

2007


Cuban Femininity and National Unity in Louisa May Alcott's Moods and Elizabeth Stoddard's "Eros and Anteros"

Nina Bennett

CUNY New York City College of Technology

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ny_pubs

 Part of the [American Literature Commons](#), and the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bennett, Nina. "Cuban Femininity and National Unity in Louisa May Alcott's Moods and Elizabeth Stoddard's 'Eros and Anteros.'" *Women in Anglophone Literary Culture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Perspectives*. Ed. Robin Hammerman. Cambridge Scholars Press. 2007. 136-162.

This Book Chapter or Section is brought to you for free and open access by the New York City College of Technology at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications and Research by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact AcademicWorks@cuny.edu.

Cuban Femininity and National Unity in Louisa May Alcott's *Moods* and Elizabeth Stoddard's "Eros and Anteros"

Scholarly interest in the concept of the United States as empire has surged since the events of 9/11. In her October 2003 Presidential address to the American Studies Association, Amy Kaplan notes that Guantanamo Bay, currently utilized by the United States military as a prison, "is a location where many narratives about the Americas intersect, about shackled slaves brought from Africa, the important role of Cuba in U.S. history, and U.S. intervention in the Caribbean and Latin America."¹ Kaplan's address reminds us that the strained relationship the United States has with present-day communist Cuba stretches back over several centuries. Indeed, it can be argued that the United States' appropriation of Cuban space today is rooted in the political philosophy of Manifest Destiny, once a centerpiece of nineteenth-century United States' political rhetoric.

In the nineteenth century, discussions of Manifest Destiny were made regularly by male public figures and elected officials whose rhetoric dominated U.S. political life. Jenine Abboushi Dallal defines Manifest Destiny as "a secular version of the chosen people in the promised land."² As Dallal's article makes clear, nineteenth-century writers address Manifest Destiny in more implicit ways than politicians. In her analysis of Ralph Waldo Emerson's views of aesthetic beauty and territorial expansion, she notes that "[a]lthough the interdependence of expansion and culture is a central theme for Emerson, passages in which he directly addresses U.S. expansionism or Manifest Destiny are rare."³ More recently, Amy S. Greenberg, through her study *Manifest Manhood and the*

Antebellum American Empire, has asserted that Manifest Destiny should be looked at as a gendered experience, with complicated, distinct meanings for men and women.

Greenberg's study traces the phenomenon of Manifest Destiny from the 1840s through the 1860s, arguing that "debates over Manifest Destiny also were debates over the meaning of American manhood and womanhood."⁴ Nationalism and gender, according to Greenberg, must be examined in tandem when looking at the role of Manifest Destiny both at home and abroad.

U.S. women fiction writers like Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) and Elizabeth Stoddard (1823-1902) were even less likely to make overt political statements concerning foreign policy than a male transcendentalist like Emerson. Instead, these women made their political commentary through fictional narratives.⁵ Through relationships between men and women in their fiction, they reveal the United States' complicated view of itself in the larger world. Striking similarities abound in depictions of Cuban women in Louisa May Alcott's first adult novel *Moods* (1864) and Elizabeth Stoddard's short story "Eros and Anteros" (1862). Both of these narratives, written by New England women in the same narrow time frame of the early 1860s, feature love triangles, each consisting of one man and two women, one of whom is Anglo, one Cuban. It is no coincidence that in each case, one of the women is specifically identified as Cuban. In both Alcott's and Stoddard's narratives, Cuban women are depicted as overtly sexual and dangerous threats who must be expelled from these narratives as the Anglo women explore their choice of husbands and come to terms with their own womanhood.

Alcott and Stoddard both use the figure of the Cuban woman as an emblem of the contradictory impulses in the United States' political psyche during the antebellum

period. In the 1850s, Cuba was a hot topic, its potential annexation advocated by Presidents Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan. A takeover of Cuba would have tremendous implications for the United States' increasingly urgent debate over the continuation of slavery within its borders. With approximately 500,000 slaves living in Cuba in the 1850s, Southern states would receive an influx of cheap human capital if annexation went through.⁶ For others, Northerners in particular, the idea of annexing Cuba was more problematic. In his influential work *Walt Whitman's America*, David Reynolds notes that for some Northerners, "acquiring Cuba was widely seen as part of a Southern plot to extend slavery."⁷ Annexing Cuba would be a strategic way for Southerners to fulfill the promise of Manifest Destiny.

The raging debate over Cuban annexation, with its Southern supporters invoking the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, was one which Alcott and Stoddard, writers who each had a wide and overlapping circle of friends, were clearly cognizant. Both writers depict Cuban femininity as threatening to marital union, suggesting that both see Cuba as an entity which should not be legally joined to the United States of America; both writers use Cuban women as symbols of inappropriate marital choices. Further complicating a reading of Alcott's and Stoddard's fiction is the fact that in the early 1860s, when both texts were written, the United States was in the midst of civil war, and the Northern states focused on keeping the existing union intact. While the real danger of Cuban annexation had passed because of the war, the debate over national boundaries was still raging in altered form. With the nation split in two, Alcott's and Stoddard's fixation on Cuban women in these texts represents not just a political commentary on Cuban annexation, but, in Alcott's case, a re-assertion of her own antislavery stance.

Travel narratives of the 1850s provide evidence of the symbiotic relationship between the United States and Cuba. Under Spanish rule, Cuba became an important trading partner with the United States, exporting sugar and other goods.⁸ As a result of the increase in trade, more United States citizens traveled to Cuba, and more of them wrote of their travels for an eager audience back home. Travel narratives about Cuba published in The United States began to peak at mid-century, with 14 published between 1850 and 1859, a number that would not be surpassed until the 1890s.⁹ These narratives, written by men and women alike, brought the daily aspects of Cuban life into U.S. homes. For example, readers could learn of Cuba's beneficial health treatments from Nathaniel Parker Willis's book *Health Trip to the Tropics* (New York, 1853).¹⁰ Readers could also learn of Cuban religious, educational, and social practices through Julia Ward Howe's wry and witty narrative *A Trip to Cuba*, printed in serial form in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1859, and published in book form the following year. Howe's account of her stay in Cuba in 1859 helped keep Cuba in the consciousness of U.S. writers like Alcott and Stoddard at a time when the annexation of the island was still a possibility and the civil war within the United States' geographical boundaries had not yet begun.

Both Louisa May Alcott and Elizabeth Stoddard, readers of *The Atlantic Monthly*, would have been likely to encounter Howe's serial.¹¹ Howe's book, laced with wry observations and humor as she observes the people and sights of Havana and other coastal cities, offers an Anglo woman's perspective on a nation whose treatment of its women mixed condescension with worship, depending on their social class. In Chapter 4 of *A Trip to Cuba*, entitled "The Harbor of Havana," Howe offers her readers her first

reaction to seeing upper-class Cuban women. It is evening, after dinner, and Howe and her traveling party are relaxing on the piazza:

The *volantes* dash by, with silver-studded harnesses, and postillions black and booted; within sit the pretty Señoritas, in twos and threes. They are attired mostly in muslins, with bare necks and arms; bonnets they know not, -- their heads are dressed with flowers, or with jewelled pins. Their faces are whitened, we know, with powder, but in the distance the effect is pleasing. Their dark eyes are vigilant; they know a lover when they see him. But there is no twilight in these parts, and the curtain of the dark falls upon the scene as suddenly as the screen of the theatre upon the *denouement* of the tragedy.¹²

Howe's description of these women reveals the complexity of depicting Cuban femininity. Here representing women of the Spanish upper class, later describing black maids, Howe distinguishes between types of femininity. As Luis Martínez-Fernández points out, nineteenth-century Cuba was in fact a nation which "was neither fully capitalist nor fully slave-based; it was neither black nor white."¹³ Martínez-Fernández identifies several distinct types of women living in Cuba: the ruling Spanish (referred to as white), the Creole and the black slave.¹⁴ Each group followed a distinct social code. The women of the Spanish ruling class were kept in a state of forced seclusion and had limited ability to walk freely about the streets, a practice Howe and many other female travelers to Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century found disconcerting and personally

prohibitive. Howe's characterization of these upper-class and Spanish women in their *volantes* is decidedly theatrical and overtly sexual.

