used to live there had been killed off by disease or relocated according to US government policy. The concept of wilderness

became a convenient way for white people to ignore the human history of the American West, instead rewriting narratives of a new Eden, of Paradise, of untouched, unspoiled wilderness. Indians had to be removed, for example, in order to create the “wilderness” experience of Yosemite National Park. Cronon insists that we must face this unpleasant history if we ever intend to forge an ethical relationship with the natural world. He acknowledges, though, that his critique of wilderness causes him some ambivalence about its implications for modern environmentalism: “Any way of looking at nature that encourages us to believe we are separate from nature—as wilderness tends to do—is likely to reinforce environmentally irresponsible behavior. . . . I also think it no less crucial for us to recognize and honor nonhuman nature as a world we did not create, a world with its own independent, nonhuman reasons for being as it is” (87). Cronon thus acknowledges that, despite its deeply problematic history, the idea of wilderness does offer important ethical lessons.

A curious anthology appeared in the same year (1995) that Cronon’s anthology was published. Borrowing its title, *Reinventing Nature?*, from the subtitle of *Uncommon Ground*, this book would appear to be a rejoinder to Cronon’s argument about the constructedness of nature. The essays in the book take aim at what the book’s subtitle calls “postmodern deconstruction,” but curiously, none challenges Cronon directly. In the preface to the book, editors Michael E. Soulé and Gary Lease announce that their book “is a response to certain radical forms of ‘postmodern deconstructionism’ that question the concepts of nature and wilderness, sometimes in order to justify further exploitive tinkering with what little remains of wildness” (xv). Nowhere in the anthology, however, does any contributor provide compelling evidence that those who practice “postmodern deconstructionism”—the worst offenders apparently being French theorists such as Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard—in any way wish to justify

the exploitation of nature. This apparent lack of evidence, however, doesn't stop Soulé from conflating postmodern deconstructionists with bulldozer operators: "Living nature . . . is under two kinds of siege. . . . The overt siege is physical; it is carried out by increasing multitudes of human beings equipped [with] bulldozers, chainsaws, plows, and livestock. The covert assault is ideological and therefore social; it serves to justify, where useful, the physical assault. A principal tool of the social assault is deconstruction" (137).³ If there is a serious critique in this book, it is often obscured by this cloud of baseless accusations and assumptions. A serious defense of the ideas of nature and wilderness could no doubt be made, but Soulé and Lease—prominent environmental thinkers in their respective fields of conservation biology and the history of consciousness—seem ill-fitted for the job. It is less problematic to argue, as I have above, that constructions of nature are not merely a human invention, but that nature is indeed "out there" and that human constructions of nature are the result of complex relationships between humans and their environments. This project studies one of many possible angles on this subject: it addresses environmental crisis by examining its ideological roots, and it teases out constructive ideas from masculine ideologies that have long been assumed to be of little use to ecocritics.

Within the field of literary criticism, a few scholars have taken up the project of defending the idea of nature—or at least, of insisting that the real world, as defined by the physical and life sciences, should be of primary importance when discussing nature. One such scholar is Glen A. Love, whose 2003 book *Practical Ecocriticism* participates in a debate that Kate Soper describes as pitting "the 'nature-endorsing' view of nature" against "the 'nature-

³ The essays also tend to assume, falsely, that "postmodern deconstruction" is a monolithic theoretical perspective, even though these theorists often have substantial disagreements with each other. Elsewhere, Soulé explicitly claims that deconstructionists somehow collude with right-wing corporate forces seeking to exploit wilderness spaces, an assertion for which he offers no evidence.

skeptical' perspective" (7). Love, of course, claims to be of the "nature-endorsing" school. He argues that "an unintended but harmful consequence of Cronon's stance in *Uncommon Ground* and other nature-skeptical positions is that they further distance environmental destruction from reality" (21). Love, like Soulé and Lease, goes on to compare Cronon's position with the so-called Wise Use principles favored by developers and corporate managers who seek to exploit the natural world for material gain. But, as in the case of Soulé and Lease's book, *Practical Ecocriticism* never deals with the substance of Cronon's argument; it focuses only on what Love perceives to be the *consequences* of his argument. Love fails to address the human history that Cronon outlines in his essay, and he doesn't acknowledge Cronon's own disclaimers about the implications of his findings. Love's solution is to move ecocriticism toward a practice that uses the physical and life sciences as a model. Ecological literary criticism, according to Love, should be more concerned with empirical studies of the natural world and less concerned with the constructedness of concepts such as "nature" and "wilderness." Love finds particular inspiration in the work of E. O. Wilson, who has attempted to apply the study of evolution to human culture.⁴ Such work, while important and interesting, tends to cause trouble when it is applied to discussions about gender, as it tends to be overreliant on biological differences to elucidate cultural phenomena. My project explains male authors' treatment of gender not as a biological

⁴ One literary scholar who has taken an even more radical position than Love is Joseph Carroll, whose book *Literary Darwinism* attempts to define a new field of what he calls "evolutionary literary theory." Evolutionary literary critics, Carroll explains, "presuppose the validity of a scientific understanding of the world, and they believe that the biological study of human beings is the necessary basis for a scientifically valid understanding of nature" (29). Carroll and other evolutionary literary critics—or "literary Darwinists," as they sometimes call themselves—argue that that any investigation of human behavior (such as those found in literature) should be grounded in evolutionary theory, which they believe to be the most effective and scientifically accurate means of understanding human nature. Carroll argues that all human behavior—including the production, distribution, consumption, and interpretation of literature—can be, and should be, understood in terms of evolutionary biology. Feminist scholars, in turn, argue that such a radical privileging of scientific discourse is the worst kind of reinscription of patriarchal ideology. Even if this kind of literary criticism were not offensive to feminist thought, it seems doubtful that it would have much practical application. Indeed, it is much more accurate to understand gender and masculinity as the historical, culturally constructed concepts that they are. The literary Darwinist school would counter that all culture is ultimately a product of biology.

phenomenon, but as a product of cultural history.

Understanding the relationship between literary figurations of nature and literary figurations of gender—in the case of this study, constructions of masculinity—requires a precise definition of masculinity. For my own understanding of the meaning of masculinity, I owe much to the work of R. W. Connell, who has coined the plural term “masculinities,” explaining that at any given historical moment, and within any given culture, there are multiple cultural constructions of masculinity. The approach to gender that I have adopted in this dissertation falls into the camp of cultural construction. This way of understanding gender derives from the work of Michel Foucault, particularly in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. This approach emphasizes that gender is a product of culture and that it changes over time and between cultures; in these ways it differs significantly from approaches that emphasize biology or psychological archetypes. This is as true for the early American republic as for any other era, though most male writers of the period did not directly acknowledge these competing masculinities, instead assuming that their readers would have a unitary understanding of the terms “manhood” and “manliness.” Although sociobiologists, foremost among them E. O. Wilson, have argued that men’s bodies are the bearers of a natural masculinity produced by evolutionary pressures, anthropologists have shown that many of the traits assumed to be “naturally” masculine—aggression, competitiveness, hierarchical dominance, territoriality, promiscuity—are products of culture rather than evolution, in that they vary so dramatically between cultures. Additionally, as cultural historian Michael Kimmel has pointed out, “Manhood is neither static nor timeless. . . . A history of manhood must, therefore, recount two histories: the history of the changing ‘ideal’ version of masculinity and the parallel and competing versions that coexist with it” (3-4). My project demonstrates, indeed, that

dominant, “hegemonic” masculinities exist alongside “alternative” ones, often within the same literary texts and within a single character or narrative persona. The fact that masculinity is almost never a unified, uncontested concept makes it impossible to make unqualified statements about the nature of male authorship, or about male engagements with the natural world. This is one of the reasons why a re-examination of the relationships between men and the environment is so important: we must begin to qualify our generalizations about these relationships.

The different modes of scholarship on masculinity often overlap and therefore do not fit into rigidly defined categories. But it can be useful to have these categories, as different kinds of scholarly projects illuminate different aspects of literary texts, ask different kinds of questions, and challenge assumptions in different ways. Rather than conflicting with one another, different fields of study tend to complement one another, a process which becomes evident when one begins looking in the bibliographies of recent scholarly works in which Dana D. Nelson, E. Philip Greven, Judith Butler, and many other scholars with a wide range of theoretical and disciplinary vantage points appear together comfortably. My own work draws from diverse sources because this interdisciplinary approach is an effective way to approach an intellectual problem. Briefly, then, I’d like to discuss some of the possibilities offered by a few different approaches to masculinity and gender.

A somewhat venerable work of cultural history, Philip Greven’s 1977 book *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America*, examines how personalities and worldviews in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America were formed through child-rearing practices. Greven divides Protestants during this period into three basic “temperaments”: evangelicals, moderates, and genteels. The first is located in experiences of relentlessly authoritarian family life, the second in experience of firm

but limited parental discipline, and the third in experiences of affectionate indulgence. Each group—across a range of Protestant sects—consists of people who shared similar childhood experiences; as groups, each differed in self-perceptions and views about the world around them. For instance, each temperament is associated with a particular pattern of response to the issues of the Revolutionary crisis at the end of the eighteenth century. The “evangelicals” tended to be republican, the “genteel” tended to be monarchists, and “moderates”—the category that most closely fits the men discussed in my study—might veer in either direction. The relatively indulgent child-rearing practices that seem to characterize the upbringing of men like William Bartram and Thomas Jefferson, Greven suggests, may have been characteristic of families sustained by complicated connections of kinship that had evolved in established communities; indulgence of children was most common within the cultural environment of emerging provincial gentry. Such formulations are germane to my study because they help to demonstrate the cultural patterns that help to explain the masculinities to which particular men subscribed, including, for instance, substantial passages dealing with the Quaker community of which William Bartram was a part. At the same time that Greven’s categories have heuristic value, however, the distinction between them—particularly the distinction between “moderates” and “genteels”—frequently becomes blurred. Nevertheless, Greven’s book is useful for its conceptualizing of these broad categories, as well as its frequent references to texts that are quasi-literary: diaries, letters, memoirs, and sermons. Greven makes a persuasive case for the study of literature as a means for understanding history, and vice-versa.

Dana D. Nelson’s *National Manhood* is a good example of the extent to which scholarship on literature and gender tends to be hybrid in character. Although it is a work of literary criticism, Nelson’s book is also historical scholarship that analyzes not only literary

texts, but also those in gynecology, ethnology, anthropology, and archaeology. Nelson argues that an ideology of white manhood has worked powerfully and, for many, destructively to establish the terms of American national identity. She contends that the deployment of the “national manhood” myth during the early years of the American republic linked fraternal feeling with civic identity to function as an ideal and guarantee of national unity. The power of “national manhood” lies in its capacity for abstraction and universalization: whiteness and maleness, for reasons that Nelson and many others have investigated, become the unmarked, default identity—characteristics that stand in for the whole and, in this instance, the nation itself—that few think to question or challenge. Nelson outlines the multiple ways “white” and “male” became attached to “nation” in the first half of the nineteenth century. She then applies this methodology to the people and the literature of the period. Meriwether Lewis, according to Nelson, “exemplifies, indeed stands as the National Subject” because “his manly vigor is wedded to the more disembodied, analytic, mathematizing attributes of the Enlightenment observer” (75). Nelson’s reading of Lewis’s contributions to *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, then, suggests that Lewis is reaffirming his authority when he describes a grizzly bear the men on his expedition have killed: “We had no means of weighing this monster; Capt. Clark thought he would weigh 500 lbs. for my own part I think the estimate too small by 100 lbs. he measured 8. Feet 7½ Inches from the nose to the extremity of the hind feet., 5 F. 10½ Ins. Around the breast” (105). Nelson’s analysis illuminates this passage, which would not normally draw our attention to Lewis’s masculinity, by showing the ways in which masculinity—or “national manhood”—was linked with mathematical and analytical thinking, and how this was tied to whiteness and national identity. Nelson’s approach has drawn attention to passages in the literature of this period that otherwise might have escaped the notice of scholars. In Chapter 3 I examine in detail

the ways that Lewis and Clark—though not centrally concerned with the idea of masculinity—act as representatives of Jefferson’s masculine ideal for the new American nation.

Of course, literary criticism is grounded—whether consciously or not—in other schools of literary theory. Somewhat surprisingly, neither ecocritics nor cultural historians seem to have made much use of the work of gender theorists; a cursory review of several recent scholarly studies reveals few references to prominent gender theorists such as Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Butler’s *Gender Trouble* bears on this project because her notion of the “performativity of gender” usefully describes what occurs in literary texts, particularly those that present themselves as self-consciously masculine. She describes performativity in this way: “acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (185). Butler, of course, means that *all* expressions of gender identity are a kind of performance, but the literature that I examine in this study borders at times on the outright theatrical, as when Meriwether Lewis names a river after his cousin in a rather obvious—and somewhat pathetic—attempt to compete with his co-leader William Clark, who names a nearby river after the woman he is courting. Other performances of gender in the narratives of the period are more subtle, but they are performances nevertheless.

Sedgwick, like Butler, is interested in the ways in which the bifurcation of gender categories is flawed, and how it serves as a tool of social control. Concentrating on British literature from the period discussed in my study of American literature, Sedgwick argues that European homophobia⁵ during this period functions as “the ability to set proscriptive and

⁵ Homosexuality as a concept had taken shape to some degree in Great Britain by the end of the eighteenth century. In 1749, the earliest extended and serious defense of homosexuality in English, *Ancient and Modern Pederasty Investigated and Exemplified*, written by Thomas Cannon, was published, but was suppressed almost immediately. It includes the passage, “Unnatural Desire is a Contradiction in Terms; downright Nonsense. Desire is an amatory

descriptive limits to the forms of male homosocial desire,” thus “regulat[ing] the behavior of the many by the specific oppression of the few” (87, 88). Sedgwick suggests the term “homosocial,” first used by cultural historians such as Carroll Smith Rosenberg in the 1970s, to describe social bonds among men that exist along a continuum of sexual desire. Such analysis is helpful for discussing male social relationships in early America, as manhood is often defined in terms of men’s relationships with other men. Sedgwick’s formulation helps to explain the boundaries of those relationships, and how these affected perceptions of manliness and masculinity. This, in turn, provides a useful framework for understanding the interpersonal web into which male interactions with nature are woven.

Stephen Ducat’s *The Wimp Factor*, which blends psychoanalytic theory and political science, is an unapologetic polemic that inspects the role that “femiphobia”—a fear of women and of being feminized—has played in conservative politics. Along the way, Ducat tracks the development of gender roles and what he calls “anxious masculinity” in Western culture. When discussing war, for instance, Ducat writes, “defeating an enemy is, more than anything else, an expression of *domination*, which . . . is the bottom-line criterion for masculinity in nearly all patriarchal cultures” (181), and he supports this assertion with evidence from anthropological and sociological studies. Ducat’s framework has helped me to formulate my own argument that men throughout American history—but especially during the early years of the United States—have been anxious about their masculinity, and that this anxiety has been a driving force in their interactions with women, with other men, and with the natural environment around them. Male writers from this period frequently invoke the language of warfare to represent efforts—their own, or those of their characters—to beat back the encroaching wilderness. They describe their

Impulse of the inmost human Parts” (qtd. in Gladfelder 32). Homosexuality was not, of course, widely accepted; executions for sodomy continued in England until 1835.

efforts to fell trees, remove stumps, unearth stones, dig postholes, and deter predators as if they were never-ending battles with an intractable enemy. Such language reflects their ongoing sense of the tenuousness of their survival, and of their place in the world. This sense of anxiety, further, helps to explain why their rhetoric is often so uncertain and internally contradictory.

Most historians and literary scholars, particularly those who have studied male representations of gender in early American texts, have used the terms “masculinity,” “manhood,” and “manliness” interchangeably, or with little attention to distinctions between them. Because precise definitions can help us to understand specific aspects of gender relationships that have been previously misunderstood, it seems useful to clarify the ways they are used in this study. “Manhood” is the term commonly used by the authors discussed in this study, and on the surface, it refers unproblematically to the condition of being biologically male. Cultural historian Gail Bederman, however, has offered a useful way of thinking of this idea in a way that usefully complicates and problematizes it. She defines “manhood” as “the process which creates ‘men’ by linking genital anatomy to a male identity, and linking both anatomy and identity to particular arrangements of authority and power. Logically, this is an entirely arbitrary process. Anatomy, identity, and authority have no intrinsic relationship. Only the process of manhood—of the gender system—allows each to stand for the others” (7-8). Thus manhood is both a biological and an ideological construction. Because ideology is subject to dramatic changes due to political and cultural developments, so too does the idea of manhood change over time. And as Butler has pointed out, even the seemingly immutable concept of biological sex is less stable and universal than it appears; she uses the example of transsexual bodies to demonstrate how complicated notions of sex and gender are.

The word “masculinity” itself was never used by any of the authors discussed in this

study, nor did it come into common usage until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Bederman explains that during the 1890s, men “coined the new epithets ‘sissy,’ ‘pussy-foot,’ ‘cold feet’ and ‘stuffed shirt’ to denote behavior which had once appeared self-possessed and manly but now seemed overcivilized and effeminate. . . . Most telling, however, was the increasing use of a relatively new noun to describe the essence of admirable manhood. This newly popular noun was ‘masculinity’” (17). Because this definition does not appear until the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, I use it in a way that reflects a modern sense of the word. I deploy it in a way similar to Connell’s: to reflect the multiple and contested meanings of male gendering at any given point in history. When I refer to “masculinity,” I am referring retrospectively to phenomena that would likely have been taken for granted by contemporaries of the writers I am discussing, and that come to light only through a modern perspective.

“Manliness,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, has referred, going back to the fifteenth century, to “manly qualities or characteristics; the type of strength, fortitude, or hardiness traditionally associated with men as opposed to women or children.” The word was commonly used throughout the period discussed in this study, and it is one whose connotation changes significantly over time.⁶ In this study, I use “manliness” to refer an ideal form of masculinity at any given historical moment, recognizing that this ideal changes over time.⁷

⁶ E. Anthony Rotundo provides a detailed and thoughtful analysis of the history of American masculinity. “manliness” during the colonial period refers to what Rotundo calls “communal manhood,” in which men were expected first and foremost to be loyal members of their communities and providers for their families. According to Rotundo, “[t]he ideal man . . . was pleasant, mild-mannered, and devoted to the good of the community. He performed his duties faithfully, governed his passions rationally, submitted to his fate and to his place in society, and treated his dependents with firm but affectionate wisdom. Pious, dutiful, restrained—such a man seems almost too good to survive on this earth” (14). When the community-oriented ethic of the colonial period is replaced by a doctrine of individual achievement—during the early part of the nineteenth century—the definition of “manliness” shifts from a communal model to one based on rugged individualism.

⁷ Some readers, particularly those with a fondness for neologisms, may wonder why the term “ecomasculinity” or “ecomasculinities” does not appear prominently in this study. Its omission is the result of a conscious decision on my part. Although the term has never been used widely, and although the combination of its constituent parts “eco” and “masculinity” make a great deal of sense when discussing the works of men such as Crèvecoeur and Bartram,

Because few scholars have noted the relationship between conceptions of masculinities and nature, this project combines research on masculinities with ecocritical literary studies, thus tracing the parallel histories of the cultural construction of masculinity and literary representations of nature. Ecocriticism, defined in the most straightforward terms, is “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty xvii). Ecocritic Lawrence Buell argues that it is “productive to think inclusively of environmentality as a property of any text—to maintain that all human artifacts bear such traces, and at several stages: in the composition, the embodiment, and the reception” is especially important in the context of this study (25). Although none of the texts I discuss fits narrowly within the tradition of “nature writing”—a genre often assumed to have begun with Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*—they all provide commentary on nature that illuminates the ways in which eighteenth-century Americans understood their relationship to the natural environment. Buell’s formulation reminds us that texts can—and must—be read in multiple ways, that Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, for instance, must be understood not merely as a work of nationalistic propaganda, as it has been traditionally read, but that it can be usefully harvested for what it has to say about the environmental concerns of eighteenth-century Americans.

Buell claims in his introduction to *The Environmental Imagination* that “[a]lthough the creative and critical arts may seem remote from the arenas of scientific investigation and public policy, clearly they are exercising, however unconsciously, an influence upon the emerging

this term, compelling as it may be, already carries too much cultural baggage to be useful in a scholarly context. The term “ecomasculinity” was probably coined by psychology professor Shepherd Bliss in the early 1990s and runs the risk of being associated with the antifeminist elements of the mythopoetic men’s movement, in which Bliss is a major figure. For this reason, I avoid using the term “ecomasculinity” to avoid any confusion between my borrowing the terminology of the mythopoetic men’s movement and embracing their ideology. This is unfortunate, in a way, because Bly, Bliss, and other mythopoetic men have made a persuasive case that the relationship between men and nature is important and in need of thoughtful revision, especially since the academy has been largely silent on the matter.

culture of environmental concern, just as they have played a part in shaping as well as merely expressing every other aspect of human culture” (3). He makes the compelling case, then, that ecocritical scholarship can bring these elements of literary art into a more conscious realm, can make them more clearly visible to us, and therefore can assist scholars, teachers, and writers in their efforts to bring environmental concerns to the attention of the wider public. Many ecocritics were initially drawn to the field of ecocriticism—even before this term became an academic buzzword—because of their own predilection toward environmental activism. Indeed, because ecocriticism was, and is, animated by the pressing need to protect an increasingly threatened natural world, its practitioners have a heightened sense of urgency and immediacy that makes their work compelling. Certainly my own work is motivated by this sense of urgency—by my belief that we must understand where our attitudes about nature come from before we can effectively solve our current environmental problems.⁸

Published a year after *The Environmental Imagination*, the seminal anthology *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, helped to create the strong sense of community that is a hallmark of ecocriticism. Prior to the publication of Glotfelty and Fromm’s anthology, many of the authors contained therein did not know one another’s work. Joseph Meeker, when he wrote *The Comedy of Survival*, did not even have the benefit of the helpful term “ecocriticism,” even though many scholars credit him with writing the first book-length study in this field. When William Rueckert coined the term in a 1978 essay, few other

⁸ Buell was prescient enough to see that the field of ecocriticism was likely to gain momentum quickly, and *The Environmental Imagination* has helped to give the field a sense of professional legitimacy. Although Buell humbly insists in *The Future of Environmental Criticism* that ecocriticism “lacks the kind of paradigm-defining statement that, for example, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* . . . supplied for colonial discourse studies” (11), a strong case could be made that *The Environmental Imagination* has served a similar purpose for ecocritics—giving it a theoretical foundation and a sense of intellectual rigor that are necessary for establishing its place within the wider academic community. This was an essential move, and well-timed, because ecocriticism is vulnerable to the charge that it is based more on activist impulses—the desire to save the earth—than on sound intellectual underpinnings. Buell’s book has done much to head off this line of attack.

scholars took note. In her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, however, Glotfelty points out that “[d]espite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it” (xix). This common sense of purpose is, I think, one of the strengths of ecocriticism. The ecocritical community—which now includes the organizations Association for the Study of Literature and Environment and the Western Literature Association (which spawned ASLE), as well as the scholarly journals *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* and *Green Letters*—provides a mutually supportive network, and a main reason for this is the extent to which ecocritics bring a shared sense of purpose to their work.⁹ This dissertation reflects my own belief that it is possible to maintain a collegial spirit while still challenging orthodoxy.

Gretchen Legler, Greg Garrard, Ursula Heise, and others have expanded the boundaries of ecocriticism to apply theoretical and disciplinary approaches not commonly practiced by early ecocritics. One important book in this area has been *The Environmental Justice Reader*, edited by Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein. “Environmental justice movements,” they write, “call attention to the ways disparate distribution of wealth and power often leads to correlative social upheaval and the unequal distribution of environmental degradation and/or toxicity” (5). Ecocriticism, then, ought to be concerned not only about the relationships between nature and literature, but also the ways in which issues of race and class influence these relationships. These writers encourage us to be more attentive to stories of and by racial

⁹ Michael P. Cohen, however, cautions scholars about the potentially negative consequences of such a strong sense of group identity: “A remarkable informality at ASLE conferences makes them seem more like a summer camp or retreat. In the evenings, people play guitars and sing campfire songs. . . . Everyone is friendly, but what if people are spending more time learning to play folksongs than learning literary methods? What if ecocritical thinking is fuzzy?” (14-15). While ecocritics, of course, ought to be attentive to the matter of audience—rather than mere “preaching to the chorus,” as Cohen puts it—and while all scholars in *any* discipline ought to avoid “fuzzy thinking,” I’m not convinced that building supportive relationships among scholars endangers the precision of one’s thinking.

minorities, particularly those who confront the unequal distribution of environmental problems. Some critics, however, in calling for the expansion of the purview of ecocriticism, have been harsh and strident in their disparagement of other scholars' work. T. V. Reed, in his essay in *The Environmental Justice Reader*, accuses Glotfelty of being “remarkably complacent and politically insensitive” in her treatment of issues of social justice in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*. He asks rhetorically, “Why does Glotfelty not feel an urgent need not merely to encourage but actively to seek out [racially diverse] voices for the collection?” (Adamson, Evans, and Stein 146). Reed makes a fair point: ecocriticism generally, and *The Ecocriticism Reader* specifically, would be strengthened if it were more inclusive of environmental justice concerns. His manner of doing so—accusing other scholars of complacency and racial insensitivity—seems unnecessarily combative. Indeed, this kind of criticism smacks of the fallacy of projecting complacency, ignorance, and/or short-sightedness onto other, earlier critics simply because they have not yet engaged the project one believes is important.

Although my project does not take up environmental justice concerns as its primary purpose—by design, in fact, the main texts discussed in this study are written by white men of relatively privileged backgrounds—it is informed by conversations surrounding environmental justice and the inclusion of the voices of women and ethnic minorities. It is essential that even work on white male authors be sensitive to the role that issues of race and gender play in the reading of *any* text, and it is essential to acknowledge that race, gender, and class are themselves *historical* concepts. It is important, for instance, to acknowledge the way that the trope of the Vanishing Indian allowed early European Americans on the frontier (itself an ideology-laden term) to imagine that they were settling uninhabited land, and it is essential to understand that

many of the traits these Americans considered manly had been borrowed from Native American cultures and adapted to mainstream white America. Daniel Boone, for example, made famous by John Filson's 1784 history *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*, is a classic manifestation of this phenomenon: a white man possessing the knowledge and values of the Indians among whom he lived. It seems more constructive to incorporate environmental justice concerns into a work of scholarship by analyzing texts such as Filson's than to berate other scholars for their failure to do so. Lance Newman offers a helpful way to think about the problems faced by ecocritics: "If . . . we are going to teach ecocentric consciousness, along with the vast extension of those values it entails, an indispensable part of it must be historical consciousness" (21). An awareness of history, then, can help critics to see that ecocentric and anthropocentric concerns have always been—and continue to be—intertwined. And ultimately, as Cronon and others have shown, it is more intellectually honest than clinging to antiquated notions of "untrammelled wilderness." Certainly, while texts of the early American republic do tend to use tropes of wildness to describe natural spaces, it is also clear, looking at these texts, that the very landscapes they purport to describe are populated. Native Americans are an almost constant presence in the narratives discussed in my study, and the authors often define white masculinity in relation to—or in opposition to—Native American men. Thus a wider sense of the cultural and historical context within which these white male authors were working can help us to better understand how they derived their notions of masculinity and how these shape, and are shaped by, their conceptions of the natural world.

Several ecocritics, following Buell, and in the spirit of Newman's recommendation, have focused their attention on early American literature, and their thinking has been influential on my own. Among these is Thomas Hallock, author of *From the Fallen Tree: Frontier Narratives*,

Environmental Politics, and the Roots of a National Pastoral, who offers a corrective to the underhistoricized and inadequately argued aspects of some of early ecocritical forays into early American literature. Hallock surveys the politics of environmental imagination from the late colonial era through the early national period. Hallock focuses especially upon how his chosen texts register the interaction of the westward march of Euro-American settler culture; the rise of systematic, informed attention to the natural landscape, typically with the aid of native and other subaltern local informants; and the emergence of a pastoral self-conception of the rootedness of national culture arising in part from a vicarious identification with the increasingly subjugated or relocated indigenes, notwithstanding a certain lingering sense of guilt and accountability toward their displacement. Hallock examines a series of texts that share a cartographic conception of regions that breaks down and eventually is abandoned under pressure of internal contradictions and data overload as national landscapes become more thickly settled and mythified.

Methodologically, Hallock works on the border between historical and literary studies. He draws upon yet differentiates himself from environmental history, which he deems insufficiently receptive to literary imagination and from ecocriticism, which he rightly criticizes as underhistoricized. Most environmentally oriented literary scholarship, Hallock notes, begins with the Romantic period, even though authors from the colonial period were obsessed with North America's natural environment. Two limitations constrain Hallock's book. One is its apparent lack of a central argument. Second, and related, is a tendency to understate the chaotic and/or intractably irrational aspects of his materials, even when the topic in question is textual ambivalence or indecisiveness. So, for example, the element of wide-eyed wonder in William Bartram's persona becomes flattened, and the extent to which Natty Bumppo steals the show in Cooper's *The Pioneers* and threatens to derail the author's nationalist project is minimized.

These are qualities, I would argue, that should be foregrounded when discussing these texts, rather than relegated to footnotes or ignored altogether. Still, Hallock's book offers a useful model for how an ecocritical approach benefits from a greater emphasis on the historical texts being examined.

In David Oates's multigeneric work of literary criticism, *Paradise Wild: Reimagining American Nature*, Oates argues that the misapplied myth of Eden has mired Americans in a hopeless "Paradise Lost" mentality that belies the true, ever-present wildness in our lives. He contends that mourning for a lost paradise is a dead end that cannot help us combat the real damage we're doing to ourselves and the rest of the world. He proposes a healthy re-mythologizing of the Eden story as a way of celebrating "wildness"—the Eden in each moment and in each cell, that cannot be lost. Oates attempts to tread the narrow line between the idea, inspired by the work of William Cronon and others, that nature, wildness, and wilderness are constructions, and traditional environmentalism, which suggests that "the real" is to be found in wilderness places, far from the corrupting reach of civilization. His project resonates with my own in that my project, like Oates's, attempts to rediscover and recast the ways that people have thought about certain ideas, and certain texts, from the early American republic. I build on Oates's work by offering close readings that are, I hope, grounded in history, attentive to environmental concerns, and sensitive to language.

Timothy Sweet's compelling study, *American Georgics; Economy and Environment in Early American Literature*, offers a useful model for this kind of scholarship in his enlightening examination and contextualization of key environmental ideas in writing from the earliest promotion of the New World to the nineteenth-century global perspective of George Perkins Marsh. The title of Sweet's book indicates an important intervention in the notion of the pastoral

and its particularly potent American manifestation, which, with its characteristic resistance to history and technological innovation, Leo Marx analyzed in his classic study *The Machine in the Garden*. The pastoral has come to mean any writing that privileges a rural ethos, the country over the city, or a special relationship to wilderness. Sweet, however, revives the distinction in Virgil's writing between his *Eclogues*, which represent the natural world as a locus of leisure, timelessness, and natural plenty, and the *Georgics*, which represents a natural world requiring labor, management, and human intervention. His use of the term "georgics" highlights his central concern of making human labor visible, thereby addressing questions that occupied early writers and still vex us: "What is the relationship between humankind and the rest of nature? What ought it be?" (5). The answers vary over three hundred years, but, Sweet argues, are hamstrung by the emergent capitalist and liberal notions of private property and possessive individualism. In lucid analyses informed by current environmental thinking, Sweet demonstrates how the European exploration of the Americas opened up a whole new realm of "systemic" economic thought. Still, Sweet gestures only obliquely toward issues of gender in this study, even though women's work, as farm wives and as farmers in their own right, was different from men's and changes the calculus. Furthermore, America's "agrarian ideal," described by Henry Nash Smith as "a cultural symbology of a classless, democratic, fee-simple empire of yeoman farmers" (6), which informs nineteenth-century georgic discourses, likewise erases women and their labor and instrumentalizes the feminine in ways that Sweet's account of the economic and environmental debates do not fully recognize. A fuller analysis would ask *how* and *why* women are excluded from these male-authored texts, and what the implications of these omissions, both social and environmental, might be.

Although this study is primarily a work of literary criticism, it requires a rootedness in the environmental history of early America. Of tremendous value in studying the relationship between frontier ideology and its real effects on the ecology of the regions that bear on the literature of my study is William Cronon's 1983 book *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. This book shows that Anglo-America was founded on a philosophy of unfettered capitalism and massive environmental waste. Although Cronon's argument is more nuanced than a simple portrait of ecologically ignorant Puritans leveling the "howling wilderness" that surrounded them, he does argue that the social and political invasion of Indian New England entailed a host of "fundamental reorganizations in the region's plant and animal communities" (vii). Much of the changing ecology of New England, Cronon argues, was the result of the colonists' "exclusive sense of property and their involvement in a capitalist economy" (viii). "Capitalism and environmental degradation," he explains, "went hand in hand" (162). Cronon's study is of particular value because it demonstrates the clear relationship between the way European colonists thought about landscape and the ecological effects of this ideology.

Two historians who have examined the relationship between frontier ideology and the relations between Anglo-Americans and Native Americans—which, I argue, lies at the heart of white Americans' sense of masculinity, as well as the American landscape—are Robert F. Berkhofer and Peter Silver. Berkhofer's book *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, argues that white Americans, even from the earliest stages of colonization, tended to homogenize widely different Indian tribal groups into a monolithic category, "the Indian." Various images were attached to this imaginary creation, ranging from the "noble savage" to the bloodthirsty and vengeful warrior. In every instance, Berkhofer argues,

the image served the needs and desires of white Americans. Silver, though he alludes to events in nearby colonies, focuses on remarkably diverse Pennsylvania to explain how the fear and shock aroused by Indian attacks during the Seven Years' and Revolutionary War changed all that, breaking down shared stereotypes. Instead, the political debate began to center on the suffering of country folk, testing the loyalties of any thought in sympathy or, worse, collusion with “our savage neighbors.” Making liberal and judicious use of pamphlets, sermons, petitions, news accounts, private correspondence, poems and plays, Silver demonstrates how the emergence of “the anti-Indian sublime” ennobled and empowered the previously downtrodden, casting them as victims of unspeakable horrors. This anti-Indian campaign, rhetorical and martial, drew the Europeans together, diminishing prejudice among them even as it hardened after the wars into a recognizable racism toward the tribes. The geographical specificity of Silver’s study is particularly helpful because it has helped me to guard against the tendency to generalize about national trends: a fallacy that the authors in my study often subscribe to, but that can be misleading when trying to place these texts in conversation with one another.

