

CHAPTER 5

Building a (White) Nation

Finns in James Kirke Paulding's *Koningsmarke, the Long Finne* (1823)

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James Kirke Paulding's (1778–1860) historical novel *Koningsmarke, the Long Finne: A Story of the New World* (1823) came out in the 1820s, when the United States was witnessing the publication of works that were consciously aspiring to create uniquely American literature. Paulding, according to scholar Daniel A. Wells, was “the young nation’s most uncompromising devotee of cultural independence before [Ralph Waldo] Emerson,” shaping the ways in which Americans perceived their past. And *Koningsmarke*, Wells notes, was “the only American novel set in the seventeenth-century Delaware colony of New Sweden.”¹ It was subsequently published in London, in October 1823, where according to an American newspaper “the favorable opinion formed of its merits on this side of the Atlantic” was confirmed, which sounds like a rather lame commendation for Paulding’s debut novel.²

Never highly popular, Paulding nonetheless contributed to American literature by writing essays, short stories, poetry, and novels. James

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Fenimore Cooper, whom Paulding greatly admired, was another author among the first in America to use topics and themes that directly pertained to the new nation and its history. Paulding's direct references to Cooper's *The Pioneers* (1823) in *Koningsmarke* acknowledge the romanticized historical tales created around the character Natty Bumppo as a pioneer in a new form of American literature in which the frontier and Native American experience were centralized. Other authors who created works in the context of American national narrative that took the form of the frontier settlement romance included Lydia Maria Child, who wrote such novels as *Hobomok* (1824) and *The Christian Indian; or, The Times of the First Settlers* (1825), and Catherine Maria Sedgwick, whose novel *Hope Leslie* (1827) appeared around the same time. These stories celebrated the heroism of whites and depicted wars with Native Americans as a uniquely American experience. They popularized an idea of Native American wars as competition between cultures rather than viewing them as settlers' appropriation of the Natives' land. Moreover, by foregrounding the violence and savagery in the representation of Native Americans, these stories cast them, as literary scholar Cassandra Jackson notes, "as resistant to white society."³

Paulding's *Koningsmarke* is one of these early American narratives that depends on a binary construction of Native and white Americans as oppositional identities, even if in the novel the latter are clearly of European origin. The Finnish protagonist, Koningsmarke, or the Long Finne, is an idealized representative of racial whiteness, civilization, and seemingly benevolent cultural superiority, despite his participation in the violent conquest of Native American land and cultural mastery of its inhabitants. The novel contributes to the myth of Finns as "benevolent immigrants" but clearly reveals them as active participants in American colonialism and imperialism. The character's projection against Native Americans serves to underscore the desirous position of white masculine men as foundational for American society and pillars upon which the new nation rests. In other words, Paulding presents the white, masculine, and fearless Finnish protagonist as an ideal representative of the desired American national identity—despite his immigrant background.

In writing the novel, Paulding used fact-based circumstances and actual people to weave a story that is "a mixture of history and romance."⁴ Despite its historical inaccuracies, scholar John Eric Bellquist considers it "an excellent reflection of many of the social and

cultural concerns in America during the post-revolutionary period.”⁵ Nonetheless, although Paulding claims to rely on historical events centering on the settlement of Delaware’s New Sweden in the 1600s, the narrative is very much a product of the 1820s. Overall, the novel participates in myth making, which this chapter will situate within the frame of settler colonialism, while also considering the role of Finns as active participants in settler colonialism and the process of constructing history. The novel writes Finns into the early American national culture and social landscape, thus demonstrating the ways in which literature can contribute to the reconstruction of a national past. In this particular narrative Finns are given a central role in the process of nation building and as embodiments of white exceptionality and innocence.

Nascent National Culture

Nineteenth-century literature in the United States, including Paulding’s novel, is bound up with many of the social, political, and cultural challenges and internal conflicts that plagued the new nation. In addition to race and slavery, Indian wars and westward movement were central concerns in early 19th-century America. Land possession was at the forefront of settler interests as the frontier kept moving west: high land prices and high taxes in the east, and potential for new fertile land in the West pushed settlers to embark on westward migration.

In the 1820s, many writers shared the strong nationalist sentiment that followed the War of 1812, which some see as a continuation of the Indian wars since both the British and the Americans tried to enlist the support of various Indigenous tribes in their fight over the frontier and control of the seas. Moreover, American writers who were trying to find a national voice responded to the political climate of the decade, namely the Native American removal policy of the 1820s. Native removal witnessed its culmination during Andrew Jackson’s administration in a formal Indian Removal Act that Congress passed in 1830. The bill entitled the president to exchange lands occupied by Indian tribes in the east for lands in the west of the Mississippi River. The federal government engaged in a removal of tribes and land, which can be associated with power, violence, forced resettlement, and expulsion, all ideas that resonate with settler colonialism.⁶

Koningsmarke reflects this political climate but also echoes the call expressed in Paulding's essay "National Literature" (1820), in which he explicitly demanded the creation of literature drawn from American realities. Such cultural independence from Europe was achieved by celebrating the wilderness and romanticizing the "noble savage"; these were elements, as mentioned earlier, that early 19th-century writers found uniquely American. Visual artists were working toward the same goal. American landscape paintings with Native American themes included Thomas Cole's *Landscape Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans"* (1826), which drew inspiration from Cooper's writing. A few years later, George Catlin made his name in portrait paintings featuring Native Americans, and Horatio Greenough continued to be inspired by the theme decades later, as testified by his controversial statue *The Rescue* (1850, Figure 5.1), which found a prominent place in front of the Capitol building. It depicts a Native American warrior attempting to kill a settler's wife and child with his tomahawk. These artworks created visual narratives of frontier encounters, some of them consolidating the idea of the vanishing Indian. Thus, American artists and authors responded to the pressing challenge to reconstruct a national past.