Later in *A Trip to Cuba*, Howe offers her readers a contrasting description when she describes her hotel chambermaid, Rosa, a woman of lower social status:

Her voice and smile are particularly sweet, her person tall and well formed-, and her face comely and modest. She is not altogether black, -- about mahogany color. I mention her modesty because, so far as I saw, the good-looking ones among the black women have an air of assumption, and almost of impudence, -- probably the result of flattery.¹⁵

It is clear from this description that Howe categorizes the women in Cuba according to race, and that she makes corresponding assumptions about their beauty. As June E. Hahner has observed, “[f]emale foreign travelers’ observations of Latin American women tended to be based on models of femininity in their own countries.”¹⁶ Howe's remarks bear this out. In a later chapter in *A Trip to Cuba*, she provides a portrait of black women in Cuba:

The women are well-made, and particularly well-poised, standing perfectly straight from top to toe, with no hitch or swing in their gait. Beauty of feature is not so common among them; still, one meets with it here and there. There is a massive sweep in the bust and arms of the women which is very striking. Even in their faces, there is a certain weight of feature and of darkness, which makes its own impression.¹⁷

Howe makes it clear that, within each category of Cuban women she describes, she finds a different degree of femininity based on both race and class.

An astute observer, Howe, like other visitors to Cuba in the late 1850s, is not only fascinated with the range of Cuban women, but with the political backdrop of the island's possible annexation by the United States. Howe is against it, feeling that "[t]he enslaved population of Cuba and our own South must, under ordinary circumstances, attain in time a condition in which Slavery shall be impossible."¹⁸ Howe finds the Cuban slave system to be more benevolent, and thus she does not feel that annexing Cuba to the United States would benefit its slaves. "Still," Howe proclaims, "Americans should feel a pang in acknowledging even in the dark article of slave laws they are surpassed by a nation which they con[d]emn." In *A Trip to Cuba*, Julia Ward Howe discusses the linked issues of slavery and annexation, implicitly asserting that such issues had become fused for U. S. citizens who ruminated over the meaning of the acquisition of Cuba.¹⁹ Through narratives like Howe's, Alcott and Stoddard were exposed to Cuban life and to the idea that the United States could define itself against the exotic otherness of Cuba and its women.

Louisa May Alcott's first adult novel *Moods* was published in late 1864 but was actually begun in August 1860, around the time Howe's travel book about Cuba was receiving attention. Alcott herself, as Sarah Elbert writes in her introduction to *Louisa May Alcott on Race, Sex, and Slavery*, "called herself a 'fanatic' in the movement for abolition of slavery and racial integration [. . .]."²⁰ In discussing *Moods*, Elbert connects chapter one of the novel, which is set in Cuba, to Alcott's moral struggle against slavery, asserting that the novel "romantically racializ[es] its heroes and heroines and

dramatiz[es] the ancient kinship ties between populations, without ever mentioning the words race, amalgamation, or miscegenation.”²¹ In *Moods*, Alcott is not just concerned with the general immorality of slavery, but with using the locale of Cuba to enact a specific fantasy of (mis)union rooted in the folly of Cuban annexation, a folly justified by Manifest Destiny.

Ostensibly, the doctrine of Manifest Destiny provided political and moral justification for the United States to expand its union in the nineteenth century. An outgrowth of the United States’ desire for territorial expansion, Manifest Destiny was at its peak in the 1840s and 1850s. In his landmark study *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History*, Albert K. Weinberg traces the practical efforts to obtain Cuba and political and social motivations behind them. In doing so, he exposes the rhetoric of sexual conquest that both Alcott and Stoddard resist against in their texts. For example, it was starting in the 1840s, Weinberg argues, that “Americans not only felt *the quickening of an expansionist impulse within themselves* but observed evidence or promise of growth in all the elements and particularly the territorial phase of national life.”²² Here, Weinberg implicitly links the expansionist impulse with male sexuality. With the Gadsen Purchase of 1853, there seemed to be no limits to what territory the United States might gain. Manifest Destiny relied on “the pervasive currents of a popular Romanticism, and credibility from the dynamic political, social, and economic changes in American life that were spawned by a new spirit of optimism and self-confidence.”²³ Or, to put it as Weinberg does, “[d]oing things meant above all to the American of the ‘fifties the exciting sport of extending the national boundaries.”²⁴ The doctrine of Manifest Destiny sustained itself through collective *belief* as well as political action. There was, as

Weinberg, points out, a “general sense of national growth in portraying America as a young giant on the threshold of a manhood which the Old World could not restrain.”²⁵ In the system of metaphor that Weinberg describes, the United States is a young, virile man desirous of significant conquests. In Weinberg’s dichotomy of conquest, Cuba becomes personified as the desirable, highly sexualized woman who will not be able to resist a male on the brink of possessing her.

According to the principles of Manifest Destiny, Cuban acquisition would not be an unnatural or violent event, but rather a seamless development of biological dimensions. Acquiring Cuba would thus be an outgrowth of biological imperative and natural law. The use of a biological analogy for U.S. expansionism, according to Weinberg, was in full swing in the 1850s. Cuba had it all: close proximity, good trade relations with the United States, and a slave system already in place.

While the 1850s saw the peak of U.S. interest in annexing Cuba, the inclination to acquire it actually began forty years earlier. In 1810, President James Madison tried to buy it; in 1819, President John Quincy Adams described the United States’ acquisition of Cuba as “indispensable to the continuance and integrity of Union itself.”²⁶ Early in 1849, when President James Polk commented on the possibility of annexing Cuba, he pronounced himself “decidedly in favor.”²⁷ The presidency of Zachary Taylor was even marred by the attempts of Cuban “filibusters,” such as the Cuban exile Narciso Lopez, to return to Cuba with a military force ready to liberate Cuba from her ruler Spain and turn her over to the United States. As Robert E. May explains, “[f]ilibusters were persons who, lacking either the explicit or implicit consent of their own governments, planned, abetted, or participated in private military invasions or intended invasions of foreign

nations or dependencies with which their own countries were at peace” .²⁸ Lopez’s filibustering missions (May 1850 and April 1851) ended in dismal failure with his public execution. The diplomatic coercion of the 1854 Ostend Manifesto, in which the United States tried to force Spain into selling Cuba to the United States, also went nowhere.

The annexation of Cuba was more easily achieved as a cultural fantasy than as a political and economic actuality. For example, in his 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman draws upon the fantasy of Cuban annexation in several poems, among them “Our Old Feuillage/Chants Democratic,” in which he catalogues Cuba as a part of the United States:

America always!

Always me joined with you, whoever you are!

Always our own feuillage!

Always Florida’s green peninsula! Always the priceless
delta of Louisiana! Always the cotton-fields of
Alabama and Texas!

Always California’s golden hills and hollows – and the
silver mountains of New Mexico! Always soft-
breath’d Cuba! ²⁹

Whitman’s belief in Manifest Destiny comes across even more strongly in his poem “States!”, another poem which appears only in the 1860 edition. In it, Whitman seeks to explain what it is that ties The United States together. In the poem’s first stanza, he asks the states directly, “Were you looking to be held together by the lawyers? By an agreement on a paper? Or by arms?” Later in the poem, Whitman refers to Cuba

directly: “To Michigan shall be wafted perfume from Florida,/To the Mannahatta from Cuba or Mexico/Not the perfume of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted beyond death.”³⁰ David Reynolds notes the irony that Whitman’s belief in the annexation of Cuba went against his democratic philosophies.³¹ Whitman was like so many other writers during the late 1850s and early 1860s, weighing in on the possibility of Cuban annexation that tantalized parts of the nation.