An especially germane work, for the purposes of my study, is Jane T. Merritt’s *At the Crossroads*, which provides a richly detailed look into the complex relations of Indian and white individuals and communities on the mid-Atlantic frontier from 1700 to 1763. The thesis of Merritt’s book is that in the late seventeenth century, Indians and whites met along the Pennsylvania frontier and, for a time, co-existed peaceably, their lives increasingly linked by bonds of commerce and kinship. These bonds eventually frayed because “in negotiating their differences, they redefined themselves and each other” (4). In the end, diverse native peoples—the Munsee, Unami, Shawnee—came to identify as “Indians” while the equally diverse European settlers—Scots-Irish, German, English—all became “white.” Ironically, the very closeness and

familiarity of the “middle ground” along this frontier fertilized racist thinking, which, in turn, fueled violent outbursts like the Paxton Boys’ massacre. Interwoven with the story of the deterioration of the middle ground is an account of the relationships of empires and their subjects. The greatest strength of Merritt’s work is her careful attention to the diversity within white and Indian populations and their changing relations with each other and with various imperial powers. Merritt tracks the changes in how various residents of the Pennsylvania frontier recounted the early history of Indian-white contact. As the middle ground crumbled, Indian residents attempted to resurrect the golden era of William Penn. But by the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War, Indians and whites had settled on an account of history that asserted irreconcilable differences.¹⁰ Because many of the works I discuss in my study focus on the “middle ground” between European-American communities and Native American communities, Merritt’s book is helpful for defining and characterizing this middle ground. This is of particular importance because the authors I discuss are all driven by various ideological agendas and are therefore inclined to view the frontier and the Native American people who live there through the lens of these ideologies. Merritt’s book has helped me to sort through these various ways of representing this middle space. In the following chapters of my study, I approach particular texts with the understanding gleaned from the insight that ideologies—in this case, ideologies of masculinity—have a demonstrable effect upon the way men treat both other people and the natural world, and are therefore worthy of our close analysis.

¹⁰ Merritt, unfortunately, sometimes ascribes instrumentalist explanations for Indian and white actions, thereby subtly replicating the dichotomized identities that her work sets out to historicize and deconstruct. Indians always act to preserve culture; whites always act to supplant Indian culture. For example, Indians deployed baptism as a “tool for survival” (98), “manipulated the new morality [of the missionaries] to exercise power within the community” (142), and strove to “reposition the balance of power in their favor” (266). Europeans sought to manipulate Indians, attempting to “enforce behavior” (213), created “ideal Indians for whom they had a variety of uses” (270), and wished Indians would “somehow fade into the background of a larger white world, or even die” (271). These depictions are undoubtedly apt at one level, but they fail to capture the more intimate and conscious motives of individual people.

Chapter 1 begins with an examination of a line from Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* in which the book's narrator, James, reminds his imaginary correspondent that "when you were here, you used, in your refined style, to denominate me the farmer of feelings" (23). I argue that Crèvecoeur defines the American man as one whose emotional roots, attaching him both to his family and to the landscape, derive from working the land. Crèvecoeur's vision for America is a country of yeoman farmers, but his idealized America is fraught with the kinds of contradictions that I have attempted to outline in this introduction: he imagines a manhood defined by intimate connection to the land, but the people most identified with sort of relationship to the natural world—Native Americans—are a source of fear and anxiety for him. I explain the tensions experienced by Crèvecoeur in terms of literary critic Dana D. Nelson's observation that masculine virtues in the early republic, particularly because they are still influenced heavily by the community-oriented values of the colonial period, were "seemingly inexhaustible and contradictory" and that American men were expected "to internalize and balance incompatible and even antagonistic claims as an expression of their 'own' personal civic responsibility" (12). Crèvecoeur's sense of manhood is situated between his identification with his life as a farmer and his fantasy of moving to the frontier to live among the Indians. This internal antagonism, I argue, applies not only to Crèvecoeur's sense of self as a man, but also to his relationships to the natural world.

Whereas Crèvecoeur straddles "ideal" masculinities of the colonial period and the republican period, and whereas he wrestles with his sense of national identity, Quaker botanist William Bartram does not appear to suffer from such identity struggles. In his 1791 book *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the*

Chactaws. Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of Those Regions; Together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians, which describes his peregrinations in the American South, his many natural history observations, and encounters with Indians, Bartram maintains a virtually unshakable optimism and cheerfulness with respect to his own masculine identity *vis-à-vis* the various people he encounters along his way. This is especially noteworthy because Bartram fits into the overall scheme of Revolution-era American manhood in some odd and ambivalent ways. During his travels Bartram made many drawings and took notes on the native flora and fauna he encountered, an activity that raised questions about his manhood, particularly among the Indians. In 1774, he visited a principal Seminole village at Cuscowilla, where his arrival was celebrated with a great feast. He met Ahaya the Cowkeeper, chief of the Alachua band of the Seminole tribe. When Bartram explained to the Cowkeeper that he was interested in studying the local plants and animals, the chief was amused and began calling him “Puc-puggy” (the “Flower Hunter”)—a term of both derision and affection, since it implies that Bartram was not sufficiently manly to be a “real” hunter, but also that he posed such a little threat that he was permitted to explore the Seminole lands unmolested. This passage—and others in which Bartram provides some insight into Native American perspectives—is of particular interest because Bartram does not merely impose Euro-American stereotypes upon Native Americans, but seems to make a sincere effort to understand their cultures and even their worldviews. Bartram, I argue in Chapter 2, embodies a form of manhood that is consistent with his Quaker beliefs: one that was built on respect for the natural world and for other human beings, but that was also brave and stubbornly independent.

Chapter 3 argues that for Thomas Jefferson, the Lewis and Clark expedition had a much more ambitious purpose than merely mapping and cataloguing their findings along the Missouri

River watershed, a purpose that went unstated in his instructions to the expedition's leaders. Jefferson saw Louisiana as a place where his vision for the young US could be enacted. Jefferson, in his book *Notes on the State of Virginia*, articulates an American nationalism based on natural history discoveries; he lambasts French naturalist Comte de Buffon for injudiciously suggesting that European fauna are larger and more numerous than their American counterparts. The discoveries of the Lewis and Clark expedition would bolster Jefferson's case against Buffon, as well as assert his mastery of the North American continent. Jefferson wished not only to begin the process of mapping and settling the West, but also to use this region as a staging ground for his vision of the new American man. Lewis and Clark's expedition would be the first to venture into the wilds of the American West to bring Jefferson's vision to fruition, and their journals provide important insights not only about the landscapes and native peoples they encounter, but also about their positions as representative Jeffersonian American men. Lewis and Clark see themselves as strong, decisive, and willing to use force against the Indians if necessary—but they also self-identify as reasonable, respectful, and ultimately peaceful men. This self-presentation manifests both in their interactions with natives and in their representations of the landscapes through which they travel. In the conclusion to this final chapter I discuss briefly how the surprisingly ambivalent masculinities expressed by Crèvecoeur, Bartram, Jefferson, and Lewis and Clark, and the corresponding interactions with the natural world they represent, may help us to better understand how eighteenth-century American men's relationships with nature were influenced by their masculinities, and vice-versa. This study provides a needed corrective to the idea, treated as axiomatic in academic circles, that the history of male engagements with the natural world has been unambiguously destructive. Indeed, the picture of early America that has emerged through my research is one as rich and complex as American society is today.

Chapter One: A Feeling Farmer:

Masculinity and Nature in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*

A Farmer in a Disturbed Landscape

In Letter 2 of J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*, the narrator, James, reminds his English correspondent that "when you were here, you used, in your refined style, to denominate me the farmer of feelings" (23). In this peculiar clause, Crèvecoeur reveals several of the defining conflicts for male American writers of the late eighteenth century: the clash between "refined" Europe and "rude" America, the disunity of pastoralism and frontier ideology, and the vexed relationship between reason and emotion. Due largely to the problem created by Crèvecoeur's decision to have his "letters" narrated by the fictional James, literary critics have not been unified in their interpretation of Crèvecoeur's phrase "farmer of feelings." Some have seen Crèvecoeur's locution as a nationalistic celebration of Farmer James's emotional expression, while others have treated many of James's own observations as the wry, ironic commentary of Crèvecoeur the author, whose own view is seen to be dark and cynical. A reading that preserves the tension between these interpretations, however, reveals a vacillating definition of nationhood and masculinity. From this perspective, *Letters from an American Farmer* may be seen not only as a manifesto of early American nationalism but also as a book that reveals the deep ambivalence that Crèvecoeur felt about the burgeoning American nation, about his identity as a man, and about the natural environment. Crèvecoeur's treatment of these interrelated dimensions of American has important implications not only for James but for the North American continent itself.

Although *Letters from an American Farmer* was published in 1782, it was written in 1774, two years before the Declaration of Independence, a fact that becomes especially significant when we consider the relationship between Crèvecoeur's vision of masculinity and Thomas Jefferson's. When Jefferson asserted in 1776 that "all men are created equal," he was making a claim about American national identity: that American political life would offer greater participation for common men than England's system did. True, some people were more "equal" than others—this claim to equality excluded those who were not white, male, property-owning American citizens—but Jefferson's formulation dramatically redefined how these American men viewed their political entitlement and their masculinity. The Declaration of Independence defined manliness in terms of resistance to tyranny: "[The King] has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people." A man, for these revolutionary thinkers, was by definition one who opposed the absolute power of the king. Rotundo maintains that "[t]his new addition to the old definition of manhood had subversive implications, for a social order based on rank could only exist where men were encouraged to submit" (16). Resistance to English authority is not in itself enough to embody true manhood; a man must be well-read enough to understand the *injustice* of British colonial rule and courageous enough to take action to stop it. Jefferson's definition implies the ability to *reason*, which, Crèvecoeur argues, is an important outcome of his time spent plowing his fields.

Crèvecoeur locates the domain of the American farmer as a middle space between the coast, characterized as bustling with commerce but susceptible to the "vices" of Europe, and the frontier, imagined as a region where even white settlers are vulnerable to adopting the barbaric ways of the Indians. Richard Slotkin explains Crèvecoeur's intentions: "In this realm, nature does not seduce man to savagery, but provides a moral and philosophic tutelage: bees teach the

good of labor and organization, the spider teaches patience, the care of soil and kine suggest an economy of enlightened self-interest and mutuality of benefits” (71). In order to successfully occupy this space and accomplish the goal of transforming the landscape to make it suitable for the kind of American society that he envisions, Crèvecoeur insists, men must be healthy, vigorous, and strong. In so doing, they will realize his vision for an impressively self-reliant, self-assured, and self-sufficient nation of men. The greatest praise in Crèvecoeur’s writings is reserved for men who provide for themselves—and even for unexpected visitors—by what they have grown and raised on their own land, by their own physical labor. He venerates those who choose to stay on a single parcel of land and develop a real intimacy with that place, and he disparages those who farm a single plot for a short time and then move on: “[M]y nearest neighbor . . . is very dissatisfied with his plight, his location, the condition of his land, which is every bit as fertile as mine; he plans to make some profit from his miserable improvements and move elsewhere. But he will never be happy anywhere and will waste his life away in false starts” (*Journey* 111). The stubbornness of the speaker in this scene is closely tied to the ideal of individual achievement that was beginning to appear in the writings of eighteenth-century authors: in this case, attachment to a particular plot of land is linked to a man’s perseverance and courage.

Although Crèvecoeur advocates a model of farming that connects men intimately with the landscapes they inhabit, it would be a gross overstatement to say that he was an ecological thinker, even for his time. In fact, it would be far more precise to say that he was guided first by his agrarian ideology, and that only through that lens can his love for nature be fully understood. Partly Crèvecoeur’s agrarianism is a function of his desire to break out of the increasingly polarized political discourse of his time—the split between those who supported the British

crown and those who sought American independence. Crèvecoeur's feelings on the issue of independence seem to have been ambivalent; in his early years he worked as a surveyor for the French during the French and Indian War. Later, he became an American (and thus British) citizen, changing his last name to St. John to de-emphasize his French heritage. As the American Revolution loomed as a possibility, Crèvecoeur remained loyal to Britain—at least on the surface—though his writings often valorize the independent spirit of the “new man,” the American. His own divided loyalties, in fact, led to great tragedies in his own life: his arrest, the destruction of his farm during an Indian raid, the death of his wife, and his years-long separation from his children.¹¹ Because Crèvecoeur was forced to leave his family behind and flee to France when the war broke out, he never was able to make himself fully at home in either Europe or North America. His devotion to his agrarian ideal, however, remained steadfast, as his later writings attest.

According to Timothy Sweet, “the literature of agrarian improvement”—of which *Letters from an American Farmer* is a prominent example, along with important texts by Jefferson, John Spurrier, Benjamin Rush, and others—“developed a discourse of rural virtue that linked economic intensification (sedentary farming methods and market embeddedness) to national political stability” (99). Thus, according to Sweet, manly virtue was linked with inhabiting a particular plot of land over a period of many years—indeed, over a period of generations—and cultivating the same fields repeatedly. This practice, however, flew in the face of sustainable

¹¹ Biographers Gay Wilson Allen and Roger Asselineau offer the following account of this period in Crèvecoeur's life: “After months of torment by his patriotic neighbors because he stubbornly refused to support their quarrel with Great Britain, [Crèvecoeur] left his wife and two younger children in Chester [New York] under the protection of friends, and with his six-year-old son, whom he apparently intended to take with him to France, reached New York City, which almost from the beginning of hostilities had been occupied by the British army. Ironically, the British arrested him on the suspicion that he was an American spy employed by General [George] Washington—and Washington had given him a pass through the American lines. After three very miserable months Crèvecoeur was released from prison, but during the following terrible winter he and his son nearly starved, and his health was permanently undermined” (xix).

agricultural techniques practiced by Native Americans in the same ecosystems. The Cherokee, for instance, practiced a form of agriculture in which they cleared a small plot—or girded enough trees to allow sunlight to pass through the forest canopy—and cultivated it for a few seasons. Before the nutrients in the soil became depleted, they would abandon this plot and cultivate another, thus allowing the forest to reclaim the former plot and rebuild its nutrient base.

Some European-American settlers emulated Native American farming methods, but Crèvecoeur and other agrarian idealists of the period rejected backwoods farming. Spurrier, whose 1793 book *The Practical Farmer* was dedicated to Jefferson, articulates the concerns that prevented men like Crèvecoeur from endorsing Native American farming techniques:

The farmers in general, in this country seem to have studied the cultivation of no grain but maize or corn. . . . It suits the Indians, as they have such a plenty of land, but being of a roving disposition they are not longer in a place than just to have two or three crops, and then remove to another spot. That cultivation may suit some of the farmers here, as well as the Indians (from whom they learned) as long as they can do like them; that is when they have wore out their land, to remove to another place; but when this country increases in population, and gets thicker inhabited, the case will be altered. (124-25)

Spurrier's concerns are couched in practical terms, but in *Letters from an American Farmer* Crèvecoeur worries aloud that backwoodsmen “contract the vices” of the Indians among whom they lived; his reluctance to borrow agricultural practices from them is an extension of his association of virtue with long-term cultivation of individual plots. This agricultural model, we understand in retrospect, led to widespread depletion of topsoil, which in turn led to a future need for far more labor—as well as fertilizer—in order to make lands agriculturally productive.

Equally ecologically damaging was Crèvecoeur's enthusiastic advocacy for the draining of swamps. He recommends this practice in part because it would transform seemingly useless swamplands into fertile fields—even though the draining of swamps and the removal of trees caused the rapid loss of the soil's ability to hold nutrients. Surely one of the reasons for Crèvecoeur's advancement of the idea of swamp draining is a fear of disease, particularly malaria, which was associated with the insects that lived there. He also probably supported this practice because of the anxiety early settlers felt toward wild predators, particularly wolves, which were associated with swamps and other ecosystems where humans were unlikely to go. This fearful attitude toward wild predators was likely an inheritance from the Puritans. An anonymous essay published in 1635 recommended that townspeople be held responsible for removing the “harboring stuffe” from the “Swampes and such Rubbish weast grounds” that may have provided cover for wolves (Cronon, *Changes* 133). The town of Scituate, Massachusetts, pledged to clear and fill nearby swamps because they represented “an annoyance and prejudice to the town [...] both by miring of cattle and sheltering of wolves and vermin” (qtd. in Stilgoe 157). The town's use of the word “prejudice”¹² is especially revealing here, suggesting that farmers' obsession with eliminating cover for wolves is as much the result of nonrational feelings as it is a real anxiety about wolves preying on their livestock (which, of course, did happen, though rarely in numbers that justified the wholesale destruction of their habitat, or the bounties many colonial governments placed on wolves in an effort to exterminate them).

¹² The *OED* defines “prejudice” as “[a]n instance of [(p)re]conceived opinion not based on reason or actual experience; bias, partiality]; a feeling, favourable or unfavourable, towards a person, thing, or class; an unreasoning preference or objection; a bias.” Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* uses the word in the following context: “A mistaken education, a narrow uncultivated mind, and many sexual prejudices, tend to make women more constant than men” (59), thus suggesting that Crèvecoeur's use of the word connotes something closer to “nonrational bias” than mere “opinion.”

The destruction of swamps throughout northeastern North America during the colonial period, which Crèvecoeur advocated, resulted in a massive loss in the region's biodiversity, as these wetlands provide unique habitat for numerous plants and animals, including pitcher plants, sundews, and numerous bird species. It also had the deleterious—and ironic—effect of depleting the region's soils of their nutrients, thus making them less suitable for agriculture. Contributing to farmers' problems was the proliferation of pests such as grasshoppers, fleas, worms, and various kinds of flies—all worsened by the rise of monocultural farming practices. Some farmers attempted to mitigate the problems associated with monoculture by planting crops on two- to five-acre plots for several years, then using them for pasture before allowing them to revert to woodland. Others rotated nutrient-depleting crops such as Indian corn with nitrogen fixers such as beans or rye in an effort to maintain soil richness. Too often, unfortunately, farmers failed to appreciate the importance of sustainable agriculture, or else they simply ignored these practices, assured that even if they were to destroy the soil on the ground where they lived, they could always pick up their families and head deeper into the continental interior. It was not uncommon, in fact, for a single family to establish farmsteads in three or four different locations.

Although Crèvecoeur wrote too early to fully understand the devastation caused by American men enacting his agrarian vision, he observes in his later book *Sketches of Eighteenth Century America* that droughts in certain areas were caused by deforestation and the draining of wetlands: “Our ancient woods kept the earth moist and damp, and the sun could evaporate none of the waters contained under these shades” (285). He notices that water tables are dropping, thus forcing settlers to dig deeper wells. This environmental destruction alarms him so much that in *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York* he quotes an early settler who offered a stinging rebuke to his contemporaries: “The second generation will regret bitterly that

their fathers destroyed so much!” (257). He fails, however, to acknowledge his own complicity in encouraging the large-scale destruction of the region’s forests and wetlands. While these later accounts complicate Crèvecoeur’s agrarian idealism in the sense that they begin to show the results of Crèvecoeur’s ideology—and that of other men of his time—nowhere does he seem to offer an apology, or a revision, of his earlier work.

The results of the first wave of westward movement were catastrophic. Crèvecoeur lamented the destruction of the forests of northeastern America, partly the result of New Englanders’ fondness for warm houses and large fires burned in open fireplaces, which, as William Cronon points out, “were four or five times less efficient than the closed cast-iron stoves of the Pennsylvania Germans,” later refined by Benjamin Franklin (*Changes* 120). A typical farm household in northeastern America—the very people whom Crèvecoeur thought would populate the rest of the US—consumed thirty to forty cords of firewood every year, enough to require the cutting of about an acre of forest annually. New Englanders’ waste of firewood astonished European observers such as Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm, who noted that “an incredible amount of wood is really squandered in this country for fuel; day and night all winter, or for nearly half of the year, in all rooms, a fire is kept going” (300). This voracious consumption of firewood, along with trees cut for lumber, ship masts, and fence posts, resulted in widespread deforestation and timber scarcities. Many New England towns experienced shortages of firewood within ten to fifteen years of their establishment, and people had to seek sources of wood increasingly farther away, thus depleting even forests many miles from the nearest major colonial settlement. Massachusetts theologian and Yale College president Timothy Dwight wrote of one Vermont town whose residents had “cut down their forest with an improvident hand: an evil but too common in most parts of the country. Unhappily it is an

increasing evil, and may hereafter put a final stop to the progress of population” (125). The possibility that settlers’ own wastefulness might halt their westward progress would have been alarming for Crèvecoeur, whose vision for America required the further settlement and taming of the country in order to make way for a nation of farmers. That their own practices might prevent this vision from ever being enacted would have struck Crèvecoeur, always an advocate of a frugal and harmonious relationship with the land, as poignantly tragic.

Writing less than a century after Crèvecoeur, George Perkins Marsh observed of his home state of Vermont, “The ravages committed by man subvert the relations and destroy the balance which nature established. [...] [S]he avenges herself upon the intruder by letting loose destructive energies hitherto kept in check by organic forces destined to be his best auxiliaries, but which he has unwisely dispersed and driven from the field of action” (36, 42). Marsh lamented the badly eroded hillsides and silt-filled waterways that he observed just a few hundred miles from Crèvecoeur’s New York. He and others described an American landscape that had fallen victim to Crèvecoeur’s direst predictions: many places had been virtually denuded of trees, overgrazed, and stripped of their fertility. Many species, including the mountain lion, moose, beaver, lynx, and wolf, were extirpated. Formerly thriving human communities were abandoned, their inhabitants having moved west, driven by economic forces and by ideas of American masculinity that had gained force and become increasingly exploitative in the decades after *Letters from an American Farmer* was first published. Marsh laments that it did not have to be this way, that nature has “organic forces” that normally keep the “destructive energies” under control. Marsh’s comment implies that such “organic forces” might also apply to human behavior—that under normal circumstances, cultural and other forces would prevent, or at least

impede, wanton destruction of the landscape. The unbounded, nebulous vision of manliness evoked by Crèvecoeur is a function of great societal upheaval: the boundaries that normally held males' behavior in check no longer applied, or were seen as inconvenient hindrances to masculine freedom.

It is telling that in his elegiac rendering of the Vermont landscape, Marsh—like Crèvecoeur—casts the natural environment as female. Greta Gaard points out the dangers inherent in a worldview that genders the natural world in this way, as in the common “Mother Earth” formulation that was appropriated from Native American cultures and used, for example, in Crèvecoeur’s phrase “broad lap of our great Alma Mater.” Because a mother’s supply of nurturing energy is seen as limitless, such a metaphor, when applied to real ecological systems—or to real mothers!—becomes perilous.¹³ James’s impression of the “great Alma Mater” is consistent with Gaard’s interpretation; he does not imagine the resources of the natural world as having limits. There is no emphasis in the text on crop rotation to extend the soil’s nutrient base, nor is there any particular mention of frugality when it comes to the consumption of raw materials. Although James does form a strong enough connection to his farm that it causes him terrible anguish when the outbreak of war forces him off his land, he does not spend enough time there to develop a complete sense of its ecological capabilities and limitations. Here, Kolodny suggests, “Crèvecoeur’s hurried sale of the *Letters* to a London publisher in 1780 does, in a sense, establish the essential unity of author and *persona*: both had fled their farms in the wake of the Revolution” (*The Lay of the Land* 63).

¹³ Gaard suggests, for example, that the notion of inexhaustibility has been applied to old-growth forests, where the effects of unrestrained logging have been devastating (303).

The American Farmer: A New Man

Crèvecoeur's thinking reflects the shift that was occurring during the late eighteenth century, when aristocratic conceptions of manhood were denounced as feminized, lacking manly resolve and virtue, while rugged individualism was increasingly becoming the model for white American masculinity.¹⁴ Scholars have struggled to discern Crèvecoeur's own position in *Letters from an American Farmer* because the extent of James's sincerity, as well as the extent to which Crèvecoeur identifies with James, is ambiguous. Since the 1960s, most scholars have viewed James as a kind of straight man to Crèvecoeur's more cynical and ironic position. According to this interpretation, James is sincere, but Crèvecoeur the author is challenging the extent to which the European values touted by James are as admirable as James seems to think. But for Crèvecoeur, whose own national identity is deeply divided, Europe still possesses enormous cultural resources, especially in the fields of education and publishing, while America holds potential that must be realized by hard work by means of "the axe or the plow" (23). Indeed, Crèvecoeur himself remained loyal to the British crown nearly until the start of the American Revolution. Crèvecoeur's James is an American man whose sense of himself is conflicted: he admires his cultural inheritance from Europe and is reluctant to discard it altogether, but he also resists what he perceives to be Europe's emasculating qualities.

James's identification of himself primarily as a farmer enables him to avoid choosing between being a rugged American and a refined European. These opposing emotional forces emerge in the passage immediately following the "farmer of feelings" comment, in which James

¹⁴ Michael Kimmel writes, "Critiques of monarchy and aristocracy were tainted with a critique of aristocratic luxury as effeminate" (14). He cites a letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, in which Adams asks, "Will you tell me how to prevent riches becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly?" (qtd. in Kimmel 14). Adams thus associates effeminacy with the "luxury" of the British and hopes to see American men strike out on a different path toward the virtues of self-sufficiency, self-rule, industriousness, and moderation.

affectionately contemplates his wife: “[W]hile she either spins, knits, darns, or suckles our child, I cannot describe the various emotions of love, of gratitude, of conscious pride, which thrill in my heart and often flow in involuntary tears. I feel the necessity, the sweet pleasure, of acting my part, the part of an husband and father, with an attention and propriety which may entitle me to my good fortune” (24). Even within this remarkably emotional scene, Crèvecoeur injects doubt regarding his narrator’s capacity for emotional expression; his claim that he “cannot describe” his emotions runs counter to his process of describing them. It would be possible to ascribe this to the common rhetorical convention during Crèvecoeur’s time of claiming words to be inadequate to express deep emotions, if not for the line that follows this one, in which James says that “these pleasing images vanish with the smoke of my pipe” (24). James is apparently unable to commit to a particular emotional response to his experience, thus producing this strange vacillation between intense passion and cool apathy.

While Crèvecoeur reveals a great deal regarding James’s hopes and anxieties about living on the frontier, the opinion of James’s wife—whom D. H. Lawrence aptly calls “Amiable Spouse,” a sly reference to Crèvecoeur’s failure to refer to her by name and his portrayal of her unwavering compliance—remains obscure (25). Her silence in the book is conspicuous. She is present in several of the book’s chapters, but always in idealized form: she works hard, she maintains a cheerful disposition, and most important from James’s perspective, she knows her place. As historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has shown, the role of an ideal woman in eighteenth-century America was “to obey—to do the wash, to go to the field if necessary, to do whatever else her husband required” (108). Amiable Spouse’s gender role is much better defined than is James’s; she never expresses doubt or uncertainty, and she never fails to perform her uxorial tasks—although, of course, because Crèvecoeur the author controls the narrative, we cannot

know what the real woman behind the “Amiable Spouse” idealization might have felt. The only time she comes close to challenging her husband’s authority is when she wonders whether writing is the proper work of a man; she suggests that plowing and sowing are acceptable activities but wonders how his writing will affect his ability to fulfill his manly responsibilities. Her gentle admonitions only contribute to James’s uncertainty about his masculinity. Despite his wife’s steadfast sense of her own gender role, James complains that although sometimes he feels the “spontaneous courage of a man,” he cannot maintain this sense of fortitude: “[T]he next instant a message from my wife, sent by one of the children, puzzling me beside with their little questions, unmans me; away goes my courage, and I descend again into the deepest despondency” (201). There is nothing here to indicate that Amiable Spouse has transgressed against her husband, nothing to suggest that some external event has upset the balance of their relationship; rather, it is the narrator’s own sense of internal struggle that “unmans” him. When James’s attention is drawn away from his labor in the fields and into his wife’s domestic sphere, he begins to doubt himself.

The relationship between James and his wife, then, appears superficially harmonious but is actually tainted by James’s doubts about his manhood. This is important because it is instructive not only about gender relationships but also about the relationship between American men and the land. Annette Kolodny rightly highlights the passage in which Crèvecoeur advocates becoming “an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater” (70); she establishes that Crèvecoeur’s use of the phrase “Alma Mater” implies a definition of America “that had at its base the literal acceptance of a return to primal harmony within the bosom of a maternal landscape and, as a consequence of that return, a rebirth” (26). Psychologically, the conception of a feminized landscape allows James to imagine returning to a

womblike protective space where he can be sheltered from the atrocities of the coming Revolutionary War. Through his labor and his intimacy with the landscape, he might define himself as a new kind of man, one who embodies both “feminine” European values and “masculine” American ones.

Just as Amiable Spouse cheerfully and compliantly produces children and performs her wifely duties, the landscape would similarly provide, yielding both abundant sustenance and an appropriate setting for self-discovery; he alleges that the farmers he observes in eighteenth-century America “grew rich very fast” because “the virgin earth abundantly repaid them for their labors and advances” (*Sketches* 231). Indeed, Crèvecoeur implies that landscape, through the force of labor, can be so productive that there would be no need for competition between men; every man would have sufficient wealth to live a happy and fulfilling pastoral existence. Here James imagines a life where he can establish a new identity without having to relinquish any of his former allegiances. Kolodny observes that as the book proceeds from the idyllic early letters to the later ones “through his various contradictions and ambivalences,” Crèvecoeur exposes the problem that “what appear to us as mutually exclusive attitudes—the rights of personal possession and the dream of communal brotherhood—are never explicitly recognized” (65). In part because James is never able to recognize that his restlessness is largely the product of his contradictory urges, he never has the opportunity to test his own axiom that “[m]en are like plants; the goodness and flavor of the fruit proceeds from the particular soil and exposition in which they grow” (71). Like a crop whose development is truncated by drought or neglect, James never takes root in a place; he never has a chance to come to full maturity as a man. Instead, he is forced to move, at least in his mind, from his farm, instead imagining a new environment where he might enact the pastoral dream that he celebrates in the book’s early

chapters. Ultimately, he is forced to choose movement—and the uncertainty that comes with it—over fidelity to a particular place that will likely be overrun by war. Instead, the frontier becomes the new setting for him to construct his vision for a new kind of American man, one whose identity is built less on agrarianism and more on his isolation from European influences.

Evan Carton accounts for Crèvecoeur's vacillation and alienation as symptomatic of a cultural moment in which "traditional anchors—religion, family structure, local community, economic system, nationality—seemed shifting and insecure [and] gave rise to . . . the effort . . . to anchor the self in the ostensible immediacy and inalienability of feeling" (24). Crèvecoeur's contradictory impulses suggest a manhood deeply rooted in love for family but also distracted by the urge to strike out for the frontier, where the immediacy of experience might provide him with a stronger sense of his manliness, allowing him to seek his fortune and test his mettle against the dangers of the wilderness. As a sort of confirmation of this interpretation, James's contradictory impulses are dramatized in the book's final chapter, in which James does, at least imaginatively, contemplate such an escape.

Many readers and scholars have placed Crèvecoeur within a group of thinkers who were challenging the authority of the British government by asserting the sovereignty of the individual. To a large extent, this is justified; Crèvecoeur does often define America in opposition to European traditions and values. Crèvecoeur, like Jefferson, imagines America as a place where the old hierarchies of Europe have been—or are soon to be—eliminated. America, according to Crèvecoeur, "is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything and of a herd of people who possess nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one, no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury" (*Letters* 67).

Crèvecoeur's mention of the latter item in this list, the industrialists who had only in recent decades come to be a significant economic force in Europe, shows that Crèvecoeur was aware of the changes that were sweeping across Europe, but that he probably did not anticipate the rise of industrialism in America or the dramatic transformative effect it would have on both American society and the American landscape. His emphasis on agriculture over industrialization is one more way that Crèvecoeur believes Americans are different from the English. Notwithstanding Crèvecoeur's omission of people who were outside the purportedly non-hierarchical system he describes—Native Americans, African Americans, and women, to name three obvious exceptions—his language mirrors that of the revolutionaries who were soon to wrest control of America in the name of liberty. Meanwhile, Crèvecoeur depicts the soon-to-be-deposed English in this way: "These Englishmen are strange people; because they can live upon what they call bank notes, without working, they think that all the world can do the same. This goodly country never would have been tilled and cleared with these notes" (*Letters* 48). Thus farming, for Crèvecoeur, is not only about self-sufficiency and connection to the land, but about *work*, and it is this latter activity that differentiates Americans from the English.¹⁵ From this perspective, it is possible to interpret Crèvecoeur's efforts to teach his son from infancy about the pleasures of farming as a nationalistic enterprise: he wants to teach his son not to be like the English. While the nationalistic ambitions in Crèvecoeur's work should not be overlooked, it is important to remember that Crèvecoeur wrote during a time when Jeffersonian national identity was in its embryonic stages, before the publication of the Declaration of Independence and toward the end of a period when submission to authority was not considered antithetical to manliness. Chapter 3 deals more substantively with Jefferson's ideas about manliness, as well as his own conception

¹⁵ What Crèvecoeur does not explain, of course, is how English farmers managed to plant and harvest their crops without doing any work. One wonders if James's fictional correspondent might have raised this point, and if so, how James might have been forced to adjust his argument.

of the American landscape—a vision that is consonant in some ways with Crèvecoeur’s agrarianism, but that is much more explicitly concerned with the formation of a new nation.