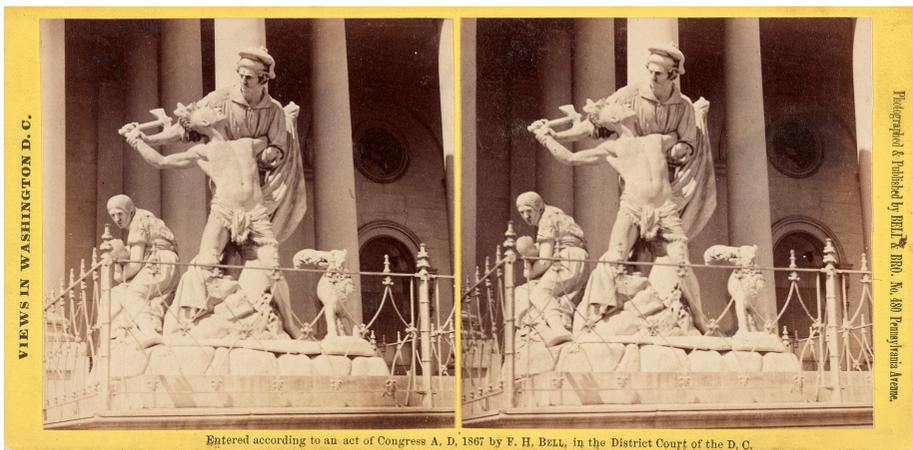


Figure 5.1: *The Rescue* by Horatio Greenough, displaying the common understanding of early 19th-century settler-Indigenous relations, as also evidenced in Paulding's novel. Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017652473>.

Literary scholar J. Gerald Kennedy suggests that:

Those who produced the images, emblems, songs, and stories of American nationhood found themselves obliged not only to rewrite the past, effacing all that was shameful, but also to ignore or dismiss continuing indignities within the would-be nation. ... Arguably, nation-building – the multiform, self-conscious construction of ideas and images of nationhood – did not become a general project until the formation of an American mass culture around 1820.

Nation-building, Kennedy continues, “encompassed an array of cultural activities.”⁷ Prominent in this process was the representation of the Native, which was collectively invented and disseminated also through lithographs and illustrations that reinforced the textual images appearing in fiction. Together with literary works, the visual arts created and reinforced not only stereotypes but also an idea of a nation and its history and contributed to the construction of the frontier myth.

History Entwined with Romance

With his decision to write about events and characters that actually had existed, Paulding contributed to the nascent formation of national literature but also to the creation of national history. His novel stems from real events, is set in a location and period that correspond to historical realities, and his fictional hero is based on a Finn who immigrated with the early settlers. The Long Finne is the hero of Paulding’s novel, which takes place in a “famous fort and town of Elsingburgh, one of the earliest settlements of the Swedes” in America.⁸ The novel’s fictional fort of Elsingburgh, according to literary historian Adolph B. Benson, was a name-loan from one of the actual districts of the New Sweden settlement called Elsingborg.⁹ Although such names and other elements may be drawn from real life, the novel otherwise has hardly any relationship to actual historical events. Paulding mediated history by creating a romantic and adventurous storyline that catered to his readers’ expectations. The factual information—or “the meat” of the story, as the author calls it—is peppered with Paulding’s imagination, which fills the gaps of events that took place in a remote time and an unremarkable colony. To quote Paulding: he had “chosen for our scene of action, a forgotten village, and for our actors, an obscure colony,

whose existence is scarcely known and the incidents of whose history are sufficiently insignificant to allow us ample liberty in giving what cast and colouring we please to their manners, habits and opinions.¹⁰ The little-known history of a marginal colony consisting of Swedes and Finns who occupied the banks of the Delaware River offered Paulding a frontier setting and a historical frame but also ample liberty to write a fictional story that nonetheless responded to the prevailing demand for national narratives.

Finns, who at the time were part of the Swedish Kingdom, began arriving in America around 1638 as part of the Swedish colonization of the Delaware Valley. More followed in the 1650s and 1660s, although the numbers were relatively small. Paulding's novel, which is set in the early 1660s, drew its inspiration from an event that occurred around that time known as "the Long Finn Rebellion."¹¹ Although only fragmented documentation exists of this revolt, it seems that it was led by an impostor who called himself Köningsmark, also referred to as Long Finne. When English and Dutch settlers started to take over the Delaware region, he wanted his followers, many of them Finns, to stay loyal to Sweden. During the event, it seems, nobody was killed, nor were any colonies lost or gained.¹² Paulding borrowed the protagonist of these events, whose real name was Marcus Jacobsson, and, as indicated above, used the time period and location as the setting for his American narrative.