Aware of the ongoing debate over Cuban annexation during this time, Louisa May Alcott prominently features an upper-class Cuban woman in the first chapter of the 1864 edition of *Moods*, her first serious full-length fictional work. It is the Cuban temptress Ottila to whom Adam Warwick, Alcott’s Thoreau-like hero, is engaged. Adam’s promise to Ottila forms the subtext for his ill-fated romance with Sylvia Yule, later Sylvia Moor, wife of Adam’s friend Geoffrey. While Alcott was known to use exotic locales in some of her sensationalist fiction, *Moods* represented her decision to move beyond the tales that brought in money to feed the Alcott family, and towards legitimate art.³² Why then should Alcott depict a Cuban woman as part of such a project?

In fact, Alcott’s first chapter for the 1864 edition, “One Year,” is comprised almost entirely of polemic dialogue between Adam Warwick, Alcott’s Thoreau-inspired hero, and his Cuban fiancée, Ottila. The chapter begins melodramatically: “The room fronted the west, but a black cloud, barred with red, robbed the hour of twilight’s tranquil charm. Shadows haunted it, lurking in corridors like spies set there to watch the man who stood among them mute and motionless as if himself a shadow.”³³ Cuba itself is described as “nothing but a tropical luxuriance of foliage scarcely stirred by the sultry air heavy with odors that seemed to oppress not refresh.” It is against this stifling background that

Alcott engages her leading characters in an equally stifling debate over the meaning of romantic promises. “Only a month betrothed and yet so cold and gloomy, Adam,” Ottila pronounces as she and Adam begin their prolonged discussion of the state of their potential union.

Adam and Ottila’s conversation takes on a distinctly political tone almost from the beginning, and they sound less and less like lovers and more and more like moral philosophers or political debaters. Ottila’s “persuasive voice” comes up against Adam’s own glare of “accusing significance.” Ottila tries to fill up the void left by Adam’s silence by asking him if he has doubts about their betrothal and about whom else he is thinking. Adam’s rather polemic response of “self respect” makes it clear that the culprit is not another woman. Instead it is their engagement itself that is suspect, one between an Anglo man and a Cuban tempess. Adam characterizes it as “a weak, unwise, or wicked act.” His fiancée catches onto Adam’s intentions when he asks her:

“How much would you do for love of me?”

“Anything for you, Adam.”

“Then give me back my liberty.”³⁴

Ottila’s silent response to this request reveals Alcott’s political subtext. Impassioned, Ottila takes Adam’s “imploring hands in a grasp that *turned them white* with its passionate pressure [. . .].”³⁵ The force of her grip, while fervent, is ultimately presented as destructive. Her Cuban femininity, while attractive to Adam, is not advantageous for a permanent marital union.³⁶

In *Moods*’ opening chapter, it is Adam, not just Ottila, who will be enslaved if their union becomes permanent. As Adam says, theirs would be “an unrighteous compact [. .

.] because you have deceived me in yourself, appealed to the baser, not the nobler instincts in me, and on such a foundation there can be no abiding happiness.” He claims that their marriage would not be rooted in “confidence, respect, or love.” By trying to disentangle Adam from this Cuban woman, Alcott makes a moral judgment by telling us that he possesses the “courage of an upright soul, the fervor of a generous heart.” She makes it quite clear that Adam and Ottila do not belong together.³⁷ Physical attraction is not enough to sustain their moral relationship, and by extension, geographical attraction is not enough to tie the United States politically to her Cuban neighbor.

When Adam asks, “Would nothing but my subjection satisfy your unconquerable appetite for power?”, the image Alcott imagines is again that of a rapacious Cuban woman, one with “strength of wit and will to conceive and execute the design,” to be sure, but one who is trying to ensnare a man from the United States.³⁸ Again, the imagery Adam summons to make his points to his fiancée is rooted not in romance, but in political fantasy: “Ottila, I have no faith in you, feel no respect for the passion you inspire, *own no allegiance to the dominion you assert.*”³⁹

By adopting the rhetoric of U.S. political annexation, Adam envisions a marital dichotomy in which he can only be either “tyrant” or “slave” to Ottila. Adam likens his desire for Ottila, whom he has known for only three months, to a form of “spiritual slavery.”⁴⁰ Alcott’s choice of terms is anything but random. The daughter of Bronson Alcott, Transcendentalist thinker, educational reformer, and antislavery supporter, Louisa May Alcott was acutely aware of the political and racial overtones of the use of the word slavery. As the title of Sarah Elbert’s collection *Louisa May Alcott on Race, Sex, and Slavery* makes clear, Alcott wrote numerous pieces of fiction that dealt with these social

issues.⁴¹ Alcott's own journals and letters also point to her commitment to abolition. In November of 1859, in a letter about the raid on Harper's Ferry, Alcott exclaimed, "We are boiling over with excitement here for many of our people (Anti Slavery I mean) are concerned in it."⁴² In a journal entry made that same month, Alcott writes, "Glad I have lived to see the Antislavery movement and this last heroic act in it. Wish I could do my part in it."⁴³ In at least one instance which she recorded in her journal, Alcott attended an antislavery meeting in May of 1863, concurrent with her writing of *Moods*. Spanning from 1860 to 1864, Alcott's initial composition of *Moods* paralleled the nation's descent into civil war. It was also during this time that Alcott volunteered in a Washington field hospital, publishing a somewhat fictionalized version of her experiences as *Hospital Sketches* (1863).

In *Moods*, the role of tyrant or slave applies not only to Adam, but to Ottila as well. They are exemplified in Ottila's reaction to Adam's harsh pronouncement that he must break off their engagement:

She watched him as he spoke, and to herself confessed a slavery more absolute than any he had known, for with a pang she felt that she had indeed fallen into the snare she spread for him, and in this man, who dared to own his weakness and her power, she had found a master.⁴⁴

Through this description, Alcott suggests that Adam (the United States) and Ottila (Cuba) each feels enslaved by the other. Their relationship is not a romance, but a delicate political balancing act, with apprehensions on both sides.

Thus, Adam's decision to leave Ottila and Cuba in chapter one represents a an acknowledgment that he has been enslaved by both woman and nation. "This luxurious life enervates me; the pestilence of slavery lurks in the air and infects me; I must build myself up anew and find again the man I was."⁴⁵ A reader's first impression, having finished chapter one is that Alcott is setting up the parameters of a love triangle, as Adam abandons Ottila and heads back to the United States, where he falls in love with Sylvia Yule, a woman who ultimately marries his best friend, Geoffrey Moor. However, the triangle of Ottila/Adam/Sylvia never really gets off the ground. Instead, the intertwining of the trio of Adam/Sylvia/Geoffrey is where Alcott applies her energies. In fact, readers see less and less of Ottila as the novel progresses. By chapter ten, she disappears altogether.

Ottila appears in the flesh only once during the year's trial period she and Adam have established to test their potential union. While Alcott's readers might expect a dramatic scene between Adam and his fiancée, it is Sylvia who encounters the Cuban beauty and her cousin Gabriel André at a Christmas party. Gabriel reveals to Sylvia that Adam is engaged to his cousin: "A month after Adam cries out that he loves too much for his own peace, that he has no freedom of his heart or mind, that he must go away and take his breath before he *is made a happy slave forever*."⁴⁶ Again, Alcott's implication is that it is Adam, not Ottila, who will be enslaved in this arrangement, that his benevolence will be taken advantage of, that he is vulnerable due to his reliance on emotions rather than reason. Alcott devotes a fair amount of description to this recognition scene between the Anglo Sylvia and the Cuban Ottila, stressing differences in their levels of sexual maturity:

Sylvia looked, saw the handsomest *woman* in Havana, and hated her immediately. It was but natural, for Sylvia was a very human *girl*, and Ottila one whom no woman would love, however much she might admire [. . .]

