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# **“Squaw Men,” “Half-Breeds,” and Amalgamators: Late Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Attitudes Toward Indian-White Race-Mixing**

**DAVID D. SMITS**

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Indian-white biological amalgamation, whether in or out of wedlock, is a subject well calculated to evoke spirited conceptions and feelings; certainly, it impinges upon the research of those who would probe more deeply into the labyrinth of Indian-white interaction in late nineteenth-century America. The tapestry of post-Civil War America is woven with many-hued Indian and white attitudes toward race-mixing. To unravel, illuminate, and interpret the complex and often antithetical views of authoritative white commentators on this issue is the purpose of this essay. The Anglo-American commentators whose attitudes will be surveyed include natural and social scientists, novelists, army officers, Christian reformers, Protestant missionaries, Indian Service personnel, historians, imperialists, and immigration restrictionists, among others. Of course, their personal fears, hatreds, prejudices, jealousies, aspirations, imaginations, sympathies, and emotions shape their views. Moreover, their attitudes represent a complex interaction among the prevailing ideas about race, gender, and class, a topic of considerable current scholarly interest.

Because Indian-white race-mixing often has been associated with the more inflammatory Black-white variety, it is useful to begin with a glimpse of representative antebellum attitudes

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toward the latter as they impinge upon the former. Several abolitionists were prominent among those Americans who marshalled arguments in defense of Indian-white as well as Black-white intermarriage. Lydia Maria Child's *Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833) sought to abrogate a Massachusetts law prohibiting marriages between persons of different colors and maintained that Native Americans were no less capable of cultural advancement than Euro-Americans.<sup>1</sup> Child's *An Appeal for the Indians* (1868) cited Sir William Johnson's cohabitation with the Mohawk woman, Molly Brant, along with less well-known but "by no means rare" Indian-white sexual unions, to prove "as plainly as the complexions of mulattoes and quadroons, that the 'antipathy of races' is not a *natural* antipathy."<sup>2</sup>

Wendell Phillips, converted to abolitionism by Child's writings, was as resolute as she was in championing both racial brotherhood and miscegenation. In a Fourth of July oration at Framingham, Massachusetts, the day after the Battle of Gettysburg, Phillips proudly proclaimed himself "an amalgamationist to the utmost extent." As he saw it, America's hope for the future rested on "that sublime mingling of races, which is God's own method of civilizing and elevating the world."<sup>3</sup> On that occasion, Phillips's words were greeted with loud applause, but not all antislavery agitators were so amenable to race-mixing. Indeed, routinely harried by those who unleashed the bugbear of amalgamation, many abolitionists felt compelled to deny that it was among their goals. Historian Leonard L. Richards rightly maintains that "throughout the ante-bellum period, anti-abolitionists repeated no charge with greater pertinacity than that of amalgamation, and none could more effectively stir up the rancor and brutality of a mob."<sup>4</sup>

Undaunted, William Lloyd Garrison, adhered to his position that "inter-marriage is neither unnatural nor repugnant to nature," but, more often than not, abolitionists repudiated amalgamation.<sup>5</sup> Antislavery editor Elijah Lovejoy shrewdly insisted that one reason why his associates promoted abolition was because "they fully believe it will put a stop, in a great and almost entire measure to that wretched and shameful, and polluted intercourse between the whites and blacks" in the slave states.<sup>6</sup>

So rabid was public sentiment against race-mixing that Black abolitionists were also constrained to deny any Black desire for it. Thus, in 1834, David Ruggles affirmed that "abolitionists do

not wish 'amalgamation.' I do not wish it, nor does any colored man or woman of my acquaintance, nor can instances be adduced where a desire was manifested by any colored person."<sup>7</sup> Clearly, then, Americans who looked to the abolitionists for counsel on the matter of race-mixing received conflicting messages.