The plot, as Benson observes, "is largely conventional, with a background of passionate love, gross superstition, and unexpected kindness, Indian captivities, tortures and killings, thrilling escapes and horrible recaptures, the frightening of savages by natural thunder, and the placating of them, with the rescue of white men, by Quakers."¹³ In the story, the settlement of the Swedes and Finns is under the rule of Heer Peter Piper, who is of German parentage but who has lived in Finland. Although he is the governor, and thus the most influential person in the village, he tends to remain somewhat overshadowed by the title character, who is a strong, virile youth representing idealized whiteness and desirable national character. The events revolve, to a great extent, around the love plot as the young Long Finne is trying to win the love of Piper's daughter, the equally idealized female protagonist, Christina. She is described as being "as fair a maid as ever the sun shone upon in this new world," and she is acknowledged to "excel in beauty, grace, and virtue."¹⁴ She is an embodiment of the virtuous domestic(ated) white

woman of the 19th century, thus appearing as a perfect object of the heroic Finn's wooing. In addition to the Finnish protagonists' romantic entanglements, the plot is buttressed by the constant tensions between the settlers and local Native tribes, the Delaware or Lenni Lenape, as well as the reader's desire to know more about the past of the young Finn. Heer Piper's African slave, Bombie, supposedly knows a secret, which is never revealed, but has something to do with the Long Finne, thus rendering his presence in the settlement suspicious. The fearless Finn, however, gains popularity among the settlers when he performs heroic acts such as saving the villagers from the Natives' attacks. His brave deeds, physical attributes, and character traits typify him as a masculine male capable of conquering wilderness and protecting the interests of white settlers. As Wells summarizes in his "Introduction" to the 1988 edition of *Koningsmarke*, the protagonist's "knightly deeds celebrate the virtues of strength, ingenuity, integrity, and selflessness that will be needed by the people to survive in the New World."¹⁵ In addition to celebrating the actions of the Long Finne, the story pokes fun at the naiveté of the settlers and exposes the hypocrisy of their religious leader. The story ends with British, not Dutch, settlers taking over the Swedish rule. The Long Finne is transported to New York as a prisoner, then liberated, and reunited with the female protagonist, Christina, whom he marries.

The characters are equally predictable as the plot. They are flat character types, some depicted with racist vocabulary. They are described by using instantly recognizable stereotypes, particularly pertinent to "race," and, as such, "they convey enormous amounts of cultural information in an extremely condensed form."¹⁶ The characters associated with Finland serve to stress the virtues associated with whiteness (see previous comments on Christina and *Koningsmarke*). Heer Piper's enslaved woman, Bombie, whom he calls in an insulting way Snow Ball, is an exception. She had been a faithful Mammy figure in Piper's family and had accompanied Heer Piper to Finland, and from there to the New World. The Black woman is a mysterious figure whose physical features, as depicted in the book, rely on stereotypical features: ebony skin, woolly hair, broad flat nose, and eyes dark as coals.¹⁷ Scholars have noted that "stereotyping tends to occur when there are gross in-equalities of power," which is the case with Bombie as well as with her grandson, the already-adult Cupid, who lives within the white settlement.¹⁸

The mischievous Cupid, whose “bacon” the village high constable had saved more than once, is compared to negatively perceived domesticated animals: in addition to the reference to a pig (“bacon”), he is “as obstinate as a mule, as mischievous as a monkey, and as ill-natured as a bull-dog.”¹⁹ His animalistic features are echoed in his name, which evokes the stereotypical idea dominant in the white imagination of Black men’s sexuality. In his presentation, 19th-century racist images of Black men as hypersexual and resembling animals intertwine. For the most part, both Cupid and Bombie are silenced; both are allowed a few words or sentences, many of which are nonsensical.

The Native Americans, instead, are depicted in more prominent roles as warriors but also as wise men, at times engaged in discussion with the settlers, seemingly on an equal footing. In the novel, however, these conversations serve to prove the inferiority of the Natives and to contest their traditions and belief systems. In Paulding’s text, Indigenous people are compared to a very different kind of animal than those used to define the Black characters, one that is voracious, dangerous, and deathly: the wild wolf.²⁰ It underscores not only the ferocity but also the untamed, nomadic life associated with the Natives, thus evoking yet another stereotype, one that is also prominent in settler colonial discourse.²¹

The Civilized vs Savages

At the time of the events, the Delaware area, according to Paulding, was for the most part “perfect wilderness.” The small colonies were in the process of settling the boundaries of their territories and trying to ascertain “who was the real proprietor of the soil. As to the Indians, they were out of the question.” They had sold their land in exchange for tobacco-boxes, pipes, and red paint.²² Settler colonialism relies on such regularization of boundaries that secure for white settlers the possession of land and, consequently, the process of maintaining a territory previously inhabited by Indigenous Americans. Such territoriality, as scholars have observed, is a specific element in settler colonialism.²³ Settlers impose their domination over the land they are making their own, rooting their own culture and colony in a territory they claim theirs, for instance, merely by using the rhetoric of discovery.