Sylvia possessed no knowledge that could analyze for her the sentiment which repelled, even while it attracted her toward Warwick's betrothed. That he loved her she did not doubt, because she felt that even his pride would yield to the potent fascination of this *woman*. As Sylvia looked, her feminine eye took in every gift of face and figure, every grace of attitude or gesture, every daintiness of costume, and found no visible flaw in Ottila, from her haughty head to her handsome foot. Yet, when her scrutiny ended, the *girl* felt a sense of disappointment, and no envy mingled with her admiration.⁴⁷

Ottila looks at Sylvia and her gaze makes Sylvia aware of her own insignificance to Adam: “[. . .] the lustrous eyes turned away with such supreme indifference, that Sylvia's blood tingled as if she had received an insult.”⁴⁸ Significantly, it is only after encountering Ottila's powerful presence that Sylvia resigns herself to a romantic relationship with Geoffrey Moor. To what extent, Alcott seems to imply, can an Anglo *girl* compete with the seductive power of a Cuban *woman*?

“[Ottila] is one those tameless natures which only God can govern; I dared not, even when I thought I loved her, for as much as I love power I love truth more.”⁴⁹ This is Adam's pronouncement to Sylvia after breaking off his engagement with his Cuban fiancée. Ottila makes a more appropriate matrimonial choice in marrying her cousin

Gabriel André. In so doing, the spectre of the United States and Cuba forging a permanent alliance ends.

By chapter twenty, Ottila is no longer presented as a real woman even by her former lover Adam. Instead, she and Sylvia are now “only fair illustrations of the two extremes of love,” ones Adam refers to from far-off Italy where he has been helping Garibaldi and the Italian nationalists.⁵⁰ As Adam points out to Geoffrey, “I am glad to have known both [women]; each has helped me, and each will be remembered while I live.” Adam, however, does not live long. Several weeks later, he dies while sailing back to the United States, having saved friend Geoffrey’s life at the expense of his own. Neither Adam (nor Alcott herself as narrator) ever refers to Ottila again. Without her ties to Adam, Ottila’s presence in *Moods* is unnecessary. She is excluded from the rest of the 1864 narrative, which moves quickly to Sylvia Yule’s own death. By the 1882 edition of *Moods*, Ottila is gone from the novel altogether.

Ottila’s removal from the 1882 text represents a conscious decision on Alcott’s part to rewrite her novel as a more conservative, domestic text. Alcott chooses to dismantle the political and philosophical framework she established in the 1864 edition as *Moods* underwent significant changes during the 1860s and 1870s. Finishing a quick draft of the manuscript in 1860, Alcott spent several years revising it and sending it to various publishers. It was finally published at the end of 1864, but Alcott expressed reservations about its critical reception, particularly once she became famous as the author of *Little Women* (1868-1869). In 1882, the Civil War having vanquished the national taste for expansion, Alcott published a quite different version in which the Cuban subtext is completely eliminated. National politics had changed radically, and

Alcott's revision of *Moods* reflects this. The fantasy of Cuban annexation was dead, and so the fantasy of Ottila fades into history.

Fascinatingly, Elizabeth Stoddard's story "Eros and Anteros," like Alcott's novel, relies on the framework of a love triangle between a man and two women, one of whom is Cuban. In "Eros and Anteros" (1862), Sue Bartlett, a twenty-two year old woman, moves to New York City to live with one of her brothers, John Bartlett. The brother and sister form a domestic partnership. Their partnership, while an unsatisfying one for Sue in many respects, is further compromised by their involvements with other people: John with Alice King, whom he eventually marries, and Sue with Alice's brother Ned, a man to whom she becomes engaged but does not wed. In Stoddard's story, as in Alcott's text, there are actually two love triangles: Sue/John/Alice, in which romantic love competes against brotherly love and sisterly friendship, and the erotic triangle of Sue/Ned/ Señora Garcia, Ned's Cuban mistress. These overlapping triangles both take Sue as their center as she struggles to understand her role within each triangle.

In "Eros and Anteros," Stoddard creates an uneasy portrait of domestic satisfaction between brother and sister. Sue and John's partnership has very clearly defined roles; he makes the money and she does the shopping and worshipping. Sue is able to secure good servants to further domestic happiness; in hiring their German servant Minna, Sue and John's life improves: "[w]e began to live a merrier life, that is, he and his friends were merry—I merely ventured to be useful."⁵¹ Sue gives herself no credit in promoting her brother's happiness, telling the reader that "[a]n elderly appendage could fulfill the same duties which fell to me now."⁵² Even the structure of Stoddard's paragraphs early in the story emphasizes the depiction of John and Sue as a single

domestic unit. Paragraphs are long and unified, quite different from the choppy paragraph style critics have noted in her novels like *The Morgesons*.⁵³ Sue's autonomy is limited in her life with John; she is his subsidiary, her possessions and skills are incorporated into his domestic space. Literally, Sue lives within her brother's boundaries.

It is through Sue's intervention that Señora Garcia, a skilled washerwoman, and Ned King's lover, enters her life. In taking an active role in domestic affairs for her brother, Sue encounters Garcia on a nearby street. As Sue catches sight of her for the first time, she describes the Cuban woman using distinctly erotic language: "I could not take my eyes away from her, and she well understood why I could not. She was the handsomest woman I had ever seen—a Cuban quadroon, about twenty years old."⁵⁴ Strikingly, Stoddard employs traditional romantic language through Sue's first person narrative. This scene in "Eros and Anteros" is reminiscent of Alcott's recognition scene between Sylvia and Ottila. In both texts, a less experienced Anglo woman encounters a Cuban woman who seems to possess not just feminine beauty, but indeed, a type of sexual power that has meaning in both the domestic and political arenas. Later, when Sue recounts her experience to John and Ned King, the exchange of dialogue the three share is fascinating:

"It is for me to be flustered at the sight of a handsome woman, not you."

"She was a quadroon."

"And a devil," said [Ned]King composedly, lighting a cigar.⁵⁵

More is revealed here about the conversations' participants than about the Señora's actual appearance. Señora Garcia's Cuban identity is defined differently by each of the three speakers: one describes her beauty, another her race, another her immorality. The three seem not to be participating in a love triangle but in a politically charged exchange about the significance of the Cuban woman. Their conversation defines Sue as well. In participating in a discussion about a beautiful woman, Sue is trapped within a male-centered space as she struggles herself to define Cuban femininity. Shortly thereafter, King begins to direct romantic attentions towards Sue:

It was my fate to be astonished a second time that evening. When our eyes met, a belief, that I had never seen him before possessed me, and I grew abstracted in my study of his face, for the reason of my belief. It was a wish of his that compelled me to observe him, presenting him in a new light. The wish was, '*I would I know you.*'.⁵⁶

In a twist that is similar to *Moods*, in "Eros and Anteros," the envy the Anglo woman feels for the Cuban is fleeting. During their next meeting, Sue's perceptions of the Cuban woman have changed because Sue's own self-image has changed. Thanks to her brother, she has secured new dresses and a bonnet and, with Ned King, a suitor of her own. With some idea of Ned's interest in her, Sue does not depict her second meeting with Señora Garcia as a romantic fantasy the ways she did with her first meeting: "The next day Garcia came. I saw little in her behavior to interest me; she was dirty, vulgar and curious."⁵⁷ Sue's revised characterization of Señora Garcia reflects the New England regional attitude towards the indigenous inhabitants of Cuba—uncultivated people of little use to Northerners who perceived themselves as less involved in the economics of

slavery than the South.⁵⁸ With a potential suitor in Ned King, the Cuban señora looks less attractive to Sue.