As the words “feelings” and “pleasures” suggest, Crèvecoeur’s emphasis on agriculture is not only a means for economic progress, but also for emotional satisfaction. As Wilson and Asselineau point out, Crèvecoeur “had chosen farming not out of desperate necessity, but because he liked the country life and the activities of the farm. Tilling the soil and raising plants and animals gave him not only a livelihood but also esthetic pleasure” (40). For Crèvecoeur this deeper, non-material happiness is a direct product of one’s relationship with the land. Throughout his writings—not only in *Letters from an American Farmer*, but also in his later works *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York* and *Sketches of Eighteenth Century America*—Crèvecoeur envisions a landscape populated by farmers, each of whom might live miles from his nearest neighbor. Such isolation from other people leaves a man—for the presence of women is mentioned only occasionally in Crèvecoeur’s writing—alone on the land. Crèvecoeur’s formulation fosters a real sense of intimacy with the place, and this intimacy has moral implications not unlike the obligations a man accepts when he takes his wedding vows. This deep sense of connection and fidelity to the landscape is the motivation behind the touching, if heavily sentimentalized, scene in which Farmer James attaches a seat to the beam of his plow so that his infant son can join him when he is out plowing his fields. He argues that maintaining an intimate relationship with the land is healthy for the child’s body and spirit: “the odoriferous furrow exhilarates his spirits and seems to do the child a great deal of good, for he looks more blooming since I have adopted that practice; can more pleasure, more dignity, be added to that primary occupation?” (*Letters* 55). Here Crèvecoeur’s sense of the relationship between manliness and the natural world is clearly articulated: James’s role as a father is not only to

provide moral guidance and vocational instruction to his children, but also to teach his son the joys of working the land, to have a strong sense of place. In turn, he hopes, his son will come to share his love of farming and his emotional connection to the physical location of the farm.

Crèvecoeur explicitly argues that as boys reach adulthood, their manhood is defined by their relationship to the land: “Men are like plants; the goodness and flavor of the fruit proceeds from the peculiar soil and exposition in which they grow. We are nothing but what we derive from the air we breathe, the climate we inhabit, the government we obey, the system of religion we profess, and the nature of our employment” (71). The list in this passage implies a clear and direct relationship between landscapes and ideas, and that the air one breathes and the government under which one lives are of equal importance in developing one’s manly character. Crèvecoeur goes so far as to suggest that men are as much a product of their natural environment as plants are. He repeatedly emphasizes the importance of fathers teaching their sons to love the land so that they will want to remain on the land and continue to cultivate it as their fathers and grandfathers did. Such language implies a relationship between people and nature that in many ways parallels Carolyn Merchant’s “partnership ethic,” a “relationship between a human community and a nonhuman community in a particular place, a place that recognizes its connections to the larger world through economic and ecological exchanges. It would be an ethic in which humans act to fulfill both human needs and nature’s needs by restraining human hubris” (56). Surely Crèvecoeur would find plenty of common ground with this description; he often writes of the need to restrain humans’ desire for material wealth. The path to happiness that he imagines for himself, for his children, and for all Americans is one based on intrinsic pleasures rather than material ones.

Communities, Individuals, and Changing Masculinities

In certain ways, Crèvecoeur embraces the community ideal that dominated the thinking of men in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial New England. As E. Anthony Rotundo has pointed out, “Before 1800, New Englanders saw a close link between manhood and ‘social usefulness’ . . . Men who carried out their duties to family and community were men to admire” (13). Men were seen to have passions that were essentially different from those of women, but it was a man’s responsibility to control his passions through reason. Rotundo explains, “[W]hether a man was struggling with manly or effeminate passions” such as a taste for luxury or idle pleasures, “he was assumed to have greater reason than women—and it was reason that helped a person to govern the passions” (11). For Crèvecoeur, farming is a quintessential manly vocation because it combines the qualities of usefulness and reason in ways that no other occupation can. It is useful, of course, because farmers are well positioned to provide for all their families’ needs and to provide for their neighbors during hard times. The farmer provides the most basic needs—food and clothing—for the survival of a community. This was essential, of course, for American colonists who wanted to prove their ability to survive on the North American continent without constant support from Great Britain. Additionally, Crèvecoeur makes the point that the act of plowing, in addition to being intrinsically pleasurable, also leaves a man plenty of time to think: “it is as we silently till the ground and muse along the odoriferous furrows of our lowlands, uninterrupted either by stones or stumps; it is there that the salubrious effluvia of the earth animate our spirits and serve to inspire us . . . of all the tasks which mine imposes upon me, ploughing is the most agreeable because I can think as I work” (47). He contrasts farming with life in the cities, where people are susceptible to the complete relinquishment of their reason: “How I hate to dwell in these accumulated and crowded cities! They are but the confined theater

of cupidity; they exhibit nothing but the action and reaction of a variety of passions which, being confined within narrower channels, impel one another with the greatest vigour” (*Sketches* 243).

The work of the farmer, then, allows him to control his passions better than men who perform other kinds of labor, particularly those who live in urban spaces. In the act of cultivating his fields, he cultivates his reason. His harmonious relationship with the land enables his governance over his emotions.

While farming was thought by colonial Americans to be a noble and manly endeavor, it was not merely a farmer’s contribution to his community that made it an attractive occupation. It is possible, indeed, to overstate the extent to which colonial Americans, even those in the Puritan Northeast, embraced a community ethic over an individual ethic. T. H. Breen, who has written prolifically about the history of Virginia, argues that “despite their occasional cooperation in political affairs, Virginia gentlemen placed extreme emphasis upon personal independence. . . . The great planters required immense tracts of fresh land for their tobacco. Often thousands of acres in size, their plantations were scattered over a broad area from the Potomac River to the James” (83). This runs against the conventional thinking, articulated by Rotundo, that men in the American colonies valued communities over individuals. Breen suggests that the patterns of individualism he observes through the diaries, letters, and travel accounts of rural Virginia are likely a product of geography; the colonists in rural areas were more inclined to embrace an ideology based on self-sufficiency and distance from one’s neighbors than would people living in cities or coastal towns based on a mercantile economy. Even though Crèvecoeur’s own farm was at Pine Hill, New York, in the Hudson Valley north of New York City, his agrarian ideal is closer to that of the Virginia planters described in Breen’s essay than the Puritan pilgrims who settled New England, the Dutch colonists who founded New York, or the French, with whom

Crèvecoeur had largely severed his connections by the time he wrote *Letters from an American Farmer*.

Crèvecoeur, then, did not seek a tightly knit human community; rather, he wanted farmers to maintain their distance from one another, even as he rejected materialism and imagined an intimate partnership between individual farmers and the particular plots of land on which they worked. The fraternal bonds formed between men would be the result not of close ties to one another or intimate work partnerships, but an absence of competition fostered by mutual self-sufficiency. “I envy no man’s prosperity,” Farmer James declares (38). As long as a man “behaves with propriety, and is faithful, he is caressed, and becomes as it were a member of the family” (59). The “family” he describes here is partly a human network, but also a web of relationships including the natural environment. Merchant posits that despite Crèvecoeur’s efforts to distinguish American farmers from their European counterparts, he shared the attitudes of American farmers who “inherited an organic worldview from their forebears in Renaissance Europe, who likewise drew livelihood directly from the land. Through this prism they saw themselves as interacting with a nature that was alive in all its interconnected parts” (*Columbia* 62). Annette Kolodny contends that “[t]ranslated into political terms, this hailed a reign of peaceful and prosperous fraternity, the power lusts and aggressions of a decaying Europe no longer necessary nor possible” (*Lay* 55). Crèvecoeur’s view, then, is a product of his particular historical and political context, but in a way that was largely consonant with Merchant’s idea of a “partnership ethic.”

The most significant way in which Crèvecoeur would likely depart from Merchant is in his emphasis on land *ownership* as the path to an intimate and ethical relationship with nature. Plots of land, in his formulation, should be of ample size, so that each farmer can be virtually

self-sufficient and so that he will have enough land to divide among his children. This would have been a special source of anxiety for someone writing at the end of the eighteenth century, as it was becoming increasingly difficult for farmers to pass on sufficiently large tracts of land to the children of their traditionally large families. Merchant explains, “Although many farmers adapted to shrinking land by selling out and moving to larger tracts of cheaper lands farther west, it was becoming clear by the early nineteenth century that cheap land was not as inexhaustible as it had once seemed” (*Columbia* 64). Rather than dwelling upon his awareness of increasing pressures on land, however, Crèvecoeur emphasizes the ideal of the yeoman farmer and what the country will look like once his vision becomes reality. Crèvecoeur’s writings are almost always tinged with his imaginings of what the land will be like, once it has been populated by a nation of yeoman farmers. Accordingly, the environmental consciousness embodied in Crèvecoeur’s writings is always colored less by what is actually there than by its potential: “What rich pasture land the colonists of this region will enjoy when the river banks, the brooklets’ beds, the swamps, and the bottom lands are drained, converted into pasture land and plied with the scythe!” (*Journey* 42). Carolyn Merchant rightly points out that the Puritan vision for America, which still holds significant influence over Crèvecoeur’s,¹⁶ implies a return to an Eden-like paradise, in which “men become the agents of transformation. They become saviors, who through their own agricultural labor have the capacity to re-create the lost garden on earth” (*Earthcare* 28). During the eighteenth century, even those who appreciated the spectacular beauty of “wilderness” could not seem to imagine leaving these places in their current state.

¹⁶ Ellwood Johnson, for instance, argues, somewhat counter-intuitively, that Puritans embraced a particular form of “individualism” that “survived especially in the habit of judging others by their characters of mind and will, rather than by rank, sex, or race. . . . The cases of conscience as bases for legal codes had effected an unusual relation between the citizen and the law” (110), which Crèvecoeur later observed. Although the Puritans certainly did not embrace the kind of individualism that Americans came to understand by the late eighteenth century, they may have planted the seeds that eventually made this ideology possible.

Virginia planter and surveyor William Byrd, for example, after praising the view from a beautiful campsite “upon an Eminence, which overlookt a wide Piece of low Grounds, cover’d with Reeds and watered by a Crystal Stream, gliding thro’ the Middle of it,” suddenly turns his attention to land’s potential: “This has a most agreeable Effect upon the Eye, and wanted nothing but Cattle grazing in the Meadow, and Sheep and Goats feeding on the hill, to make it a Compleat Rural Landscape” (178). Although such thinking reflects an admiring view of the natural world in some ways, it is dangerous from an ecological perspective, as it emphasizes only the land’s potential, rather than its current ecological state. It imposes on the land an idealized vision for the future, rather than an appreciation for what is already there.

Even when Crèvecoeur writes travel narratives about his observations and experiences, his thoughts are directed toward his future vision for America. In this way Crèvecoeur borrows from a strategy of colonial natural historians and travel writers, among them William Wood and John Josselyn, whose books served as promotional tracts encouraging Europeans to set across the Atlantic and emigrate to the New World. Crèvecoeur’s writings are different from these earlier volumes in that they concentrate almost exclusively on *agriculture*. Crèvecoeur, at least, imagines that his emphasis on farming is something new, although Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden*, has argued persuasively that Crèvecoeur’s book “projects the old pastoral ideal, now translated into a wholly new vocabulary, on to the American scene. . . . Here the writer is no mere observer or dreamer; he *is* the American husbandman—a fact which underscores the literalness of the pastoral ideal in a New World setting” (108). What is new, then, is not the emphasis on farming, which of course emerges from a long pastoral tradition in European literature, but the *literalness* of this ideal as expressed in Crèvecoeur’s writing, as opposed to its largely metaphorical function in European pastoral writing. Crèvecoeur does not depict pastoral

landscapes as imaginative constructs that enable him to escape from the values and lifestyles of the city; he literally works the land himself, and he believes that an agrarian ideal is the one around which the new nation should be built. This, I believe, is largely a product of the cultural and political context in which Crèvecoeur was composing his “letters.”

When Crèvecoeur writes about what it means to be an American, he is referring as much to masculine identity as he is to national identity, both of which were experiencing a period of profound transformation. The connection between nationalism and masculinity—and the destabilizing uncertainty of both—is evident in the nationalistic discourse of the late eighteenth century. Physician Benjamin Rush’s late eighteenth-century essay “Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic,” for example, argues that the goal of education in America is to train boys to live according to the ideals of a new nation, independent from England: “That republic is sophisticated with monarchy or aristocracy that does not revolve around the wills of the people, and these must be fitted to each other by means of education before they can be made to produce regularity and unison in government” (9). Rush attempts to catalog the qualities that should be taught to boys in the American education system, with the idea that these boys will grow to embody the perfect union of American nationhood and manliness. Rush and other writers encouraged men to be physically vigorous yet intellectually nimble, pleasant yet willful, mild-mannered yet assertive, and self-reliant yet devoted to the good of the community. Dana D. Nelson points out that Rush’s list of masculine virtues is “seemingly inexhaustible and contradictory” and that American men were expected “to internalize and balance incompatible and even antagonistic claims as an expression of their ‘own’ personal civic responsibility” (12). Due to substantial shifts in cultural values during the period, it was virtually impossible for a single man to embody the many masculine traits that were deemed admirable. Although Rush

himself did not see his list of ideal traits as inherently irreconcilable, Crèvecoeur's narrative repeatedly shows a pattern of struggle between the paired traits that Rush identifies. In light of this ambitious and often contradictory notion of masculinity and nationhood, we must reconsider the view—held by readers and critics alike for the first 175 years after the book's publication—that *Letters from an American Farmer* is a relatively straightforward nationalist tract of social and natural history (Winston 249). Such a definitive project would have been impossible during a time when the American colonies were on the verge of declaring war against England, when men felt their national and masculine identities tugged in opposite directions. Crèvecoeur in particular is particularly difficult to stamp with the “nationalist” label, especially in 1774 when the book was written, since his own national loyalties were so complex. Crèvecoeur did believe that an important social experiment was underway in North America, and he did believe that Americans were essentially different from the British, but he was not a supporter of the Revolution.

Crèvecoeur the Idealist, Crèvecoeur the Cynic

Since the 1960s, critics have challenged the notion of Crèvecoeur's project as a straightforwardly nationalist one by situating the book's first few chapters within the context of the whole book, treating the book as a continuous narrative rather than as a series of documents to be considered individually.¹⁷ These critics tend to fall into one of two camps. The first group reads the letters as following a model of alternating optimism and disillusionment; as the country

¹⁷ My own view is that while it is helpful to think of the letters as documents that were in conversation with one another, it is impossible to establish a continuous narrative thread through the letters. Ian Finseth offers this explanation: “Many readers of *Letters* have casually assumed that the work's form reflects a deliberate and significant choice on Crèvecoeur's part to create meaning through narrative momentum: through a linear progression of events through character development. The problem is that Crèvecoeur's London publisher, Davies and Davis, dramatically rearranged the original manuscript, such that what might seem the author's organizational plan really reflects that of the editors, or even, perhaps, such that the final form of the book is little better than accidental” (312).

marches toward war, James struggles to maintain the optimism associated with his agrarian idealism. But even the most idealistic letters are marked by what Norman Grabo calls “curiously wrong notes” that undermine the notion that Crèvecoeur’s intentions were primarily optimistic. Grabo argues that James’s fond recollection of attaching a seat to his plow so that his infant son can join him, while appearing pleasantly pastoral, recalls Odysseus’s refusal to participate in the war against Troy, instead avoiding conscription by pretending to be insane by plowing with an ox and horse (168). While Grabo’s example seems a stretch, it does usefully acknowledge the presence of numerous contradictions that undermine any sense of unitary purpose. And of course, Odysseus’s refusal to participate in the war against Troy does mirror Crèvecoeur’s reluctance to join either the revolutionaries or the loyalists in the American war for independence.

The second critical camp emphasizes the divide between Crèvecoeur the literary artist and the foolishly naïve Farmer James, thus highlighting Crèvecoeur’s own frustration and disillusionment with the burgeoning American nation. Elayne Antler Rapping, for example, considers James a “straw man” to the more sophisticated Crèvecoeur (713). While such a reading rightly credits Crèvecoeur’s book with a literary artifice that earlier scholars had ignored, it does not adequately account for the ambivalent masculinity in James’s account, which suggests doubts that are deeper and more psychologically complex than mere displeasure with the state of late eighteenth-century America. At the same time, though, it avoids discussing the extent to which Crèvecoeur the author does identify in many ways with James the narrator.

The notion of Crèvecoeur as ironic author smirking at James’s ingenuousness also fails to address the book’s odd shifts in narrative perspective. The “farmer of feelings” descriptor, for instance, is filtered through several layers of distancing: Crèvecoeur the author, who disguised

his French ethnic background by changing his name to St. John, presents this information through James, who, in turn, quotes his unidentified correspondent.¹⁸ The alienating or distancing strategies Crèvecoeur uses in *Letters from an American Farmer* are even more pronounced in *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and New York*, published in 1801. In this three-volume work, Crèvecoeur's unnamed narrator recovers a series of manuscripts from a trunk aboard the shipwrecked *Morning Star* and translates them from English into French (thus necessitating, for speakers of English, a translation "back" into English). Further, the overwhelming majority of the text is told through dialogue, so the narrator's own perceptions are often obscured by those of the men—for the only speaking characters in the narrative are men—who are speaking, or by the narrator's companion, Gustave Herman. A range of opinions on the question of the day—the future of the American republic, the virtues of farming, the character of Indians, the relationship between whites and the natives, and the large-scale changes happening to the landscape—permeate the book, but it is often difficult to determine Crèvecoeur's own position. Additionally, much of this text is extremely fragmented, with the "translator" frequently interjecting to point out that a section of the manuscript is missing, or that it is waterlogged and illegible. Such strategies might be read as a facile means by which Crèvecoeur avoids the responsibility to be faithful to his own experience, or to tell his story in a linear fashion, with full transitions between the various sketches. As Crèvecoeur's biographer and great-grandson Robert de Crèvecoeur suggests, "It seems reasonable to assume that in re-

¹⁸ Grantland S. Rice argues that these disassociating or distancing strategies "elide potentially dangerous political affiliations in a rapidly nationalizing world[,] . . . address the plurality of rising national audiences and . . . mediate the changes in attitudes within and between these audiences" (108). Similarly, Christine Holbo contends that the layers of narrative perspective in *Letters from an American Farmer* reveal Crèvecoeur's uncomfortable position as "an international wanderer, both immigrant and émigré; as an individual with intellectual and personal affiliations in many nations, but without a basis for his sense of identity in one national tradition" (57). Christopher Iannini describes Crèvecoeur as "an author whose concerns were continually refashioned by his itineracy" (202). These notions of Crèvecoeur's struggle for a balance between conflicting identities come closer to accurately explaining the book's peculiar narrative voice because they acknowledge Crèvecoeur's own uncertain national and political loyalties.

working notes he took while in America, there were certain *non sequitur* passages, and certainly many lapses of memory . . . yet this ancient literary device is not overworked and the *Voyage* is relatively smooth” (*Journey ix*). Notwithstanding Robert de Crèvecoeur’s dubious assertion that this strategy is not overworked—indeed, it is one of the most obvious and distracting features of the text—it also misses a key point. While it may be true that Crèvecoeur utilizes these distancing strategies to elide textual problems, he also may well be doing it to address his uncertainty about his own identity as an American man.

What most critics do not address, however, is that the narrative distancing is not only a question of Crèvecoeur’s national identity, but also his masculine identity. He is a wanderer not only between nations but between masculinities. It is understandable that this aspect of Crèvecoeur’s writing has not been widely understood, since Crèvecoeur only rarely employs the word “manhood,” since he never refers to “manliness,” and since the term “masculinity” does not come into common usage in English until nearly one hundred years after the publication of *Letters from an American Farmer*. This is where a retrospective view of masculinity, complete with modern scholarly terminology, may be especially useful. R. W. Connell demonstrates that at any given moment in history, “hegemonic” definitions of masculinity—referring to “the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life”—exist alongside alternative or “subordinated” ones (78). What makes Crèvecoeur’s position along this continuum especially difficult to discern is that he was writing precisely at a time when one version of masculinity, one based on the community-oriented ideal of the colonial period, was being challenged by revolutionary ideals based on rebellion and individualism. It is thus impossible to ascertain whether Crèvecoeur embraced a “hegemonic” or “subordinate” notion of masculinity because the status of ideal, “mainstream” American masculinity was itself in a state

of flux. And even if it were possible to say whether masculinity according to “British” ideals versus “American” ideals was dominant at the moment of Crèvecoeur’s writing, Crèvecoeur was loath to take a clear position favoring one over the other. It is possible to say only that societal upheaval was the order of the day, and that Crèvecoeur’s sense of personal identity was deeply entangled in the politics of his time.

An interpretation that accounts for shifting identities as an integral part of the text acknowledges the unstable nature of American national and masculine identity during Crèvecoeur’s time. During the eighteenth century, of course, few white Americans were more than a generation or two removed from Europe, and most still felt a strong kinship with their European ancestors. If the first few letters can be read as a celebratory portrayal of an American farmer, they must also be read as celebrating a farmer whose sense of national allegiance remains in question. In expressing his admiration for the American people, James exclaims, “I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations” (69-70). While James claims to be celebrating the “melting pot” that represents this allegedly new race of people, he cannot seem to help celebrating the diversity of *Europeanness* he observes in America. In so doing, he raises doubts about whether there is really anything so new about “the American, this new man” (69). Rather, what seems to please him most about American people is their recombination of existing European races and traits.

James may be “American,” but Crèvecoeur’s account suggests that the very idea of American identity is one of multidimensional and often conflicting loyalties. These doubts surface when James discusses the question of whether or not to join the American Revolution: “Shall I discard all my ancient principles, shall I renounce that name, that nation which I once

held so respectable? . . . On the other hand, shall I arm myself against that country where I first drew breath, against the playmates of my youth, my bosom friends, my acquaintance?” (203).

James never directly answers the question. Here, of course, the distance between Crèvecoeur the author and James the narrator is at its greatest. Crèvecoeur, as we know, did not “first draw breath” in England, but in France. If anything, Crèvecoeur’s allegiance to France likely would have made him sympathetic to the revolutionary cause. Most critics have assumed that James refuses to participate in the war because of his pacifism—a reasonable conclusion, since James does characterize himself as a “lover of peace” (202)—but the passage itself suggests that his reticence stems instead from his reluctance to commit to a particular side. James’s hesitation may have less to do with principled resistance and more to do with two other factors. First, he faces the very real threat of persecution by those on both sides of the conflict. Situated between English settlements and those of various Indian tribes, some of whom sided with the British during the American Revolution, Crèvecoeur’s farm became vulnerable to attack by either side. The British in particular viewed the city of New York and the Hudson Valley as key strategic locations, forcing the delegates of the revolutionary Provincial Congress to flee far upriver, eventually settling in the town of Kingston. These constant political and military activities would have made residents of the area leery of declaring their allegiance to either side. Second, his uncertain identity—both in terms of nation and masculinity—frustrates and immobilizes him. This uncertainty, in turn, has important ramifications for Crèvecoeur’s understanding of masculinity.

The title of the chapter from which the “farmer of feelings” comment arises—“On the Situation, Feelings, and Pleasures of an American Farmer”—suggests Crèvecoeur’s motives.

This chapter, the first after his introduction, extols the virtues of farming as the primary mode of

life for men on the North American continent. While *Letters from an American Farmer* is a work of fiction, the distance between Crèvecoeur the author and James the narrator becomes virtually nonexistent when it comes to their respective attitudes about the pleasures of farming.

Crèvecoeur's biographers Gay Allen Wilson and Roger Asselineau assert that "Crèvecoeur loved farming" and that "[e]ven if *Letters from an American Farmer* is not actual autobiography, he certainly identified with James the correspondent, and thus we can assume that the author was speaking his own sentiments" when he extolled the virtues of farming (39). Crèvecoeur's own views are closest to James's when he writes about the life of a farmer—one that Crèvecoeur himself knew well on his farm at Pine Hill—and most distant when James speaks about politics. This pattern repeats itself in Crèvecoeur's other writings; he consistently expresses through his various narrators that in the pantheon of noble vocations for eighteenth-century Americans, farming occupies the highest position. In *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York*, he is most effusive in his praise when he travels through the New York and Pennsylvania countryside and meets farmers who, in the span of only a few years, have transformed the countryside from forest to fields and pastures. He contrasts farming, for example, with the tyranny he associates with a manufacturing economy, and with the savagery he ascribes to hunting and trapping.

Understood as a manifestation of Crèvecoeur's uncertain masculinity, the phrase "farmer of feelings" takes on a richly paradoxical quality. Because it is James's English correspondent, and not James himself, who coins the phrase "farmer of feelings," a layer of distancing is added to this phrasing, making Crèvecoeur's own view difficult to discern. Does James's correspondent intend a sly ridicule of his American friend, suggesting that his emotional tendencies are a sign of his lack of manliness? Does he mean to praise James for being the sort of man who expresses

his feelings freely? James believes that his “refined” correspondent must assume that the emotions of “him who daily holds the axe or the plough” are “rude,” and he exclaims, “[H]ow much more refined on the contrary those of the European, whose mind is improved by education, example, books, and by every required advantage! Those feelings, however, I will delineate as well as I can, agreeably to your earnest request” (23–24). To what extent should the reader take James’s earnestness at face value? What sort of “feelings” is James talking about? Rotundo argues that American men of the late eighteenth century were developing a new sense of masculinity, in which men were jettisoning colonial virtues of restraint and submission and instead coming to value the forceful outward expression of assertiveness, personal ambition, and desire for power and wealth (16). These values do emerge in James’s testimony, but we also see a strong sense of family loyalty, a desire for fraternal community, and an urge for intimacy with the land that is as sentimental as it is driven by the accumulation of material wealth. Indeed, in *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York*, Crèvecoeur rejects the notion that the primary goal of farming should be the acquisition of wealth: “Those people who believe they’ll become rich by farming deceive themselves. There is no money in farming in these northern states. The seasons move too swiftly; winters are too long and labor still too dear” (36). Instead, Crèvecoeur emphasizes the importance of “improving” the land, which he defines in these terms: “to clear the land’s surface of these giant trees at the foot of which man feels so insignificant, to clean and burn everything that encumbers growth, to drain the swamps, to plant and to fence in the orchards and to keep the roads open, and to build homes and barns” (37). Crèvecoeur’s vision for America necessitates the metamorphosis of the American landscape to suit the desires of the yeoman farmers he hoped would populate the continent. The outcome would be one in which humans and landscape are transformed simultaneously; as one settler

remarks, “I hold as very important the happiness derived from being one of the first sprouts of this society, of seeing fields and orchards replace useless forests; muddy swamps converted to pasture land; the upstanding immigrant considered in Europe the riff-raff, becoming a substantial colonist and respectable citizen” (*Journey* 98). The transformation of the land, then, mirrors the transformation of humanity. European peasants are likened to “useless forests” waiting to be turned into fields of bountiful crops.

Oddly, though, even as Crèvecoeur reserves his most enthusiastic praise for the men who have transformed the landscape by breaking ground and plowing it, he argues that the initial surge of westward-bound settlers are the failures and misfits of society: “thus are our trees felled, in general, by the most vicious of our people, and thus the path is opened for the arrival of the second and better class, the true American freeholder, the most respectable set of people in this part of the world” (79). This is a strange observation, as Crèvecoeur himself, particularly in his wanderings through upstate New York and Pennsylvania, noted that those who cleared the land and those who began harvesting crops from it were typically the same individuals. As Crèvecoeur well knew, of course, trees had to be felled in order to grow crops, while a hunter or trapper could make a comfortable living without cutting a single tree. This paradox is important to understanding Crèvecoeur’s concerns, as it illustrates the uncomfortable disconnect between his agrarian utopianism and the realities he observed on the American frontier, where the transformation of the landscape that he so eagerly anticipated was already taking place. It suggests that Crèvecoeur’s concern was with product rather than process. This is ironic, of course, because the end result he hopes to achieve looks a lot like the eighteenth-century countryside of England or France, while the landscape in transition—the landscape marred by stumps, by yet-to-be-drained swamps, by eroded hillsides, the sort of landscape depicted in the

Thomas Cole painting that I described in the opening to this dissertation—is quintessentially American during Crèvecoeur’s time.

Even as Crèvecoeur advocates for a massive agricultural revolution in North America, he is not entirely insensitive to its consequences. In one passage in *Letters from an American Farmer* he describes the pernicious presence of wasps,¹⁹ which build their nests in his fields and pose an ever-present threat to the unwitting farmer who runs his mower over the hive. “[T]he only remedy” to this nuisance, he asserts, “is to lie down and cover our heads with hay, for it is only at the head they aim their blows; nor is there any possibility of finishing that part of the work until, by means of fire and brimstone, they are all silenced” (64). While Crèvecoeur does suggest that the improvement of the land necessitates the destruction of the yellow jackets, he also expresses regret: “though I have been obliged to execute this dreadful sentence in my own defence, I have often thought it a great pity, for the sake of a little hay, to lay waste so ingenious a subterranean town, furnished with every conveniency and built with a most surprising mechanism” (64). What is especially noteworthy in this passage is the emotional subtlety with which Crèvecoeur handles the destruction of a hive of yellow jackets—creatures that, almost any farmer would allow, have the potential to make a farmer’s life utterly miserable. That James would go out of his way to express such admiration for yellow jackets is clear evidence of his respect for living things, even though his lifestyle choices mean significant disruption of the animal and plant communities that surround and inhabit his farm.

If we view James as a deeply conflicted character in an evolving narrative, the chapter “Distresses of a Frontier Man,” whose title is suggestive of this internal conflict, is instructive. Crèvecoeur’s emphasis on the word “man” reverberates throughout the chapter, in which James

¹⁹ It is likely that Crèvecoeur refers here to yellow jackets in the genus *Vespula*, a common type of social wasp that usually nests in holes in the ground. Because yellow jackets are wasps, Crèvecoeur’s terminology is technically correct. Indeed, yellow jackets are known simply as “wasps” in English-speaking countries outside North America.

struggles with the meanings of masculinity in his life: the various responsibilities associated with his roles as husband, father, and male American. The particular use of the word “distresses”—and not, for example, “problems” or “predicaments”—suggests that James’s difficulties are not external but emotional. They are “distresses” of masculine self-identity. The chapter begins with James’s “wish for a change of place,” a wish that has no readily apparent origin; the best clue we get is James’s claim that “[t]he climate best adapted to my present situation and humour would be the polar regions, where six months’ day and six months’ night divide the dull year” (198). James, like Crèvecoeur, is an itinerant man, a man with no fixed sense of place. His proposed solution to this “distress” is to move his family away from his neighbors, whom, he says, move too easily “from loving to hating and cursing one another,” to the frontier (202). There, he says, he and his family will live among the Indians, where he will learn the manly activity of hunting, where his family will adopt the customs of the particular tribe in closest proximity to them, where they will learn a new language, and where they will sleep on bearskins. Here James will become exactly the kind of man that he chooses to be, free from the constraining and contradictory pressures imposed on him by an uncertain and volatile society. Crèvecoeur’s notion of the frontier as a place to escape is not exactly new. Scores of European writers, starting with Christopher Columbus and continuing through the colonial period, had figured the wilderness of the North American continent as *terra incognita*, as a blank spot on the map where they might enact their fantasies and desires. The different spin, in Crèvecoeur’s case, is that rather than figuring wilderness spaces as Eden, he sees the frontier as a retreat, as a place where he might be liberated from war and other related sociopolitical forces.

James and his family never actually go to live with the Indians. But this chapter does illustrate the central conflict of the various letters. Writing from the perspective of uncertain

identity, Crèvecoeur at first attempts to identify himself primarily as a farmer, which he hopes will permit him to remain politically unaffiliated. When revolution breaks out, the dangers of war make it impossible for him to find refuge in agrarian neutrality. Rather than select one of the warring sides, his narrator, James, imaginatively relocates to the frontier, where he will not have to choose. Instead, he and his family can forge an entirely new identity, free from European and colonial influences. Although this letter adopts a distinctly different tone, one that scholars have construed as a sign of Crèvecoeur's disillusionment, it is entirely consistent with James's preservation of his multidimensional (and often confused) identity as a man. Retreating to the frontier is the only choice that allows for this possibility—one that is nonetheless fraught with “distresses.”

James is clearly mesmerized by romantic, Rousseauian assumptions about living among the Indians. “Without temples, without priests, and without laws,” he writes, “they are in many instances superior to us,” thus defining Indians in terms of the absence of restrictive European customs and practices (216). The notion that Indians—particularly Indian men—were “without laws” was a persistent fiction that continued well into the nineteenth century. In fact, the cultural attitudes of many American Indian groups explicitly placed constraints on their behavior toward nature by gendering the natural world. Farming, for example, according to Smohalla of the Columbia Basin tribes in the mid-nineteenth century, was an unacceptable insult to the land: “You ask me to plow the ground! Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's breast? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest” (qtd. in Merchant, *Death* 28). This prohibition against tilling the land illustrates, as I discuss in the next chapter, why some Indian tribes refused to adopt Thomas Jefferson's proposal that they become “civilized” by converting to an agricultural economy. Nevertheless, the fiction of lawless Indian men was one that served an

important function for white men. Nicholas Biddle, writing of the Lewis and Clark expedition, said of the Shoshone chiefs, “[Their] manliness of character may cause or it may be formed by the nature of their government, which is perfectly free from any restraint,” including the freedom to barter away his wives and daughters if he so chooses (421). Not only does a man do what he chooses but he also has complete control over women, a notion that must have been appealing to eighteenth-century men whose relationship to women was changing. For the settler who found this view appealing, the morality of such a patriarchal mindset was unimportant. What matters is a man’s uncontested right to complete self-determination and the maintenance of his authority in relationships with women and with the natural world. By moving his family to the frontier, James might free himself from whatever it is that “unmans” him when one of his children delivers him a message from his wife.

While the freedom he associates with Indian culture is appealing to James, he is also fearful of the Indians; he frets that his children “will be caught by that singular charm” of Indian culture, permanently lose their “European manners,” and perhaps even abandon him altogether, preferring to live the rest of their lives as Indians (214). This ambivalence causes him great consternation. He is suffocated by the difficulty of treading the line between the corrupting influence of European society and the “savagery” of Indian culture. Indeed, elsewhere in his writings Crèvecoeur reveals a veritable obsession with the purported cannibalism of Indians. Throughout *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York*, Crèvecoeur’s anxiety about native cannibals creeps into the narrative: “This primitive organization, while destroying the idea of a common interest, was for all time a never ending source of quarrels, hatreds, revenges, and wars more implacable than those of tigers, since the conqueror devoured the conquered, as they still do today; while the tiger, however hungry, never eats his own kind”

(50). Because in *Journey* Crèvecoeur employs distancing strategies similar to those he uses in *Letters*, it is not entirely clear whether or not Crèvecoeur himself really believes the Indians are cannibalistic. It is clear, however, that Indians are a source of great discomfort for Crèvecoeur; on the one hand, they symbolize a freedom and physical vigor; on the other, they represent savagery and degeneracy.²⁰ For Crèvecoeur Native Americans embody a masculinity that is vigorous and unrestrained, but also dangerous and potentially barbaric.