Such justification is presented also in *Koningsmarke*: Heer Piper, who governed the settlement of New Sweden, did so “by right of dis-

covery, grant, possession, and what not.”²⁴ The references to the settlers’ “right” is revealing as is the list ending with “what not,” a clear trivialization, which seems to imply that the settlers could invent numerous motives, many of them insignificant, to rationalize their domination over the territory. In addition, the settlers deem it a “fair purchase” of the Native land since liquor, ammunition, and watch-coats were given in exchange for the large territory the Swedish government purchased. The settlers also legitimize land possession because the tribes, as the narrator explains, “wither[ed] away” as a result of their excessive drinking of alcohol.²⁵ And yet, drunkenness, which is presented as an innate weakness and vice of the Natives, is a consequence of trading with the whites. Although they are corrupted by the settlers, the novel shifts the cause for the Natives’ degradation to their “race.”

Historians Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker argue that “As settlers killed, removed, assimilated, and marginalized Native peoples to wrest the land from them, settlers justified their actions with racial logics and romanticized histories that separated Natives from their lands, both actually and figuratively, to privilege settler possession.”²⁶ This is exactly what occurs also in Paulding’s novel. According to the narrator, “The early settlers of this country were, perhaps, as extraordinary a race of people as ever existed. Totally unwarlike in their habits, they ventured upon a New World, and came, few in numbers, fearlessly into the society and within the power of a numerous race of savages.”²⁷ The settlers represent this “extraordinary” race, which evidently refers to their whiteness. The way their arrival is presented underscores their admirable character traits: they were pacific, adventurous, and courageous. They arrive as a small group, which renders them unthreatening. They are said to be driven by curiosity, eager to explore this new land, where they are soon attacked and overpowered by numerous savages. In other words, the settlers are depicted as arriving with peaceful, not bad, intentions but soon become the target of Native American violence. Indeed, as the text points out, the “noble ancestors” with “moral courage” were met by wild and “ignorant people” who were “superstitious”; they were “degenerate,” with “debased” minds, and gradually they became “corrupted by the universal curse of their race, spirituous liquors, the seductions of which the best and greatest of them could not resist.”²⁸ The Natives’ cultural inferiority (implied in their superstitious nature) and innate weakness of character establish them as vulnerable to the corruptive force of liquor, the

“universal curse of their race.” The distance the narrator takes from the causes of the Natives’ debasement liberates the settlers from any responsibility and involvement in their degeneration. What is at play here is the claim of white innocence. As with imperialist nostalgia, “the responsible imperial agent is transformed into an innocent bystander, masking his involvement with processes of domination.”²⁹ The seemingly benevolent presence and pacific intentions of the settlers are foregrounded and reinforced through the themes of innocence, honesty, justice, and their intentions to negotiate treaties, all concepts used as a mere rhetoric strategy to justify oppression of the Indigenous people and possession of their land. The reason for the Natives’ downfall and degradation, as mentioned earlier and repeated here, is liquor, which appears as a racial cause that surfaces because of the weakness of character, not because the white man introduced it to the tribes. Hence, the white man appears guiltless. The distinguishing feature between civilized and uncivilized, then, is “racial.”

Benson further notes that “Paulding, with one or two exceptions, simply maintained a hazy, general cross-section idea of the white Man pitted against the Redskin, and painted it accordingly. His ignorance of specific facts is covered up by satire.”³⁰ The novel abounds in generalizations and repeatedly evokes stereotypes, not only those related to white and Black characters. For instance, although the “neighbouring Indians were, for the most part, on friendly terms with the whites at Elsingburgh,” this was not the case with all Natives, some of whom were more inclined to commit murders.³¹ Such statements seem to further promote the idea that the Elsingburgh whites would have preferred to peacefully cohabit with Native Americans whose aggression is presented as *their*, not the settlers’, inherent tendency. And yet, the initial intentions for peaceful cohabitation and bonding with Indigenous people cease when land possession is questioned. Then, friendliness turns into rivalry and conquest. It is the animosity of the Natives that is explicitly explained, and it is they who are presented as susceptible to vice and violence—they drink and then become violent, which has devastating consequences. Because of their violent nature and tendency to get drunk, Paulding thus presents the Natives as unable to take care of their lands and to live peacefully with the settlers. This in turn renders it impossible to assimilate them into a civilized society governed by the white newcomers. Paulding offers these as valid motives for the settlers’ mastery over the “savages,” to suppress their

traditions, take possession of their territories, and, hence, Heer Piper feels justified to charge the Natives with trespassing “by hunting on the lands ceded by them in *fair* purchase.”³² In this way, the author takes part in reinforcing existing negative images of Native Americans that were circulating in America at the time. The contrast between the “savages” and “civilized” becomes foregrounded through their “race,” character traits, and behavior, and the way they use the land.