In this second encounter, though Sue is less attracted to Señora Garcia's beauty, she is fascinated by her use of Catholic ritual:

She gave me a slight touch of the dramatic, however, before she went. The organ sounded in the church, and the chant of the priest came in through the open window, for it was a celebration day. She crossed herself, and all her dirt and vulgarity vanished. A gleam of remembrance shone in her colorless face; she clenched her right hand, and with the left slowly rubbed her arm, which was bare to the shoulder.⁵⁹

In describing Señora Garcia as a “dramatic” woman, Stoddard juxtaposes the Cuban woman with Sue's own passivity, her inability to act on her own feelings towards Ned. In this lower-class Cuban washerwoman, Sue finds a woman who is not afraid to display her sexual or religious feelings, however uncultured she may be.

For Ned King, Sue Bartlett embodies the role of passive angel, while his Cuban mistress is “an animal – a leopard, say; a creature of pure instincts, and no more answerable for what she is, and what she does, than an animal is.”⁶⁰ Ned's's characterization of Señora Garcia reveals not just a man's attempt to define a woman sexually, but hints at nineteenth-century U.S. attitudes towards Cuba itself, just as Alcott does in *Moods*. In her chapter “American Men Abroad,” Amy S. Greenberg characterizes Anglo male attitudes towards Latinas as organized around the notion of invasion: “The conquest of the Latin Anglo woman offered tangible evidence of the

success of aggressive American manhood, and the success of Manifest Destiny as well.”⁶¹ Señora Garcia is object, not angel, for Ned King.

Ned and Sue’s chaste engagement becomes significant as a political as well as a sexual statement: “I never went out except with him. With all this supervision, he never approached me, no caress passed between us; there were no moments of fond, foolish, human weakness.”⁶² A new annexation process has begun; Sue’s comments make it clear that Ned will be her protector, as he has already begun to rule over her. It is he who sets the rules and forfeits his opportunity for a more sexual relationship with his fiancé. Ned’s remark of “I would have you crystallized in me” again embodies the notion of a type of annexation, whereby Sue’s own mind will become enfolded into the structure of her future husband’s. Sue’s limited autonomy is sure to be diminished further, if not eradicated altogether upon her marriage. The “unspoken compact” Sue and Ned make assures that the boundaries of their relationship before marriage will continue after marriage; they will have a life of passive serenity.”⁶³ However, the “heaven of repose” Ned King longs for sounds less like happiness on earth and more like a state of sexual death for both man and woman.

The political implications of the love triangle in “Eros and Anteros” are exposed through the story’s climactic scene, in which Sue, having performed an act of “instinctive rebellion,” steals her brother’s house key and dares to sneak out of the house and spy on her fiancé. In so doing, Sue promotes her own autonomy but discovers Ned’s sexual liaison with the Señora. The most powerful words in this scene are Sue’s as she asks her fiancé, “You never ventured to compare my soul with Garcia’s body?”⁶⁴ The uneasy, asexual relationship between Sue and Ned’s is exposed; so too is the political nature of

Ned's's relationships with both women, Anglo and Cuban. The Anglo woman possesses a soul but has no body; the Cuban woman is considered only a body. Once again, women serve as metaphorical sites for the political doctrine of Manifest Destiny; however, neither the Cuban woman nor the Anglo woman alone embody an ideal combination of physical and spiritual values.⁶⁵

Señora Garcia is perceived as a body not only by Ned's, but by Sue as well. As "Eros and Anteros" progresses, the Señora's body rapidly deteriorates. In the hotel room where Sue discovers their rendezvous, Señora Garcia seems barely alive at all, hardly a figure of vital sexual energy. Consumptive, her loud cough is the sound which gives her and Ned's away. Inside the room, Sue, Ned, and the Señora enact a twisted version of a holy communion ceremony, a Catholic ceremony associated with the foreign Cuban. First, it is Sue who gives Señora Garcia wine to stop her cough: "I held it to her lips, and she slowly sipped it, till she revived." Soon after, realizing the depth of Ned's's attraction to the sickly Cuban, Sue transgresses and imbibes some herself: "The act made all the receded blood rush back to King's face; his brows were in a flame."⁶⁶ By drinking the wine, Sue has taken control over her own body, but it is an isolated and tenuous control.

The story ends elliptically, in a way that is typical of Stoddard's narrative style. Sue and Ned King act as legal witnesses to their siblings' marriage but have no emotional connection. Two years pass in one sentence: "It is two years since they were married. I see King often. Our engagement was never annulled. I still live alone in Third street."⁶⁷ By not annulling their engagement, Sue is able to live alone, instead of with the married John and Alice. In keeping their "unspoken compact," Sue gains a measure of personal freedom, but no emotional or physical happiness. Sue's tone in delivering the story's

final lines is flat, declarative, emotionless. She has no protector left. The last paragraph of Stoddard's story is choppy. For Sue Bartlett, the consequences of remaining unmarried are profound; she chooses to join herself to no man, but she is not happy.

Ned King too is alone, saved from his unsavory relationship with his Cuban mistress. Stoddard chooses to erase Señora Garcia from the rest of "Eros and Anteros." Presumably she dies of consumption shortly after her encounter with Sue and Ned King, but she is not even given a death scene of her own; she is dispatched without words. In rejecting Señora Garcia as part of an acceptable domestic relationship with an Anglo man, Stoddard borrows from the political climate of anti-annexation and fits it into an uneasy domestic space. Like Alcott, Stoddard blends a political viewpoint within what is superficially a romantic narrative. In "Eros and Anteros," Stoddard makes the same decision as Alcott does in *Moods* when Adam Warwick rejects Ottila as his future wife. Both writers' depictions of love triangles between an Anglo man, an Anglo woman, and a Cuban woman reflect their distaste with masculine perceptions of the social advantages of Manifest Destiny. The notion of political (and sexual) conquest, hailed by men, is undercut in both Alcott's and Stoddard's texts where the Anglo men wind up with nothing. Any chance at a satisfying romantic relationship with a U.S. citizen has been ruined due to the men's association with a Cuban woman. The Anglo women also suffer the consequences of the love triangles with Cuban outsiders, losing confidence in their own womanhood.

Within the last five years, as Stoddard's work has been re-examined and republished, scholars have steadily acknowledged the political nature of Stoddard's fiction. For example, through an examination of Stoddard's novel *Temple House*,

Weinauer makes a compelling argument for contextualizing Stoddard's fiction within the political and social upheaval of the Civil War. In writing about Stoddard's novel *Two Men* (1865), Jennifer Putzi reads Stoddard's work as overtly political, exploring issues of race and class. Stoddard's use of Philippa Luce, a character of mysterious national origins, echoes her earlier creation of Señora Garcia in "Eros and Anteros." Putzi asserts that in *Two Men*, "Philippa's 'strange' beauty is inexplicable and therefore supernatural, evil, even 'diabolical' in a New England setting."⁶⁸ Señora Garcia is similarly characterized as such by the Anglo characters in "Eros and Anteros." In linking Philippa with Venezuela, Putzi recognizes Stoddard's interest in fantasizing about racial and national boundaries. Putzi views Stoddard's use of Venezuela as "a warning to her readers about the dangers inherent in uncontrolled passion, such that which led to the wars in South America as well as the United States' Civil War, during which Stoddard was writing."⁶⁹

