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"Natural Arabesques": James Fenimore Cooper's Republican Ideal on the Léman

Patrick H. Vincent

British travelers and the search for pictorial effects

Late eighteenth-century British travelers who journeyed along the shores of the Léman sought to reduce Switzerland's complex realities to a conventional *paysage moralisé* in which liberty, landscape and manners elegantly mirrored one another. Inspired by earlier travelers and poets such as Addison, Thomson and Goldsmith, their immediate model of course was the distinction drawn by St. Preux in book fourth of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* between "les riches et charmantes rives du pays de Vaud" and "le Chablais sur la côte opposée, pays non moins favorisé par la nature, et qui n'offre pourtant qu'un spectacle de misère" (II 136). Rousseau opposed the pays de Vaud to the Chablais, the Beautiful to the Sublime, to highlight the advantages of republican institutions. The dark crags overhanging Meillerie not only threw shade on St. Preux's relationship with Julie, but also were meant to allegorize the King of Sardinia's arbitrary rule over Savoy. But the Revolution and upheavals triggered by the French invasion of Switzerland in 1798, like the storm that marked the end of St. Preux and Julie's love affair, fast eroded British travelers' faith in Swiss republicanism. Although Percy Shelley could write in 1816 that Clarens, Meillerie and Chillon "were created indeed by one mind, but a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality" (128), by the time Pictet de Rochemont signed the Treaty of Paris in 1815, "reality" had already intruded too strongly for most liberal-minded British travelers to take these lakeside monuments as anything more than sentimental tourist markers – the idyll between Britain and the Swiss had run its course.

Even Shelley admitted as much when, visiting Clarens, he noted that "the spirit of old times has deserted its once cherished habitation" (131). William

Webb, another British traveler passing through Vevey on his way to Italy six years later, pointed out more generally that "Swiss demoralization is a constant theme of eloquence with our disappointed countrymen" (83). Because of trade barriers on Swiss textiles, Switzerland in the 1820s was a poor country heavily dependent on tourism: in 1828, for example, fifty thousand visitors passed through Geneva (Martin 244). Webb partly blames this feeling of disappointment on the usual ills of tourism, begging, innkeepers' avarice and the host population's new taste for luxury. More unusual is his targeting of recent historical events, including the "puny and inglorious skirmish" in 1798 which put an end to Swiss liberty, and the Holy Alliance's sway over the country which enabled the Swiss to "indulge in their cherished apathy" (83-86). From 1816 until the 1840s, Switzerland was divided internally, its cities and property-holding elite monopolized power and its confederate government served a merely decorative purpose. As Alexis de Tocqueville famously stated in 1836, "il y a des cantons, il n'y a pas de Suisse" (Reichler 1199). Webb, like Tocqueville a decade later, could assert that the Swiss claim that they were "the only free nation in the world" was unfounded, since the United States and Great Britain clearly offered more telling examples of political liberty (87).

As a result of this shift in British attitudes toward Swiss politics, the conventions of signification dictating travelers' representation of Switzerland's manners and landscape necessarily changed as well. Swiss manners, long considered as the direct correlative of the country's natural liberty, began to be harshly criticized or simply dismissed as insignificant. John Murray, for example, writes in the introduction to his popular *Handbook for Travellers in Switzerland*, first published in 1838:

> With regard to the natural beauties of Switzerland, there can be but one sentiment of admiration. On the subject of the moral character of the Swiss, and of their character as a nation, there is much greater variety of opinion though the larger portion of impartial witnesses will concur in a low and unfavourable estimate of them. (xxx)

As the passage suggests, British travelers replaced their study of landscape, liberty and manners with a much narrower focus on what Murray calls "Switzerland's natural beauties." One of the first, and certainly the best known, to break away from the conventional *paysage moralisé* was Wordsworth, who famously shored up a string of disappointments beside the Léman, on the Col de Balme and at the Simplon with the sublime apperception of his own imagination's power. Less imaginative or egocentric, the

majority of travelers who passed through Switzerland favored the fashionable picturesque mode, or else a more staid version of the sublime. Both of these modes, as critics in the last two decades have insisted, empty the landscape of its historical and social specificity, disguising the historical as natural.