Paulding centers human interactions in the process of settlement but at the same time examines the relation of man and nature. In the same way as the settlers oppress the Natives, they also dominate nature by eliminating forests to build forts and towns or by taming rivers. Their civilization campaigns and relationship with nature are destructive. For instance, in the process of taming the wilderness, the settlers build a dam that obstructs the fish from moving down the river, which causes the Natives to starve. Here, to quote the anthropologist Patrick Wolfe, the contest for land clearly is also contest for life.³³ The settlers also destroy the forest by burning leaves and killing trees. Destroying to control, or to remove and replace, are the settlers’ strategies that stand for social development. Farming land and constructing protective walls to secure the whites against the Native tribes are signs of civilization that, according to the newcomers, give them a right to the land and make the settlers prosper. Misunderstandings arise because the tribes claim they sold the land with the trees on it but not the birds in the air, fish in the river, or beasts in the woods. These, they argue, “belong to those who have the courage and skill to catch them.”³⁴ In the Natives’ view, wilderness, in part, is a no man’s land where certain tracts of land and animals are nobody’s possession. These tracts of wilderness were fundamental for survival, the territory for free fishing and hunting. However, not only do the novel’s settlers take possession of the land but they also demonstrate that they wish to oppress the Natives, trying to convert them to “civilized” ways and belief systems. Such a “civilizing” assimilation process relies on the erasure of Native traditions, thus rendering it a form of genocide.³⁵

Scholars such as Patrick Wolfe have argued that assimilation strategies imposed by the dominant culture are less violent than genocide but no less eliminatory.³⁶ In *Koningsmarke*, which attacks every aspect of Native American life, the settlers try to convert the Indigenous tribes to the white man’s religion, their way of cultivating land, building forts, and trading unfairly. Although they share the same geographical space,

there are clear boundaries, both physical and cultural, dividing the settlers from Native Americans.

The Natives acknowledge the settlers' conquest of the territory but accept that the Great Spirit, not the white man, will extinguish them:

We shall perish, or be driven before it, till we come to where the sun sets in the great salt lake of the West, and when we can go no further, there will soon be an end of our race. If such is the will of the Great Spirit, we cannot help it; if it is not his will, you cannot make it so.³⁷

Here Paulding promotes the idea of the vanishing Indian as a predetermined destiny, but the responsibility of Indian removal is shifted from the white settlers, in the novel the Swedes and Finns, onto the Great Spirit, thus negating the settlers' involvement in the push of Natives toward westward migration. Indeed, they appear innocent in the elimination of Indigenous tribes.

If the Natives on the one hand are depicted as cruel with innate tendency for violence, on the other hand they can also be perceived as loyal and noble. The narrator explains that when they agree to a peace treaty they never violate it afterwards. They had few temptations and vices before the arrival of the settlers and "many good, not to say great qualities." They never lied and could always be trusted to do what they promised. Such descriptions evoke the stereotypical idea of the "noble savage." However, in Paulding's narrative, friendship between the white men even with such "noble" Natives is deemed impossible. At the peace talks the Swedish and Finnish settlers accuse the Natives of being ignorant barbarians and are scornful of their spiritual beliefs and worldviews. In the Natives' view, the settlers, instead, "are a bad people" with two faces and hearts. The Natives accuse them of bringing liquor, smallpox, and lies among the tribes. This attitude of no reconciliation triggers a transformation in the Natives: they resume their war-whoops and raise their tomahawks.³⁸

In the novel, the colonial construction of Native Americans as uncivilized and the use of colonialist language by explicitly labeling them as "savages" serve to justify the American expansion that relied on the acquisition of land and natural resources. The domination of Native Americans via oppositional identity construction, their classification as representing different "race" and ethnicity, becomes an enactment of colonial mastery. Cassandra Jackson argues that projecting

alienness onto Native Americans as well as African Americans served to justify “the appropriation of their labor and land.”³⁹ In Paulding’s novel, the tall, white Finn contrasts with not only the “savages” but also Cupid, a “dwarf” with ebony complexion. The oppositional positioning of Indigenous inhabitants and white Americans, furthermore, contributes to the pretext of colonial dispossession of Native Americans. Paulding’s novel buttresses the historical narrative of Native Americans being conquered because of their inferiority. At the same time, it endorses the Indian removal policy.

White Innocence and Exceptionality

The fictional character of Koningsmarke, or the Long Finne, contributes to the creation of the myth of Nordic exceptionalism and white innocence that can also be detected in the settlers’ legitimization of land possession. Social and cultural anthropologist Gloria Wekker has identified elements that denote white innocence, many of them applicable to the Long Finne. For instance, according to Wekker, innocence is associated with smallness, such as a small nation that Koningsmarke also represents, or it may carry “feminine connotations.” Moreover, the claim for white innocence is particularly strong in countries like Sweden where another foundational claim is exceptionalism.⁴⁰ Such concepts are present in Paulding’s novel and it can be argued that they resonate among Finns even today. The description of the fictional Finn, Koningsmarke, relies on references to his height and masculinity but also his effeminate appearance: he is nearly six feet tall, well proportioned, a “fair tall youth” who embodies manly beauty that “might have been thought somewhat effeminate.” He is an idealization of masculinity—with his fierce character and muscular body—but also of sensitivity as well as whiteness, his complexion being “almost too fair for a man.” With his “light blue eye, the colour of the north,” he stands out as “an Apollo among satyrs” among the “sturdy” village “boors.” He is, indeed, exceptional. In addition to being physically superior, he comes from a sophisticated family of certain social position as indicated by the reference to his father, who had been “a gentleman of Finland, called Colonel Koningsmarke,” by now deceased. The female protagonist, Christina, recalls having seen such “species of more polished beings” in Finland, a recollection that emphasizes the uniqueness of Finns.⁴¹ The Long Finne is a highly idealized figure, who

not only appears as the hero of the story but, in doing so, contributes to the myth of racial purity, which is fundamental in the construction of American nationhood.