While Stoddard's views on annexation and slavery are less transparent than Alcott's, her writings for the *Daily Alta California* newspaper do provide some clues. Stoddard's letters appeared in the paper twice a month from October 1854 through January 1858 as she wrote her column as a "Lady Correspondent" from her home in New York City.⁷⁰ In one column from February 1856, Stoddard expressed her discomfort with the political rhetoric of annexation, of what she called "inflated Yankees [who] cry Excelsior to the American flag. It must wave in every land, and it is the specialty of every American to forward its journey, and to make it fly, in and out of season, over our own territory, and that of everybody else."⁷¹ In another column from September 1855,

she expressed no faith in President Pierce, a proponent of Cuban annexation, saying, “I guess any Administration would be an improvement on the present one.”⁷²

Stoddard’s criticism of Franklin Pierce is significant: it was through a mutual friendship with novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote Pierce’s official campaign biography in 1852 that her husband Richard Stoddard obtained his job.⁷³ It was during Pierce’s presidency, in October 1854, that Cuban annexation fever became even stronger. The Ostend Manifesto represented the lengths to which the United States might go to acquire Cuba. In this document, written secretly by three U.S. diplomats, the United States government calls on Spain to sell Cuba to it. The tone of the Manifesto is unabashedly patriotic and jingoistic. As its rationale, the Manifesto cites that “[Cuba] belongs naturally to the great family of States of which the Union is the providential nursery.”⁷⁴ In addition, “[t]he intercourse which its proximity to our coasts begets and encourages between them and the citizens of the United States, has, in the progress of time, so united their interests and blended their fortunes that they now look upon each other as if they were one people and had but one destiny.” More frighteningly, the Ostend Manifesto hints that violence may be on the horizon: “[it is] upon the very same principle that would justify an individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor if there were no other means of preventing the flames from destroying his own home.” Again, just as with travel narratives of those who journeyed to Cuba in the 1850s, the Manifesto is a compelling glimpse into a version of the collective psyche of the United States. That President Pierce had to distance himself from its unsavory ideology even though he believed in its aims further shows the struggle both government and individuals had in realizing the unfulfilled dream of Cuban annexation.⁷⁵ Stoddard’s

willingness to criticize Pierce in a public forum suggests her views on his presidency were strong ones.

Shortly after the Presidential election of 1856, Stoddard proclaimed to her newspaper readers that “[t]he bluster, dishonesty, and greed of slavery are the prominent American traits to the world.”⁷⁶ She did not hesitate to point out the United States’ failings on the world stage, and felt strongly that any religious arguments in favor of slavery were dishonest.⁷⁷ In this context, Stoddard’s depiction of Señora Garcia in “Eros and Anteros” shows that her exploration of complicated issues of national and racial identity began even earlier in the Civil War period than scholars have previously addressed. A lower-class, unskilled immigrant, Señora Garcia’s relationship with the United States leads to her death: “the climate was killing her she said; snapping her fingers, she hoped she should find Cuba when she died.”⁷⁸ While “Eros and Anteros” does not deal openly with abolition, it is a story in part about annexation and expulsion and the ways in which Anglo men and women view Cuban femininity as antithetical to marital harmony.

In examining Alcott’s novel and Stoddard’s story as texts that embody political fantasies to examine the issue of spousal choice, I am mindful of Amy Kaplan’s important observation that “[t]he idea of foreign policy depends on the sense of the nation as a domestic space imbued with a sense of at-homeness, in contrast to an external world perceived as alien and threatening.”⁷⁹ Kaplan reminds us that “[r]eciprocally, a sense of the foreign is necessary to erect the boundaries that enclose the nation as home.”⁸⁰ This concept further illuminates the ways in which Alcott’s novel and Stoddard’s story embody political concerns. Thus Alcott’s and Stoddard’s use of a Cuban woman in these

texts represents a complex re-inscription of U.S. political desires in the mid-nineteenth century into a domestic context. Kaplan has noted the domestic rhetoric employed in debating the Mexican War of the 1840s. “In debates about the annexation of Texas and later Mexico, both sides represented the new territories as women to be married to the US.”⁸¹ Furthermore, in examining travel diaries written by men from this same period, Amy Greenberg finds that “[t]he conquest of the Latin American woman offered tangible success of the aggressive American manhood and the success of Manifest Destiny as well.”⁸² For Alcott and Stoddard, Cuban women are not appropriate wives for these men but the “pure” relationships between Anglo men and women also come out as failures, hinting that Alcott and Stoddard were as critical of domestic subjugation as they were about political conquest.

I wish to stress the unlikelihood that Alcott or Stoddard wrote about Cuba without being conscious of its specific political importance in the early 1860s.⁸³ The Cuban woman was not merely an abstract being for these women writers, but in fact, a living, breathing locus of national anxiety. The fear of using Cuba to perpetuate a cycle of human enslavement would certainly have been a concern to Alcott, and on the mind of Stoddard as well. Through *Moods* and “Eros and Anteros,” Alcott and Stoddard break down the boundary of “separate spheres” between the political and domestic. As Cathy N. Davidson reminds us, “the separate spheres metaphor can even make it seem as if women chose their world, as if white, middle-class American women preferred the female, domestic, sentimental, collective private space (basically the world of the home) to the male, individualistic, public sphere of commerce and politics.”⁸⁴ Both Alcott’s

1864 edition of *Moods* and Stoddard's 1862 story "Eros and Anteros" blend political and domestic space, writing fiction that inscribes both public and private worlds.

For Alcott and Stoddard, American women excluded from public participation in public policy, writing fiction provided a vehicle through which they could fantasize. In rejecting Cuban women from their narratives, Alcott and Stoddard extend their moral reach and reject an annexation of territory whose main asset would be its human capital, its slaves. Cuba, for both writers, is an inappropriate choice. As Arthur Schlesinger Jr. reminds us, "the imperial dream had encountered consistent indifferent and recurrent resistance through American history".⁸⁵ Through these two works of fiction, Alcott and Stoddard register their resistance to Cuban women, and Cuba itself, being connected to men from the United States.

¹ Amy Kaplan, "Violent Belonging and the Question of Empire Today: Presidential Address to the American Studies Association October 17, 2003." *American Quarterly* 56.1 (2004): 12-13.

² Jenine Abboushi Dallal, "American Imperialist UnManifest: Emerson's 'Inquest' and Cultural Regeneration" *American Literature* 73.1 (March 2001): 48-49.

³ *Ibid*, 55.

⁴ Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (NY: Cambridge UP, 2005), 14.

⁵ For a thorough discussion of how criticism on the genre of the political novel has developed, see Sharon Harris' introduction to the essay collection *Redefining the Political Novel: American Women Writers, 1797-1901* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995). In describing the articles in this collection, Harris writes that "[t]hese works [the novels] bring to the forefront debates by women novelists on the nature of political orders (both macroscopically and in their microcosmic representations of family and social structures), the suppression of classes and races that are not part of the dominant culture in American society, and the means by which women's art forms have been controlled and defined under patriarchy" (xxviii).

⁶ Tim DeForest, "Southern Attempts to Annex Cuba." *America's Civil War* 10.2 (May 1997): 38-45. *Academic Search Premier* 27 February 2004 <<http://epnet.com>>.

⁷ David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (NY: Knopf, 1995), 137.

⁸ See Louis A Pérez's fine introduction to *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: The Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Imprint, 1998). Pérez notes that "[b]etween 1841 and 1859 the value of Cuban imports from the United States increased from \$27.8 million to \$ 40. 3 million, while the value of exports to the North grew from \$37.4 million to \$68. million" (x).

⁹ See Harold F. Smith, "A Bibliography of American Travellers' Books about Cuba Published Before 1900" *The Americas* 22.4 (April 1966): 404-412. A full listing of titles from the 1850s appears on pages 408-409.