Defining New Directions

While Crèvecoeur adopts the rhetoric of egalitarianism and equal opportunity, particularly when advancing the idea that immigrants can come to America to create a new nation of farmers, he uses subtle strategies to differentiate himself from these other men. The difference between Crèvecoeur's attitudes about hunting and those of his neighbors suggests the ways he was not like them. In some ways Crèvecoeur seems to fear becoming too much like other farmers who, as Wilson and Asselineau point out, participated in hunting routinely to supplement what they could grow or raise on their farms. This would have been especially true for farmers just beginning to cultivate their particular plot of land; the procurement of wild game would have been necessary for their families' survival during the first few winters before they were able to produce enough surplus during the growing season to get them through the winter. Crèvecoeur may be clinging to his identity as a "farmer of feelings" whose emotional attachment to place is made possible in part by his book learning. Indeed, Crèvecoeur's decision to write his "letters" is one that both ties him to other farmers in America and alienates him from them, as the epithet "scribbling farmer," attributed to travelers passing by James's house, attests (19).

²⁰ Crèvecoeur's worst fears became reality when his farm at Pine Hill was burned during an Indian raid in 1780, after he and his family abandoned it when war broke out between the American colonies and Great Britain.

Additionally, he fears that if he were to take up hunting, the lure of the chase would likely disincline him to the farming life, instead causing him to adopt the regressive, antisocial habits of the hunter. Of course, the irony in James's anxiety regarding hunting is his implicit assumption that this activity is tempting; otherwise it would be unnecessary for him to resist the urge to take part in it. By resisting frontier life so strenuously, James thus acknowledges its appeal.

Equally problematic is James's—and, by implication, Crèvecoeur's—failure to acknowledge that the middle space Crèvecoeur imagines for his nation of farmers is land currently (in Crèvecoeur's time) occupied by Native Americans. By the time European-American settlers moved into some western lands, of course, many of these were indeed unoccupied—largely the result of the catastrophic spread of disease, as well as various wars waged to drive out the Indians. At times Crèvecoeur seems oblivious to Indians' ownership of the very land that he hopes to populate with a nation of farmers; he refers to the landscape as wilderness, and the Indians who live there—or who had once lived there—are scarcely a footnote to the text. At other times, however, Crèvecoeur does acknowledge the legitimacy of Indian claims to the land, especially in *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York*. During the course of his journeys, the book's unnamed narrator has several meetings with Native American men, and in each case they are portrayed as men with dignity, who possess wisdom and knowledge of the land, and who are friendly and polite toward visitors. Crèvecoeur's ambivalent treatment of Indian men is in large part a function of his discomfort with their masculinity, a problem that he never resolves in any of his books.

James fears the two conflicting masculinities within himself: the feminizing yet rational tendencies of European culture and the “manly” yet uncontrollable qualities associated with the frontier. James longs for a place where his multidimensional masculine identity can be

preserved, a place where one never has to declare one's allegiances, where his only responsibilities are to his family, his immediate neighbors, and to the land itself. Crèvecoeur suggests, though, that America's potential to be such a place exists only in the imagination. Leo Marx points out that in Crèvecoeur "there is no mention of Arcadia, no good shepherd, no stock of poeticisms derived from Virgil, no trite antithesis of country and town,²¹ no abstract discord between nature and Art . . . yet all of these traditional features of the pastoral mode are present in new forms supplied by the American experience" (114). Just as Crèvecoeur's frontier dreams begin to take shape, however, he begins to consider the daunting task that it will be. Not only will James himself need to make major lifestyle adjustments, his wife also will have to learn to cook various indigenous corn recipes, to bake squashes and pumpkins in ashes, to smoke meat, and to "cheerfully" adopt the manners and customs of the Indians. Optimistically, he declares, "Surely if we can have fortitude enough to quit all we have, to remove so far, and to associate with people so different from us, these necessary compliances are but subordinate parts of the scheme" (222). To discover this special kind of "fortitude" is central to James's fantasy. In James's perfect world, the rigid boundaries between spheres—between Native American and white culture, between gendered spheres, between contested masculinities—are broken down. If James wishes, he could be the one who smokes the meat and bakes squashes. He can adopt the Native American customs that appeal to him and reject those that do not. He is free to participate in activities such as hunting—though he expresses suspicion of this activity because he thinks it leads to barbarism—while at the same time nurturing plants and animals and permitting himself emotional attachment to the people and landscapes that he loves.

²¹ On this point I differ with Marx. As I have shown earlier in this chapter, Crèvecoeur sharply contrasted rural life with what he saw as the corruptedness of urban life. In fact, Crèvecoeur asserts that "the true Americans" are those who live not in the cities, but on farms. Crèvecoeur also places whalers and fishermen, in whom Crèvecoeur shows significant interest in *Letters from an American Farmer*, into the same category as farmers, as they are farmers of the sea. Whether or not these antitheses are "trite" is, of course, a matter of conjecture.

Crèvecoeur's ambivalence toward Indians and the frontier life extends to his attitudes about hunting. Wilson and Asselineau observe that Crèvecoeur "did not hunt for deer, bears, and other wild animals, like his neighbors, for he strongly disapproved of hunting because of the effect it had on human character" (42). This was partly a function of Crèvecoeur's fear of the frontier and the savagery he associated with it. Wilson and Asselineau also speculate that Crèvecoeur's "opinion of hunting had been influenced by sociological theories on the origin of human society which he had encountered in his philosophical reading. An early theory was that migratory hunters preceded agriculturalists, who needed to remain relatively stationary in order to plant, cultivate, and harvest their grains and other plant food" (42-43). According to this view, it is Crèvecoeur's reading that is the most important influence upon his thinking: he is influenced by pre-Darwinian notions of the inexorable advancement of human society from "primitive" societies toward "civilized" ones. In this way Crèvecoeur differs from Farmer James, a simple rustic who could "describe our American modes of farming, our manners, and peculiar customs, with some degree of propriety, because I have attentively studied them," but whose "knowledge extends no farther" (7-8).

Slotkin suggests that one way Crèvecoeur explores getting around the problem of his anxieties about miscegenation and cultural degeneracy is embodied in the frontier naturalist as exemplified by his contemporary, William Bartram, a fellow admirer of the natural world who described having been "seduced by these sublime, enchanting scenes of primitive nature" that he observed on one journey through the Southern Appalachians (69). Surely this sort of reconnaissance mission is the motivation behind Crèvecoeur's own *Journey into Northern Pennsylvania and the State of New York*, which came a decade after Bartram's *Travels*. In his

writings, however, Crèvecoeur never discovers within himself a Bartram-like serenity in his interactions with Indians or in his wilderness experiences.

Because James and his family never actually go to the frontier, the compromises he suggests are not merely “subordinate” parts of the project of relocating to the frontier, but potential deal-breakers. For a person of Crèvecoeur’s cultural background, living among the Indians might have seemed appealing in theory, but it would have been too dramatic a change in lifestyle for someone of his “refined” European sensibility. More important, Crèvecoeur devotes a great deal of energy to valorizing the hard-working yeoman farmer in the book’s other chapters; to suggest—in a way that seems out of step with the other chapters—that agrarianism is *not*, after all, the solution to his conflicted identity makes his project even more complicated. Crèvecoeur suggests that even complete withdrawal from society fails to address these core issues of confused masculine identity, while bringing about the loss of the agrarianism that he has worked so hard to describe. It is a bittersweet moment in the narrative, since it suggests that the yeoman-farmer masculinity that Crèvecoeur creates in the other letters is admirable but not practicable in the real world of eighteenth-century America, an effect that is heightened by the editors’ decision to place the frontier chapter last. The sense of insecurity and uncertainty associated with frontier life may clarify why Crèvecoeur himself, when the Revolutionary War broke out, returned to Europe rather than head west.

James never achieves the kind of sustained devotion to place that he envisions in the more optimistic and agrarianism-oriented letters, such as “What Is an American?” and “On the Situation, Feelings, and Pleasures of an American Farmer.” As a result, he tends to see the landscape as a backdrop for exploring his precarious masculine identity, rather than as a unique place with its own stories and peculiarities. James must somehow wrestle with the simultaneous

urges to nurture a single plot of land, to head for the frontier where he can be free to choose his own masculinity, and to relocate to feminized Europe. It should not be surprising, then, that James never fully develops the intimate relationship with the land that is central to some of the book's early chapters. This is partly the result of factors that are beyond James's control; the American Revolution, for instance, would be detrimental to his bucolic vision for the land, whether or not he decides to cast his lot with one side of the fighting or the other. Kolodny rightly argues that figuring the landscape as female made possible a land ethic based on possession and domination. What Kolodny and other critics have failed to note is the extent to which the indeterminate state of American manhood was an important factor in preventing men like James from achieving a deeper, more intimate relationship with the land. As a result, their impact on the land was at times thoughtless and at other times plainly destructive.

Meanwhile, the frontier ideology of manliness that had begun to coalesce during Crèvecoeur's time became better defined, if not more ethical, in its relationship to both women and the natural world. Carton suggests that "[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century, this identity crisis had been eased, at a cost that we continue to tally and pay, through the ideological and organizational separation of gendered spheres" (25). Crèvecoeur's distinction between the domains of Farmer James and his wife illustrate this well, and the bifurcation between male and female emotional spheres continued to widen during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although Margaret Fuller, Susan Fenimore Cooper, Henry David Thoreau, and other mid-nineteenth-century American writers would suggest alternative—and less exploitative—relationships between people and nature in the nineteenth century, it would not be until the twentieth century that such writers as Aldo Leopold and Wendell Berry would suggest an ethical relationship between men and nature based on agrarianism, thus renewing Crèvecoeur's rightful

place as a seminal figure in the American literary tradition. The men in Wendell Berry's Port William novels, for example, bear a striking resemblance to Farmer James: they are simple, hardworking people who develop an intimate relationship with the land. Their affective response to the land and to each other, rather than their desire for material acquisition, is of primary importance. And like Crèvecoeur's idealized American farmer, Berry's characters do not identify themselves first as patriotic Americans, but as members of a self-sufficient community only vaguely associated with America at large. Berry, while sometimes embracing traditional notions of the separation of gendered spheres, establishes the contemporary relevance of his male characters by imbuing them with a land ethic, a concept that is never quite able to gain traction in Crèvecoeur's book because of the constant threat of war. Because of the unstable political situation and an uncertain national masculinity that results from this instability, Crèvecoeur's land ethic never quite comes to maturity.

That the chapter "What Is an American?" is still widely anthologized, usually in isolation from the later chapters of *Letters from an American Farmer*, provides strong evidence that the truncated nature of Crèvecoeur's project is still widely misunderstood. Scholars have made strides in ascribing the tensions between the early chapters and the later ones to such factors as Crèvecoeur's transient citizenship and his previously underappreciated literary skill. To fully understand the book's ambivalences and its perplexing shifts in point of view, however, one must look not only to the nationalistic implications of the book, but to how this nationalism affected masculine identity and the landscape itself. Through such an analysis, the tragic side effects of the birth of a new American nation emerge in a much clearer way. Men such as Farmer James, who had wished to forge an ambitious new American identity that valued farm and family, suddenly had to choose sides in the struggle between the rebels and the British, or else

watch their homes be destroyed in the crossfire, as Crèvecoeur's farm at Pine Hill was when the war broke out. Not only was the American Revolution destructive to communities, farms, and families, but it also pushed the country toward an individualistic masculinity that was ultimately wasteful and short-sighted in its treatment of the land. If we read *Letters from an American Farmer* with the understanding that national identity, masculinity, and environmental concerns are deeply intertwined, we gain a renewed appreciation for what is at stake in the book's final chapter, when James searches desperately—and ultimately in vain—for an alternative to war. When James contemplates abandoning his farm, he metaphorically leaves behind a masculinity that might have enabled American men to live in harmony with the landscape that sustained them.

Chapter Two: “Men in every Sense”: William Bartram’s Mediating Manliness

Travels and William Bartram’s Botanist Boyhood

William Bartram was a man of his time, to be sure, but he would never have neatly fit into ideas about “mainstream” masculinity, either during the colonial period when he grew up or during the republican period of his adult years. Despite his own difficulty in fitting into existing modes of manliness—and his rejection of many of the values associated with these ideals—he did help to usher in the age of frontier masculinity by introducing new audiences, particularly in Europe, to the ideal of the frontier hero. Bartram was not born on the frontier, nor was he raised in a way that particularly oriented him toward wilderness adventure. Bartram was born and raised in a stone house built by his father, the famed botanist John Bartram, but unlike his self-educated father, William Bartram grew up surrounded by the trappings of scientific and intellectual inquiry. Throughout William’s childhood, his father corresponded with leading scientists on both sides of the Atlantic. The botanical garden in which William played was a well-known center for those with horticultural interests and was visited by many of the intellectual, social, and political leaders of the day. With his father’s encouragement, and surrounded by such celebrated figures as Benjamin Franklin, James Logan, Joseph Breintnall, and a host of visiting naturalists (including Peter Kalm of Sweden), the young Bartram developed an interest in science at an early age. He was privileged to have access to his father’s personal library, as well as the libraries of the Darby (Friends) Meeting and the Library Company of Philadelphia. In 1752, William entered the newly formed Philadelphia Academy (later the College of Philadelphia). Despite his training in history, Latin, French and the classics,

however, botany and drawing remained his “darling delights,” according to his father. “I’m afraid he can’t settle to any business else,” John wrote in 1755.²²

When William was fourteen years old, his father initiated him as a botanical traveler by taking him on a collecting trip to New York’s Catskill Mountains. On this trip he met Cadwallader Colden, considered by many to be the best scientific thinker in the New World; his daughter Jane, a significant artist in her own right; and Alexander Garden, the Charleston physician and botanist. Throughout his early years, William spent much of his free time studying and drawing the native plants and birds he encountered. So good were his illustrations, in fact, that Royal Society Fellow Peter Collinson shared them with such influential scientists as George Edwards and Carl Linnaeus, artist C. D. Ehret, and collectors Lord Bute, the Duchess of Portland, and London physician John Fothergill. His father, however, worried that William’s interest in botanical observations and illustrations would not translate into a viable trade. Many suggestions on how to handle the boy’s interests and talents were forthcoming from John’s correspondents, but William was not willing to give up his “darling amusements” as friends advised. He shunned Benjamin Franklin’s offer to teach him the printer’s trade, rejected his father’s suggestion that he take up surveying or medicine, and ignored Collinson’s advice that engraving would provide an income while at the same time allowing him to pursue his artistic interests. Even though John Bartram—being a botanist himself—was pleased by his son’s interest in botanical studies, he worried that William’s occupations would not bring a consistent income.

Why would John Bartram have seen botanical study as an appropriate occupation for himself but not for his son? First, John Bartram was never a wealthy man, and he presumably wished for his son greater prosperity and economic security than he ever had. Second, and more

²² Letter to Peter Collinson, September 28, 1755.

significantly, economic changes in the latter half of the eighteenth century intensified the pressures upon many American men. As Dana D. Nelson points out, “shifts of authority, affiliation, and capital in the early nation seem to have reconfigured men’s experience of and intensified their focus on manliness. Fears over masculine identity as experienced in the family, and about masculine rivalry foregrounded in the market transition became more urgent as these were attached to questions about national stability” (37). What had once been internal family worries were thus enlarged into anxieties with national implications. Young, white, middle-class men such as Bartram were under a number of contradictory pressures: to be solid community members and providers for their families, to be humble and mild-mannered (especially in Bartram’s Quaker community), and to be aggressive competitors in newly capitalistic urban marketplaces. As economic success became increasingly important during the late eighteenth century, the quiet life of a scholar would not have been seen as an appropriately manly vocation. The study of nature could be an acceptable hobby, as it was for the farmer Crèvecoeur and for the statesman Thomas Jefferson, but because it could not provide a steady income, it was perceived, even by the foremost botanist of the American colonies, as a somewhat unstable—and by implication, unmanly—way to earn one’s living.

In 1761, at the age of 21, William abandoned a frustrating business apprenticeship in Philadelphia and traveled south to Cape Fear, North Carolina, where his father’s half-brother William owned a trading post. Though no more successful at business there, Bartram enjoyed being away from the constant scrutiny of his family. In 1765 he persuaded his father to buy him property in the swamplands of Florida, as well as slaves to work the land, so that he could establish a rice and indigo plantation. Henry Laurens, a family friend of the Bartrams, reported that William was the only “human inhabitant within nine miles”—by which Laurens meant the

only white inhabitant—a situation that likely would have been agreeable to Bartram, had he managed to make his plantation venture a successful one. Laurens suggests that Bartram’s failure as a planter resulted from his difficulty in managing his slaves, whom Laurens describes as inept—only two of the six slaves were able to handle an axe—and “exceedingly insolent” (qtd. in Slaughter 159). Thomas P. Slaughter notes that “[i]t was failure that quenched William’s appetites in a way that success never satisfied his father or even [Benjamin] Franklin. [...] Failure as a merchant and planter led to flight, exploration, and ultimately withdrawal, which, in turn, contributed to a self-discovery that he otherwise would never have enjoyed” (250). It was Bartram’s failure to fit comfortably into the masculine public world of the Founding Fathers, ironically, that made it possible for him to join his father on the longest and most important botanical expedition of the elder Bartram’s career. The one-year trip was a rewarding experience for William and solidified his interests in botanical exploration and illustration. This trip involved a 400-mile exploration of the St. John’s River in Florida, after which William returned to Philadelphia, where he worked on a farm. By this time some of his drawings caught the attention of the famous English botanist, John Fothergill.

Fothergill, impressed by Bartram’s drawings, financed an exploration of southeastern North America, which would eventually result in Bartram’s 1791 travelogue of his experiences on this trip entitled *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws; Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of Those Regions; Together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians*. A few months before the Boston Tea Party in 1773—an event, along with the American Revolution itself, which receives only scant attention in the narrative, even though Bartram himself volunteered briefly

for a Florida regiment that successfully fended off a British attack—he sailed to Charleston, South Carolina, and spent the next two years traveling through coastal and northeastern Georgia. From there, he moved inland into Cherokee country, the foothills of the Southern Appalachians. He ranged as far west as the Mississippi River, which he reached in October 1775. The following year he circled back to Georgia and began his trip back to Philadelphia, arriving shortly before the death of his father in early 1777. In return for Forthergill’s generous support, Bartram throughout his journeys collected seeds and specimens of the flora of southeastern North America and sent them to England; Christoph Irmscher notes that Bartram “sent no fewer than 209 dried plants and fifty-nine zoological and botanical drawings” back to Fothergill (36). Although Bartram was a significant and respected naturalist during his time—his burgeoning reputation within the European scientific community was one of the main reasons for the popularity of his work—modern readers tend to read his book not for “its scientific accuracy but . . . instead as a sort of pre-Romantic prose-poem by an eighteenth-century man of nature” (Cox, “William” 51). What critics mostly have ignored, however, is the extent to which Bartram, through his interactions with other people, especially Native Americans, and through his depictions of the natural world, challenged the notions of masculinity that were ascendant during his lifetime. Indeed, studying Bartram forces us to reconsider what constituted a hegemonic masculinity in America during the Revolutionary period, or if there even *was* a single, dominant idea of masculinity for men during this period. Through his representations of the natural world—the place where masculine ideals are most frequently played out—Bartram shows the tension between competing models of manhood: the push toward a “national manhood” based upon agrarianism versus his internal sense of what manliness ought to mean. This tension in the

narrative can be partly explained by the gap between Bartram's own interpretation of masculinity and the gendered assumptions he projects upon his readers.

Travels is the only book-length work Bartram produced during his lifetime, but it has left a lasting impression upon readers for the past two centuries. By turns travelogue, memoir, adventure story, natural history, lyrical vignette, ethnography, and perhaps even political tract, the genre of *Travels* is difficult to pin down. Christoph Irmscher explains that "Bartram's strange book is a ragbag of different and apparently irreconcilable genres. Many sentences, in their staccato rawness, remind the reader of the diary sketches or, in more modern parlance, the collection of field notes from which they originated" (37). As a result of these eccentricities, and as a result of the scientific rhetoric in which much of the narrative is encapsulated, "many readers," as John D. Cox points out, "have failed until quite recently to differentiate between William Bartram and his alter ego in *Travels* or to recognize the degree to which both his travels and his *Travels* created Bartram as an author, a traveler, and an American" (*Traveling* 45). While it is highly instructive to consider *Travels* in terms of what we know about the values and background of William Bartram the author, it is also useful to consider that Bartram constructed his narrative persona to represent in a certain way the places and people he encountered during his travels. Bartram knew that he was writing for readers who were largely unfamiliar with the landscapes he was describing, so he adopted the rhetoric of the traveler in order to orient them. He also adapts his language to an American audience in two ways: first, by excising some of his harshest criticisms of American society; and second, by emphasizing the most dangerous and adventuresome episodes to make himself a more appealing narrator in the mold of a Daniel Boone-like manly frontiersman. But his audience, broad as it was, would have been impossible to satisfy in its entirety. American and European readers, particularly in the wake of the

American Revolution, would have subscribed to very different ideologies and would have had widely divergent expectations. Readers primarily interested in science would have objected to Bartram's grandiloquent descriptions, while readers of literature would have found Bartram's interminable lists of species exasperating.

The initial reviews of the American edition of *Travels* were dismissive. A reviewer for *Massachusetts Magazine* complained that Bartram's descriptions were "rather too luxuriant and florid," perhaps a dig at Bartram's less-than-manly prose style, although the reviewer does acknowledge that Bartram had "accurately described a variety of birds, fish and reptiles, hitherto but little known" (Harper xxiv). A less generous reviewer argued that Bartram "magnifies the virtues of the Indians, and views their vices through too friendly a medium. . . . Many rhapsodical effusions might, we think, have been omitted, with advantage to the work" (Harper xxiv). Such a stinging rebuke, complete with the gender-inflected accusation of Bartram's "rhapsodical effusions," suggests that Bartram violates the principle that guided most American writers' literary depictions of Native Americans during this time, which was to build a national literature based on Indian themes, but to represent these people in terms of "savage" stereotypes. It would have been acceptable, presumably, to portray Native Americans in terms of Rousseau's "noble savage" formula or according to what Peter Silver has called the "anti-Indian sublime"—a strategy emphasizing the brutality of Native Americans, particularly invoking images of war—but not to imagine them as people with rational interests or complex emotional lives. Bartram, as we shall see, subverts this literary convention, thus offending American critics whose own views toward Native Americans were hostile and fearful.

Despite criticisms from these and other American reviewers—most of whom echoed the complaints that Bartram was too sympathetic in his representations of the landscape and of

Native Americans—the book soon gained in popularity, especially in Europe; it was republished in England and Ireland, and French and German translations appeared by the end of the eighteenth century.²³ Bartram’s book has long been known as a major influence on the Romantic poets, particularly William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge.²⁴ That the Romantic poets found inspiration in Bartram’s work makes perfect sense, since Karl Friedrich Schlegel, one of the intellectual architects of the Romantic movement, declared in *Lyceum Fragments* that “[a]ll art should become science and all science art” (qtd. in Magee 133). Such a unity of science and art is precisely what Bartram achieved in *Travels*, an accomplishment that can be attributed, at least in part, to an upbringing that treated scientific study—notwithstanding his father’s later objections to William’s interest in botanical drawing—as an occupation befitting a man. Bartram, in fact, finds great strength in the position he stakes out in the narrative. His elastic interpretation of masculinity protects him during several potentially dangerous encounters, yet he also shows bravery and resolution befitting the ideal frontiersman that became the standard for American manhood in the century that followed the publication of his book.

Quaker Manhood and the Other

An important influence on Bartram’s sense of his own masculinity, as well as his particular attitudes toward science and nature, was his Quaker upbringing.²⁵ Although both his

²³ John D. Cox writes that *Travels* “is generally regarded as a classic of both travel literature and nature writing, as its almost poetic descriptions of magnificent flora and fauna, numerous lists of Latinate nomenclature, and enthusiastic expression of the author’s response to the wonders of nature have captivated readers since its publication” (“William” 44).

²⁴ N. Bryllion Fagin has shown that Coleridge in particular “had read Bartram’s *Travels* with a great deal of attention, for he found many passages, sometimes whole pages, important enough to be copied into his notebook” (128).

²⁵ Slaughter downplays the influence of “Quaker texts” on the Bartrams’ attitudes toward the natural world: “A search for ‘Quaker texts’ that account for the perspective John brought to the forest would be a mistake, both because explicitly rejected such disputatious books, as when he declined to read the copy of Barclay’s *Apology* that Peter Collinson sent him, and because, for all the surviving discussion of books in his correspondence, he never

father and his grandfather had their ties to the Society of Friends severely strained at various times—his grandfather, William, was at one point deemed “out of unity” with the Quakers for denying the divinity of Christ—young William did regularly attend Quaker meetings, and he continued to identify with many of the tenets of Quakerism during his adult life. William’s application of Quaker values to his attitudes about the natural world probably resembled those of his father, which, according to Helen Gere Cruickshank, “never harbored, or gave countenance to, dissimulation. [John’s] mind was frequently employed, and he enjoyed the highest pleasure, in the contemplation of Nature, as exhibited in the great volume of Creation” (22). Thus both father and son tended to view the natural environment as a manifestation of God, and they saw God’s works everywhere in their journeys through colonial and revolutionary America, even as their primary concerns were with botanical details that they intended to pass along to their European correspondents. That William Bartram’s own view of the natural world echoed that of his father is consistent with his convictions about manhood. Eighteenth-century Quaker men, particularly those who shared the Bartrams’ “moderate” interpretation of the Quaker religion, tended to forge father-son bonds based on a “sense of both duty and deep affection,” which enhanced John and William Bartram’s shared vision of the natural world (Greven 182).²⁶

While William Bartram’s “adult beliefs did not correspond perfectly with those of the Society of Friends, his Quaker background exerted a tremendous influence on his relationship

mentions, quotes from, or paraphrases a single one. Furthermore, a reconstruction of his family’s library reveals that the Bartrams owned none of the classic Quaker texts, not even George Fox’s *Journal* or any of the writings by William Penn” (59). He does, however, acknowledge that “[i]f Quakerism partly explains John’s naturalism, nature explains his unique form of Quakerism [...]. In other words, John is a Quaker naturalist and a naturalist Quaker at the same time (59). William Bartram’s own Quakerism and his approach to being a naturalist are products of a similar chain of influence.

²⁶ Philip Greven’s analysis of eighteenth-century Protestant child-rearing patterns suggests that there may not have been a single, unified Quaker masculine ideal. He argues instead that conceptions of masculinity did not vary with religious denomination but according to different trends across denominations. William Bartram was a “moderate” (as opposed to “evangelical” or “genteel”), meaning that a key dimension of his masculinity was a sense that father-son relationships depended upon a mutual sense of duty and fidelity, and that they were to be “obliging” toward one another.

with, and representations of, the natural environment” (Cox, “William” 45). Bartram’s grandfather’s refusal to accept the divinity of Christ influenced him in significant ways, and also mirrored changes in the Quaker faith itself. As Quakerism moved into the late eighteenth century, its fundamental doctrines, particularly the acknowledgment of no final authority in matters of faith—whether Church or Bible, except the Word of God in the heart—were more in accord with the teachings of biological science than the dogmas of any religion. Bartram manifests this progressive interpretation of the Quaker faith through his intricately detailed descriptions of the natural world, in which he saw the miracle of creation.

The Quakerism to which Bartram subscribed distinguished itself in important ways from orthodox Christianity of his time, which regarded the colonization of North America and other parts of the world—and by extension, the natural world, which was generally treated as a colonial subject—in terms of what Sara Mills calls an “ideological form of masculinity” that “can be considered to be extreme and excessive” (99). Mills continues, “This particular type of masculinity developed within the colonial context because of the need to appear . . . as a member of a ruling race. It was constructed on the basis of opposition to other seemingly weaker forms of ‘native’ masculinity . . . and also in relation to the forms of femininity available to British women within the colonial context” (99). Thus colonial masculinity defined itself in binary opposition to a feminized “Other,” which was portrayed as a lesser, or corrupted, version of manhood. As Peter Silver has shown, the notion that Indian masculinity was corrupted and “savage” was largely the product of Anglo-American fears of attacks by Native Americans: “To make sense of the spectacle of the mid-Atlantic colonies at war, one has to be able to imagine this fear, and the desperation that comes with continual defeat. For most of the time when they were faced with Indian war, people in the countryside—instead of feeling indignant, enraged, or

defiant—were simply terrified” (40-41). These fears were not unfounded, of course, since “[t]he violence that provincial Americans found themselves first dreading and then experiencing was, in the most literal sense, terroristic. It had been carefully planned and carried out by the Indians with whom they were at war to induce the greatest fright possible” (Silver 41). During the Seven Years’ War, for instance, Indians routinely dragged colonists they had killed into the middle of the street in order to heighten the colonists’ fears. These acts of violence had a grisly edge that was designed specifically to strike at the organ of male sexual power, the penis, and the center of male thought and reason, the brain.²⁷ “Through these acts of emasculation,” Jane T. Merritt explains, “Indians manipulated white men’s fears and flaunted their powerlessness to protect themselves and their families” (179). In doing so, they exploited a core tenet of masculinity that nearly all European-American men shared: a man’s ability to defend and provide for his family.

To some degree it is difficult to generalize about colonial masculinity, since, as we have seen, masculinity is nearly always a contested idea, and even among narrowly defined male figures there is a good deal of variation in the ways that men imagined their masculinity. Nevertheless, we have seen the conception of masculinity described by Mills in the writings of Crèvecoeur, who sought to valorize the American farmer as modeling a new form of American manhood, and in so doing often defined these idealized yeoman farmers in stark opposition to European models of manhood and to those of Native Americans, whom Crèvecoeur viewed with trepidation and some disgust. Crèvecoeur sought to superimpose upon the American landscape a middle place, between the corruption of the cities along the Atlantic seaboard and the barbarism of the western frontier. It was in this green place, both literally and ideologically, that American

²⁷ Jane T. Merritt elaborates, “In November 1755, [when] white settlers found Casper Springs dead at a Berks County farm, his ‘brains were beat out, that he had two Cuts in his breast, was shott with a bullet in his back, and his privities cut off and put into his mouth.’ [...] Joseph Shippen told his father in August 1756 that a group of men near Thomas McKee’s trading post ‘found a man lying in the Road shott and scalped his Scull split open and one of the Provincial Tomahawks sticking in his private parts’” (179).

manhood, as Crèvecoeur imagined it, would flourish. The way that Crèvecoeur sought to define the new American man meant figuring his ideal in opposition to older, European forms of manhood, which he tended to caricature and belittle, a position that contrasts with Bartram's relatively inclusive attitudes toward cultural "Others."

Because Quakers such as Bartram generally championed a set of religious and cultural values distinct from other Protestants, Bartram's conception of masculinity differed from those of colonists such as Crèvecoeur, who operated from something closer to orthodox Christianity, which was considerably more zealous about colonialism. For instance, while Bartram supported the colonial project itself, his personal ethos did not condone a model of colonization based on violence, nor did it view Native American peoples with the same condescension and hostility that marked most European-American depictions of Indians during this time. Although Bartram himself endorsed something close to an orthodox Quaker conception of pacifism, an attitude that extended to his representations of nature as well as of other people, his pacifism was not shared by all Quakers. Some Quakers, for instance, had taken up arms in defense of their Indian neighbors against rioters supporting the Paxton Boys, a vigilante group who had killed at least twenty Indians in the 1763 Conestoga Massacre. In response David James Dove produced an anti-Quaker propaganda pamphlet entitled *The Quaker Unmask'd*, which portrayed the Quakers as vicious killers and which called into question their worldly ambitions and masculinity.²⁸ Dove's portrayal of the Quakers was hyperbolic and unfair to most Quakers, and did not reflect the sincerity of Bartram's own pacifism. But it was representative of the way Quakers were

²⁸ Silver argues that in the view of many backcountry Presbyterian Scots-Irish frontiersmen and other colonists sympathetic to the Paxton Boys' cause, "Quaker men's mustering in the crisis was nothing to smile at. It was chilling if you thought about it right, because it proved that Quaker pacifism was a selective sham, maintained solely to keep the country people in danger's way. But just let those same rural Europeans come within range, Dove observed grimly, and 'Behold [...] the Quaker unmasked, with his Gun upon his Shoulder, [...] eagerly desiring the Combat, and thirsting for [...] Blood!'" (207). See also Jane T. Merritt's analysis of the crisis (264-308).

perceived by some of their fellow Americans, and it does suggest the difficulty Bartram may have had in presenting his relatively sympathetic portrayals of Native Americans to a European-American audience. Naomi Baker, referencing a range of histories and travel narratives, argues, counter to Dove's depiction of Quaker hypocrisy, that Quakers tended to resist "the English male selfhood" that was dependent upon binary oppositions defined against "Others," and that eighteenth-century "principles of masculinity invoked ideals of rational control and demonstrations of physical valour through violence from which the early modern Quaker dissented. The intersecting discourses of colonialism and masculinity are thus undermined in the narrative by Quaker frameworks" (8).²⁹

By virtue of his identity as a Quaker naturalist, then, Bartram regarded his relationships to the natural world and to Native Americans in ways that departed significantly from ideals that defined manhood in terms of feats of military conquest. Although Bartram did embrace many of the colonial ideals that aspired to transform the landscape into a pastoral setting suitable for inhabitation by refined Europeans, he actively rejected the notion that this was to be done through violence. Faced with encounters that might have caused other men of his time to resort to belligerent posturing or outright combat, Bartram references using gentleness. Rather than straddling hegemonic identities, and rather than simply eliding the violence that might be necessary to push Native Americans off the land in order to claim it on behalf of idealized yeoman farmers, as Crèvecoeur does, Bartram identifies his manhood as an alternative to the mainstream. The boundary that Bartram draws between himself and "Others" is far more

²⁹ Baker derives her conception of eighteenth-century Quaker masculinity from a range of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Quaker travel narratives, as well as a number of historical sources on eighteenth-century Quakerism, including Errol T. Elliott's *Quakers on the American Frontier* (Richmond, IN: Friends United P, 1969) and Arthur J. Worrall's *Quakers in the Colonial Northeast* (Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1980).

permeable than it was for most writers during his time, thus enabling him to create more sympathetic portraits of them.