To reinforce the role of this “tall, straight, light-complexioned, blue-eyed youth” as representative of ideal American identity, the Long Finne, when defying authority, is “whistling Yankee Doodle.”⁴² He embodies American confidence, individualism, and courage. Foregrounding the admirable qualities of the Long Finne—his physical attributes and character traits—serves to emphasize the characteristics of white Americans in general; he is their representative. They appear civilized and superior, which places them in a position of power that is made to seem natural. Such a power structure is reinforced when white Americans are mirrored against Native Americans. The paradoxical relations with Native Americans, whose language the Long Finne speaks, contrast with claims for innocence with disavowed violence. His intelligence and skills evoke another myth about the northerners deemed remarkable for their intellect and education.

The Long Finne assumes the role of an unmistakable hero when he alerts the village of the approaching Indian warriors. Their “horrible yell” confirms the arrival of the “savage warriors,” a yell “which the adventurous founders of the new world were, alas! too well accustomed to hear.” The settlers get ready to defend their fort and even women and children start to load the guns, which they hand to the admirable northern men, “their brave defenders.” A battle ensues but the Natives soon become “discouraged by resistance,” which implies their mental weakness and thus inferiority. It is pure luck, it seems, that an explosion in the villagers’ ammunition deposit shifts the power balance toward a triumph of the Natives. As the villagers flee toward the river, the heroic Koningsmarke remains to fight the “savages.” The settlement houses are burned to ashes, Heer Piper’s dreams of founding an empire vanish, and “a wild, shrill whoop announced the triumph and departure of the savages” who were retreating to their “forest homes.”⁴³ The Natives’ savagery is evoked through their barbaric, wild, and shrill yells, their tendency to violence and cruelty, and their retreat back to the wilderness. The Finnish hero once again stands out with his altruistic, courageous actions to defend and protect the colony. However, after a fierce struggle to protect Heer Piper’s daughter, the virtuous Christina, she and Koningsmarke become captives of the retrieving tribe.

Despite his captivity, the Long Finne remains true to his exceptionalism: he is cheerful, accepting and adjusting to his circumstances, and, because of his ambitious nature, he distinguishes himself, excelling in the skill of shooting so well as to make the Natives jealous. He thus proves the superiority of white civilized men. Not only is he physically strong and handsome, skilled in hunting and war, but his intellectual capacity is such that he knows the Indian language. This enables him to have conversations with the tribe's wisest man, who happens to be the father of the woman whose slave the Long Finne has become.

The superiority of the settlers is articulated by the wise man of the tribe when he tells Koningsmarke that the Natives will never be able to become good white men, shall never become farmers, and are unable to understand the religion of the settlers. In sum, they cannot be assimilated into white society. The reasoning of the Native is logical when he argues, for instance, that the whites "are a miserable race in your own country ... or you would not have come hither to disturb us."⁴⁴ But the arguments, for the most part, are deemed naïve, seemingly childish, and supposedly funny. They serve to testify to the Natives' primitiveness.

The myth of Native–white oppositional positioning is reinforced by the myth of the superior Finn, who gets along with the Natives because of his innocence and benevolence. These are the distinguishing features that separate him from the village "brutes," and which again appear as signs of his superior humanity. His benevolent attempt to explain the civilized–barbarian paradigm fails and soon becomes a legitimization for the settlers' land possession as Koningsmarke undertakes to prove "that a people who cultivated the ground had a right to take it away from those who only hunted upon it, because it was the will of the Great Spirit that the human race should increase to the greatest possible number in all parts of the world."⁴⁵ The argument lacks logic as it makes it seem like hunters or nomadic people are unable to contribute to the increase of human race. The settlers, the Long Finne claims, had a right to the land, it was desirable that they multiply, and the Natives, who (according to him) were incapable of farming land, consequently would, and perhaps should, be eliminated. In the Long Finne's explanation, it was the will of the Natives' Great Spirit, not of the white man, that this should be so. Once again, Paulding introduces a claim of the settlers' innocence. A discussion about the distinction between a man and an animal ensues to elaborate the point: the former is governed

by reason, the latter by instinct, which makes the latter “an inferior race by nature.” It is clear that the former refers to the settlers, the latter to the Natives. The narrator concludes that it was impossible to make the “poor savage” “comprehend the most simple elements of our social and religious systems.”⁴⁶ In this way, the novel takes part in the dominant process to prove that the Natives cannot be assimilated into white society; there are no possibilities for cohabitation since they are helpless cases, which then would justify their elimination or removal. To quote Jackson: casting Native Americans as “incapable of adapting to the present or future, also posed removal as a benevolent act that would both save and civilize Indians.”⁴⁷ Such apparent benevolence contributes to the construction of the innocent, superior, civilized, and in many ways exceptional white settlers, who in the novel are identified as Swedes and Finns.