Guidebooks enabled this displacement of history by emptying the country of its inhabitants, as Claude Tissot has recently argued, and by reorganizing the land to take into account tourists' new thirst for visual effects. Johan Gottfried Ebel's famous *Manuel du voyageur en Suisse*, for example, divides the Vevey region into thirteen "romantic and picturesque viewpoints" (461). William Webb, standing at one of these designated stations, the terrace of St. Martin's Church in Vevey, uses the language of art to quite literally erase the scenery's materiality as he describes the Dent d'Oche above Meillerie at night:

> [T]he mountain ranges shewed, under the [moon's] influence – as though it were day – the same aerial brilliancy, supplanting their materiality. . . . This wondrous show of mountain form, void of substance, springs buoyantly forth from the blue vault, instead of being delineated on it . . . an essence rival to the Empyrean, unembodied as itself. (96)

The writer pays no attention to human details in the landscape; rather, his description recalls Turner's ethereal depictions of Vevey's scenery in 1809, which, as David Hill has written, banish poverty and toil (92-97). Much like Turner, and anticipating Ruskin, Webb labels himself a "worshipper, of mountain coloring in all its diversities and combinations of tint and hue" (95). This new generation of travelers, intent on celebrating a Rousseauvian nature dissociated from its social and political realities, was prepared to admire Switzerland solely for its pictorial effects.

Americans in Switzerland: Lessons in manners

It was with these pictorial effects in mind, but also with self-admitted "*American* eyes" (*Letters and Journals* I 341), Ebel's guidebook in pocket, and perhaps a bit of Julie in his heart, that novelist James Fenimore Cooper passed through Vevey on September 26, 1828 on the tail end of his first Swiss tour. In his travel notebook, he jotted down: "Lovely scenery – Lake, boats. Mountains of Savoy, and around the head of the lake. Nakedness of Savoy and richness of the Swiss landscape" (*Letters and Journals* I 341).

Upon Cooper's return to Otsego Hall in the summer of 1835, he developed these cryptic notes into five elaborately descriptive pages of what was to become his extensive two-part *Sketches of Switzerland*, published in 1836.[1] In reconstructing his Swiss excursions, the author relied on secondary sources such as Ebel, Louis Simond and Jean Picot almost as much as on his journal jottings and on his excellent memory. But politics in the United States at the time of writing strongly inflects what he remembered and how he crafted these memories into a travel account. In this first encounter with the Léman, for example, Cooper reworks Rousseau's opposition between the "nakedness of Savoy" and the "richness of the Swiss landscape," transferring the sublimity and aristocratic oppression of the Savoy to the Bernese Alps and placing them safely out of view. This enables him to exult that the view he found above the Léman was not "the finest view [h]e had yet seen in Switzerland," but "the most exquisite." "It was," he continues, "Goethe compared to Schiller; Milton to Shakespeare; Racine to Corneille" (*Switzerland* 264). Like the exquisitely counterpointed harmony of genres that his literary associations suggest, Cooper imagined the Léman as an "entirely new country" mingling "the glow of Italian warmth . . . with the severe grandeur of Switzerland." Inspiring in him a feeling of "calm and delighted satisfaction" (*Switzerland* 264-265), this "new" and imaginary Switzerland is thus not only a landscape, but it also embodies the vision Cooper had of an American republic that would be harmonious both socially and politically.

Cooper had already lived two years on the Continent when he first toured Switzerland, nominally to improve the European sales of his books, in reality to develop a model of moral behavior which he might export to the young republic. He was in search as it were of a modern version of the Classical ideal of the "good man" to match America's exceptional situation. Although the novelist is remembered today as a cranky Democrat with antiquated Jeffersonian ideals, his political beliefs during his European tour were still in flux as he tried to make sense of the profound changes taking place back

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[1] There were three contemporary first editions of the same work published in 1836. Minor changes exist in the different editions, most notably in the title: *Sketches of Switzerland* and *Sketches of Switzerland. Part Second*, both published in Philadelphia by Lea and Carey; *Excursions in Switzerland* and *A Residence in France; with an Excursion up the Rhine, and a Second Visit to Switzerland*, published by Richard Bentley, London; and a one volume *Excursions in Switzerland* published under the Baudry's European Library and Galignani imprints in Paris. Cooper's Swiss travel narrative has been splendidly re-edited, respecting the original two parts, by SUNY Press.

home. What troubled him were the new realities of Jacksonian populism and the leveling drive toward social egalitarianism. The equation of democracy with liberty, equality with freedom disturbed not only Cooper but also European observers who knew their Locke and feared that natural rights, the props to personal freedom, would be sacrificed on the altar of political equality. Europe's aristocratic system had provided a useful safeguard against social conformity and the tyranny of majority rule. But as Tocqueville wrote in 1835, "the question is not how to reconstruct aristocratic society, but how to make liberty proceed out of that democratic state of society in which God placed us" (306). Tocqueville's solution was to guarantee new props or artifices that would protect individual freedom, including the liberty of the press, decentralized government, a forthright legal profession, citizen ombudsmen, and social manners.