Travels contains scant reference to the growing tensions between the American colonies and Great Britain, but it is highly unlikely that Bartram thought as little about these events as the narrative suggests. Bartram, not surprisingly, downplays his involvement in the war in part because he does not wish to alienate his readers—and his sponsor—across the Atlantic, where, it turns out, his book was far better received than it was in the young US. Nevertheless, Bartram found himself in the thick of tensions between the British, the Americans, and the Cherokee in Georgia during 1776. Of the period in question Bartram’s narrative contains only the following vague information: “I employed myself during the spring and fore part of summer, in revisiting the several districts of Georgia and the East borders of Florida” (467). The only even indirect references to the war itself come through Bartram’s representations of the natural world, such as his discussion of the “eternal war, or rather slaughter” between fish and insects. He notices that “when those different tribes of fish are in the transparent channel, their very nature seems absolutely changed; for there is here neither desire to destroy nor persecute, but all seems peace and friendship.” Bartram asks, “Do they agree on a truce, a suspension of hostilities? Or by some secret divine influence, is desire taken away? Or are they otherwise rendered incapable of pursuing each other to destruction?” (195). As a pacifist, Bartram was of course hoping to apply these questions not only to the animal world, but to the human world that was headed inextricably toward war during the time of his travels.

Bartram, however, was far more directly and actively engaged in the hostilities than his vague allusion to “revisiting several districts” of the area may suggest. George Ord, a contemporary and biographer of Bartram, writes that Bartram “volunteered and joined a

detachment of men, raised by General Lachlan McIntosh, to repel a supposed invasion of that state from St. Augustine by the British” (qtd. in Harper 416). According to Ord, Bartram was involved in a skirmish between the Georgians and the British that succeeded in fending off, at least temporarily, a British invasion from the south. After the battle, however, Bartram turned down McIntosh’s offer for a promotion to the rank of lieutenant; Edward J. Cashin explains that Bartram “could reconcile volunteering to oppose a threat to his friends, but his Quaker conscience would not let him become a professional in the business of war. Although it comes as no surprise that he declined the position, he certainly deserved the honor of the offer” (233). Bartram rejects the notion that his worth as a man might be defined in terms of his military exploits, even though, as Cashin suggests, he might have been an effective and courageous soldier. Rather than seeking military successes against a vilified “Other”—whether it be Indians or the British—Bartram continues his pursuit of botanical discoveries. While he rejects defining male heroism in terms of militarism, Bartram recasts it in a way that was gaining popularity in the final years of the eighteenth century.

Bartram is among the early figures in what would become the familiar American tradition of the frontier hero. According to Thomas J. Hallock, “Anticipating the [...] hypermasculine plot of empire that would become commonplace in the next century, William Bartram portrays an individual stepping outside society, confronting wilderness, and forging a new identity” (158). Bartram, of course, did not single-handedly invent the tradition of the frontier hero, nor would posterity remember him as one of its key figures. During the period between Bartram’s actual journeys around the American southeast and the eventual publication of his book, Daniel Boone had emerged as a legend thanks to John Filson’s “The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boon,” included in his 1784 book *The Discovery, Settlement And Present State of Kentucke*. Hallock

describes the various parts of Filson’s book as converging “around a central theme—the appropriation of resources,” thus prompting Filson to use language that “divides a messy frontier into polarities, swinging from a bloody struggle to promises for the future, from wilderness to civilization” (61). First published in 1784, the book, based on interviews with Boone, contained a mostly factual account of Boone’s adventures from his exploration of Kentucky through the American Revolution. However, because the real Boone was a man of few words, Filson invented baroque, philosophical dialogue for this “autobiography,” thus reinventing Boone as an essentially fictional and mythic character.

Thanks to Filson’s book, in Europe Boone became a symbol of the “natural man” who lives a virtuous, uncomplicated existence in the wilderness. What is striking about this stereotypical heroic figure, of course, is that he is a white man who possesses the skill set of an Indian—never an actual Native American. While held captive by the Shawnee, Boone earned the respect of his captors because his skills resembled theirs; Hallock points out that “[l]ike many pioneers, he would occasionally be mistaken for a native, and as one might expect, fared better in the border regions than in colonized country” (66). Boone’s legend was perhaps most famously expressed in Lord Byron’s epic poem *Don Juan*, which devoted a number of stanzas to Boone, including this one:

Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The General Boon, back-woodsman of Kentucky,
Was happiest amongst mortals any where;
For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoyed the lonely vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

Byron's poem celebrated Boone as a man who found happiness by turning his back on civilization. Existing simultaneously with the image of Boone as a refugee from society was, paradoxically, the popular portrayal of him as civilization's trailblazer. Filson succeeds in creating for Boone what Crèvecoeur could not—or would not—do in his own portrayals of frontiersmen. Crèvecoeur suggests that men on the frontier were too rough and barbarous to be appropriate representatives of civilization, yet he does not explain how the frontier is to be tamed to create room for his idealized yeoman farmers, whereas Filson embraces the paradox. Many of the folk tales inspired by Filson's book depicted Boone as a man who migrated to more remote areas whenever civilization crowded in on him, thus casting him as a man whose purpose was to tame the frontier to make room for the advance of western civilization. In a typical anecdote, when asked why he was moving to Missouri, Boone supposedly replied, "I want more elbow room!" Boone himself, however, rejected such an interpretation of his life, thus emphasizing the extent to which the myth of Daniel Boone was more fantasy than reality. "Nothing embitters my old age," he said late in life, like "the circulation of absurd stories that I retire as civilization advances" (Faragher 325-26).

Bartram, who travels alone for much of his four-year journey through the American South, steps well outside American civilization as he knows it, and he bravely endures numerous confrontations with hostile humans and animals. Although Bartram sometimes suggests national, even imperialistic, ambitions for the landscapes through which he travels, he rejects the "hypermasculine" dimensions of these ambitions. In this way Bartram's account takes some of its cues from the works of earlier Quaker travelers such as Englishman John Taylor, whose 1710 missionary autobiography *An Account of Some of the Labours, Exercises, Travels and Perils, by Sea and Land, of John Taylor of York* highlights some of the ways in which Quaker men

perceived their masculinity differently from other colonial travelers. Taylor's narrative undermines the notion that male colonialists assumed an undisputed "masculine" position, or that the colonized subject was necessarily to be figured in the "feminine" language found in other colonial travel narratives. During one encounter with Indians, Taylor describes a ritual dance in which the natives are naked, emphasizing the physical manliness of the dancer: "beating himself with his Arms, and Clapping his Hands, till he was all of a foam with Sweat" (Taylor 6). The homoerotic quality of Taylor's writing is evident, but so too is the sense that Taylor is not defining his own manhood in binary opposition to the savage "Other." Likewise Bartram rejects—or at least problematizes—such dualisms. When he meets with Cowkeeper, the chief of the Seminole Indians, he describes the chief as "a tall well made man, very affable and cheerful, about sixty years of age, his eyes lively and full of fire, his countenance manly and placid, yet ferocious, or what we call savage, his nose aquiline, his dress extremely simple, but his head trimmed and ornamented in the true Creek mode" (162). Bartram does not entirely reject the notion that Indians appears "savage," although he does use the qualifier "what we call savage" to suggest that the term is a relative one, depending on one's cultural point of view. Even as he acknowledges this potentially disparaging stereotype, however, he also characterizes Cowkeeper as "manly," a descriptor that would have been deemed unacceptable, when applied to Native Americans, by many European Americans who feared and loathed them. In addition to being an exemplar of the frontier hero himself, Bartram shows considerable bravery in the act of representing Native American men as being capable of manliness, a descriptor that would not have been applied to them by most Anglo-American writers at the time.

Bartram's encounter with Cowkeeper leads to an important moment in the narrative. When Cowkeeper—presumably through an interpreter—is informed of the nature of Bartram's travels through Creek territory, Bartram notes, "he received me with complaisance, giving me unlimited permission to travel over the country for the purpose of collecting flowers, medicinal plants, &c. saluting me by the name of PUC PUGGY, or the Flower hunter, recommending me to the friendship and protection of his people" (163). Historian Judith Magee has argued that "Bartram was much flattered by such a compliment and in later years, when writing to friends in the South, he would occasionally sign his letters with his Creek name" (106). There is little doubt that the friendship and mutual respect between Bartram and Cowkeeper was sincere, and it is true that Bartram wore his Creek moniker as a badge of honor. Cowkeeper's willingness to allow Bartram free passage over Creek lands made Bartram's travels safer and easier, and making friends and allies in Indian territory was something that not every early European-American explorer succeeded in doing.

In other encounters with Indians throughout the narrative, Bartram's inclination toward moderation and gentleness serves him well.³⁰ Faced with an angry, armed Seminole—a notorious murderer who has been banished from his tribe and who had been rudely treated the day before at a trading house—Bartram responds by offering his hand. Initially the Indian is taken aback, but upon reflection he takes Bartram's hand in friendship. Bartram believes the Indian's "design was to kill me when he first came up," but he then ascribes to him the following thought process: "White man, thou art my enemy, and thou and thy brethren may have killed mine; yet it may not

³⁰ As Gregory A. Waselkov and Kathryn E. Holland Braund point out, to the Native Americans Bartram met during his travels, "Puc Puggy appeared a fair and tolerant observer of their land and their customs. They welcomed him into their towns and into their homes. They recognized his honesty, endured his curious gaze, accepted his botanical researches, and patiently answered his questions" (23). In so doing, Bartram, while originally setting out primarily to record his observations of plants, also succeeds in producing one of the most thorough, detailed, and even-handed written accounts of Native Americans during his time.

be so, and even were that the case, thou art now alone, and in my power. Live; the Great Spirit forbids me to touch thy life; go to thy brethren, tell them thou sawest an Indian in the forests, who knew how to be humane and compassionate” (45). Although Bartram, of course, can never free himself entirely from his own cultural and ethnic identity, he does attempt to see the encounter through the Seminole’s eyes and convey that viewpoint to his readers, a narrative strategy that was rare for his time.³¹

This is a fascinating encounter for several reasons. First, it reveals the way Bartram comports himself when traveling alone through the wilderness: rather than presenting himself as a rough-and-ready frontiersman—the image of American manhood that came to dominate much of nineteenth-century American discourse—Bartram approaches this potentially murderous Indian with humility and friendship. Bartram’s decision to present himself in this way is especially revealing when one considers that the encounter occurred in real time much later—probably two years later, when Bartram was on his way back through Florida before sailing back to Philadelphia—than it appears in the narrative. Bartram, then, wanted to establish a sense of adventure in the narrative right away, but he also apparently wanted his readers to become acquainted with the kind of narrator he would be, the kind of man who resolves disputes through pacifism and respect rather than threats of violence. Second, Bartram’s efforts to narrate the Seminole’s own thought process provides some insight into Bartram’s empathy for Native

³¹ The way Bartram constructs his narrative persona often utilizes the knowledge that he gains about the various Native American tribes whose lands he explores. As John D. Cox puts it, Bartram “constructs his narrator as both European and Native American,” a union that is “more epistemological than ontological. That is, Bartram becomes an American because he is able to conjoin not only Enlightenment science with proto-Romantic poetry but also European and Native American ways of understanding the world” (*Traveling* 21). While Cox perhaps overstates the influence of Native American epistemologies on Bartram’s own way of seeing the world, it is undoubtedly true, as Cox states, that “[c]reating a narrative persona allows Bartram to reconcile [...] competing ideologies, for as a traveler, Bartram’s narrator is never bound completely to a single way of knowing his environment—natural, social, or cultural” (*Traveling* 21). Cox’s analysis, because it focuses on Bartram’s narrator rather than Bartram himself, minimizes the influence of Bartram’s Quakerism on his tendency to undermine monolithic ways of understanding the human and natural worlds, which is a significant omission; nevertheless, Cox helpfully draws attention to the fluid identity of Bartram’s narrator.

American manhood. While Bartram, as author, maintains control over the telling of the story, he allows for the possibility that the Seminole a man of reason, one of the hallmarks of manhood for eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers.³² Eve Kornfeld argues that “Bartram’s decision to construct an imaginary dialogue between himself and the Other is highly significant in transforming the scene” because, she writes, it creates “the sense of communication between two equal, thinking human beings. It also balances and provides context for Bartram’s next, actual dialogue with the white traders nearby” who characterize the Seminole in “equally implausible language” as a notorious villain and murderer (74). “That Bartram presents both possibilities to his readers,” Kornfeld explains, “indicates his difficulty in reconciling his society’s representations of the savage Other with his own, more complicated experience of the encounter” (75). Bartram, then, is willing to give roughly equal consideration to the viewpoints of Native Americans and whites, to make sense of the world through multiple lenses. Because his own masculinity is not dependent on defining himself in opposition to “savage” and feminized Indians, he represents Native Americans in a more nuanced and balanced way than most American readers expected.

This is not to say that Bartram always depicted Native Americans positively. Anticipating the criticisms that would be leveled against him by European-American reviewers, Bartram writes, “I doubt not but some of my countrymen who may read these accounts of the Indians, which I have endeavoured to relate according to truth, at least as they appeared to me, will charge me with partiality or prejudice in their favour” (183). Bartram was correct, despite the

³² Francis Harper, in the “Naturalist’s Edition” of *Travels*, remarks, “[l]ittle did this son of the wilderness realize how the world of science and literature was destined to benefit by his forbearance! And it may be added that if Bartram had been other than a Quaker, he might not have survived!” (335). Ironically, here the modern critic appears to show less awareness of the Seminole’s point of view than does Bartram himself: why, for instance, would this man care about the future of the “world of science of literature” across the Atlantic, on another continent, in an entirely foreign and alien culture? While Harper may be correct that Bartram’s Quakerism—and his respect for cultures other than his own—may indeed have saved his life on multiple occasions, his analysis provides little insight into the motivations behind the Seminole’s behavior.

fact that he then follows his prediction with an attempt to “exhibit their vices, immoralities, and imperfections,” a section of the narrative that includes this rebuke of the Creeks: “They wage eternal war against deer and bear, to procure food and cloathing, and other necessaries and conveniences; which is indeed carried to an unreasonable and perhaps criminal excess, since the white people have dazzled their senses with foreign superfluities” (183-84). It is perhaps unsurprising that this account would not have pleased readers who expected their prejudices toward Native Americans to be confirmed, since Bartram blames the greed of the whites, rather than the essential savagery of the Indians, for their waste of animal life. By admonishing Native Americans for their rampant destruction of animals, and by implicating whites in this slaughter, Bartram suggests that an appropriate form of American manhood is one that would show restraint in its treatment of animals.

Among the Animals: Bartram and the Nonhuman

Bartram situates his narrative persona as a man who embodies multiple masculinities, and he does so especially in his representations of encounters with animals. At the same time that he embodies the courage and hardiness of a frontier hero capable of protecting himself against the most dangerous of wild animals, he also embraces a masculinity based on gentleness, moderation, and reason. Bartram’s narrative is regularly subsumed by Bartram’s obsessive fear of alligators—from a practical standpoint, probably quite a reasonable development, since Bartram’s life depended upon his constant vigilance regarding the presence of these dangerous creatures—and his efforts both to learn about them and to keep himself safe from them.³³ One

³³ Bartram asks at the beginning of one paragraph, “How shall I express myself so as to convey an adequate idea of it to the reader, and at the same time avoid raising suspicions of my veracity?” (118). Then he goes on to ask the reader if he would be believed if he were to describe a lake so filled with fish that the alligators feeding on them “were in such incredible numbers, and so close together from shore to shore, that it would have been easy to have

particularly memorable passage involving alligators comes while Bartram is exploring the St. John River by canoe; he is repeatedly chased and pursued by alligators as he paddles upriver, and when he gets ashore, “an old daring one, about twelve feet in length [...] rushed up near my feet, and lay there for some time, looking me in the face, his head and shoulders out of the water” (498). Bartram resolves that the alligator “should pay for his temerity,” and returns to camp for his gun. When he returns to the spot where the alligator had been, Bartram finds the creature inspecting the canoe in search of fish. “On my coming up,” Bartram narrates, “he withdrew sullenly and slowly into the water, but soon returned and placed himself in his former position, looking at me, and seeming neither fearful nor in any way disturbed. I soon dispatched him by lodging the contents of my gun in his head” (117).

Bartram’s behavior in this instance is of interest because it highlights the balance that he achieves between competing conceptions of manliness. On the one hand was the burgeoning ideal of the rugged frontiersman, epitomized by figures such as Daniel Boone and early Kentucky settler Thomas Walker, whose sense of manhood was often measured by the number of animals they killed. Walker, after a three-month exploration of the Holston, Clinch, and Powell River watersheds, wrote in his journal in June of 1750 that his company “killed in the Journey 13 Buffaloes, 6 Elks, 53 Bears, 20 Deer, 4 Wild Geese, about 150 Turkeys, besides small game. We might have killed three times as much meat, if we had wanted it” (qtd. in Brown

walked across on their heads, had the animals been harmless” (118). It seems likely that his exaggeration in this case is a product of Edmund Burke’s influence. According to Pamela Regis, Bartram’s prose works between two modes: natural history and the sublime. She explains, “The natural historical method [...] relied on observation conducted according to exact procedures. Burke’s theory, relying as it did on the observer’s accurate reporting of his emotional responses, provided Bartram with a scientific way of representing his reactions to the scenes he saw” (41). This is a helpful framework for understanding the sometimes fragmented nature of Bartram’s narrative; he frequently shifts between lengthy, rather ponderous lists of species, often using Latinate nomenclature that would have been virtually meaningless to his non-specialist readers, and scenes punctuated with numerous exclamation marks to indicate his own visceral response to the beauty and grandeur of what he saw. The Burkean sublime mode provides Bartram, normally a scrupulously exacting observer of nature, with a vocabulary for showing his emotional responses to the American landscape.

40). Walker, of course, is alluding to the abundance of wild game in Kentucky, but he is also boasting of his masculine hunting prowess, particularly when he emphasizes that he and his men might have killed many more animals if they had wished. Bartram, on the other hand, had been raised in a family environment based upon moderation, and throughout his narrative expresses reluctance to kill animals. This probably explains why Bartram goes to such lengths to emphasize the aggressive nature of alligators in general, and especially of the one that he kills, to prove that his action was in self-defense. It could be said that Bartram invokes the “anti-alligator sublime” to account for his killing of the alligator in this scene. When he describes actually shooting the alligator, his language—“I soon dispatched him”—sounds almost clinical in its detachment, signaling to his readers that he derives no pleasure from killing the animal, but rather that it was a necessary act. Bartram thus demonstrates that he is “manly” in both senses of the word: a man who can exact deadly force when the situation calls for it, but who maintains a sense of restraint befitting a man of his moderate Quaker upbringing.

Elsewhere in the narrative Bartram vainly “endeavourer[s] to plead for [the] lives” of a small herd of deer whom his Indian guides decide to hunt, even though the party is not in any immediate need of meat (176). On another occasion Bartram laments the “very extravagant waste” of a large tortoise that his Indian companions serve for supper one evening, as the group was not “able to consume one half its flesh, though excellently well cooked.” He is distressed that his “companions [...] seemed regardless, being in the midst of plenty and variety, at any time within our reach, and to be obtained with little or no trouble or fatigue on our part” (159). Bartram’s anxiety about the waste of animal flesh contrasts sharply with what was to become the standard for American masculinity during the nineteenth century, particularly on the western frontier, where hyper-masculine figures such as “Buffalo” Bill Cody gained notoriety for their

profligate killing of animals.³⁴ Bartram's contrasting behavior suggests that he opposes killing animals for sport, but is willing to kill the alligators in self-defense, even to punish them for their "temerity," particularly after a long day of battling with these creatures from his canoe.

Bartram's experiences with alligators and other large predators serves as a reminder of humans' place in the natural world. When recounting his experiences among these dangerous animals—even when he is successfully beating them with a club or shooting them with his fusee—Bartram depicts himself as not the top of the food chain, but part of it. In one particularly striking scene on the shore of Lake George, Bartram dozes off with a store of fish stashed in the bushes near his camp. When he awakes, he discovers that sometime in the night, a wolf has dragged off his fish, causing him to reflect upon his status as potential prey: "How much easier and more eligible might it have been for him to have leaped upon my breast in the dead of sleep, and torn my throat, which would have instantly deprived me of life, and then glutted his stomach for the present with my warm blood, and dragged off my body, which would have made a feast afterwards for him and his howling associates!" (145). Bartram suggests that, in fact, the wiser strategy, from the wolf's perspective, might have been simply to drag him off and eat him, rather than "to have made protracted and circular approaches, and then after, by chance, espying the fish over my head, with the greatest caution and silence rear up, and take them off the snags one by one, then make off with them, and that so cunningly as not to waken me until he had fairly accomplished his purpose" (145). Bartram's recognition of his own status as potential prey, as well as his willingness to view the scene from the perspective of the wolf, demonstrates the multiplicity of narrative perspectives that he uses in *Travels*, as well as the humility that characterizes his masculine identity.

³⁴ According to his autobiography, Cody earned his nickname by killing 4860 buffalo during an eighteen-month period between 1867 and 1868.

Certainly humility was considered a virtue among the Pennsylvania Quaker community in which Bartram was raised. Their valuation of humility came into some question, however, when Quaker men, faced with the nationalistic fervor that came with the American Revolution, attempted to define their manhood in terms of a wider American culture. Perhaps the man most famous for attempting to define the virtues associated with American manhood during this time was Bartram's fellow Pennsylvanian Benjamin Franklin, who listed humility—along with temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, and chastity—among the thirteen virtues that he hoped to cultivate in himself. His terse explanation for how he hoped to achieve humility, as he articulates in his autobiography, is as follows: “Imitate Jesus and Socrates” (147). Famously, Franklin devised weekly charts on which he recorded his progress with each of these virtues, one at a time, with the eventual goal of mastering them all.

Revealingly, though, Franklin listed humility last, suggesting that he thought he would need to master all twelve of the other virtues before he would be ready to tackle humility. The trouble, for Franklin, is not only that he struggles throughout his life to be humble, but that he doubts whether humility is really so useful. “Most people,” Franklin writes, “dislike vanity in others whatever share they have of it themselves, but I give it fair quarter whenever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor and to others who are within his sphere of action. And therefore, in many cases it would not be altogether absurd to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life” (72). Such a view aroused some controversy during Franklin's time, but it was not an altogether radical notion. Increasingly, as market economics came to dominate life for urban Americans, qualities such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, and assertiveness came to be seen as more virtuous than they were in earlier

times, or in rural communities. Bartram, a longtime resident of Franklin's Pennsylvania and a friend of Franklin, was aware of these developments, and his repeated assertions of humility throughout *Travels*, both in his depictions of Native Americans and of the natural world, can be read as his condemnation of Franklin's conception of manliness. Bartram argues that the closer a man is to nature, the closer he comes to achieving his best, humblest, most manly self. He contrasts the "unviolated retreats" of natural world, which, unlike cities, are "unpolluted by the violent hand of invidious industry, avarice, and ambition, false politeness, and cruel civilization, which refines and sublimates humanity quite away leaving in its place a subtle, restless firey spirit, a malicious power principle, continually watching to enslave mankind and destroy the happiness of a future state" (250). Bartram's conflation of "ambition" with such nefarious traits as cruelty and malice emphasizes the degree to which he rejected this ideal, which was gaining traction among the Founding Fathers, particularly Franklin. While the Bartrams always maintained a close relationship with Franklin—John famously named a shrub, the *Franklinia*, for Franklin during his 1765 expedition—William passionately adheres to Franklin's virtue number thirteen, the one that defeated Franklin himself.

Bartram, however, accepted the male and female gender roles that Franklin articulated when he wrote, "It is the Man and Woman united that make the compleat human Being. Separate, she wants his Force of Body and Strength of Reason; he, her softness, Sensibility and acute Discernment. Together they are more likely to succeed in the world" (*Papers* 3: 30). Franklin, Bartram, and other men of similar middle-class, relatively secular backgrounds tended to view gender roles in much this way. According to Philip Greven, however, the traits associated with masculinity and femininity were assumed to exist simultaneously within both men and women. The key was maintaining balance between these competing forces: "As with

power and liberty, both the masculine and the feminine traits of temperament were indispensable for a sense of wholeness and of balance, though the chain of being always justified the superiority of the masculine over the feminine. But excess of any kind was undesirable to moderates” such as Bartram and Franklin, “so they always lived with an uneasy balance between the masculine and the feminine components of the self, just as they also lived with an awareness of the uneasy balance between power and liberty in the world” (Greven 243). This way of understanding the male and female dimensions of the self would have appealed especially to Bartram, whose particular way of being in the world was based on his notions of balance and harmony rather than on ideological extremes. It also would have appealed to the scientist in him, since it relied on quasi-scientific—if not exactly quantifiable—notions of human happiness.

Bartram, of course, writes from the perspective of his background as botanist and natural historian, thus pushing him toward a narrative voice that emphasizes these sciences. Even here, though, Bartram mediates between multiple modes of representing his scientific findings. The narrative, as any reader will notice merely by picking up the book and turning at random to almost any chapter, contains numerous passages that consist of little more than long lists of the plants Bartram has observed during his explorations. These lists, however, are frequently interrupted by lyrical passages in which Bartram expresses his amazement while at the same time providing detailed scientific observation:

I was struck with surprise at the appearance of a blooming plant, gilded with the richest golden yellow: stepping on shore, I discovered it to be a new species of the *Oenothera* [...]. The large expanded flowers, that so ornament this plant, are of a perfect yellow colour; but when they contract again, before they drop off, the underside of the petals next the calyx becomes of a reddish flesh colour, inclining to vermilion; the flowers

begin to open in the evening, are fully expanded during the night, and are in their beauty next morning, but close and wither before noon. (330)

Irmscher rightly points out that in such descriptions, “Bartram’s multilayered discourse, instead of simply anthropomorphizing the plants it features [...] frequently allows them to retain their strange, spectacular, surprising beauty, ‘their singular pleasing wildness and freedom’” (39).

Bartram, then, moves beyond the human-centered discourse characteristic of most natural history writing during his time. “[T]here is in Bartram,” writes Michael P. Branch in his article “Indexing American Possibilities: The Natural History Writing of Bartram, Wilson, and Audubon,” “a strain of radical nonanthropocentrism which clearly distinguished him from his contemporaries” (288). Because Bartram’s sense of his own masculinity is not tied up in the colonial project of defining himself against a constructed “Other,” he is free to represent the natural world in ways that appreciate its unique features. This freedom, in combination with his skills as a naturalist, enables him to represent the natural world in the detailed, specific, and lyrical ways that so enthralled the Romantic poets.

Manliness and the Rhetoric of Improvement

The discourse of eighteenth-century male-authored travel narratives often assumed that colonized landscapes needed to be tamed and transformed in accordance with the “reason” of masculine Enlightenment ideals. That both the natural history and wilderness travel were largely the domains of white men made it that much more convenient for these ideas to take hold.

Because Bartram was concerned with botany in large part because he was interested in improving American farmers’ practices through scientific discovery, he sometimes practices the rhetoric of “improvement” associated with eighteenth-century colonialism. Particularly while he

is traveling through Florida's Alachua Savanna, Bartram depicts the landscape not in terms of what he sees, but in terms of the land's potential for large-scale cultivation. Bartram took his inspiration from men such as William Stork, who in the introduction to the 1769 third edition of John Bartram's *Account of East-Florida* argues that "[t]he new introduction of but a single grain or plant, as the rice in Carolina, or the turnip in Norfolk, will sometimes totally change the face and condition of a country. Here therefore is a field in which the naturalist may make his science peculiarly useful. His knowledge extending through the vegetable world, informs him where every valuable plant, grain, or tree is to be found, and also in what country it is wanting, and may be propagated to advantage" (*A Description of East-Florida* part 2, ii). Stork asks rhetorically, "How long was England, this active, enterprizing, philosophical nation, uninformed of the uses of clover, turnips, potatoes, &c. without which its present inhabitants be at a loss for subsistence?" (ii).

Although Bartram never shares Stork's paternalistic attitude toward the farmers of North America, he does hope that his observations of Florida will lead to greater insights about the fertility of the land and that it will lead to large-scale migration to the area to take advantage of its potential for grazing and cultivation. Passing over the meadows of the Alachua Savanna, Bartram declares that this region "would, if peopled and cultivated after the manner of the civilized countries of Europe, without crowding or incommoding families, at a moderate estimation, accommodate in the happiest manner above one hundred thousand human inhabitants, besides millions of domestic animals," and he predicts that "this place will at some future day be one of the most populous and delightful seats on earth" (211). Bartram's urge to see the landscape transformed in this way is related to his vision for the new American nation, which he hopes will be unified, peaceful, and prosperous. In order for this to be accomplished, he

argues that the land will need to be populated by white inhabitants such as himself, men with the wisdom and reason to recreate the landscape for western civilization. Particularly because Bartram abhorred war and its effects upon people and landscapes, he articulates a unified conception of landscape. Bartram, like many men of the new US, sought to resist the fragmentation and sectionalism that might produce another Revolution-like conflict. His advocacy for the population of the Florida landscape with yeoman farmers highlights his desire for peace and stability, as well as his own efforts to reconcile the drive toward unitary manhood resulting from American independence and his own desire to strike out on his own, both literally and philosophically.

The demeanor that Bartram adopts throughout his narrative is that of mediator between cultures, between the Old World and New World, and between masculinities. “Bartram,” Slotkin explains, “although he rambles extensively abroad, even among the savages of the wildest parts of the South and West, never neglects his husbandry. [...] [H]e mediates between the wilderness and civilization, sallying into its precincts to gain knowledge for the more perfect pursuit of farming” (*Regeneration* 263). Bartram takes to heart the dual meaning of the word “husband,” which refers not only to a man’s role within his family, but also to men’s relationships to the land as tillers of the soil. When Bartram botanizes, for example, he aims for accurate, practical information that would be of use to men trying to make a living from the land: “The *Angelica lucida* or *nondo* grows here in abundance: its aromatic carminative root is in taste much like that of the Ginseng (*Panax*) though more of the taste and scent of the Anise-seed: it is in high estimation with the Indians as well as the white inhabitants” (267). He does not ascribe the qualities of this plant to any religious purpose, nor does he exaggerate its qualities for promotional purposes. He hopes that the precision of his natural history observations will be

useful to the practical implementation of the agrarian ideal that Crèvecoeur articulated, so that the new nation of yeoman “husbands” will be equipped with the scientific knowledge they need in order to succeed.

Bartram’s musings, however, are interrupted when he encounters a band of African Americans while riding along some sandy ridges in South Carolina. Contemplating the landforms around and below him, Bartram sees an approaching group of dark-skinned men. “I had every reason to dread the consequence,” Bartram writes, and “had reason to apprehend this to be a predatory band of Negroes. [...] I was unarmed, alone, and my horse tired; this situated every way in their power, I had no alternative but to be resigned and prepare to meet them. [...] I mounted and rode briskly up; and though armed with clubs, axes, and hoes, they opened to right and left and let me pass peaceably” (379). Unlike the encounter with the Seminole, however, this time Bartram does not solicit the reader’s sympathy for these African-American men by attempting to understand their point of view; instead Bartram keeps “a sharp eye about me, apprehending that this might possibly have been an advanced division, and their intentions were to ambuscade and surround me; but they kept on quietly” (379). Bartram’s anxiety about these men stems in part from his prior experience trying in vain to manage African slaves at his failed Florida plantation, an experience that had left him sick, malnourished, and embarrassed. The encounter is especially uncomfortable for Bartram because his own sense of masculine strength is tied not to economic success, as it was for many Anglo-American men of his time, but to his abilities as a frontier explorer and adventurer, and to his eventual hope of seeing the land made habitable for farmers. The African men are threatening precisely because they already possess the knowledge and skills required to carve out a successful living on the lands that Bartram is attempting to explore; they already have achieved the intimacy with the land that Bartram

acquires through close scientific study. Whereas Crèvecoeur defined his masculinity in terms of his intimacy with a particular landscape, Bartram defines his in terms of his ability to achieve intimacy with *any* landscape through precise observation. Bartram worries not only that these men may pose a physical threat to his person, but also that their presence complicates the possibility of the language of “improvement.” They represent what Monique Allewaert calls an “ecology of resistance” that makes facile ideologies of colonization impossible.³⁵ *Travels* demonstrates the tension between the masculine ideals that Bartram admires and the difficulty of applying these ideals to the very real people he encounters and lands he explores.

When Bartram gets around to discussing women—few of whom he seems to encounter during his travels, and when he does, they receive only a cursory mention—he shifts into a highly stylized, classical register. His representations of Indian women in particular emphasize his discomfort in the presence of women. Traveling through the Little Tennessee Valley in Cherokee country, Bartram and his companion witness the following scene: “parterres of flowers and fruitful strawberry beds; flocks of turkeys strolling about them; herds of deer prancing on the meads or bounding over the hills; companies of young, innocent Cherokee virgins, some busily gathering the rich fragrant fruit, others, lay reclined under the shade of floriferous and fragrant native bowers” (225).³⁶ Bartram then comments that this “sylvan scene of primitive innocence” became “too enticing for hearty young men long to continue idle spectators,” a distancing strategy that removes the narrator Bartram from responsibility for his own prurient thoughts, spreading the responsibility among himself, his companion, his readers, and “hearty young men”

³⁵ Allewaert suggests that “[t]he power of these Africans comes from their alliance with the land: ‘axes and hoes’ are weapons as much as clubs are” (346). Allewaert argues that “Bartram expects that both slaves and Maroons”—of which the latter category probably distinguishes the group he encounters—“have a particularly proximate relation to tropical terrains, and he also expects that his proximity has military significance” (346).

³⁶ That Bartram calls the Cherokee women “virgins” is likely a projection of his own perception, since historian Theda Perdue, who has worked extensively on the Cherokee, particularly women and gender relations, writes that “[u]nmarried women engaged in sex with whomever they wished as long as they did not violate incest taboos against intercourse with members of their own clans or the clans of their fathers” (56).

in general (226). When the two men make their presence known, the Cherokee women “confidently discovered themselves and decently advanced to meet us, half unveiling their blooming faces, incarnated with the modest maiden blush, and with native innocence and cheerfulness, presented their little baskets, merrily letting us know that their fruit was ripe and sound” (226).