To be sure, Indian-white miscegenation did not generally evoke the tortured anxieties and venomous censure of its Black-white counterpart.<sup>8</sup> But it generated enough vituperation to warrant the conclusion that as sexual partners, particularly within marriage, Indians were sometimes only slightly more reputable than Blacks in the eyes of many Anglo-Americans. Accordingly, the results of Franco-Indian and Hispanic-Indian race-mixing in North America were habitually vilified. French fur trappers and traders, together with their "squaws" and "mongrel offspring," were scrutinized by Francis Parkman in his 1846 visit to Fort Laramie. "The [Anglo-American] emigrants," Parkman reported, "felt a violent prejudice against the French Indians, as they called the trappers and traders."<sup>9</sup> Anglo-Americans' jaundiced views of the Spanish-Indian hybrids of California were attested to by Western historian Hubert Howe Bancroft: "The Spanish possessed an admixture of Indian blood, for which the Americans entertained an undisguised and irritating contempt."<sup>10</sup>

To some people, Mexico's notorious political instability prior to the Porfiriato substantiated the pernicious consequences of miscegenation. In 1863, Louis Agassiz, the renowned Harvard naturalist, asked reformer and philanthropist Samuel Gridley Howe to imagine the reverses for "republican institutions, and our civilization generally," of a citizenry composed of "the effeminate progeny of mixed races, half Indian, half negro, sprinkled with white blood." "Can you," he challenged, "devise a scheme to rescue the Spaniards of Mexico from their degradation? Beware, then, of any policy which may bring our own race to their level."<sup>11</sup>

Agassiz's remarks reveal the antipathy that some nineteenth-century natural scientists held for miscegenation. Dr. Josiah C. Nott warned in his ponderous but influential *Types of Mankind* (1854) "that the superior races ought to be kept free from all adulterations, otherwise the world will retrograde instead of advancing in civilization." Biological amalgamation not only jeopardized cultural progress, it also threatened the mental and physical endowments of the "superior race" which, Nott argued,

"must inevitably become deteriorated by an intermixture with the inferior." But Nott complicated the issue by insisting that the "dark-skinned" peoples could make absolutely no progress toward civilization so long as their blood remained unmixed. In his view, the Native Americans, with the sole exception of the "Toltecs," had not become civilized. Whereas it was "falsely asserted" that the Choctaws and Cherokees had "made great progress in civilization," Nott avowed "positively" that exhaustive research proved "that the pure-blooded Indians are everywhere unchanged in their habits." Euro-Americans had intermarried with the Choctaws and Cherokees, and Nott contended that "all such trumpeted progress exists among these Whites and their mixed breeds alone. The pure-blooded savage still skulks untamed through the forest, or gallops athwart the prairie."<sup>12</sup>

But those disposed to conclude from Nott and his ilk that race-mixing afforded hope for the advancement of dark-skinned peoples were confronted with other authoritative opinions to the contrary. By 1864, the work of Paul Broca, the Frenchman generally regarded as the father of modern physical anthropology, was being read in English. From his research on human "hybridity," Broca concluded that the offspring of markedly different races were apt to be partially infertile and, in the case of the mulatto, less long-lived than the full-blood parents. Broca's findings were cautious and tentative, but they strengthened the case of the polygenists and offered no encouragement whatever to amalgamationists.<sup>13</sup>

Herbert Spencer, the English philosopher of evolution, lent his enormous scholarly prestige to the school of thought opposed to intermarriage between divergent races. In *The Principles of Sociology* (1876), Spencer endorsed certain varieties of miscegenation, but only those between "races near akin." Darwin's popularizer held that "a society formed from nearly-allied peoples of which the conquering eventually mingles with the conquered, is relatively well fitted for progress." Thus England, "peopled by different divisions of the Aryan races, and mainly by varieties of Scandinavians," was a society whose inhabitants were sufficiently alike to cooperate in the same social system, but sufficiently unlike to remain adaptable. Societies formed of races "contrasted in their natures" achieved cohesion only through compulsion and remained in "unstable equilibrium." The mixed-blood elements of such societies were maladjusted misfits. As

Spencer put it, the "half-caste, inheriting from one line of ancestry proclivities adapted to one set of institutions, and from the other line of ancestry proclivities adapted to another set of institutions, is not fitted for either." Mexico and the South American republics, "with their perpetual revolutions," illustrated the sad consequences of the amalgamation of "unallied races."<sup>14</sup>

Spencer's prediction of an unparalleled development for the United States was based in part on his understanding of "biological truths." During his triumphal 1882 visit to the United States, he pronounced that "the eventual mixture of the allied varieties of the Aryan race forming the population will produce a finer type of man than has hitherto existed, and a type of man more plastic, more adaptable, more capable of undergoing the modifications needful for complete social life." That Native Americans ought to be excluded from this biological amalgam Spencer made explicit in 1892. Writing to a Japanese cabinet minister, Spencer cited the "abundant proof, alike furnished by the inter-marriages of human races and by the inter-breeding of animals, that when the varieties mingled diverge beyond a certain slight degree *the result is invariably a bad one* in the long run." For Spencer, America's "half-breeds" furnished the living proof of his theory.<sup>15</sup>