As I pointed out above, manners, the outward manifestation of a nation's social and political order, were no longer the primary concern of British travelers who toured the cantons after 1815. But for some American citizens at least, Switzerland still had something to teach. The extent to which Swiss manners and institutions interested American travelers depended largely of course on their own political views. James Sansom, a Northerner who visited the Swiss cantons in 1801, was convinced of the superiority of America's institutions. Comparing his homeland with the French-imposed Helvetian Republic, he wrote that "a free and equal citizen of the American republic, whether naturalized or native born, can see but little to regret in the exchange of a despotic oligarchy, for a foreign dictator" (33). Sansom's dismissal of Swiss institutions went hand in hand with his chauvinism, which strongly surfaces for instance in his boast that "Lake Superior, would drown Switzerland, and absorb all the lakes in Europe" (14). More sympathetic to Swiss-style republicanism was South Carolinian planter Francis Kinloch, whom Cooper knew through the painter Horatio Greenough. A Whig in favor of Nullification, Kinloch gives an overly approving report of Restoration Switzerland, idealizing Swiss "simplicity" and admiring individual cantons' independence (81). In between these two positions are Nathaniel Carter's *Letters from Europe* (1827) and Orville Dewey's *The Old World and the New* (1836), two narratives of European tours published, like Cooper's *Sketches*, in response to Americans' great interest during the 1820s and 1830s in everything European. Both writers praised the extreme courtesy they saw in all classes in Switzerland, without however exaggerating the advantages of the country's political institutions. Carter, for example, recommended the "excellent population – temperate, healthy, hardy" (II 543) but noted that "there

are no affinities in the moral and political elements of the country" (II 551). Dewey's laudatory portrayal of Swiss manners served above all to help him articulate the dangers of a classless society in the United States. Complaining that intercourse in America was "monosyllabic, brief and ungracious" and New Englanders, instead of saying "Good morning sir," only grumbled "morning!" he feared that Americans' lack of good manners in the narrow sense indicated more deep set and potentially explosive social tensions (231-233).

Like Dewey, Cooper admired Swiss manners because they highlighted Switzerland's apparently more harmonious and better-defined social order.[2] An extremely perceptive traveler, the novelist was healthily skeptical of guidebooks and eagerly interviewed local informants from all social backgrounds to learn everything he could about Swiss society. It is perhaps this informal, pragmatic attitude which Cooper meant when he wrote to his American editor that he was looking at Europe with "*American* eyes." During the course of three excursions through the Bernese Oberland and Eastern Switzerland in 1828, Cooper was impressed by the good looks and civility of the inhabitants; even the droves of children who begged on the roadside did not disturb him much (*Letters and Journals* I 311). On the other hand, like Carter, the writer was less awestruck by Swiss and particularly Bernese institutions, which he read up on in Bern's library and in Louis Simond's *Switzerland*, and which he often discussed with the Swiss themselves. In particular, Cooper disagreed with Simond, a distant family relation on his wife's side, whose book praised the Bernese nobility in order to justify the canton's oligarchic government (Simond II 313-314). "It requires a good deal of faith and some ignorance," Cooper writes in his journal, "to entertain a very high respect of what is called an ancient family" (*Letters and Journals* I 283).

The image of William Tell as "an ill fed cow herd" serves as an apt metaphor for Cooper's views on Switzerland's proverbial liberty, views which clearly did not apply to its internal politics (*Letters and Journals* I 320). In the second volume of his *Sketches*, which covers his second tour of Switzerland in 1832, he writes:

> Though the mountain, or the purely rural population here, possess more independence and frankness of manner, than those who inhabit the towns . . . neither

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[2] Cooper jealously disparaged Dewey's travel book in a letter to his wife, joking that he "writes of fine scenery like a Yankee meeting his mother after an absence of forty years – 'Why! Mother – is it you?'" (*Letters and Journals* III 228). The anecdote illustrates how competitive the market for picturesque travel narratives was during this period.