This scene in Cherokee country recalls an earlier passage in which Bartram describes Ouaquaphenogaw Marsh, a place that the Creeks say “is inhabited by a peculiar race of Indians, whose women are incomparably beautiful; they also tell you that this terrestrial paradise has been seen by some of their enterprising hunters, when in pursuit of game, who being lost in inextricable swamps and bogs, and on the point of perishing, were unexpectedly relieved by a company of beautiful women” who “kindly gave them such provisions as they had with them, which were chiefly fruit, oranges, dates, &c. and some corn cakes, and then enjoined them to fly for safety to their own country; for that their husbands were fierce men” (47). This account resonates particularly for Bartram, as he associates these elusive and beautiful Indian women with impenetrable landscapes and a generalized sense of danger. Little is known of Bartram’s own relationships with women, but he never married and does not seem to have had any long-term romantic relationships. We may guess that Bartram’s sense of female Otherness is partly a function of his own experiences, as well as his associations of beautiful women with natural landscapes that are simultaneously beautiful and in need of improvement. Thus, while Bartram’s unusual—for his time—sense of his own masculinity enables him to break down polarities between himself and Native Americans, he does tend to figure femininity as something strange

and vaguely threatening.³⁷ As a man who embraced the twin meanings of the term “husband,” Bartram, as Thomas P. Slaughter contends, “suffered his lack of a mate as an unnatural state, as a defect in himself” of which the presence of women served as an uncomfortable reminder (217).

Bartram’s representations of Native American women parallels his father’s conflation of carnivorous plants with predatory femininity. John Bartram’s correspondence about the carnivorous Venus flytrap provides some clues about the attitudes that father and son shared regarding this relationship between women and nature.³⁸ Slaughter points out that “[w]hen John showed the unusual plant to visiting men, he told a joke about the vulvalike grasper that consumed meat. He saw a resemblance between the trapping mechanism and female anatomy, and saw humor in comparing the fate of insects it gorged and men’s relations with women.” The joke, Slaughter explains, “was in the plant’s shape and movement, the name that he gave it, and the portrayal of men as prey powerless to resist the predatory female trap that ate them” (30). For John Bartram, who loved women and was comfortable in their presence throughout his life, such a joke was primarily intended to amuse other men, although of course the potency of humor is often in its capacity to reveal what one believes to be true. For William, however, the anecdote might have come close to mirroring his sense of what femininity really meant. A rare passage in which Bartram discusses a particular woman at length concerns an Indian woman who is married to a white trader:

³⁷ In addition, Bartram’s ambivalence may be explained partly by the burgeoning national narrative in which the American landscape, according to Dana D. Nelson, “is repeatedly invoked specifically as a ‘woman’ to portray a passive and even sickly body, one that can only be resuscitated by manly acumen and authority” (42). The tension in Bartram’s writing perhaps stems from the contradiction between his firsthand observation of the land’s fertility and productivity, which he cannot help but associate with the Cherokee women he encounters, and his belief that the land is in need of cultivation and improvement. But Bartram never hints, as Nelson suggests, that the land is sickly.

³⁸ Slaughter writes, “The Latin binomial given the plant, *Dionaea muscipula*, is literally translated as ‘Aphrodite’s mousetrap.’ The origins of the first term are quite clear. The Greek goddess Dione merged with the more powerful myth of her daughter Aphrodite, who then became Venus in the Roman pantheon. As Venus, she wasn’t just goddess of love, but also of sexuality and sexually transmitted disease. The second term clearly means mousetrap and not flytrap, but the translation never caught on in popular nomenclature. . . . The name suggests some sort of sexual trap, but for what isn’t clear except that the trapper is female and the trapped is male” (29).

Her features are beautiful, and manners engaging. Innocence, modesty, and love, appear to a stranger in every action and movement; and these powerful graces she has so artfully played upon her beguiled and vanquished lover, and unhappy slave, as to have already drained him of all his possessions, which she dishonestly distributes amongst her savage relations. He is now poor, emaciated, and half distracted, often threatening to shoot her, and afterwards put an end to his own life; yet he has not resolution even to leave her; but now endeavors to drown and forget his sorrows in deep draughts of brandy. Her father condemns her dishonesty and cruel conduct. (110-11)

Bartram's description of the white trader as an "unhappy slave" who is "emaciated" and "drained of his possessions" sounds distinctly like a fly caught in a Venus flytrap or a spider's web, thus echoing the thrust, if not the humor, behind his father's joke. Bartram views women, especially Native American women, as potentially dangerous and predatory toward men, who are themselves powerless to resist their charms.³⁹

Despite his conflation of Indian women and cruel predation, however, Bartram does not wholeheartedly and uncritically commit to the ideal of "male" improvement of "female" natural spaces in order to counter this potentially perilous scenario for Anglo-American men, thus complicating the interpretation that ecofeminist scholars such as Kolodny have assigned to his writings. The transformation of unfamiliar landscapes into the more familiar appearance of agrarian spaces, Bartram acknowledges, will have far-reaching implications that are not always positive. At the same time that he effervesces that "by the arts of agriculture and commerce, almost every desirable thing in life might be produced and made plentiful here, and thereby

³⁹ Slaughter argues that Bartram "both curious and cautious" in his relations with women, "entranced and terrified. Innocence, modesty, and beauty bewitched him: he felt the allure of 'powerful graces'; womanly manners seduced him. He feared being vanquished, becoming a slave, the loss of freedom that romantic entanglements meant to him. Indian women, with their more visible sensuality, the combination of innocence and wantonness that he writes about, were the most dangerous, the most attractive, to him" (222).

establish a rich, populous, and delightful region,” he argues that to do so would “in a little time exhibit other scenes than it does at present, delightful as it is” (199). Indeed, he seems to believe that true masculine virtue is associated with leaving the landscape as it is, as when he describes a road in St. John’s parish: “on the verges of canals, where the road was causwayed, stood the *Cupressus diticha*, *Gordonia Lacianthus*, and *Magnolia glauca*, all planted by nature, and left standing by the virtuous inhabitants, to shade the road, and perfume the sultry air” (36). Bartram suggests here that it is possible for men to inhabit a landscape—and even to transform it by cultivating it and building roads upon it—while still preserving some of the land’s original, awe-inspiring character. Bartram shows a good deal more sophistication regarding the transformation of the American landscape than does Crèvecoeur, who never seems to fully acknowledge the process by which landscapes transition from wilderness—in other words, largely forested places, inhabited primarily by Native Americans—to farms and pastures. While Bartram does not adopt what one would call an ecological vision, he does, at least indirectly, recognize that his vision for the new nation will have consequences. Because Bartram is not locked into a masculine ideology that predetermines his responses to the landscape, he is able to develop a vision that is more complex and nuanced—even if it is ultimately still driven by the rhetoric of “improvement”—than we have seen from earlier writers.

Slaughter’s analysis of some of the sections that Bartram excised from the Alachua Savanna portion of *Travels* illuminates Bartram’s thinking. In one passage removed by Bartram before the first published version of *Travels* appeared in 1791, he compares humans unfavorably to animals; he then extends his generalization to a larger commentary upon the state of the human world: “How debasing to humanity to see every day and everywhere amongst what are called civilized nations such a disparity, such an inequality in the conditions and situations of

men. [...] It appears to me within the reach or ability of man to live in this world, and even in this depraved age and Nation to a good old age without greatly injuring himself or his neighbor” (qtd. in Slaughter 195). Slaughter notes, “What a strong indictment of his country and countrymen, which it makes good sense to edit out after the war, during an era that celebrated independence and resented what was seen as Quakers’ closet Toryism, when he was looking for a sympathetic audience to read his book,” thus suggesting that the passage does represent Bartram’s actual feelings about his country and countrymen, but that he removed the passage so that he would not offend his readers (195).

If these segments of *Travels* are indeed indicative of Bartram’s true sentiments, then Bartram viewed the resulting, future landscape in much the same way that Crèvecoeur imagined the less geographically specific middle landscape that he hoped to see populated by a nation of farmers. Like Crèvecoeur, Bartram hoped for a relationship between men and the natural landscape that would enable a kind of universal self-sufficiency and egalitarianism that he believed to be missing in the “depraved age and Nation” in which he lived. Although Bartram does not emphasize intergenerational continuity to the same degree that Crèvecoeur does, he does—at least in this passage—imagine the landscape in terms of its potential, and in terms of the possibilities for egalitarianism that American agrarianism offered. While Bartram did not support outright revolution as the solution to the depravity and inequality that he saw in colonial relations, he certainly agreed with the revolutionaries’ assertion that all men were created equal, and he wanted Americans’ treatment of the landscape to reflect that belief.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Allewaert argues that “[i]n *Travels*, Bartram intended not to chronicle the complex political history of the American tropics, to elegize loss, or to lose (or find) himself but to distinguish southern North America as a temperate region that contributed to the healthy ‘activity of the human faculties’” (341). At times in the narrative, Bartram discovers landscapes that seem to confirm his presuppositions about this semi-tropical environment, while at other times, as Allewaert points out, “in spite of his effort to describe the southern lowlands as a temperate space, the tropical, the useless, and the cataclysmic continually set him off course” (341).

The Alachua Savanna passages are especially striking because they differ so sharply from most of the narrative, in that they focus so heavily upon the land's potential. Earlier, Bartram had described the same landscape in these terms:

This little lake and surrounding meadows would have been alone sufficient to surprise and delight the traveler; but being placed so near the great savanna, the attention is quickly drawn off, and wholly engaged in the contemplation of the unlimited, varied, and truly astonishing native wild scenes of landscape and perspective, there exhibited: how is the mind agitated and bewildered, at being thus, as it were, placed on the borders of a new world! On the first view of such an amazing display of the wisdom and power of the supreme author of nature, the mind for a moment seems suspended, and impressed with awe. (166-67)

This passage is far more typical of the way Bartram represents the various landscapes he encounters during his journeys. How then can we square Bartram's respectful and admiring attitudes toward nature—and the counterbalancing notions of manhood that inform them—with this apparent desire to see the landscape thickly settled, which seems much more in line with “hegemonic” patriarchal values? Bartram, in fact, imagines population growth on a far greater scale than anything described in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*. While Crèvecoeur does advocate altering the landscape in order to accommodate a nation of yeoman farmers, Bartram's particular reference to *thousands* of new settlers and *millions* of domesticated animals anticipates the transformation of the Florida landscape in the centuries to come.

Indeed, some of the passages that seem most overtly scientific in their orientation—the paragraphs that consist of little more than lists of botanical species, may in fact be a product of the same thinking that inspires the Alachua Savanna passages. “The inclusion of stock taxonomic

language,” writes Hallock, who suggests, perhaps dubiously, that these passages might have been added by another author or editor, “continues the equation of nature and nation that one finds in *Notes on the State of Virginia* and the *Lewis and Clark Journals*” (155). “The result,” he writes, “is an example of Euroamericans defining their own botanic realm” (155). An unpublished manuscript from the late 1780s entitled “Some Hints & Observations Concerning the Civilization, of the Indians, or Aborigines of America” shows that Bartram, in addition to defining American nationhood through his botanical discoveries, also sought to define American manhood through ethical relationships with Native Americans and with the natural world. By acting honorably, for example, in their treaty-making with the Creeks, Bartram implores his countrymen, “Let us my Brethren convince the world that the Citizens of the US are Men in every Sense. [...] Let us leave to our Children, a monument inscribed with Lessons of Virtue, which may remain from age to age, as approved examples for their Posterity: that they [...] may say to one another; see how benevolently, how gratefully[,] how nobly, our forefathers acted!” (198). Bartram suggests that one’s manhood is measured by the way his actions will be received by future generations, a view that appealed to men’s perceptions of themselves as husbands, fathers, and patriarchs. That Bartram sought to define American manhood in terms of the humane treatment of Native Americans reflects the worldview that shaped the writing of *Travels*. Bartram, however, like his friend Thomas Jefferson, probably overestimated the Indians’ desire for assimilation into European-American society when he wrote in the same document that the Indians “want Sheep & horned cattle & would be happy with our arts, and improvements in Agriculture. On their vast natural Plains, their Hills & Commons encircling their Towns, they could raise Sheep enough to supply Wool for the Manufactories of the US, without clearing one acre of Woodland” (198). While Bartram demonstrates some sensitivity to the desires of the

Indians with his disclaimer that the forests would be preserved, his vision for the Creeks' land would nevertheless radically transform the landscape, and it assumes—probably in error—that the Creeks would be amenable to becoming the providers of wool for the new nation.

In 1805, when Bartram was sixty-six years old, President Thomas Jefferson invited him to serve as the natural history advisor on an expedition to explore the Red River in what is now Texas. Bartram, because of his age and a stiff leg—the result of a compound fracture suffered when he fell twenty feet out of a cypress tree at his home—declined. Although Bartram did not go on this trip or any other major expedition for the rest of his life, he did help to usher in the age of frontier masculinity by introducing new audiences, particularly in Europe, to the ideal of the frontier hero. Because Bartram somewhat stubbornly refused to submit to an ideology of colonial masculinity that insisted upon binary oppositions between whites and natives and between humans and nature, and because Bartram was raised by the most important botanist of the American colonies during the eighteenth century, he was able to see the landscape with a clarity of mind that eluded many of the explorer-naturalists who came before him. He was not only a profound inspiration for the Romantic poets, but also a man who defined masculinity in new ways. Rather than trying to find middle ground between existing ideologies of American manhood, Bartram—or at least, the narrator of his book—found a way to live that was simultaneously heroic, pacific, and governed by reason. In the next chapter I turn my attention to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, the most famous of the hero-explorer-imperialist-discoverers of this period; I argue that these men, perhaps better than any others, demonstrate the ways in which the ideology of Jeffersonian manhood—of which these men were among the foremost representatives—looked very different in practice from what it purported to be in the abstract.

Chapter Three: Jeffersonian Masculinity and the Journals of Lewis and Clark

Jeffersonian Manhood and the Corps of Discovery

On August 12, 1805, Meriwether Lewis and a small detachment of men crossed the Continental Divide. On their way to Lemhi Pass, where they were to make their passage through the mountains, one of the men, according to Lewis, “exultingly stood with a foot on each side of a little rivulet and thanked his god that he had lived to bestride the mighty and heretofore deemed endless Missouri” (5: 74). This pronouncement, given just below the Continental Divide, provides a useful metaphor for the historical moment at which the Lewis and Clark expedition stood. One way to read the significance of this moment would be as a clear symbol of male conquest of a feminized landscape: the unnamed man literally *straddles* the rivulet. Such language, Carolyn Merchant argues, alters “the earth from a bountiful mother to a passive receptor of human rape” (39). Merchant is correct in that the moment when these men crossed the Continental Divide did represent a significant and transformative event in the settling of the American West by European Americans, a process that led to massive ecological destruction and genocide, sometimes literally involving rape. At the same time, though, with the benefit of considerable retrospect, we may read this passage from the *Journals* as a watershed moment in the history of American manhood. As the men stood at Lemhi Pass, they straddled multiple masculinities. One foot was in the Jeffersonian mode of manhood—one whose roots were still very much in the model carried over from European aristocracy—while the other was in a new kind of American national manhood, one based on hardiness and associated with the frontier.

In a letter to Meriwether Lewis dated January 18, 1803, ten months before the Senate’s ratification of the Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Jefferson explained the object of a mission he had

been planning for several years: “to explore the Missouri River, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce” (DeVoto 482). In service of this commercial enterprise, Jefferson also instructed Lewis and his men to learn what could about the native people they encountered—about their languages, methods of agriculture and hunting, implements of war, marriage customs, religious traditions, and, of course, methods of commerce. Jefferson’s instructions are the impetus for the leaders’ meticulous record-keeping during their voyage, a project that culminated in the eighteen-volume collection we now know as the *Journals of Lewis and Clark*.⁴¹

The *Journals* consist of eighteen small notebooks, approximately four inches by six inches, of the type commonly used by surveyors in field work.⁴² The journals contain huge volumes of data, going well beyond geographical notes and records of temperature and weather. Both men made meticulous observations on the geology and biology of the region and enlivened their journals with images of animals and plants, Indian artifacts, canoes, and costumes. William Clark drew a number of excellent maps, which were used extensively by later explorers. In general, Lewis and Clark tend to record similar kinds of details about their daily experiences,

⁴¹ For years, controversy surrounded the journals of Lewis and Clark, which seemed too polished to be field notes taken on one of the most arduous expeditions ever undertaken on American soil. The difficulties of the journey, combined with the existence of other, overlapping journals in Clark’s hand, seemed to suggest that the journals might be the product of post-expedition copying, rather than the originals. How, some historians wondered, could the leaders of forty some soldiers take time each day to write such lengthy descriptions of what they saw, and how could they keep these beautifully bound volumes so clean? Was it possible that these notebooks were influenced by the sometimes-faulty memories of the explorers long after the events they describe? Gary Moulton, who has edited the most comprehensive published edition of the *Journals*, along with a number of other scholars, has concluded, after extensive research, that the journals housed at the American Philosophical Society are indeed the originals.

⁴² The available evidence suggests that Lewis and Clark carried their notebooks sealed in tin boxes to protect the relatively fragile journals from the elements. Because the journals were considered the only reliable record of data gathered on the expedition, the men took great care in their preservation. From a close examination of the journals and sets of loose notes, Gary Moulton, among others, has concluded that Lewis and Clark often worked from rough notes compiled daily, then periodically transcribed these into more polished form in the bound volumes; in most cases, however, the time between taking the notes and transcribing them must have been very brief. On many occasions, the explorers wrote directly into the bound volumes.

although Clark's prose is thought to be terse and at times turgid, perhaps the result of his lack of formal schooling. Lewis's entries are generally more philosophical, more lively, and more lyrical, and he spends more words describing in detail the places, people, and wildlife that the men encounter. Because his entries tend to be more rambling and less strictly fact-oriented than Clark's, it is often Lewis's entries that are most revealing about the conceptions of manliness that the men—or at least Lewis—sanctioned.

Jefferson hoped that Lewis and Clark would find a water route connecting the Missouri watershed with the Columbia River watershed, thus opening the western reaches of the continent to commercial exploitation. But for Jefferson, this mission had a much more ambitious purpose, one that goes unstated in his letter to Lewis. Jefferson saw Louisiana as a place where his vision for the young US could be enacted. Jefferson would have agreed heartily with contemporary, occasional correspondent, and fellow agrarian idealist Crèvecoeur's comment in *Letters from an American Farmer* that the American man, "leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. The American is a new man who acts upon new principles" (44). Thus Jefferson in many ways shared Crèvecoeur's vision for the fledgling American nation that he helped to create through his participation in the First and Second Continental Congresses and his composition of the early drafts of the Declaration of Independence. Like Crèvecoeur, Jefferson imagined that the American frontier would be settled by yeoman farmers who would tame and civilize the wilderness, transforming it from a rough and untamed space to one hospitable for individualistic agrarianism.

Jefferson, in fact, takes Crèvecoeur's pastoral ideal a step further. Jefferson received most of his support in the Presidential election of 1800 from the South and from the western frontier,

undoubtedly because, as a Virginian, he portrayed himself as an advocate of the farmer—approximately eighty percent of Americans at the time were farmers—and the common man. Although some farmed cash crops to resell, the vast majority, consistent with the ideal articulated by Crèvecoeur, lived on family farms and grew food for their own subsistence. They built their own houses, raised their own animals, grew their own food, and made their own clothes. Jefferson firmly believed that these farmers were the heart of American republicanism and that the future of the nation rested upon their shoulders. “In spite of the demonstrated superiority of large-scale farming” at least in terms of efficiency and prospects for making one’s fortune, Kolodny points out, “he continued to advocate the small, independent family-size farm, claiming that ‘those who labour in the earth’ are, as a consequence, gifted with ‘substantial and genuine virtue’” (*Lay* 27). Jefferson, then, saw farming as the solution as much for society’s moral decay as for its economic problems. He believed, as did Crèvecoeur, that farming was the solution to avoiding the squalor and gross inequality he saw in the developing factory cities in Europe. But he also believed that farming would contain men’s passions and keep them literally grounded in America’s virtuous soil.

Jefferson attempted to make his agrarian utopianism literal by extending its principles to official government policy. Leo Marx observes that even as Jefferson “endorsed the same goals [as Crèvecoeur] he recognized the problems Crèvecoeur had glossed over. How could a rural America possibly hold off the forces already transforming the economy of Europe? What policies would a government have to adopt to preserve a simple society of the middle landscape?” (117). One answer to this question was Jefferson’s effort in 1776 to include a clause in the Virginia constitution entitling male residents of the state to fifty acres of land, part of his effort to encourage all the men of Virginia to take up farming as a primary vocation. Although

this measure failed, he did manage later that year to persuade the state legislature to grant a preemptive right to anyone living on up to four hundred acres of otherwise unclaimed land in Virginia.⁴³ He insisted on this policy of ownership, Kolodny suggests, because he saw “an almost erotic intimacy in the bond of man and soil: artisans are merely ‘*occupied* at a work-bench,’ while, for the farmer, a more appealing relatedness is promised by that ‘immensity of land *courting* the industry of the husbandman’” (27). Adding emphasis to the word “courting” (not italicized in Jefferson’s text), Kolodny suggests that Jefferson perceived a courtship relationship between men and nature, a relationship that could lead to marriage—or rape. Jefferson’s dogged efforts to encourage widespread land ownership were intricately linked to his notions of American nationhood and American manhood. He believed that encouraging farmers to settle and survey the “middle space” between the settled areas along the coast and the frontier beyond the Appalachian Mountains was key to establishing a strong foundation for the new American nation, and he was willing to use government policy to make it happen.

Of course, for all Jefferson’s egalitarian rhetoric—and he did consistently follow through on policies to try to increase the number of American men who owned their own land—he himself was far from the common man for whom he claimed to be in sympathy. Indeed, as Timothy Sweet has shown, Jefferson “does not envision a ‘classless state,’ as Leo Marx and others have suggested. Rather, he describes a basic division between wealthy and poor white

⁴³ Thomas J. Humphrey argues that this limit on preemptive rights “rankled some speculators.” Adds Humphrey, “Farmers could keep the land if they surveyed it within six years, but they had to start paying taxes immediately. The laws generated revenue for Virginia, while securing the state’s authority over the region by forcing future migrants to register claims with Virginian officials” (180-81). Although the clause was effective in these respects, it brought mixed results for Jefferson’s goal of facilitating land ownership for yeoman farmers. According to Humphrey, “Even if they raised the necessary cash and bought a plot in the western part of the state, migrants faced long, costly, and potentially fatal battles to keep it. Private land companies, speculators, Indians, the British army, and officials and migrants from inside and outside Virginia all competed for land in the region. Meanwhile, Virginia legislators acted in the interests of wealthier speculators, reducing the chances poorer whites had of getting and keeping freeholds. By the middle of the 1780s, speculators controlled most of the land in the western part of the state, including Kentucky, and prices escalated. Purchasers often then had to defend the land they bought from the conflicting claims of absentee landlords and others who asserted title over the property” (181).

Virginians (the laboring and tenant classes evidently being contained in the latter category)” (104). Jefferson describes this class separation in terms of farming: “The wealthy are attentive to the raising of vegetables, but very little so to fruits. The poorer people attend to neither, living principally on milk and animal diet. This is the more excusable, as the climate requires indispensably a free use of vegetable food, for health as well as comfort, and is very friendly to the raising of fruits” (*Notes on the State of Virginia* 158). Perhaps the arbitrariness of the different kinds of agriculture Jefferson assigns to the various economic classes is a function of Jefferson’s own distance from actual agricultural practice. While Crèvecoeur practiced the kind of yeoman agrarian lifestyle that he advocated in his books, Jefferson in his early years was a wealthy lawyer who studied Latin, Greek, and French. He later inherited five thousand acres and dozens of slaves, which became the basis for his palatial estate at Monticello. But he never spent much time working the land himself; that work was left for his slaves and servants. Although Jefferson earned the nickname “Man of the People” by greeting White House guests in plain attire such as a robe and slippers, Michael S. Kimmel aptly depicts Jefferson and other American statesmen of his time—George Washington, John Adams, and James Madison—as examples of the “Genteel Patriarch,” who represents “a dignified aristocratic manhood, committed to the British upper class code of honor and to well-rounded character, with exquisite tastes and manners and refined sensibilities” (13). To classify Jefferson in this way is striking because it shows that even as Jefferson imagined—and tried to help encourage—a nation of yeoman farmers to fill the interior of the North American continent, he still embodied a conception of manhood that was more consistent with European (especially British) values than with those of the burgeoning American nation.⁴⁴ Indeed, Jefferson was often the subject of ridicule for his

⁴⁴ Of course, the spaces that Jefferson imagined as uninhabited were often already inhabited by Native Americans, or were formerly occupied territories that had been cleared of Native American presence by war and disease.

fidelity to European standards of manliness.⁴⁵ Politicians of all stripes were subject to such taunts because attacking one's masculinity was an especially potent sort of attack, particularly if one's alleged effeminacy could be somehow linked to British foppishness. Partly this was a class-based denunciation, as "luxury"—a condition that could only be applied to the wealthy—was often a code word for effeminacy.⁴⁶ That Jefferson, one of the most popular and influential Presidents in American history, was the subject of ridicule for being insufficiently manly, however, is powerful testimony to the contested nature of American manhood during the period after the American Revolution.

Leaving Behind European Manliness

To understand the ways in which manhood was contested and how it was tied to national identity, Royall Tyler's 1787 play *The Contrast*, the first professionally produced play written by an American playwright, which satirizes European masculinity as a means of promoting American patriotism, serves as an instructive example.⁴⁷ Created after the tradition of the English Restoration comedies of the seventeenth century, *The Contrast* takes its inspiration from Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, a British comedy of manners that had revived that

Jefferson imagined, too, that even in those places already occupied by Native Americans, his agrarian vision might be realized by encouraging indigenous peoples to shift to an agricultural economy and lifestyle.

⁴⁵ Bruce Curtis explains that "late in the eighteenth century Thomas Jefferson was accused of 'timidity, whimsicalness,' 'an inertness of mind,' 'a wavering of disposition,' and a weakness for flattery, all stereotypically feminine traits. A late-nineteenth-century historian was more direct: Jefferson had been 'womanish' because 'he took counsel of his feelings and imagination.'" (40).

⁴⁶ According to John Tosh, the bourgeois character of this formulation can be understood in terms of the history of the term "effeminacy": "In the eighteenth century one of the give-away symptoms of this condition was 'luxury'—the unbridled desire to acquire and spend" (63).

⁴⁷ Kimmel, in *American Manhood*, reads the play, as I do, with an eye toward the stereotypes of masculinity that the various male characters represent. Kimmel's analysis, however, is flawed in several important ways. First, the names that he offers for the various types do not fit their corresponding characters very well; for example, Kimmel argues that Billy Dimple represents the "Genteel Patriarch," even though he is neither particularly genteel nor patriarchal. Second, Kimmel overplays the importance of Van Rough, whose role in the play even Kimmel himself admits is relatively minor. Third, Kimmel suggests that the real-life Thomas Jefferson privileges what the "Self-Made Man" model of masculinity over the "Heroic Artisan" without acknowledging that Jefferson valued artisanship as well as farming and inventing.

tradition a decade earlier. Tyler uses the form to satirize Americans who follow British fashions and indulge in British vices. As its title suggests, the play offers a number of “contrasts,” the most important of which is the juxtaposition of the characters Billy Dimple and Colonel Manly. Dimple is a feminized fop, an dissembling, snobbish rogue who travels to Europe and returns a dandy: “the ruddy youth, who washed his face at the cistern every morning, and swore and looked eternal love and constancy, was now metamorphosed into a flippant, pallid, polite beau, who devotes the morning to his toilet, reads a few pages of Chesterfield’s letters, and then minces out to put the infamous principles in practice on every woman he meets” (27). Dimple spends most of the play practicing his unctuous seduction upon three women: one he is engaged to marry but does not love, a second he wishes to marry for her wealth, and a third he wishes to keep close to him for sex. Colonel Manly, conversely, is a true son of the young United States: stiffly formal in his manners with women, gravely serious, deeply honorable, and ardently patriotic. He is an honest toiler, unafraid of hard work, proud of his self-reliance and devoted to his male comrades. By the play’s end, predictably, Dimple has been exposed as a fraud, while Manly—the quintessential American male, at least in Tyler’s conception—wins the love of the woman Dimple is supposed to marry, as well as (just as importantly) the approval of her father.

Thomas Jefferson cast his lot with a conception of American national manhood similar to that embodied by Colonel Manly in Tyler’s play. Although Jefferson in some ways practiced a model of masculinity derived from European aristocracy and was thus vulnerable to the charge that he was a Dimple-like macaroni who affected British customs and manners, in his writings he repeatedly valorized American artisans and yeoman farmers and argued that they were the basis of American national identity. Jefferson was not torn between conflicting allegiances; he was, from the start, an ardent patriot who sought to build a new nation upon a new model of manhood

as articulated by Crèvecoeur. To the extent that anxiety about American national manhood appears in Jefferson's writings, it comes in the form of insecurities manifest in nationalistic competitiveness. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson goes to great pains to challenge the theories of French naturalist George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, who, in the fourteenth installment (published in 1766) of what would eventually become his thirty-six volume *Histoire Naturelle*, disparaged the natural environments of both North and South America while also sneering at the indigenous inhabitants of the two continents:

In America [. . .] animated Nature is weaker, less active, and more circumscribed in the variety of her productions; for we perceive, from the enumeration of the American animals, that the numbers of species is not only fewer, but that, in general, all the animals are much smaller than those of the Old Continent. [. . .] Even those which, from the kindly influences of another climate, have acquired their complete form and expansion, shrink and diminish under a niggardly sky and an unprolific land, thinly peopled with wandering savages [. . .] (251)

Not satisfied with denigrating the fauna of North America—a continent he had never visited—Buffon expanded upon his theory of American degeneracy, an offshoot of his biogeographical approach to natural history in which he argued that the American climate, natural resources, and water supply combined to create an environment inclined to reduce the physical size and vitality of its inhabitants. Explaining Buffon's theory, Alan Bewell states that “[e]ven as the primary scientific focus of biogeography was on the natural or artificial distribution of plants and animals and their adaptation to new environments, its most controversial aspect lay in its reflection on the biological relationship between people and environments” (116). For Buffon and his later

supporters, this unfavorable relationship between America's climate and its inhabitants explained the many failings, both biological and cultural, they saw in the new country.

In his effort to disprove Buffon's theory, Jefferson creates a detailed chart, entitled "A comparative View of the Quadrupeds of Europe and of America," comparing American animals to their European counterparts (50). We learn, for instance, that American bears (presumably black bears) can weigh up to 410 pounds, while European bears weigh only 153.7.⁴⁸ American beavers weigh 45 pounds, European beavers 18.5; American otters 12 pounds, European ones 8.9. And so on. Jefferson even resorts to the absurd claim that mammoths may exist in North America, despite the consensus among naturalists of his day that they had long ago gone extinct; in fact, he warns Lewis and Clark when they head west to be on the lookout for mammoths along their journey (Deloria 5). Jefferson includes these extinct animals in his case against Buffon not, presumably, because he actually holds out serious hope that woolly mammoths will be discovered living in North America, but because he's desperately seeking any advantage he can find in his effort to discredit Buffon: a project that was unnecessary from a scientific standpoint, as Buffon's theory had been soundly debunked by the time Jefferson wrote his volume. It was a meaningful gesture only from a rhetorical perspective, insofar as Buffon's theory still had popular appeal that needed to be challenged. What Jefferson's exceedingly strenuous rebuttal to Buffon's theories suggests is that Jefferson was not yet sufficiently confident in America's strength as a nation to rely solely on the available science to make his case. And his insistence on physical *size* of its animals as his main point of comparison suggests a quest for physical dominance, a quest for *masculine* dominance. Jefferson, by emphasizing the physical difference between American and European specimens, naturalizes the masculine power of Americans over Europeans, particularly since Jefferson borrows Buffon's notion of geographical determinism.

⁴⁸ How Jefferson arrives at this impressively precise figure is unclear.

This illusion of a superior masculinity possessed by Americans works to deny, confine, and erase the masculinity of Europeans. Dominance becomes a process of constructing “the other”—an alien masculinity that, through its alleged difference and cultural inferiority defines and justifies the position of the dominant group—in an oppositional, hierarchical relationship.⁴⁹

It is partly his nationalism, too, that causes Jefferson to shift into an emotional register when he represents the natural landscape. Describing the Natural Bridge, a geological formation in Virginia where Cedar Creek (a small tributary of the James River) has carved out a gorge in the mountainous limestone terrain, Jefferson begins by noting its dimensions—270 feet deep by 45 feet wide, etc.—presumably an effort to demonstrate the magnificence and physical expansiveness of the American landscape, not unlike his chart comparing American and European animals. But then he declares, “It is impossible for the emotions, arising from the sublime, to be felt beyond what they are here; so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing, as it were, up to heaven, the rapture of the spectator is really indescribable!” (25). Here Jefferson emphasizes not only the physical qualities of the Natural Bridge, but the emotional response of the observer—as if this response is an innate result of the experience of seeing it. The “sublime” American landscape, for Jefferson, is one that elicits a predictably and

⁴⁹ Interestingly, Jefferson’s efforts to counter Buffon lead him to defend Native Americans. He declares, “I believe the Indian then in body and mind equal to the White man,” although, as numerous scholars have pointed out, his actions suggested a less respectful view of North America’s native inhabitants (qtd. in Gerbi 261). Indeed, as Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., explains, “[a]lthough Jefferson subscribed to the equality of all men in their original creation and to the potentiality of the Indian in particular, he graded peoples on a scale of superiority and inferiority as did his American and European counterparts” (43). It is Jefferson’s belief in the potential of Native American peoples, in fact, that leads him, ironically, to policies intended to “civilize” them, even as such policies tended to devalue and exterminate their existing cultural traditions. Those Indians who did not wish to assimilate to Anglo-American culture and take up farming as a primary vocation, according to a proclamation issued by Jefferson in 1803, were encouraged to exchange their lands in the east for parcels west of the Mississippi because, as Berkhofer describes, this was “a way of expelling from within the nation those influences he believed deleterious to the American spirit and the continued vitality of American institutions” (157). This hardly sounds like the egalitarian spirit that Jefferson invokes in his Revolutionary writings. But at least in the context of his dispute with Buffon, his nationalism appears to win out over his intolerance toward Indians.

automatically rapturous response.⁵⁰ In some ways, as Michaëlle L. Browsers suggests, Jefferson's conception of the way people should treat nature anticipates the "environmentalist" land ethic of such later figures as twentieth-century naturalist Aldo Leopold. Jefferson, for instance, wrote to James Madison that "[t]he question [w]hether one generation of men has a right to bind another [...] is a question of such consequences as not only to merit decision, but place also among the fundamental principles of every government. [...] I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, 'that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living.'"⁵¹ By "usufruct," according to the system of English law that he inherited, Jefferson referred to "the right to make all the use and profit of a thing that can be made without injuring the substance of the thing itself" (Chambers 85). Jefferson here uses the term "usufruct" as a metaphor for political relations, and in some ways this is emblematic of the way he thought about land: as a metaphor for political philosophy that he espoused. But his meaning was literal, too. Because Jefferson sought a durable political system, and because that political system was built upon principles of land ownership and cultivation, he imagined a partnership between men and the natural environment that allowed people to profit from its use, so long as no harm was done to it. In this way Jefferson, echoing his friend William Bartram, envisions a durable conception of masculinity, one that is measured by its ability to be sustained over multiple generations through judicious use of natural resources.