¹⁰ In "Letter No. 29: Havana & Co.," Willis addresses the issue of Cuban annexation. He writes: "We are to see, probably, whether it [Cuba] will stand the infusion of the blood which, of all on earth is most unlike it—the restless, hurried, scrambling, undignified-ly successful Yankee, and I hope Cuba will not be *over*—filibustered, but remain so far Spanish for the next fifty years, as to give a fair chance to the experiment" (280-emphasis original). His assumption that U.S. annexation is imminent also comes across in his remark that "[t]he Cuban ladies will be slow to give up the *volante* for any carriage that may be introduced by the invading Yankee" (284-emphasis original). Willis' statements point to the presumption many Americans had that, whatever their own opinion was of Cuban annexation, it was an impending event.

¹¹ In fact, both Alcott and Stoddard contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* in the early 1860s, along with Julia Ward Howe. For an examination of the role of the *Atlantic Monthly* in shaping the careers of women writers, see Anne E. Boyd's "'What! Has she got into the *Atlantic*?': Women Writers, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the Formation of the American Canon" *American Studies* 39.3 (Fall 1998): 5-36. In addition, Alcott was personally acquainted with Julia Ward Howe, noting several of their meetings in November of 1856 and May 1857 in her journal. Of the latter, Alcott writes, "Father had three talks at W.F. Channing's. Good company—Emerson, Mrs. Howe and the rest" (*Journals*, 84).

¹² Julia Ward Howe, *A Trip to Cuba* 1860. (NY: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 38.

¹³ Luis Martínez-Fernández, “The ‘Male City’ of Havana: The Coexisting Logics of Colonialism, Slavery, and Patriarchy in Nineteenth-Century Cuba.” *Women and the Colonial Gaze*. Eds. Tamara L. Hunt and Micheline R. Lessard. (NY: NYU Press, 2002), 104.

¹⁴ In *A Trip to Cuba*, Howe describes the appearance of Creoles in the following manner: “The prevailing color of the Creole is not the clear olive of the Spaniard, nor the white of the Saxon, -- it is an indescribable, clouded hue, neither fair nor brown” (230).

¹⁵ Howe, *A Trip*, 119.

¹⁶ June Hahner, Introduction. *Women Through Women’s Eyes: Latin American Women in Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts*. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998), xvii. See pages 169-173 for a list of nineteenth-century female travel accounts of Latin America.

¹⁷ Howe, *A Trip*, 122.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 216, 224.

¹⁹ It is worthwhile to compare Julia Ward Howe’s published narrative with Joseph Dimock’s unpublished diary *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: The Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock*. 1859. Ed. Louis A. Pérez. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Sources Imprint 1998). Dimock, a mercantile agent whose diary was written the same year as Howe’s, also points to the strong pull Cuban annexation still had during this time: “Americans can and do talk here openly of buying Cuba, of annexation and of *manifest destiny* and are only answered by a shrug of incredulous shoulders”(19,emphasis original). Other passages speak to a rhapsodic belief in the inevitability of acquiring Cuba: “In the hands of an industrious, thrifty and *go-ahead* population, Cuba would blossom like the rose; now it is a garden growing wild, cultivated here and there in patches, but capable at least of supporting in ease a population of ten times its present number” (85-emphasis original). Dimock would go on to predict that “the whole surface of this garden of the world will burst from bud to a magnificent blossom which will astonish the civilized world” (104). Paradoxically, for Dimock it is the United States who can civilize a less-developed Cuba and also return it to an Edenic paradise. For both Howe and Dimock, Cuban annexation is presented as a political option that must be addressed.

²⁰ Sarah Elbert. Introduction. *Louisa May Alcott on Race, Sex, and Slavery*. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1997), ix.

²¹ *Ibid*, xxxvi.

²² Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963), 193-194, emphasis added.

²³ Robert W. Johannsen, “The Meaning of Manifest Destiny.” *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism*. Eds. Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris. (Arlington, TX: Texas A and M UP, 1997), 13.

²⁴ Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, 203.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 194.

²⁶ President Adams as quoted in Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny, American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (NY: Hill and Wang, 1995), 24.

²⁷ President Polk as quoted in De Forest, “Southern Attempts.”

²⁸ Robert May, "Manifest Destiny's Filibusters." *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism* Eds. Sam W. Hayes and Christopher Morris. (Arlington, TX: Texas A and M UP, 1997), 148-149.

²⁹ *Leaves of Grass: Fascimile Edition of the 1860 Text*. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1961), 159, lines 1-5.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 349, 350.

³¹ Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America*, 135.

³² For instance, Alcott's novel *The Inheritance* (1849) is set in England and her romantic thriller *A Long Fatal Love Chase* (1866) takes place in France, Italy and Germany. Alcott's trip abroad in 1865 exposed her to many locales that made their way into her fiction; Part Two of *Little Women*, *Good Wives* (1868-1869) is set in Europe as well as in New England. However, Alcott's own travels were limited before 1865, and Cuba was not among them.

³³ Louisa May Alcott, *Moods* 1864 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP), 1991, 5-6.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 6-7.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 7-emphasis added.

³⁶ Elizabeth Young takes up the motif of ethnic and national boundaries in her book *Disarming the Nation: Women's Writing and the American Civil War* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1999) which examines the symbolic ways in which fiction written by American women writers is imbued with "fictions of nationhood and fantasies about gender" (17). Young points specifically to the roles race and gender play in this type of fiction: "As blackness and whiteness dynamically define each other, moreover, they also consistently take shape in relation to other national and ethnic designations. These works include characters who inhabit or assume forms of identity outside the dichotomy of black and white, particularly those of Irish and Cuban nationalities. Such designations blur distinctions between race and ethnicity and further unsettle the unstable boundaries of whiteness" (20).

³⁷ Alcott, *Moods* (1864), 7, 8.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 8-9.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 9, emphasis added.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴¹ *Louisa May Alcott on Race, Sex, and Slavery* (Boston, MA: Northeastern UP, 1997).

⁴² *The Selected Letters of Louisa May Alcott*. Eds. Joel Myerson, Daniel Shealy and Madeline Stern (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 49.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 95.

⁴⁴ Alcott, *Moods* (1864), 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 96, emphasis added.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 99-100, emphasis added.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 100.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 127.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 202.

⁵¹ Elizabeth Stoddard, "Eros and Anteros" 1862. *Stories: Elizabeth Stoddard*. Eds. Susanne Oppermann and Yvonne Roth (Boston: Northeastern UP, 2003), 90.

⁵² Ibid, 91.

⁵³ In her introduction to *The Morgesons* (1862-NY: Penguin, 1997), Sandra Zagarell characterizes Stoddard's style as "astringent, elliptical" and later remarks that "Stoddard is historically important also as an experimenter in narrative method. She anticipates modern fiction in using a severely limited mode, with minimal narrative clues (eliminating the "she said"'s as much as possible), minimal transitions, and dramatic, imagistic, and aphoristic impact" (ix ,xxi).

⁵⁴ Stoddard, "Eros and Anteros", 92.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 93.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 93, emphasis original.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 94.

⁵⁸ Differences in Northern and Southern perceptions of Cuba are neatly summed up by Matthew Pratt Guterl: "If British and American abolitionists saw Cuba as having the most grotesquely abusive slave system in the Atlantic world, many Southerners and their counterparts, venture capitalists from the eastern seaboard, believed that the island had a certain mystique about it, an intoxicating aroma of decadence, decay, and slavery." "After Slavery: Asian Labor, the American South, and the Age of Emancipation," *Journal of World History* 24.2 (2003): 211.

⁵⁹ Stoddard, "Eros and Anteros," 94.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 96.

⁶¹ Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 134.

⁶² Stoddard, "Eros and Anteros," 99.

⁶³ Ibid, 101.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 102, 103.