> has them in so great a degree, as to leave plausible grounds for believing that the institutions are very essentially connected with the traits. (*Rhine* 220)

Cooper saw this disjunction between Switzerland's forthright manners and its undemocratic political institutions as a confirmation of the Whig principle that only property and class, those vested interests at the basis of a "natural" social order, could guarantee personal freedom. In *The American Democrat*, published in 1838, Cooper makes this crystal clear, writing that "all which society enjoys beyond the mere supply of its first necessities, is dependent upon the rights of property. . . . We may infer that the rights of property, to a certain extent, are founded in nature" (187). Switzerland, a nation where independent circumstances, not mountains, crossbows or more democratic institutions, allowed "independence and frankness of manner" (*Rhine* 220), helped consolidate Cooper's conservative views.

While Cooper distinguished manners from political institutions, he maintained the conventional association discussed above between manners and landscape. In Europe, the novelist discovered a way to unite what Donald Ringe has identified as the two main strands in his work, the sense of a nation in its temporal and spatial aspects, and the question of values in a society (86). As the quote from *The American Democrat* indicates, however, nature as represented through his landscapes stood not for liberty, but for social distinction. For example, Cooper projects the Bernese aristocracy's independent manners and circumstances onto the Bernese Alps, which had a sublimity he felt did not exist in America (*Switzerland* 71). The novelist could not help but admire the aristocracy's "noble sentiments," just as he admired the mountains from his villa on the outskirts of Bern, going so far as to admit that he would not mind being an Erlach (*Switzerland* 32). But he also felt uncomfortable with hereditary rights and oligarchic politics, which clearly had no place back home. He thus qualifies the above wish, stating that were he an Erlach, he would share his power with others (*Switzerland* 32).

On his second tour of Switzerland in 1832, Cooper sought a way to resolve this contradiction by settling with his family at Mon Repos, a lakeside cottage near Vevey. This was a town where, as he wrote upon his first view of the Léman after four years, "reality surpassed the expectation." "Reality" in this case meant a situation closer to Cooper's own social ideal. Preferring the rocks of Savoy to the Bernese Alps cut off by clouds from the rest of the world, Cooper thus turned his back on the Bernese aristocracy whose "beau idéal of exclusion" (*Switzerland* 29) recalled Louis Philippe's oligarchic politics, which he opposed (*Letters and Journals* II 320, *Rhine* 185). Fur-

thermore, he was distancing himself from those British tourists who, to shore up their disappointment at the failure of Rousseau's republican dream, engaged in Manfred-like experiences of solitary communion with high mountains. Vevey in 1832 was a peaceful enclave inhabited, as Lewis Agassiz had noted three years beforehand, by a "tolerably good though limited society" (136). Here, sheltered from too overt a class distinction, Cooper imagined he had at last found a viable model of social order and of the "good man" to safeguard political liberty in America.

"Natural Arabesques": Cooper's ideal of the American gentleman

The panorama of the Léman also serves as an important structuring metaphor where it appears in Cooper's Swiss novel, *The Headsman*, and in his *Sketches of Switzerland*. In particular, his description of the rocks of Savoy at sunset from a boat on the lake, outlined schematically in *The Headsman* and developed more fully in the *Sketches*, deserves to be cited at length for its pictorial beauty but also because it suggestively allegorizes Cooper's ideal American gentleman:

> The summit of the rocks of Savoy are broken into the most fantastical forms, so beautifully and evenly drawn, at the same time they are quite irregular and without design, that I have termed them natural arabesques. No description can give you an accurate idea of their beauty, for I know nothing else in nature to compare them to. . . . Now the effect of the outline of these rocks, at, or after sunset, relieved by a soft, golden sky, is not only one of the finest sights of Switzerland, but, in its way, is just the most perfect spectacle I have ever beheld. It is not so apt to extort sudden admiration, as the rosy tints and spectral hues of the high Alps at the same hour; but it wins on you, in the way the lonely shadows of the Appenines grow on the affections, and, so far from tiring or becoming satisfied with their view, each successive evening brings greater delight than the last. (*Rhine* 184)