⁵⁰ Gisela Tauber attributes Jefferson's expansive language to his "intense personal identification with the state of Virginia and with the people and places he is describing" and that his "plan for the state of Virginia in his *Notes* suggests his urgent desire to restore to health and beauty his mother the state of Virginia" (638). Michaëlle L. Browsers goes so far as to call Jefferson's land ethic "environmentalist" in that it emphasized "the maintenance of a moral standard which was the product of a society comprised of small, freeholding farmers. This notion of how society should be organized, in turn, has important bearing on how we treat nature" (53).

⁵¹ Jefferson to James Madison, 6 September 1789.

Jeffersonian Idealism Goes to the Frontier

Although Jefferson's ideal of the manly yeoman farmer, with its core principles of democracy and stewardship, may well exemplify an ecologically and politically sustainable way of inhabiting American agricultural land, there are aspects of Jefferson's conception of American national manhood that are problematic. One inherent paradox in Jefferson's writing, particularly in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, is his conflation of lyrical language in his descriptions of the natural world with his tireless impulse to exploit it. In one particularly famous and memorable passage, Jefferson describes the view overlooking the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers at Harper's Ferry in northern Virginia: "The passage of the Patowmac through the Blue Ridge," he writes, "is perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in nature" (19). While this scene produces an emotional and philosophical response from Jefferson—he wonders about the geological processes that produce this magnificent view, and he describes it as "as placid and delightful, as that is wild and tremendous"—it also must be read as part of his larger project of seeking to commercially exploit the American West (19). In his chapter on rivers, for instance, Jefferson focuses almost exclusively on their navigability, and he speculates on the usefulness of certain waterways—particularly the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri watersheds—as prospective routes for the fur trade. Because Jefferson devotes far more pages in *Notes on the State of Virginia* to his speculations about the commercial development of the West than he does to natural history or lyrical description, we must conclude that he favored a masculinity based upon the use of land for commercial exploitation. As Jeffrey Myers explains, "Jefferson places his ecologically beneficent yeoman farmers in the service of a large and contradictory project. His catalogs and descriptions of wildlife, plant life, minerals, and soils inventory the materials of a vast commercial enterprise" (25). Or as Kolodny explains it, "Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*

continually hints at, but steadfastly refuses to make explicit, the essence of the pastoral paradox: man might, indeed, win mastery over the landscape, but only at the cost of emotional and psychological separation from it” (28). The yeoman farmer was not ecologically benign in practice. And Jefferson’s project of charting, surveying, and ultimately exploiting the resources of the American West set in motion a chain of events that resulted not only in mass extinctions and loss of critical habitats, but also the extermination of a multitude of Native American cultures. The fact that Jefferson remained in Washington while Lewis and Clark carried out his plans for the Louisiana Purchase reinforces Kolodny’s point: his physical separation from the places explored by the Corps of Discovery prevented him from ever attaining a deep physical or emotional connection with the lands and people who would be affected by his administration’s policies, even though the collection of artifacts gathered from the expedition that he displayed prominently in his Monticello home—Indian buffalo robes, beaded Indian leggings, an otter skin bag, some Indian utensils, an earthenware pot, clay pipes, a bow and arrows—suggests that Jefferson *wished* for that kind of direct and profound connection to the West.

Jefferson, of course, did not anticipate the consequences of his vision for the American West. His thinking was focused almost entirely on the agrarian potential for the lands west of the Mississippi, and not on how the project of exploring and settling the West would affect the natural and human communities that already lived there. The discoveries of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Jefferson hoped, would not only bolster his case against Buffon, but also assert his administration’s mastery of the North American continent. Lewis and Clark’s journals provide important insights not only about the landscapes and native peoples they encounter, but also about their positions as representative Jeffersonian men. They see themselves as strong, decisive, and willing to use force against the Indians if necessary—but they also self-identify as

reasonable, respectful, and ultimately peaceful men. This self-presentation manifests both in their interactions with natives and in their representations of the landscapes through which they traveled.

One of the main purposes of the Corps of Discovery—and certainly one that directly addressed both Jefferson’s conflict with Buffon and his identity as an Enlightenment thinker—was scientific in nature. It is as a scientific voyage that the Lewis and Clark expedition can be claimed most persuasively as a success. Lewis and Clark catalogued 176 species of plants, including the Osage orange, prairie apple, pink cleome, long leaved mugwort, purple coneflower, bitterroot, silverberry, greasewood, Sitka alder, ponderosa pine, mariposa lily, narrow-leaved skullcap, western snakeweed, petioled wake-robin, netleaf hackberry, Oregon boxwood, mountain hemlock, slender toothwort, golden currant, and wild hyacinth—all of which were previously unknown to European taxonomers. (Native Americans, of course, had known about these plants, their natural histories, and their medicinal properties for centuries, perhaps millennia.) They recorded numerous bird species, including several now named for them: Clark’s grebe and Clark’s nutcracker, for instance. Jefferson wanted this kind of information, even though its commercial or military application might not come immediately. Jefferson, true to his station as an Enlightenment naturalist who wanted to make significant contributions to Linnaean taxonomy, did want the expedition to seek knowledge for knowledge’s sake, and Lewis and Clark—especially Lewis—were effective and perceptive observers of nature. Perhaps more importantly, they proved themselves to be worthy representatives of Jefferson’s conception of manhood.

Martial Masculinity in Indian Territory

It is telling, and probably revealing of his overall intentions, that even though he valued the contributions of men like William Bartram and invited them to join smaller exploratory trips, when it came to leading the Corps of Discovery—by far the most ambitious and high-profile expedition that he sent to scout the Louisiana Purchase—Jefferson chose two military men: William Clark, formerly a captain in the Clarksville militia, and Meriwether Lewis, who had once served as a lieutenant under Clark in a detachment of the US Army. According to Stephen Ambrose, Clark's fear of the Indians who lived along the upper Missouri was such that he "added a bronze cannon. [...] Mounted on a swivel that allowed it to be turned and fired in any direction, [...] it would be the largest weapon to that date ever taken up the Missouri. It could fire a solid lead ball weighing about one pound, or sixteen musket balls with sufficient velocity to go through a man. At close range, a highly effective antipersonnel weapon" (127). The fact that Lewis and Clark brought along such a powerful weapon is testimony to the fact that even an ostensibly benign mission, one intended to find a trade route to the Pacific and to learn about the native peoples who lived along that route, had potentially violent implications. In this context, it may be helpful to read Lewis and Clark's journals not merely as a faithful catalog of their experiences and observations along their expedition, for it does seem to be reasonably accurate and thorough, but also an early entry in the genre of the Western. As Marilyn C. Wesley explains, "the many subgenres of the male adventure tale," a genre that Lewis and Clark's journals certainly made use of, "endlessly replicate the ideological premise that acts of violent destruction construct power" (4). The act of bringing along the cannon is symbolic of the extent to which the expedition's leaders subscribed to this notion, at least in the beginning, since it

could serve as a means for controlling and dominating people and landscapes.⁵² Clark was anxious about the potential failure of the expedition, and he believed, as he and his cohorts began their journey up the Missouri River, that the most effective way to safeguard the expedition was through an ostentatious display of military strength. As Indian scholars Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., and Marc Jaffe posit, perhaps it was as a result of such military organization that “there was only a single fatality during the two-year-long expedition, and that from an unforeseen medical emergency rather than accident or conflict with unfriendly Indians” (xv). The cannon serves ultimately as a means for *protecting* rather than destroying life, and even if Clark did originally imagine the cannon as a means for subjugating Native Americans along the way, the meaning of the cannon’s presence shifts significantly during the course of the expedition.

As it turned out, the expedition never fired the swivel cannon, at least not for military purposes. Lewis ordered it to be loaded during the standoff with the Teton Sioux on September 25, 1804; however, he eventually deemed it unnecessary to fire the cannon in a threatening way that day, on any other day during the expedition. However, the cannon is mentioned frequently in the journals for its usefulness as a signaling instrument. While the keelboat was proceeding upstream, the expedition leaders almost daily sent out hunting parties, which sometimes ranged a mile or more from the river in pursuit of fresh meat. At the end of the day a blank shot was fired from the swivel to orient the hunters to the keelboat’s location. It was also used to celebrate memorable events along the way. For instance, Clark writes on January 1, 1805, that “[t]he Day was ushered in by the discharge of two Cannons” to celebrate the arrival of a new year as they spent their difficult and tense winter among the Mandan Indians (3: 266). Since the cannon was

⁵² Stephen J. Ducat suggests that this obsession with brutal devastation has always been a central dimension of American masculinity: “Unable to embrace the longing to bring life into this world, one worships the means for wielding death. Exterminationist weaponry is revered. A culture of permanent war becomes a society’s *raison d’être*” (46).

heavy with a severe recoil, it was not suitable for use on the canoes, and therefore had to be abandoned as the expedition reached the shallow headwaters of the Missouri. Lewis had the swivel gun buried in the cache made in June 1805 before the portage around the Great Falls. They recovered it on their way home the following year, and soon were able to lighten their load somewhat. “As our swivel could no longer be serviceable to us as it could not be fired on board the largest perogue,” wrote Clark on August 16, 1806, “we concluded to make a present of it to the Great Chief of the Menetaras (the One Eye) with a view to ingratiate him more Strongly in our favor. I had the Swivel Charged and Collected the Chiefs in a circle around it and adressed them with great ceremoney. [...] After the council was over the gun was fired and Delivered” (8: 304). Thus the cannon, originally brought along as means for intimidating potentially hostile Indians along the way, proves to be too heavy to be of real utility; its significance shifts, in that it becomes a symbol of friendship between whites and the Menetaras. This is one example of the ways in which the imperialist motives of the Corps of Discovery, such as they were, are derailed in favor of a humbler, more diplomatic, and probably more successful model for interactions with Indian tribes. The expedition leaders never consciously acknowledge this change in their thinking, but the cannon’s meaning, and the martial masculinity associated with it, changes over the course of the two-year expedition.

More subtle than the mounting of a cannon on the bow of a boat, but equally revealing, is Jefferson’s instruction to assess the Indians along their voyage in terms of the “extent and limits of their possessions; their relations with other tribes [...] their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, [and] arts [...] and articles of commerce they may need or furnish” (De Voto 1128). Although Jefferson’s instructions sound benign—and perhaps were intended to be so—they laid the groundwork for the destruction of Native American tribes and

their cultures that followed. The Corps of Discovery gathered information that was later used against the tribes who willingly provided it.⁵³ One Nez Perce elder, Pakaowna, remembered the legacy of the Corps of Discovery in this way:

The number of persons dead [as a result of the Lewis and Clark expedition] were one sergeant of the Corps of Discovery (from appendicitis), three Nez Perce emissaries, two Blackfeet killed by Lewis's party near Maris River in Montana on their return trip in 1806, and forty-two Bannocks. Therefore, the total is forty-eight people killed because of a message of peace and friendship! It is ironic that a message of peace and friendship brought about the spilling of blood to so many people. This was the beginning of a great change to Ni Mii Puu country. (Pinkham 158)

Not only did Lewis and Clark's voyage unwittingly lead to bloodshed between the Nez Perce and the Bannocks, but it also helped bring about the widespread exploration, settlement, exploitation, and destruction of the American West by Anglo Americans. Although the two leaders of the expedition generally comported themselves with a high degree of restraint, and although at times they showed considerable respect for native peoples and their knowledge, they nevertheless represented in the public imagination a martial conception of American manhood that accompanied this first official foray into the commercial exploitation of the continent's interior. Lewis and Clark might have embraced this version of American manhood at the beginning of their journey, but this conception changed as they were forced to deal with the day-to-day realities of interacting with native tribes, keeping their men safe, and holding to Jefferson's instructions.

⁵³ Jeffrey Myers rightly observes that "[t]he preoccupation with their possessions, their tribal territory, their readiness for war, along with the military imprimatur of the Corps of Discovery, is foreboding for the indigenous peoples of the West" (36).

Lewis and Clark: Jeffersonian Men

Lewis and Clark's journals provide important insights not only about the landscapes and native peoples they encounter, but also about their position as representatives of the Jeffersonian American man. Particularly revealing are the passages in the journals when Lewis and Clark encounter people living along the Missouri River: many members of various Indian tribes, as well as occasional French trappers and traders. These interactions reveal several things about their concept of masculinity: (1) the traits they seem to regard as appropriately manly, (2) their notions about proper relationships between men and women, and (3) their ideas about the ways in which men should interact with the natural world. I will discuss each of these concepts in turn, starting with the personal attributes Lewis and Clark seem to define as masculine.

In their negotiations with Indian tribes, Lewis and Clark repeatedly use gendered language in their efforts to both educate and persuade the natives. During a particularly tense encounter with some members of the Teton tribe, Sergeant John Ordway observes in his journal that despite the Tetons' threats, "Captain Clark used moderation with them, told them that we must and would go on and would go. That we were not Squaws, but warriors" (3: 49). Clark's initial employment of this dualistic masculinity—one that rhetorically defines itself in opposition to the female—elicits an aggressive response from the Chief, who "Sayed he had warriors too and if we were to go on they would follow us and kill [us]" (3: 49). It appears that Clark miscalculates the Teton Chief's conception of masculinity; Clark seems to expect that his comment "we were not Squaws, but warriors" will defuse the tensions between the Tetons and the Corps of Discovery. It has the opposite effect. One likely explanation for the Tetons' bellicose reaction is that, as Nancy Shoemaker points out, "[o]ne common gender metaphor"

among Native American men “was to insult enemies by calling them women” (240).⁵⁴ The Tetons, then, may have interpreted Clark’s comment as an incitement to war. Such misunderstandings and miscommunications frequently occurred in negotiations between whites and Native Americans, and these were often rooted in differing conceptions of masculinity.⁵⁵

When Clark’s gender metaphor appears not to work, he shifts his rhetoric to remind the Indians that there will be more white people to come and that these whites are far more likely to look upon them favorably if they allow Lewis and Clark and their men safe passage—and conversely, that they will face retribution from Lewis and Clark’s patriarchal president if they should attack. According to Ordway, Clark tells them “that we were sent by their great father the president of the U.S. and that if they misused us that he or Captain Lewis could by writing to him have them all destroyed as it were in a moment” (DeVoto 37). Clark first portrays himself and his party in terms of a warrior-like masculinity defined in opposition “squaws,” thus setting up a battle of wills with the Mandan chiefs through his implicit challenge to the Mandan warriors’ masculinity. Clark finds more success when he describes his benefactor, Jefferson, as a patriarch capable of bestowing both generosity and vengeance. The strategy works for Clark because it might be the only way to give the Mandans pause before attacking his comparatively small band—to remind them that although Jefferson is a thousand miles away in Washington, he is a patriarchal force capable of inflicting retribution. Because the motivating cause of most intertribal wars was revenge for past misdeeds, and because of the hierarchical structure of the Mandan tribe, such language would have been much more likely to produce a favorable result in

⁵⁴ Shoemaker adds, “Those Indian groups most renowned for their military prowess—the Catawbas, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Iroquois—were [...] adept at assaulting their enemies with stinging gender metaphors” (241).

⁵⁵ To the English of Virginia in the early seventeenth century, for instance, Indian men were thought to be “idle” not because they were inactive, but because they neglected to take responsibility for agriculture, as European men were conditioned to do. Early English colonists therefore justified their seizure of Indian lands by pointing to the failure of Indian men to subdue the earth with the plow. Many Indians, in turn, scorned European men.

the negotiations than would a battle of masculine wills. Their willingness to adjust their rhetoric—and their self-presentation as men—is often key to their survival. It is unclear, however, whether Lewis and Clark ever arrive at a coherent understanding of Native American masculinity, especially because they encounter numerous tribes with widely divergent languages and cultural traditions.

Surely Jefferson would approve of being represented in the paternalistic way that he appears in this confrontation with the Mandans; representatives of Anglo-American government often figured Native Americans as children needing guidance and protection. After their return from their two-year expedition, for instance, Lewis and Clark invited Mandan chief Sheheke and others to a reception at which the following toast was given: “The Red People of America—under an enlightened policy, gaining by steady steps the comforts of the civilized, without losing the virtues of the savage state” (Foley and Rice 6). Here the paternalism implicit in Jefferson’s Indian policy is well articulated. There is some evidence, in fact, that Native Americans in the eighteenth century accepted European paternalism, thus clearing the way for Jefferson’s particular take on relations between Anglo Americans and Native Americans. Shoemaker writes, “The Cherokees [...] grasped the utility of accepting the king of England as their father. In 1730 Sir Alexander Cuming, a colonial eccentric with no official standing, stormed through the Cherokee Nation, stopping at each town to give a speech about ‘the great Power and Goodness of his Majesty King George, who he call’d the great Man on the other Side of the great Water; that himself and all his Subjects were to him Children, and they all would do whatever the King ordered them.’ He then made the Indians get down on their knees, drink to the King’s health, and ‘acknowledge themselves dutiful Subjects and Sons to King George’” (252).

Well after Lewis and Clark’s winter among the Mandans—when the Shoshone who have

agreed to accompany the expedition over the Continental Divide become suspicious of Lewis's intentions and threaten to return to their home territory—Lewis tells their chief, Cameahwait, that “if they continued to think thus meanly of us that they might rely on it that no white men would ever come to trade with them or bring them arms and ammunition. [...] I still hoped that there were some among them that were not afraid to die, that were men and would go with me and convince themselves of the truth of what I had asserted” (5: 216). Here Lewis appeals to Cameahwait's sense of bravery and honor, a tactic calculated to force the Shoshone to recommit to their agreement. Lewis remarks, “I soon found that I had touched him on the right string; to doubt the bravery of a savage is at once to put him on his metal” (5: 217). Whereas the use of gender metaphors had exacerbated the tensions between the Corps of Discovery and the Mandans earlier in the expedition, this time—in a different context—it achieves the desired result.

Throughout the colonial period, Native Americans and Europeans forged economic and military alliances that relied heavily on some shared assumptions about men and masculinity. Particularly when it came to war, Indian and European gender norms reinforced one another. Indian men often appealed to a common language of manhood to goad others into joining them in wars against a common enemy. When the Delaware Indians refused to join the Iroquois as allies in war, the Iroquois taunted, “You Delaware Indians doe nothing but stay att home & boill yor potts, and are like women, while wee Ondondages & Senekaes goe abroad & fight” (qtd. in Shoemaker 242). The Iroquois used the same tactic to convince reluctant English colonists to “fight like Men.” Since Lewis does not provide a clear sense of Cameahwait's perspective, we cannot know exactly what his motivations are, nor is it clear from Lewis's account whether

bravery is an exclusively “manly” trait among the Shoshone.⁵⁶ The intrepid frontier manliness that Lewis identifies, and that shares some of the same assumptions as that of the Shoshone, is one that comes to be venerated among white American men in the nineteenth century. Lewis helps to define the masculine standard against which the next generation of American men would be measured.

Lewis’s references to courage are not merely rhetorical. In their journals, both Lewis and Clark repeatedly praise the bravery and determination of the men in their party, and they both seize the opportunity to disparage those who fail to display the bravery they expect in a man. Probably the most glaring example is their French interpreter, Toussaint Charbonneau, whose acts of cowardice and incompetence earn him the scorn of nearly every member of the expedition. In one memorable incident, Lewis recalls, “It happened unfortunately for us this evening that Charbonneau was at the helm of this pirogue; Charbonneau cannot swim and is perhaps the most timid waterman in the world” (4: 152). A strong wind suddenly comes up, Charbonneau panics, and he nearly flips the boat, which happens to contain the expedition’s instruments, papers, medicine, and the various items that have been saved as gifts for future encounters with Indians. Thankfully, the other men on the boat are able to right it, and the crew—including Charbonneau’s Shoshone wife, Sacajawea—are able to retrieve most of the gear. Charbonneau is the perfect foil to the Jeffersonian model of American manhood; instead of a courageous, self-reliant, red-blooded American male, Charbonneau is a lily-livered, effete Frenchman who is utterly dependent on others for his own safety and well-being. (Remember that Buffon, another Frenchman, is Jefferson’s foil for his claims about the size and abundance of American wildlife.) Charbonneau is not even a particularly good interpreter, as he does not speak fluently the languages of Indian people among whom he has lived for twenty years. In the

⁵⁶ The courage of Sacajawea suggests that bravery was valued among women as well as men.

eyes of the other members of the expedition, he embodies the reasons why Louisiana is better off under the flag of the US and not France.

Lewis and Clark single out Charbonneau in a second way—his treatment of women—and this illustrates the second point I wish to make about their masculinity. Charbonneau comes to the expedition with some baggage with respect to his interactions with Indian women. Years earlier, while Charbonneau worked as a fur trapper for the North West Company, his expedition leader, John MacDowell, wrote in his journal that “Toussaint Charbonneau was stabbed in the act of committing a rape upon her Daughter by an old Saulteaux woman with a Canoe Awl—a fate he highly deserved for his brutality— It was with difficulty he could walk back over the portage” (qtd. in Nelson 13). It is probably revealing of European Americans’ lack of respect for the rights of Native American women that MacDowell, rather than punishing Charbonneau himself, instead allows an Indian woman to impose punishment. Charbonneau’s reputation for brutality, nevertheless, follows him when he joins the Corps of Discovery, and it leads to an incident in which Charbonneau receives a stern upbraiding from William Clark. On August 14, 1805, Lewis writes in his journal that Charbonneau “struck his Indian Woman for which Captain Clark gave him a severe reprimand” (5: 93). Clark’s intervention during a marital dispute is not unprecedented on this voyage. Earlier, when the expedition is at its winter camp among the Mandan Indians, a sentinel informs Clark that one of the Indians has threatened to kill his wife because she has been sleeping with one of the whites. Clark notes that he “went down and spoke to the fellow about the rash act which he was like to commit and forbid any act of the kind near the fort” (3: 239). At the same time that Clark seems to be setting boundaries for acceptable behavior by men toward women, he also seems to quietly acknowledge the limits of his authority when he specifies that the Indian man may not kill his wife “near the fort.” Why then does Clark

seem to think he has the authority to intervene in Charbonneau and Sacajawea's marital dispute, when it was generally acknowledged that men had the right to control their wives, even using physical coercion if necessary? Part of the answer to this may have to do with Sacajawea's value to the expedition. Not only does she show herself to be an able interpreter and a person of quick judgment, as when she rescues the gear that Charbonneau has carelessly dumped into the Missouri River, but she also is an asset because having a woman along signals to tribes that this is a peaceful expedition and not a war party. That Sacajawea becomes so crucial to the success of the Lewis and Clark expedition is testimony not only to her own abilities as a guide and interpreter, but also to the irrelevance, as the expedition goes on, of the veneer of male superiority over women.

Just as important, Lewis and Clark, as representatives of the Jefferson administration, seem incensed by Charbonneau's arbitrary exercise of power, which for them may have resembled the arbitrary power against which the American Revolution was supposed to have been fought. Jefferson, after all, in the Declaration of Independence, cites the King of England's policy of "abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies." It is the arbitrariness of these actions that strikes Jefferson as most objectionable, and it is the same for Lewis and Clark in their judgments about Charbonneau's treatment of Sacajawea.

The two captains, however, do seem to sanction—perhaps even with some amusement—the exploitation of native women by the men in their party, their main anxiety being the possible spread of venereal disease. Further, the expedition's leaders seem unwilling to recognize—or are determined to de-emphasize—a crucial difference between their own ways of interacting with

the Indians and those of the French (such as Charbonneau). Whereas Lewis, Clark, and the members of their expedition maintain a certain distance between themselves and the Indian tribes they encounter along their way, and while they act more as tourists than as inhabitants of the land, the French in the American West tended to live among the Indians and intermarried freely with them. As historian Vine Deloria, Jr., points out, “French colonial policy had encouraged intermarriage with the Indians and the exchange of children to create kinship bonds with the eastern tribes. The French sought to create a new kind of society of mixed Euro-Indian genetic background that would and could hold the lands claimed by the French king under the Doctrine of Discovery by appealing to their common ancestry” (8).

Of course, the notion that the French integrated themselves more freely with Native Americans than did the British, and that this implies a more tolerant and respectful attitude toward them—as articulated in Francis Parkman’s aphorism, “Spanish civilization crushed the Indian; English civilization scorned and neglected him; French civilization embraced and cherished him”—has been vastly overstated and oversimplified (131). Robert Berkhofer has shown that “the high ideals of integrating the inhabitants of the Franco-American colony into one people hinged as much upon concrete power as upon good intentions. Integration still presumed acculturation and French dominance, and discrimination underlay Franco-Indian relations as actually practiced” (128). Thus Charbonneau’s treatment of Sacajawea, while disturbing to the members of the Corps of Discovery, in some ways symbolized the character of the relationship between the French—as well as other European colonial powers—and the indigenous peoples of North America. Any of these interpretations of white-Indian relations, including those of Lewis and Clark, assume that Indians were available for intermarriage to any Europeans who wished to do so, an assumption that vastly oversimplified Native Americans’ attitudes toward white

settlers.⁵⁷

Even as Lewis and Clark saw themselves as possessing a more respectful and more enlightened attitude toward Native American women than Charbonneau and other Frenchmen, they came well short of embracing hybridity in the ways that the French routinely practiced. Indeed, fear of miscegenation is implicit in the warnings they issue to their men about catching venereal diseases from Indian women. Partly this was a function of the theory, dating back to the days of Christopher Columbus, that venereal disease originated with the native populations of North America. Lewis receives what he believes to be confirmation of this theory when he asks one of the Mandan chiefs, through Charbonneau, “whether these people had the venereal”: “the information was that they sometimes had it but I could not learn their remedy; they most usually die with its effects. This seems a strong proof that these disorders bothe gonaroeah and Louis venerae are native disorders of America” (5: 122). The real danger to the expedition, then, from Lewis and Clark’s perspective, comes from Indian women’s unchaste nature. Among the Chinooks, Clark writes, “The young women sport openly with our men, and appear to receive the approbation of their friends & relations for So doing. Maney of the women are handsom, They are all low both men and women. [...] Pocks and Venerial is common amongst them” (6: 73). Striking, of course, is the double standard implied here; “sporting openly” with Native American women—and thus making themselves vulnerable to the exchange of venereal disease—is not considered evidence of “low” status for the men of the Corps of Discovery, but the same

⁵⁷ Much of the available research on relationships and intermarriage between French colonists and Native Americans has focused upon internal debates within the French population. Kathleen DuVal points out, however, that “though French views are important, they did not dictate reality. Omitting Indian motivations and policies distorts how, how often, and why [intermarriage] occurred. [...] In colonial Louisiana Indian circumstances, needs, and customs had more influence over whether cross-cultural sexual and marital relationships occurred and how children born from such unions fitted into their complex world” (270). Although DuVal’s argument applies primarily to Louisiana, her overall point—that Native Americans’ attitudes and circumstances played a larger role in French-Indian intermarriages than has been previously acknowledged—applies to the totality of French-Indian relations in the New World.

behavior on the part of the Indian women is proof of their lack of virtue. This viewpoint is consistent with the ideology that called for women to be the possessors of virtue in society and that gave men free rein to behave as they pleased, as they were assumed to be vulnerable to temptation and corruption. Since Native Americans—particularly Native American women—were seen by Anglo Americans as being close to nature, the implicit sanctioning of the sexual exploitation of Indian women by Anglo-American men extends to the expedition’s views toward the natural world.

Lewis and Clark’s unsympathetic treatment of Charbonneau thoroughly underscores the extent to which they reject the masculinity they associate with Europe. Their treatment of women, likewise, suggests something of the veneration of women’s domestic role that began to be used in the context of “republican motherhood” during the American Revolution, although they express doubt about the extent to which Native American women fit into that scheme.⁵⁸ On the Pacific Coast, when Lewis attempts to describe the clothing worn by the women of the coastal tribes, he writes,

The garment which occupied the waist, and from thence as low as nearly to the knee before and the ham, behind, cannot properly be denominated a petticoat, in the common acceptation of that term [...] the whole being of sufficient thickness when the female stands erect to conceal those parts usually covered from formiliar view, but when she

⁵⁸ The term “republican motherhood” did not explicitly appear in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The term was coined by Linda K. Kerber in her 1980 book *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Jan Lewis subsequently expanded the concept in her 1987 article “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” published in *William and Mary Quarterly*. However, its early seeds were found in the works of John Locke, who included women into social theory, but did not clearly define women’s roles until his *Second Treatise*. “The first society,” according to Locke, “was between man and wife, which gave beginning to that between parents and children. [...] [C]onjugal society is made by a voluntary compact between man and women” (qtd. in Kerber 44). Women were still expected to focus on domestic issues, but Locke’s treatises helped to elevate the status of the domestic sphere.

stoops or places herself in many other attitudes, this battery of Venus is not altogether impervious to the inquisitive and penetrating eye of the Amorite. (6: 435)

By “Amorite,” one cannot help but speculate that Lewis refers to himself here, as he had gone nearly two years without sexual activity, if the *Journals* are to be believed, by the time he makes this observation. His voyeurism is of interest because he seems to suggest that the scant attire of the Flathead women is a kind of *invitation* to prurient male behavior. It is not a man’s fault, according to this logic, if a woman’s attire, or her behavior, encourages him to behave lasciviously.

Lewis’s attitude toward Native American women shows signs of embracing the patriarchal colonial mindset that frequently governed the depiction of women and nature in eighteenth-century travel narratives. Ynestra King explains, “The building of Western industrial civilization in opposition to nature interacts dialectically with and reinforces the subjugation of women, because women are believed to be closer to nature” (19). King’s thesis is doubly true for Native American women, since they were seen during this period as being closer to nature than their Anglo counterparts; indeed, early European American natural history writers tended to view Native Americans *as* part of nature, even including a section on Native Americans in their writings on flora and fauna. John Josselyn, for instance, in his 1671 book *New England’s Rarities, Discovered in Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Serpents, and Plants of that Country*, treats Native Americans as if they were merely another species along with birds, mammals, and fish. Jefferson, in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, uses a similar structure in that he provides a chapter on “Aborigines” between two aspects of the state of Virginia, “Marine Force” and “Counties and Towns.” Bartram, in his account of the natural history of southeastern America, devotes the entire fourth part of his narrative to “An Account of the Persons, Manners, Customs and

Government of the Muscogulges or Creeks, Cherokees, Chactaws, &c. Aborigines of the Continent of North America.” Lewis and Clark likely imagine Native Americans in much the same way.

Complicating this picture, however, is the difference between Lewis and Clark on the subject of Native American women generally and Sacajawea specifically. For instance, when the Corps of Discovery reaches the place where Sacajawea was abducted by a band of Hidatsa raiders when she was a girl, Lewis writes, “*Sah-cah-gar-we-a* or Indian woman was one of the female prisoners taken at that time; tho’ I cannot discover that she shews any immotion of sorrow in recollecting this event, or of joy in being again restored to her native country; if she has enough to eat and a few trinkets to wear I believe she would be perfectly content anywhere” (5: 7). Jenkinson claims that in using such language to describe Sacajawea’s response to being taken to such an important place in her own life history Lewis “is essentially denying Sacajawea human status” (92). While that is an overstatement, Lewis adopts a less sympathetic view toward Sacajawea than does Clark, who acknowledges her pivotal role in helping the Corps of Discovery move safely through Shoshone territory. On their return trip, Clark wrote a letter to Charbonneau, offering to bring his whole family to St. Louis to live under his benefaction: “Your woman who accompanied you that long dangerous and fatiguing route to the Pacific Ocean and back deserved a greater reward for her attention and services on that rout than we had in our power to give her at the Mandans” (Jackson 315).

Clark’s depiction of Sacajawea’s bravery and stoicism indicates no surprise. Many of the women that Clark knew probably subscribed to a feminine ideology that valued stoicism as part of their roles as mothers of the new republic, whereas Lewis, who was often uncomfortable in his

interactions with women, may have been less attuned to this ideal.⁵⁹ Clark, in fact, actively builds relationships with both men and women, with both the Indians and the French, in an effort to smooth the way for future settlement. In these ways he blazes a path for Americans' interactions with women, with Indians, and with the landscape that, in retrospect, seem not to have been followed by the individuals who moved west in the decades to come.⁶⁰ Reading the *Journals* in this way reminds us that although the two men are explicitly sent to gather information intended for settling and reforming the American West, information that was later used for sometimes destructive purposes, they themselves comported themselves with remarkable restraint and decorum in their relationships with Native Americans. In this instance, Clark appears to be the tempering influence on the more explicitly imperialist Lewis.

The third way in which Lewis and Clark enact their masculinity is in their attitudes toward the landscape itself. I have argued that American men have defined their manhood, in part, in terms of their relationship to nature. We have seen this connection in the Revolution-Era writings of Crèvecoeur, who writes eloquently about building a seat for his infant son on the handle of his plow so that his son, from an early age, can join him in the fields and begin to develop his own intimate relationship with the natural world. We see a similar relationship in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in which Thomas Jefferson describes the spectacular beauty of the Potomac River, even as he dreams of the river's possible use for commercial exploitation.