Women Negotiating Settler Colonialism

The section that takes place in the local Delaware (Lenape) tribe’s territory centers the uncivilized, cruel ways of the Natives. The tropes of romance, wilderness adventure, and frontier encounter intertwine in the scene in which the prisoners are carried deep into the wilderness, a virgin forest where wild animals maintain their land possession. Deviating from traditional captivity narratives, both men and women are abducted. In addition to the Long Finne and Christina, others from the village are also among the captives: Lob Dotterel, Claas Tomeson, his wife, and their infant child. Conventional gender images are evoked as the strong and courageous Finn assists the weak female, Christina, carrying her in his arms through the forest. All men, however, are stripped of their manly power when they are unable to prevent the cruel killing of Tomeson’s wife and child, murders they are forced to witness.

Upon the arrival of the captives in the tribe’s village, they are met with whooping and horrible cries of women, children, and old men, all armed with tomahawks, guns, and clubs. The savagery seems to pertain to representatives of both genders and all ages, not only presented as a characteristic of Native men. The entire tribe’s violent responses are further underscored through a description of the torture inflicted on the captives. The barbaric customs come across as the tribe’s traditions: the relatives of those killed in battle are able to choose to adopt

a prisoner or torture them to death. Here Paulding is drawing material from real incidents that he conflates with his imagination.

The civilized–barbarian dichotomy is foregrounded in the way some of the captives are treated. Claas Tomeson is tortured to death by the Natives, the “inhuman beings” whose answer to his cries is laughter, shouts, and additional torture. Ludwig Varlett, another prisoner, after witnessing the burning of Tomeson, tricks the Natives, who, once they realize they have been fooled into shooting him and thus having been deprived the “fun” of torture, tear his body into pieces and drink his hot blood. These episodes are presented as proof of the Natives’ stupidity, barbarism, and innate cruelty, in sum, that they are “savages” who had to be tamed and civilized. This idea is reinforced in the description of an ensuing celebration of the “wretched bacchanals” that ends, as can be expected, in drunkenness.⁴⁸

The Long Finne with his handsome face and admirable physical form is chosen as a husband or slave by one of the tribe’s women. The relationship with the Native woman may be seen to fall into the category of “common-law” marriage, which was rather common among white settlers, instead of being an official or formal intermarriage. It is potentially acceptable, however, to advocate intermarriage or relations between white men and Native women, but not considered tolerable for Native men to have intimate relations with white women like Christina. This reflects the prevailing attitude in American society at the time, which envisioned intermarriage, when it was deemed acceptable, “as a prerogative of white men, and said nothing about Indian men marrying white women.”⁴⁹ Such attitudes also reflect the period’s racial hierarchies according to which Natives could become white, or at least women could be assimilated into white society as spouses or partners of white men, but Blacks never could. Koningsmarke, however, rejects “the bodies of Natives who supposedly stood between whites and their dream of civilizing America.”⁵⁰ He contributes to the myth of racial purity by escaping when threatened by interracial desire that would contest America’s denial of racial mixing.

If the hero of the story is chosen to cohabit with a Native woman as her slave, the virtuous, white, and fair heroine of the story, Christina, instead, is adopted as a sister to an Indigenous girl, Aonetti or Deer Eyes. She is the dark beauty of the village, thus contrasting against Christina’s fairness. Christina becomes a member of the tribe, assuming the name of Mimi, which signified the Turtle Dove. For a brief

moment, the novel questions what it means to be Indigenous or to be a settler. These two women engage in a negotiation of territorial possession and cohabitation on peaceful terms. They lack the violence characteristic of men (and some of the Indigenous women). They use their “feminine” nature to nurture intimate bonding. The dark and fair women’s differences, however, become apparent when they become rivals: they both love the heroic Finn. The civilized–barbarian dichotomy is played out in the reactions of the two women: Aonetti is ignorant of civilized ways of hiding emotions, thus openly revealing her feelings; she is entirely governed by emotions rather than intellectual reason; she is unaware of “proper” female behavior; and her “gender and tender simplicity” render her inappropriate “indelicate forwardness” rather “affecting.”⁵¹ Christina, instead, appears as the superior white woman: she remains grateful to and affectionate with Aonetti, even when discovering the latter’s feelings for the Long Finne; she feels sympathy for Aonetti for losing her brother in a battle; and she remains virtuous even under challenging circumstances.⁵² And yet, despite their differences and duel for the love of the white hero, the two women protect, care for, and love each other.

Christina thus remains unmarried but forms a homosocial interracial relation with a Native woman, although they are defined as sisters. They are both described as “innocent girls,” but it is in Aonetti’s arms that Christina awakes after her failed attempt to escape. They are said to love each other, and it is on the bosom of Christina that Aonetti weeps, confessing her love for Christina: “I love you,” she would say.” And, although the love was mutual, the civilized white woman “could not help feeling a certain awkward sensation, that sometimes cause her to return the caresses of the Indian maid with a coldness.”⁵³ The emotional affection seems acceptable to Christina but it is the physical contact and intimacy that she rejects. In her civilized society homosocial relations might be accepted as long as they resist crossing the line into homoerotic physicality.

Although both Christina and the Long Finne imitate the tribe’s way of life, which again evokes their white superiority, benevolence, innocence, and resistance to settler complicity, it only serves to underscore the foreignness and inferiority of the Natives’ lifestyle when compared to their own cultural background. At the same time, it serves to demonstrate that the white characters are able to adapt to their circumstances, to assimilate even into the lifestyle of inferior “savages” with-

out compromising their moral integrity. The unequal relationships are maintained, rather than discontinued as Veracini has theorized, but the roles and power balances are momentarily reversed when the Native women become conquerors, possessing captive bodies and flesh.