In their insightful Introduction to Cooper's *Sketches*, Ernest Redekop and Maurice Geracht emphasize the aesthetic and religious import of the passage. But they also quite rightly generalize their point, arguing that it reflects Cooper's desire for a "middle ground between freedom and restraint" not only in art and religion, but also in political institutions and manners (*Rhine* xxix-xxx). It is these last two categories which concern us. For Rousseau, as we saw earlier, the Dent d'Oche looming over Meillerie represented the King of Sardinia's arbitrary power over the Chablais. Cooper here recuperates the

mountain as an icon of power, but combines the sublime with the beautiful, and implicitly, aristocracy with democracy, transforming the mountain into a symbol of authority so mild that it grows on the affections rather than "extorting" admiration through terror. By later comparing the arabesques to the pencil strokes of Raphael, whose frescoes he had admired in the Vatican and had associated with Creation, the novelist makes it clear that this authority approximates divine order (*Italy* 237-238).

This idea of order stems as much from Cooper's pragmatic appraisal of European politics and society as it does from his crusade to protect America from what he saw as democratic abuses. His European tour made him conscious that only gentlemen possess the manners and independent thinking to act as a bulwark against populist politics, while it also revealed to him that these gentlemen too often acted undemocratically, in their own self-interest. His solution was to introduce a third, synthesizing term between nobility and democracy. Just as his "natural arabesques" give a fixed, aesthetic form to wild nature, liberality circumscribes natural self-interest. Cooper calls liberality "the generous manly feeling to let all enjoy equal political rights, and to bring those to whom authority is necessarily confided, as far as practicable, under the community they serve." Liberality, he argues, is a prerequisite to being a gentleman in America. "One of the strongest feelings created by an absence of so many years from home, is the conviction that no American can justly lay claim to be . . . an American gentleman, without this liberality entering thoroughly into the whole composition of his mind" (*Rhine* 192). But Cooper's reworking of conventional sets of opposites, nature and art, sublime and beautiful, high Alps and Apennines, suggests less a permanent feeling of harmony than it does a transitory synthesis. Like the ever-changing light over the lake, his dialectic between nature and art reflects his own wavering allegiance to a democratic versus an aristocratic social order, and his own uncertainty as to how "liberality" might effectively be applied. This uncertainty is powerfully captured in the passage that directly follows the above description:

> I scarcely know when this scene is most to be admired; when the rocks appear distinct and brown, showing their material, and the sky is burnished; or when the first are nearly black masses, on whose surface nothing is visible, and the void beyond is just as pregnant with sufficient light to expose their exquisite forms. Perhaps this is the perfection of the scene, for the gloom of the hour throws a noble mystery over all. (*Rhine* 184-185)

Cooper hesitates between two modes of pictorial representation, the picturesque and the sublime, and therefore also between a more realistic and a more idealizing vision of history. Whereas the picturesque, with its emphasis on contrast and on ruggedness, shows the rock's "material," the sublime hides all the details of the picture behind a veil of *sfumato*, only "exposing" the mountain's "exquisite forms." In the end, the author, like British travelers such as Webb, chooses the second, more sublime mode, indicating a shift in his social thinking. Cooper's belief in a natural social order grounded in property comes across particularly strongly in the above passage. It suggests that one cannot effectively reach the desired harmony, the synthesis of nature and art, democracy and aristocracy, without first "throwing a noble mystery" over the material conditions that enable class distinction.

This displacement or naturalizing of class is incorporated into the plot of *The Headsman*, a *roman à thèse* written to test the social theories that Cooper developed in Europe. The romance was advertised as "the last of a series of Tales by the author of the Spy." Disappointed by poor reviews and even worse sales of his previous works, Cooper wished to give up fiction writing for good (*Letters and Journals* II 354). Yet his desire to spread the word about his political fears and hopes was great enough to validate the writing of one last novel. This "Swiss tale" was inspired by an evening sail on the Léman. Cooper later claimed to his publishers that the idea for the story came suddenly and was impossible to resist (*Letters and Journals* II 337, 354). Set in the early eighteenth century, at the pinnacle of Bern's aristocratic power, the novel explores themes standard in Cooper's novels, including nature versus civilization, good versus evil, natural versus hereditary nobility. Two long lost friends, Baron Willading, a venerable Bernese aristocrat, and Grimaldi, a mysterious Italian who we learn in the end is the Doge of Genoa, meet on a bark sailing to Vevey where they plan to attend the *Fête des Vignerons*. Carrying passengers from all walks of life, the boat is a not-so-subtle symbol for society. Cooper devotes half of the first volume to describing the boat's sixty-kilometer voyage, a rather forced way to yoke together correspondences between human society and the surrounding mountains. After a superb sunset during which the two noblemen admire the Meillerie's "natural arabesques," a dramatic storm suddenly transforms the lake into a dystopian landscape:

> Those fairy-like, softly-delineated, natural arabesques . . . were now converted into dreary crags that seemed to beetle over the helpless bark, giving unpleasant admonitions of the savage and inhospitable properties of their iron-bound bases,

> who were known to all who were cast against them while the elements were in disorder. (*Headsman* I 98)

The author's use of landscape as social allegory is made evident as he describes the "unpleasant" underside of the harmonious order symbolized by the "natural arabesques." The "iron-bound bases," those who belong to the bottom rungs of society and live closer to nature than to civilization, threaten this order. Curiously, however, it is Maso, a renegade type with "savage and inhospitable properties," who heroically saves the boat. At the same time, Sigismund, a young officer, leaps into the lake to rescue Willading and his daughter. Representing the two dialectical forces shaping Cooper's synthetic ideal of the American Gentleman, the two heroes are indirectly pitted against one another, providing the novel's dramatic tension.

As the plot unravels, we learn that Sigismund apparently is the son of Balthazar, Bern's hereditary executioner and a social pariah, and that he loves Willading's daughter. Despite his bravery and good manners, Sigismund's unsavory origins get in the way of their marriage. After a rowdy *Fête*, in which Maso is arrested for losing his temper, the entire party heads up the valley to the Great Saint-Bernard hospice where they get caught out in a second storm. The murdered body of a minor character is discovered in the hospice's ossuary, and Sigismund, Maso and the Headsman all are suspected. The trial, which concludes the novel, enables Cooper to weigh each main character's moral make-up. Whereas Maso is portrayed as conniving and unreliable, Sigismund

> stood in high relief, like one of the stern piles of those Alps that now appeared to his eyes so much superior, in their eternal beds, to all the vine-clad hills and teeming valleys of the lower world. (II 243)

By abandoning Maso, whom the writer had earlier represented as embodying a certain natural nobility (I 149, II 156), Cooper also blatantly abandons his synthetic ideal of the American Gentleman, symbolized by the "natural arabesques," in favor of a more sublime, class driven figuration of mountains and of society. Sigismund's stern nobility, unconvincingly attributed to natural merit, is legitimized in the contrived denouement, where we learn that he and Maso are in reality both sons of the Doge. The first, well-mannered (and legitimate), is accepted by Grimaldi and gets the lady. The illegitimate son, noble but overly wild and reckless, is last seen fading into the distance on the Aosta side of the pass, an Italian avatar of Natty Bumppo.

Donald Ringe has argued that Cooper bungles *The Headsman* because he sacrifices its overall message, the injustice of hereditary rights, to a happy ending (66). For the ending to be happy, however, the Doge would have had to adopt both sons. By making him accept only the legitimate, well-mannered hero, the author affirms that only a well-entrenched elite can guarantee the social order necessary to insure personal freedom. The reviewer for the *Metropolitan Magazine* of October 1833 is closer to the truth than Ringe when he blames the ending's failure on the fact that Cooper "first stumbles, then bends his knees before Authority" (*Critical Heritage* 171). Intent on penetrating the realities of Europe with "*American* eyes," Cooper visited Switzerland eager to see the country differently from the British whom he vehemently disliked. While the latter only looked at Swiss landscape, nostalgically imagining it as a bastion of political liberty, Cooper associated the country's picturesque views with its mild manners in order to express his ideal of the American Gentleman. But that ideal remained just that, an ideal. The novelist knew that the social reality he encountered in Vevey was the result of exceptional historical circumstances. The Léman's harmonious landscape little resembled America's wilderness, just as the social model it symbolized hardly resembled the American republic's younger and more egalitarian society. Instead, Cooper left Europe in 1832 with a far more conservative social vision, what John McWilliams calls a "firmer insistence on social and moral inequality," than on his arrival six years earlier (178). Disappointed by his "Swiss tale," just as reviewers and readers felt let down by all Cooper's European writings, the *Metropolitan Magazine* reviewer sums up Cooper's European experience by stating, "We did not expect this from an American, and least of all from American Cooper" (*Critical Heritage* 171).

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