⁶⁵ As Greenberg states in *Manifest Manhood*, "[i]n the 'annexationist' fantasy of American man and Latin American woman," it is not just the Cuban woman who is only half there, but "the American woman is necessarily absent" (221).

⁶⁶ Stoddard, "Eros and Anteros," 104.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 104.

⁶⁸ Jennifer Putzi, "The 'American Sphinx' and the Riddle of National Identity in Elizabeth Stoddard's *Two Men*" *American Culture, Canons, and the Case of Elizabeth Stoddard*. Eds. Robert McClure Smith and Ellen Weinauer. (Tuscaloosa, AL: Univerwsity of Alabama P, 2002), 191.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 196.

⁷⁰ In his dissertation *The Literary Career of Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard*, (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1968) James H. Matalock asserts that "[t]he *Alta* column carried the fullest statement of Elizabeth's views on a wide variety of subjects, views which changed very little throughout the rest of her life,," 141.

⁷¹ Quoted in Matalock, *Literary Career*, 148.

⁷² Quoted in Matalock, *Literary Career*, 143.

⁷³ In the book, Hawthorne ends with an account of Pierce's acceptance of the Democratic party's Presidential nomination. He quotes from Pierce's acceptance speech in which he identifies America as "a Union wonderful in its formation, boundless in its hopes, amazing in its destiny" *Life of Franklin Pierce*. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1852, 135. While Hawthorne does not go out of his way to emphasize Pierce's territorial ambitions, neither could he ignore them in preparing his campaign biography.

⁷⁴ "Ostend Manifesto" 18 October 1854. Rpt. in *Documents of American History*. 8th Edition. Ed. Henry Steele Commager. (NY: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1968), 333-335.

⁷⁵ Alcott and Stoddard's friendships with Nathaniel Hawthorne provide an area of intersection between the two writers, who did not socialize with each other. For example, Hawthorne and Richard Stoddard's fortuitous first meeting was secured through James T. Fields, head of the publishing firm of Ticknor and Fields, the same company that would later publish Julia Ward Howe's account of her month in Cuba in 1860. Alcott grew up in the company of Hawthorne and his wife Sophia in Concord, Massachusetts in the 1840s. In 1852, the Hawthornes bought Hillside House from Louisa's father Bronson, who had moved his family to Boston. In June 1860, the Alcotts and Hawthornes were reunited back in Concord and became next door neighbors. Hawthorne's death in May 1864 brought his connection to the Alcott and Stoddard families full circle: he died in the company of his old friend Franklin Pierce, who brought Hawthorne's body back to Concord from Philadelphia. In fact, Hawthorne himself had relatives who spent time in Cuba: Sophia Peabody Hawthorne and Mary Peabody, his wife and sister-in-law, went there in December 1833 to improve Sophia's health. They stayed until the spring of 1835, and Sophia kept a diary of her time there. During the Hawthornes' courtship, Sophia entertained him with stories of her life there. See Brenda Wineapple, *Hawthorne: A Life* (NY: Knopf, 2003).

⁷⁶ Column from 23 November 1856 as quoted in Matalock's *Literary Career*, 148-emphasis original.

⁷⁷ See *Daily Alta California* column from 21 December 1856, quoted in Matalock, *Literary Career*, 151-152. Stoddard rails against a Southern clergyman's assertion that Christian conversion justifies slavery in the United States.

⁷⁸ "Eros and Anteros", 100.

⁷⁹ Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity" *American Literature* 70.3 (September 1998): 581-582.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 582.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 585.

⁸² Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 134.

⁸³ Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Pearl of Orr's Island: A Story of the Coast of Maine* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1862), takes as its main focus the Cuban orphan Moses Pennel who washes up on the New England shore. Stowe's abolitionist stance and her decision to write a novel with a Cuban protagonist is further evidence that American women writers were conscious of Cuba's unique value to the United States.

⁸⁴ Cathy N. Davidson, "Preface: No More Separate Spheres!" *American Literature* 70.3 (September 1998): 444.

⁸⁵ Arthur Schlesinger Jr. "The American Empire? Not So Fast." *World Policy Journal* (Spring 2005): 44.

Works Cited

Alcott, Louisa May. *Moods*. 1864. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1991.

---. *The Journals of Louisa May Alcott*. Eds. Joel Myerson, Daniel Shealy and Madeline B. Stern. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1989.

---. *The Selected Letters of Louisa May Alcott*. Eds. Joel Myerson, Daniel Shealy and Madeline B. Stern. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1987.

Dallal, Jenine Abboushi. "American Imperialism UnManifest: Emerson's 'Inquest' and Cultural Regeneration." *American Literature* 73.1 (March 2001): 47-83.

Davidson, Cathy N. "Preface: No More Separate Spheres!" *American Literature* 70.3 (September 1998): 443-463.

DeForest, Tim. "Southern Attempts to Annex Cuba." *America's Civil War* 10.2 (May 1997): 38-45. *Academic Search Premier* <<http://epnet.com>>. (accessed 27 February 2006).

Elbert, Sarah. Introduction. *Louisa May Alcott on Race, Sex, and Slavery*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1997. ix-lx.

Greenberg, Amy S. *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*. NY: Cambridge UP, 2005.

Hahner, June, E. Introduction. *Women Through Women's Eyes: Latin American Women in Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998. xi-xxvi.

Howe, Julia Ward. *A Trip to Cuba*. 1860. Rpt. NY: Negro Universities Press, 1969.

Johannsen, Robert W. "The Meaning of Manifest Destiny." *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism*. Eds. Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris. Arlington, TX: Texas A and M UP, 1997. 7-20.

-
- Kaplan, Amy. "Manifest Domesticity." *American Literature* 70.3 (September 1998): 581-606.
- Kaplan, Amy. "Violent Belonging and the Question of Empire Today: Presidential Address to the American Studies Association October 17, 2003." *American Quarterly* 56.1 (2004): 1-18.
- Matlack, James. "Hawthorne and Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard." *New England Quarterly*. 50 (1977): 278-302.
- . *The Literary Career of Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard*. Ph.D. diss. Yale University, 1968.
- Mártinez-Fernández, Luis. "The 'Male City' of Havana: The Coexisting Logics of Colonialism, Slavery, and Patriarchy in Nineteenth-Century Cuba." *Women and the Colonial Gaze*. Eds. Tamara L. Hunt and Micheline R. Lessard. NY: NYU Press. 2002. 104-116.
- May, Robert E. "Manifest Destiny's Filibusters." *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism*. Eds. Sam W. Hayes and Christopher Morris. Arlington, TX: Texas A and M UP, 1997. 146-179.
- Putzi, Jennifer. "The 'American Sphinx' and the Riddle of National Identity in Elizabeth Stoddard's *Two Men*." *American Culture, Canons, and the Case of Elizabeth Stoddard*. Eds. Robert McClure Smith and Ellen Weinauer. Tuscaloosa, AL: U. of Alabama P, 2002. 183-201.
- Reynolds, David S. *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*. NY: Knopf, 1995.
- Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr. "The American Empire? Not So Fast." *World Policy Journal* Spring 2005: 43-46.
- Stephanson, Anders. *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right*. NY: Hill and Wang, 1995.
- Stoddard, Elizabeth. "Eros and Anteros." 1862. *Stories: Elizabeth Stoddard*. Eds. Susanne Oppermann and Yvonne Roth. Boston: Northeastern UP, 2003. 89-104.
- Weinauer, Ellen. "Reconstructing *Temple House*." *American Culture, Canons, and the Case of Elizabeth Stoddard*. Eds. Robert McClure Smith and Ellen Weinauer. Tuscaloosa, AL: U. of Alabama P, 2002. 232-264.
- Weinberg, Albert K. *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963.

Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass: A Facsimile Edition of the 1860 Text*. Ithaca, NY:
Cornell UP, 1961.