Conclusion: Creating Transnational Myths

The novel creates and reinforces myths about white superiority and the exceptionality of Finns, who are described as possessing traits that continue to resonate in the idealized constructions of Finnishness: honesty, courage, and innocence linked to their admirable physical attributes. In particular, the male protagonist, the Long Finne, appears in a pivotal role throughout the novel. The conventional overlapping of escape and rescue plot amplify the heroic role of the white Finn in planning and executing the escape and rescuing both Christina and Lob Dotterel at the same time. He demonstrates his exceptionalism more than once, for instance when he assumes the task of exchanging views with the Natives who hold him and the other villagers as their captives. In Paulding's novel, the Natives' identity is constructed by labeling and defining them with cliched terminology. Overall, the novel affirms stereotypes, justifies settlers' land possession, legitimizes removal and slaughter of Natives, and contributes to defining myths about the new nation and ideal national identity.

Although Paulding's novel is set in the 1660s Delaware region, it addresses contemporary 19th-century concerns and controversies. These include references to "race" and racial hierarchies, reinforcing stereotypes, justifying Indian removal, participating in the creation of national identity and history, contributing to the process of nation building. The novel even introduces references to the death penalty and lynching, for instance when the Black character, Cupid, is punished by hanging, his body "hanging in mid air."⁵⁴ It vividly evokes an image of a Black body lynched. And, in the context of creating American national literature, the novel explains and legitimizes Native marginalization, removal, elimination, and invisibility. Interracial desire and marriage that posed a national threat of miscegenation is carefully avoided. A land that could be seen to be defined by denial of racial mixing and racism has been rescued from "savages" while at the same time its territories are secured under civilizing influences.

The heroic escape and subsequent marriage of Koningsmarke and Christina bring the novel to a happy ending. The nation is being built and will be inhabited by descendants of these representatives of white innocence and exceptionalism. In the novel, Finns have claimed their place in the context of nation building and contributed to the more general process of reinventing history. The son of the happy couple, the “little blue-eyed grandson” of Heer Piper, is a sign of the white, ideal “race” being prolonged.⁵⁵ The new nation has secured the continuation of the desired citizens, the admirable and honest white northerners.

Notes

- 1 Wells, “Introduction,” v.
- 2 N. Y. Patriot, “Literary Notices,” *American Watchman and Delaware Advertiser* (Wilmington, DE), January 2, 1824. The newspaper’s May 25, 1824, issue carried a short extract from *Koningsmarke* (Book 7, chapter I) in which the characters Edith and Dominie Kantwell collect donations from the inhabitants of Elsingburgh. It was considered “so good a ‘touch at the times’” that the newspaper presented it “as a mirror for the new Tax-gatherers, (who have invented a gospel which oppresses the poor more than the Jewish system formerly did).”
- 3 Jackson, *Barriers Between Us*, 23.
- 4 Paulding, James Kirke, *Koningsmarke*, 3.
- 5 Bellquist, “Book Review: Koningsmarke.”
- 6 On Indian removal, see Weik, *Archeology of Removal*, and Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*.
- 7 Kennedy, “National Narrative,” 9.
- 8 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 5.
- 9 Benson, “Corrigenda,” 43–44.
- 10 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 3.
- 11 Haefeli, “Revolt,” 137.
- 12 See Haefeli, “Revolt” and Benson, “Corrigenda.”
- 13 Benson, “Paulding’s ‘Koningsmarke,’” 20. For a summary of the plot, see also Paulding, *Literary Life*, 164–65.
- 14 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 18.
- 15 Wells, “Introduction,” xii–xiii.
- 16 Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, xvi; quoted in Jackson, *Barriers*, 4.
- 17 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 5, 15–17, 24, 208.
- 18 Wekker, *White Innocence*, 141; quoting Hall, *Representation*, 258.
- 19 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 33.
- 20 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 13.
- 21 Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism,” 396.
- 22 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 9, 10.
- 23 Wolfe “Settler Colonialism,” 388.
- 24 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 9.
- 25 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 94.

- 26 Ostler and Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism," 363.
- 27 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 92.
- 28 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 93–94.
- 29 Wekker, *White Innocence*, 109.
- 30 Benson, "Paulding's 'Koningsmarke,'" 22.
- 31 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 94–95, 63, 69.
- 32 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 95; italics added.
- 33 Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 387.
- 34 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 99–100.
- 35 For definitions of genocide, see Article II(d) of the UN Convention, 1948.
- 36 Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 401.
- 37 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 99.
- 38 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 94, 97, 100.
- 39 Jackson, *Barriers*, 10.
- 40 Wekker, *White Innocence*, 16–17.
- 41 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 18–19; 8, 19; 11.
- 42 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 7.
- 43 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 107–08, 110.
- 44 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 128.
- 45 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 130.
- 46 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 131–32.
- 47 Jackson, *Barriers*, 24.
- 48 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 121–25.
- 49 Cott, *Public Vows*, 27.
- 50 Jackson, *Barriers*, 26.
- 51 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 133.
- 52 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 134, 156, 165.
- 53 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 150–51.
- 54 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 211.
- 55 Paulding, *Koningsmarke*, 255.

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