⁵⁹ Abigail Adams and other women of her generation viewed the political events of Revolutionary America through a classical lens. According to Caroline Winterer, "Portia," Adams's epistolary persona in her correspondences with her husband, "helped Abigail to find a personal and spousal identity as a mother left alone in charge of a farm, as a wife of a leading—and absent—patriot, and as a woman groping toward a political voice [...]. She would be 'very sensible and heroic,' she told John, embodying the Roman ideals of stoicism and selflessness" (47). Although Sacajawea obviously does not share Abigail Adams's nationalistic zeal, it would have been understandable for Clark to interpret her stoicism in the context of Adams's feminine ethos.

⁶⁰ Joseph A. Mussulman suggests that the destruction of the West that began in the first half of the nineteenth century was not the fault of the Lewis and Clark expedition, or of Jeffersonian agrarianism, but of the Jackson administration: "The new order, symbolized by the presidency of Andrew Jackson . . . , rejected national interests and instead gave free rein to the interests of the individual citizen, without governmental intervention. . . . Thus the stage was set for the reckless exploitation of the land and the people that Lewis and Clark had observed, measured, and recorded" ("Clark's").

Lewis and Clark's purpose for venturing into the American West, as outlined in Jefferson's letter to Lewis, is as commercial as it is cultural or scientific. As a result, many of their observations evaluate the commercial possibilities of the places through which they travel, resulting in the journals' evincing a feeling of separation between the authors and the natural world. Lewis and Clark—as well as the other men on the expedition who kept journals—collect information on locations that might make convenient towns and trading posts; they frequently remark about the presence or absence of good timber; they comment on the abundance or paucity of wild game. A typical entry resembles the one written by Lewis when the expedition reaches the site of what is now Fort Union, Montana: “I ascended the hills from whence I had a most pleasing view of the country, particularly of the wide and fertile vallies formed by the missouri and yellowstone rivers, which occasionally unmasked by the wood on their borders disclose their meanderings from many miles in their passage through these delightfull tracts of country” (4: 67). Although Lewis does not explicitly make clear that he is evaluating the landscape for its commercial and military potential, his intentions become more evident as he continues: “the whol face of the country was covered with herds of Buffaloe, Elk & Antelopes; deer are also abundant, but keep themselves concealed in the woodland. The buffaloe Elk and Antelope are so gentle that we pass near them while feeding, without appearing to excite any alarm among them” (4: 67). The landscape, Lewis suggests, is so fertile and so hospitable for human habitation that it practically gives itself to whomever so desires it. Both Lewis and Clark note the spot's potential as a trade location between two navigable rivers, the early highways of commerce. In passages such as these, the two leaders seem especially conscious of their audience—Jefferson himself, as well as the men who would come after them to settle the West—and represent this location as a place waiting for Anglo-American civilization to arrive.

Western Landscapes Assert Their Agency

During the eighteenth century, adventure stories such as Lewis and Clark's Journals were considered boys' stories and were constructed as masculine. Stories of imperial exploration and conquest were even more strongly associated with masculinity.⁶¹ Because Lewis and Clark were representatives of a Jefferson administration that sought economic and political control over the North American interior, they represent—whatever their personal views on the matter—a masculinity defined by the domination of the natural world by claiming, mapping, and placing boundaries around it. Over time, however, their journal entries become subsumed by the ferocity and grandeur of wild nature in the West. The land itself, and the animals that live there, impose upon the expedition's leaders a kind of humility that they did not anticipate needing. Not even the gigantic bronze cannon they bring with them for protection proves an adequate match for the landscape. Whether or not they consciously intended for their journal entries to reflect agency on the part of nature, this becomes an increasingly powerful theme in their narrative, particularly as they get further up the Missouri River into rough and unfamiliar territory. Whatever masculine ideological agenda they may have sought to impose upon the West, the landscape in many ways trumps ideology and takes control of the narrative.

The men on the expedition, for instance, have some harrowing encounters with grizzly bears, which seem at times to be impervious to their bullets. One bear, for instance, “pursued two of [Lewis and Clark's men] separately so close that they were obliged to throw aside their guns and pouches and throw themselves into the river altho' the bank was nearly twenty feet perpendicular” (109). After finally shooting and killing the bear, the men “took him on shore and

⁶¹ Martin Green argues that examples of womens' and girls' travel narratives and adventure stories are “exceptions” to this historical rule, dating back at least to the fifteenth century (6).

butched him when they found eight balls had passed through him in different directions” (109). Not even the massive firepower the men brought with them on the voyage seemed to be enough to stop these bears; it took a company of six to eight men to hunt them safely. In one especially frightening scene, Lewis, out hunting for bison, is unexpectedly charged by a grizzly: “in the first moment I drew up my gun to shoot, but at the same instant recollected that she was not loaded and that he was too near for me to hope to perform this operation before he reached me; it was on an open level plain, not a bush within miles nor a tree within less than three hundred yards of me” (139). The “level plain” in Lewis’s description places Lewis and the bear on a literal even playing field, and it is only Lewis’s ingenuity—he runs into the river and points his espartoon at the bear, causing it to turn away before it actually attacks him—that enables him to avoid fighting the bear. Thus the bear derails Lewis’s sense of control. Luckily, he emerges from the encounter with his physical person intact.

Lewis and Clark’s encounters not only with grizzly bears, but also with pronghorn antelope, undermine any expectations they may have had for becoming lords of the western landscapes through which they travel. On September 17, 1804, traveling through what is now South Dakota, Lewis comments at length about the difficulty in hunting these wary, fleet-footed, and elusive animals:

We found the Antelope extremely shy and watchfull insomuch that we had been unable to get a shot at them; when at rest they generally seelect the most elevated point in the neighbourhood, and as they are watchfull and extremely quick of sight and their sense of smelling very accute it is almost impossible to approach them within gunshot. [...] they will frequently discover and flee from you at the distance of three miles. I had this day an opportunity of witnessing the agility and the superior fleetness of this anamal which was

to me really astonishing. [...] I beheld the rapidity of their flight along the ridge before me it appeared rather the rapid flight of birds than the motion of quadrupeds. (3: 81).

Despite the Lewis and Clark's repeated efforts to hunt pronghorn, these animals find ways to frustrate and thwart them. Whatever expectations Lewis may have for mastering the lands through which he is traveling and dominating the animals who live there, the force of the landscape itself asserts its agency within the narrative. Whether they wished it or not, Lewis and Clark as expedition leaders altered their thinking—adopted a humbler and more pragmatic masculinity—in order to secure their survival and that of their men.

At other times, in their role as writers attempting to represent for an audience the places they encounter, Lewis and Clark are overcome by the sublime beauty of the land, or they express great ambivalence about it. Beholding the snow-capped peaks of the Rocky Mountains for the first time, Lewis writes, "I felt a secret pleasure in finding myself so near the head of the heretofore conceived boundless Missouri; but when I reflected on the difficulties which this snowey barrier would most probably throw in my way to the Pacific, and the sufferings and hardships of myself and party in thim, it in some measure counterballanced the joy I had felt" (118). This passage illustrates well the conflicting impulses that accompanied Lewis on the expedition: while he was able, in certain moments, to reflect upon the intrinsic value and beauty of the landscapes he explored, he was forever preoccupied by the goals for the expedition, as well as the health and safety of his own men. The beauty of the high summits of the Rockies, then, very quickly turns to anxieties about the dangers and hardships that would almost certainly await them as they attempted to cross through the mountains on their way to the Pacific.

Later, Lewis, guided by Edmund Burke's instruction to Enlightenment thinkers to calm their nerves by surrendering themselves to the vastness and magnificence of the sublime, "seated

[himself] on some rocks near the center of the falls,” so as to “enjoy the sublime spectacle of this stupendous object, which, since the creation, has been lavishing its magnificence upon the desert, unknown to civilization” (4: 283) By seating himself near the center of the falls, Lewis becomes an audience of one, the necessary figure in the aesthetic scheme, without which even the grandest manifestations of landscape are wasted, like a theater filled with scenery but empty of people.⁶² Much in the way that Crèvecoeur considered farming a manly activity because it gave him uninterrupted time to cultivate his rational mind, contemplating this spectacular waterfall is a similarly manly activity for Lewis because it enables him to develop his reason, thus enabling him to see the falls as a manifestation of the oneness of creation. The scene is doubly gendered, in fact, because it occurs as part of wilderness travel, historically a masculine tradition in which the traveler moves outside his home environment into new places that reveal new insights about the larger world, rather than being constrained within the home, typically figured as a feminine space. This theory of travel relates to the Enlightenment project of an all-encompassing vision through the eyes of an individual, supposedly rational viewer, thus implying a masculine subject.⁶³

After experiencing the sublime and the beautiful in these quintessentially Burkean terms, however, Lewis laments, “After writing this imperfect description I again viewed the falls and was so much disgusted with the imperfect idea which it conveyed of the scene that I determined to draw my pen across it and begin again” (4: 285). Rarely at a loss for words—compared to the more laconic Clark—Lewis here finds himself unable to find an adequate means for expressing the effect that the western landscape has on him. This is a common convention among explorers

⁶² Recall, for instance, the solitary horseman in the Thomas Cole painting with which I open this study. The scene would not be complete without a human figure to appreciate it and to give it scale.

⁶³ For more on the masculinity of the gaze, see, for example, Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality and the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986); Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989); and Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

of the North American continent throughout the colonial period; writers, confronted with a landscape whose scale and sublimity exceed anything they have previously seen, lament the inadequacy of words to convey the grandeur of the landscape to readers. Here Lewis mirrors Jefferson, who is similarly awestruck in his attempts to describe his view overlooking the Potomac. In turn, Jefferson mimics earlier writers—particularly explorers—who, upon encountering the sublimity of the North American continent, found language to be inadequate to the task of conveying it to a (largely European) audience, a phenomenon Michael P. Branch has termed the “trope of ineffability.”⁶⁴

Lewis’s use of tropes of the sublime, however, are the products of more than mere affectation; they show the very real loss of control and sense of vertigo that he and Clark felt as they moved ever farther away from familiar territory. Along the way, collapsing cutbacks, shifting oxbows, half-sunken sawyers, and hidden sandbars gave dramatic evidence that the great river was a violent and unpredictable ally to the advance of Enlightenment ideals into the West. This instability was epitomized by the melting away one night of the sandbar on which the explorers had pitched their camp. The remains of Indian towns and fortifications were likewise a constant reminder of the unsteady movements and tottering fortunes of nomadic tribes who lived in a perpetual state of warfare that had caused the disappearance of entire tribes in the recent past. Thus the zone defined by the winding, turbulent course of the Missouri River was one of constant flux, upon which the expedition as an arm of Enlightenment attempted to impose a modicum of order, mapping the river and its environs and attempting to stabilize Indian relationships through treaties, a familiar pattern of imperial design with predictable results. The Corps of Discovery set out believing that their imperial masculinity would overcome any

⁶⁴ It is not clear who first coined this useful phrase. Michael P. Branch has used it to describe the response of early American travel writers who find themselves at a loss for words to describe the places they encounter. Other critics, such as Helen Hennessy Vendler, have used it in a more general sense as a poetic device (see Vendler 104).

challenges that came their way, that they would be able to impose order upon the chaotic wilderness. The actual land and its inhabitants, both human and nonhuman, made it impossible for them to realize these ambitions. As a result, the *Journals* reflect a subtle shift toward a humbler conception of masculinity on the part of the expedition's leaders.

Minting the Coin of Success

Of course, beyond the humbling episodes that Lewis and Clark experience at the hands of Indians, animals, and the sublimity of the land itself, they must face an even deeper rupture in their expectations for their expedition: the failure of their central mission to discover what Jefferson termed “the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent” (Letter to Lewis 61). Although it is certainly a mark of their extraordinary skill and leadership that Lewis and Clark survived two years on their difficult journey while losing only a single member of their party, they never did find what Jefferson sent them to find, thanks to the intractable reality of the continent's geography. As James P. Ronda explains, “Jefferson's dream of a northwest passage up the Missouri, across an easy mountain portage, and down the Columbia to the sea was an illusion. Rivers churned to white water and endless mountain ridges brought the dream face-to-face with harsh reality. [...] How [then] could [Lewis and Clark] mint the coin of success out of the base metal of failure?” (81-82). Extracting a successful narrative from their expedition not only to justify the substantial resources that the Jefferson administration spent, but also to create a story that would make American men want to follow them into the American West, thereby enacting Jefferson's dream for American manhood. Daunting as the task was, that was exactly what they did. For, as Ronda points out, “In the geography of American myth, Lewis and Clark loom as great western heroes” (82). What Lewis

and Clark represented, then, was much more important to turn-of-the-nineteenth-century American men than what they actually accomplished.

If anything, their expedition made Americans aware that cross-continental travel was going to be even more difficult than it had been previously imagined; there would be no possibility, even during an age of prolific canal-building along the eastern seaboard, for creating a water route connecting the Missouri and Columbia watersheds. Anyone seeking to go west of the Rocky Mountains would have to go overland—or, if traveling by water, to either pass all the way south of Cape Horn or find a Northwest Passage through the great islands of the Arctic. Such news was surely discouraging, although it would mean that the qualities needed to settle the West were the ruggedness, tenacity, and physical vigor that came to be associated with frontier manhood in the nineteenth century. The fact that the expedition is widely remembered as a success, then, is much more revealing of the ideologies to which the expedition was attached than it is of what Lewis and Clark actually achieved. To be fair to Lewis and Clark, however, we should consider the lessons of the expedition that the leaders and their men learned, but that were forgotten by Jefferson and his political heirs: the sense of respect and humility they discovered in their engagements with landscapes—and whole nations of people—that forced them to reconsider the aggressive posture with which they began their expedition.

There are moments when Lewis, unlike the more matter-of-fact Clark, allows his insecurity about his masculinity to make its way into the journals. His “discovery” of Maria’s River is one such moment. Soon after Clark names a picturesque stream in honor of Julia Hancock, who would later become his wife, Lewis decides to name a considerably less magnificent rivulet for his cousin, Maria Wood: “I determined to give it a name and in honour of Miss Maria W—d called it Maria’s River. It is true that the hue of the waters of this turbulent

and troubled stream but illy comport with the celestial virtues and amiable qualifications of that lovely fair one; [...] it is [...] destined to become [...] an object of contention between the two great powers of America and Great Britain” (4: 266). That Lewis envied Clark’s relative success in finding a mate—and, eventually, a wife—is a well-documented point. What is important is not whether Lewis’s jealousy of Clark affected the expedition in any significant way, but the way it helps us to understand how Lewis’s insecurity about his manhood—defined, for him, in many instances by his lack of success in matrimony—affected his understanding of the landscape.⁶⁵ Lewis’s injection of his sense of uncertainty into a journal meant as a mere catalog of his findings in the West seems so out of place that it demands our attention. The clearest conclusion one can draw from this curious passage is that Lewis projects his own uncertainty and ambivalence about his manhood onto his perceptions of the West. Rather than seeing Maria’s River for what it is—and to a large extent, rather than merely treating the river as an opportunity to woo a prospective mate, as Clark does—Lewis regards it with the same apprehension with which he approaches the traditionally manly act of finding a wife.⁶⁶ Contrary to the assumptions of critics who have seen the Corps of Discovery as a simple projection of masculine dominance, Lewis evinces mainly anxiety in this passage.

Lewis’s anxiety is rooted not only in his uncertain sense of himself as a man, but also in worries about future conflicts over land, hence his unusual nonsequitur predicting that Maria’s

⁶⁵ As Clay Straus Jenkinson points out, “There is a ‘miriad’ of material for the psychoanalyst here. . . . Just how the river’s status as an ‘object of contention’ between Britain and the US resonates with Ms. Wood is not clear. Given Lewis’s later difficulties in finding a wife, it is not hard to extrapolate from this description the idea that ‘contention’ was a central fact of Meriwether Lewis’s mating rites” (37).

⁶⁶ Whether Lewis had amorous designs on his cousin is not precisely known; however, his thought process in naming Maria’s River does reveal quite a bit about his sense of himself in relation to the ideals of American manhood during his time, ideals that were manifest in a man’s success in finding a wife and raising a family. Jenkinson devotes much of his book to speculation about Lewis’s love life and sex life; these concerns are relevant to this discussion insofar as they illuminate the insecurities that emerge in the *Journals*—and how Lewis projects his own uncertainties onto the landscape. Lewis, perhaps, also reveals his rivalry with Clark here. Although the two men share a close friendship and a remarkably effective partnership, when Clark takes the opportunity to name a river after his beloved, Lewis feels compelled to do the same, even though he has no analogous female for whom to name *his* river.

River will one day become “an object of contention between the two great powers of America and Great Britain.” Recall that in 1803, when Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark to explore the upper reaches of the Missouri, he ostensibly sent them to explore territory that had been recently purchased from the French—or, more accurately, to explore regions from which the French, for a sum of \$15 million, had agreed to withdraw their claims—even though the ownership of the lands west of the Mississippi River was far from a settled matter, given the stakes held by not only the Americans and the British, but also the Spanish and the numerous Native American groups who lived there. Lewis’s linking of these two seemingly disparate anxieties—personal doubt about his own manhood and national struggles over land ownership—suggests that land disputes between nations were themselves personal struggles for masculine superiority; Jefferson’s feud with Buffon over Buffon’s theory of American degeneracy testifies to this fact.

Lewis and Clark function as a bridge between Jefferson’s nationalist agrarianism and the taming and civilizing of the western wilderness as seen in the works of such nineteenth-century male writers as James Fenimore Cooper, whose *Leatherstocking Tales* both mourn the disappearance of the rugged frontier and celebrate the advance of Anglo-American civilization, and Washington Irving, whose *Western* books imagine the frontier as a testing ground where American men might once and for all overcome the effeminizing influence of Europe. When Irving details his perception of American manliness in his 1835 book *A Tour on the Prairies*, he repeatedly describes the other men in his touring party as “rough,” “coarse,” and “uncouth,” thus emphasizing their independence from the feminized domestic sphere. There are almost no women in Irving’s book, and most of the men (including Irving himself) are unmarried, or at least to have no specified attachment to women. Irving compares his idealized frontiersmen favorably to those educated in Europe: “We send our youth abroad to grow luxurious and

effeminate in Europe; it appears to me, that a previous tour on the prairies would be more likely to produce that manliness, simplicity, and self-dependence, most in unison with our political institutions” (55). While Irving suggests a vision of masculinity and nationhood that appears well formed, it is one that has moved even further away from the ideal of intimacy with the land that Crèvecoeur articulated and Jefferson promoted. Just as the settlers displaced the cougar and the wolf, the perpetually itinerant frontiersman largely supplanted Crèvecoeur’s “farmer of feelings.”

What Lewis and Clark discover, however, is that the masculinity best suited for living in the West—as opposed to the domain of ideologies and abstractions—is one that is flexible and responsive to changing conditions. Not long into their expedition, it becomes clear that they have eschewed rigid conceptions of manhood in favor of ones that enable them to form friendly and productive relationships with Native Americans, and that enable them and their men to survive harsh climates and inhospitable landscapes. The lessons they learn serve as a useful metaphor for the kind of masculinity that is needed for successful navigation through our current age of globalization and environmental change. Such a masculinity would necessarily be sensitive to social justice, and it would have the foresight to respond to ecological crisis and other life-threatening events before they become catastrophic. A truly durable model of masculinity, therefore—the kind of durable manhood that Thomas Jefferson sought when he sent Lewis and Clark up the Missouri—would have an ecological conscience, since attentiveness to the natural world is not only ethical but essential for the long-term survival of humanity.

Conclusion

The authors discussed in this study share a common struggle: to represent their experiences of the American landscape in ways that are consistent with their conceptions of manhood. These men frequently define their manhood in terms of their relationships with the natural world; they define it in relation to activities such as farming and hunting, and in a broader sense they consider “American manhood” as a product of land use and land ownership. In large part due to the pressures placed upon them by the American Revolution—a subject rarely mentioned in any of these narratives, but always lurking in the background—these writers move among multiple masculinities: the idealized “new American man” who was to replace European notions of manliness on the North American continent, and those emerging from the authors’ individual sensibilities and particular cultural contexts. No two writers address these contrasting impulses in the same way. Crèvecoeur responds to his feelings of anxiety and dread by imagining a retreat to the frontier, while Bartram describes his often harrowing experiences traveling through Indian country before retiring to a relatively home-bound existence tending his botanical gardens. Jefferson addresses his detachment from the landscapes he hopes to populate with yeoman farmers by ordering the Corps of Discovery to send artifacts to his Monticello home, while Lewis and Clark themselves find themselves adapting their ideas of manhood to the realities of life in unfamiliar territory, among unfamiliar indigenous cultures. In each case, they find themselves trying to reconcile the drive toward a national masculine ideal with other ideologies that are products of their own life experiences and individual circumstances. Their resulting representations of the North American continent are fraught with tensions, contradictions, and ambivalences in which the landscape serves as the arena where their masculine anxieties are played out.

Most critics who have studied the relationship between nature and gender in early American literature have worked with broad categories of gender. When they have studied male writers' conceptions of gender, they have used broad terms such as "men," "American men," or "white American men." While their analyses have usefully shown the harmful ways in which some male writers have figured the landscape as female and therefore as open for exploitation and abuse, the tendency to view "male writers" through a unitary analytical lens has blurred all male writers—or at least, all white male writers—together. While many male writers who wrote about the natural world during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century struggled to tread the line between "national" and "local" masculinities, thus suggesting some common ground between these authors, there is no single narrative through which we can understand their representations of nature. The pressures upon Crèvecoeur, a family man of French descent trying to manage a yeoman farmstead in rural New York, were quite different from those facing Bartram, a single, Quaker botanist living outside Philadelphia. The paternalism of Jefferson, living at his Monticello plantation, looked different from the perspective of Clark as he negotiated with Shoshone warriors at the base of the Continental Divide. We cannot simply shoehorn these men, their masculinities, and their depiction of the American landscape into a unified story about masculine exploitation. This project is an intervention into the broader conversation about landscape and gender, in that it asks us as literary critics to look more carefully at the particular circumstances of the men who wrote their descriptions and narratives of the North American continent. When we analyze the behavior and attitudes of "American men," which American men do we mean? Do we mean Seminole men from West Florida who have a history of mistreatment by white traders? Do we mean Virginia plantation owners of English descent? Or do we mean Quaker botanists with deep connections to the transatlantic

scientific community? The answers to these questions matter, and they cannot be easily elided by conceptualizing gender in broad terms.

What then do ecocritics and other literary critics gain by looking at the multiplicity of masculinities at the turn of the eighteenth century? First, as I have suggested, we avoid the oversimplified notion of historical actors and writers as working within a single narrative or ideology. American culture during the late eighteenth century was rich and complex—as rich and complex as American society is today—and ideas of masculinity were similarly varied. By examining the individual circumstances of particular writers such as William Bartram or Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, we can begin to understand their writings as products of rich and complex lives. By viewing these writers' masculinities in a more nuanced way, we take their conceptions of the landscape seriously, rather than imagining them as hopelessly naïve or idealized. With the benefit of hindsight, we would recognize flaws in their treatment of the natural world, and we would identify these as products of an unsustainable masculinity, but we would do so in a way that expresses understanding of, and sympathy for, the roles and expectations placed upon men during a time of war, upheaval, and great societal change.

Second, examining various representations of nature as products (in part) of multiple masculinities allows critics to recognize that “masculine” representations of nature, rather than being universally harmful, can be benign, or destructive, or ecologically neutral, or some combination thereof. This recognition opens up a new conversation in which critics might evaluate the relative merits and limitations of various masculinities *vis-à-vis* their representations of, and treatment of, the natural world. The agrarian masculinity advocated by Crèvecoeur and Jefferson, for example, has the virtue of connecting men to the landscapes they inhabit, encouraging them to know their home places intimately and to adopt a stewardship ethic that

might enable people to live sustainably on a particular plot of land over multiple generations. The touching scene from *Letters from an American Farmer* in which Farmer James attaches a seat to his plow so that his infant son can join him in the fields is a model of intimacy that seems laudable and worthy of replication. Problems arise, however, when the ideology of the yeoman farmer is applied to the North American landscape as a whole. Some landscapes, such as the arid Southwest, are not suitable for the kind of agriculture that Crèvecoeur and Jefferson envision, and this ideal does not provide any explicit allowance for regional variation. This failure to account for a particular ecosystem's unique characteristics—an ironic result of an ideology based upon a man's relationship to one particular place—may have contributed to the Dust Bowl in Texas and Oklahoma during the 1930s, since it assumes that *all* landscapes can be farmed successfully according to a model of farming developed in the relatively moist, temperate climates of the Mid-Atlantic states. Furthermore, the egalitarian ideal of yeomanry did not consider what would happen as population growth increased the pressure upon available land, nor did it value the practices, agricultural or otherwise, of Native Americans.

The ideal of the frontier hero has a similarly mixed legacy. This masculine ideal encouraged men to appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the natural world, and as we have seen in Meriwether Lewis's celebration of the magnificent Great Falls of the Missouri, it did inspire men to admire nature on its own terms, without the need for taming it and transforming it for human use. William Bartram, certainly, was able to test his manhood against the perils of the wilderness without adopting an attitude of exploitation. But when the frontier hero was performed for a popular audience—as he was, for example, in John Filson's fictionalized and mythologized depiction of Daniel Boone—he often became a larger-than-life figure, one whose manhood was measured not only by the miles he traveled and the dangers he overcame, but also

by the quantity and magnitude of the lives he took. This tradition became further magnified during the nineteenth century, when the ideology of Manifest Destiny took hold, encouraging men to settle and tame the American West because it was God's plan and because the authentic test of manhood was one's ability to bend the landscape to one's will. The popular image of the West as a place of lawlessness and violence only served to justify the exploitation of its natural resources, the destruction of its wildlife, and the extermination of its native populations. These tragic results become that much more poignant when one considers that the early frontier heroes such as Bartram, Lewis, and Clark were generally respectful in their own interactions with Native Americans and with the lands of the West.

Third, thinking in terms of specific, multiple masculinities might enable literary critics, environmental thinkers, and scholars of gender to consider these ideologies in ways that we have not yet conceived fully. Because the story of American manhood is often told as part of a larger national narrative, it has tended to frame the discussion in terms of a "national manhood" that may have existed in theory, but that may not accurately or fully reflect the ways men actually lived. Even men who saw themselves as embodying "American manhood"—and we cannot really know what proportion of men have ever seen themselves in this way—come from a multiplicity of socioeconomic backgrounds, child-rearing environments, religious traditions, ethnic groups, and vocational communities. When we begin to consider all these factors, we will begin to tell a different story of American manhoods—plural—rather than one that assumes a dominant, hegemonic masculinity against which, if the story acknowledges multiple masculinities at all, these multiple masculinities define themselves. Perhaps the idea of masculine hegemony is itself something of a myth, an idea that has been useful in helping scholars to show the ways in which the voices of women and minorities have been excluded

from the conversation, but which may be ripe for significant re-examination. In doing so, we discover a hidden history of American men that allows us to understand more deeply how society defines masculinity, and how it has—and still does—figure masculinity in relation to male engagements with the natural world.

A number of questions remain to be taken up by literary critics. One of the most important of these is what happens when the discussion is broadened to include other kinds of texts. This project focuses mainly on “nature writing,” texts that detail representations of the natural world and humans’ relationships to it. These texts have proven useful in showing how men figured their masculinity in relation to the natural world, and they do provide an interesting cross-section of perspectives on this relationship. But an analysis constructed around these texts has its limitations. Every one of the texts discussed in this study has had a complicated publication history. In each case there is significant lag time between the writing of the text and its publication. In several cases the final published version—due to editorial changes made without the author’s permission, or due to the kinds of audiences these writings were originally intended for—may not entirely reflect the author’s intent. Perhaps most significantly, none of these texts are representative of the culture of literary production and consumption that Cathy N. Davidson describes in her groundbreaking work *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. Partly this is because the novel—with a few exceptions, such as those of Charles Brockden Brown and Susanna Rowson—had not yet taken hold as a genre in which American writers were generally working, and partly it is because their works were not viewed as literature but as political tracts or works of natural history. Even by the standards of late eighteenth-century America, the writers discussed in this study all circumvented, whether by accident or by their own design, the means by which other literary figures during their time published their

work. This means that we cannot take their writings as representative of American literature as a whole during the late eighteenth century. A novelist such as Brown would be more representative of male literary artists during this period, and it would be valuable to apply some of the critical approaches discussed in this study to a work such as *Edgar Huntly* or *Wieland*. Furthermore, during this period the most popular authors in America were not American writers such as Brown, but British authors. Although this study focuses on American writers, studying the relationship between masculinity and nature in eighteenth-century Gothic novels in Britain and how these were received by American audiences would provide a fuller picture of how Americans experienced this relationship. It would be difficult to overstate the extent to which literary culture of the eighteenth century was a transatlantic phenomenon.

In addition to not participating in the conventional literary culture of their day, the texts discussed in this study also generally were not written for a popular audience. Bartram's primary audience was his benefactor in England, John Fothergill, whom he was careful not to offend by taking sides—at least within the narrative itself—in the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson published *Notes on the State of Virginia* only after a version of the manuscript began to be circulated without his permission. Lewis and Clark never intended their journals to be published; although they go well beyond the stated goal of merely recording their observations for cultural and scientific purposes and therefore deserve, in hindsight, to be treated as literature, it is impossible to know what their writings might have looked like if the men had known that their writings would one day be published and distributed to a wide audience. Crèvecoeur is probably the writer in this study who wrote for the widest audience, but even his book has a complicated history, since it was published nearly a decade after it was written and since its contents were rearranged by his publishers. It would be quite useful to add to this conversation a deeper

discussion of Filson's [*The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*](#), particularly its section on Daniel Boone, since this text was far more popular and influential in its day than any of the other texts discussed in this study. Although Filson's text is highly fictionalized and mythologized, and therefore did not accurately represent the experiences of Colonel Boone, it would provide a touchstone for the development of the ideal of the frontier hero, for which Daniel Boone serves as a model—at least in a mythological sense—to this day.

Another area that may offer richer insights into the nature of masculinities in the late eighteenth century would be a deepened analysis of white-Indian relations during this period. Recent historical scholarship such as Jane C. Merritt's *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* has shown the ways in which both whites and Native Americans figured their racial and masculine identities in relation to—often in opposition to—one another. We have seen this negotiation of identities in every text discussed in this study. But the contexts for these relationships in North America go well beyond the Mid-Atlantic region that Merritt describes so well. The section in Bartram's *Travels* in which Bartram meets Cowkeeper, for instance, would be enhanced significantly by a deeper discussion of the particular cultural cauldron that characterized Florida during the eighteenth century. What factors from Cowkeeper's life experience influenced his perception of his own masculinity, and how did this perception affect his view of someone like Bartram? Would he have been predisposed to adopt a positive view of white men, or would he have supposed them to be physically weak, cowardly, and inept in warfare? How might the Seminoles' relationships with African Americans have shaped their views on race and masculinity? Would Bartram's negotiations with Cowkeeper have had some similarity to Lewis and Clark's diplomatic relations with the Mandans? Does the equation change significantly when we consider tribes such as the Shoshone, who had

comparatively little experience dealing with white settlers, traders, and explorers? These questions might be addressed effectively with a deeper analysis of regional and tribal differences among Native American groups.

The suggestions I have offered above would help to deepen and broaden the conversation that I hope this project has initiated. In addition to the scholarly conversation to which this project contributes, I also hope that this project may provide some insight into the masculinities that American men have inherited, and how these masculinities offer both positive and negative interactions with the natural environment. While it is obviously important, for example, to acknowledge the many ways Crèvecoeur's vision for American manhood is ecologically flawed and unsustainable, it also may be valuable to distill from Crèvecoeur's discussion that which might be useful, even admirable. Since an essential part of America's identity as a nation has to do with its work ethic, a model of connection to a particular landscape through hard work is one that many American men and women can identify with, and that ought to be transferable from exploitation to restoration. Perhaps this is why the bioregionalist movement, while still rather small and disorganized, resonates strongly for environmentally minded Americans. It venerates organic farming—a process that looks something like the kind of farming that Crèvecoeur and Jefferson promoted—as a means for food production at the same time that it disparages the dehumanized and mechanized methods of large-scale monoculture and agribusiness. It provides opportunities for people who are not farmers to participate in the restoration of ecosystems by planting native species, constructing erosion-resistant trails and roads, and managing ecosystems to deal with fire, drought, and flooding. The activities and rhetoric of the bioregionalist movement, whether or not they do so consciously, embody values of American manhood that date back to the eighteenth century, thus making it a quintessentially American movement.

Today, of course, both men and women participate equally in organic farming and environmental restoration, but the values underlying these activities have their roots in eighteenth-century conceptions of masculinity.

In recent years, the popularity of such books as Elizabeth Gilbert's *The Last American Man* and Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*, as well as the film adaptation of Krakauer's book, attests to the continued appeal of the masculine ideal of the frontier hero. The title of Gilbert's book suggests that Americans may view this ideal with some nostalgia—as a relic of the past—but there are many small ways in which Americans may enact their desire to test themselves against the frontier. Hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, whitewater kayaking and canoeing, spelunking, canyoneering, mountaineering, ice climbing, and a host of other outdoor activities are as popular today as they have ever been. While, again, these are activities that are often as popular among women as they are among men, the appeal to some degree lies in the ways Americans have adapted masculine ideals that date back to the eighteenth century. By running a Class IV rapid, contemporary Americans might get a taste of the fear William Clark experienced when he was charged by a grizzly on the Upper Missouri; by getting themselves turned around on a bushwhack through Denali National Park, they might better understand the sense of confusion that Crèvecoeur and his companion felt when they were lost in the wilderness of western Pennsylvania. The proliferation of magazines and websites devoted to these activities demonstrates that the frontier hero has not died off, but has evolved into an ideal accessible to a broader range of people. Perhaps the most important lesson modern Americans might gain from reading these early narratives is that all of these men—even without the benefit of hindsight, and without knowing what the consequences of unrestrained exploitation and development of natural resources would be—experienced their masculinity as a product of respectful relationships with

nature, and they all found some need to reshape their senses of manhood to accommodate changing circumstances. In a world rapidly shifting due to changes in technology, a growing human population, and climate change, it is more important now than ever to adopt practices and ideologies that can accommodate change. It is ironic, perhaps, that to find models of masculinity that can successfully integrate change, we need only look to our past.

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