Daniel Garrison Brinton, one of America's foremost anthropologists, made the issue even more complex. Brinton held that no subject impinged more decisively on the future of the human species than the effects of race-mixing. All-embracing conclusions on the question were impossible, because the results of miscegenation depended on the races involved. Brinton was convinced that interbreeding between Blacks and Anglo-Americans produced inferior offspring. Mulattoes were deficient in physical vigor, prone to scrofula and consumption, unable to endure hard labor, and shorter-lived than the "pure" parental stock. Though generally as fertile as their unmixed parents, mulattoes who bred only among themselves were threatened with extinction, owing to high infant mortality rates.

Brinton was far more sanguine about the offspring of Indian-white mixing. In Latin America the mestizo had become politically and socially predominant. Moreover, the half-breeds of Anglo-America's frontiers were "singularly hardy, intelligent and vigorous scouts, guides, hunters and soldiers. Not a few of them have distinguished themselves in our colleges, and later

in clerical and political life." But despite his comparatively high regard for these people, Brinton categorically rejected the idea of promoting Indian-white amalgamation. Whatever the accomplishments of the mixed-blood, the University of Pennsylvania professor had "no doubt but that any white mixed race is lower in the scale of intelligence than the pure white race." Brinton recognized that prevailing prejudices, from which he was not free, ordained that white men who married women of a "darker race" conferred "indelible degradation" on their children. Brinton reserved his most strident condemnation for the Anglo-American woman who married a man "of a lower ethnic type." As he saw it, representatives of "the highest race" had "no holier duty, no more sacred mission, than that of transmitting in its integrity the heritage of ethnic endowment gained by the race through thousands of generations of struggle."<sup>16</sup>

Unquestionably, then, there were influential natural and social scientists who, for a variety of reasons, vigorously opposed Indian-white miscegenation. But for every scholarly voice raised against amalgamation, another spoke out in favor. The dean of American anthropologists, Lewis Henry Morgan, pondered the question and, after initial misgivings, ultimately endorsed race-mixing. In 1847, Morgan edited J. E. Seaver's *A Narrative of the Life of Mary Jemison*. His preface to this book characterized Indian-white intermarriage as an "unnatural alliance."<sup>17</sup> But thirteen years later, while visiting the far Western frontier, Morgan considered the possibility that the infusion of white blood among the relocated eastern tribes explained their progress toward civilization. About this time, he concluded that intermarriage advanced Indians without lowering whites. Writing to Professor Daniel Wilson of the University of Toronto in 1861, Morgan alluded to instances among the Shawnees, Delawares, and Wyandots in Kansas "where white men who had married half-breed Indian women were living genteelly among them . . . and also instances where half-breed Indians had married white wives and lived in good style." Impressed by such cases, Morgan averred that "when the Indian acquires property, and with it education, and becomes permanently settled, then honourable marriage will commence, and with it a transfer of the posterity to our ranks." Morgan looked forward to that eventuality, believing "we can absorb a large portion of this Indian blood, with an increase of physical health and strength, and no intellectual detriment."<sup>18</sup>

Daniel Wilson, a Canadian scholar known for his meticulous research on prehistoric peoples, called attention to the amount of Indian-white interbreeding on all Euro-American frontiers and estimated that it was generally beneficial to both races and to civilization as well. Among Canada's mixed-bloods Wilson listed "men at the bar and in the Legislature; in the Church; in the medical profession; holding rank in the army; and engaged in active trade and commerce. No distinctive traits separate them, to the ordinary observer, from the general community of which they form a part; and they will disappear after a generation or two, simply by the numerical superiority of those of European descent."<sup>19</sup> Wilson's views, widely known in the United States, offered encouragement to proponents of Indian-white amalgamation.

So did the research of Armand de Quatrefages, renowned professor of anthropology at the Museum of Natural History in Paris. This influential French monogenist maintained that enhanced fertility, beauty, physical strength, and creativity were the consequences of interbreeding between whites and other races. Rejecting the theories of the Comte Joseph de Gobineau, a prominent spokesman for Nordic supremacy, Quatrefages argued that the mixing of races had been "the most powerful element of progress" in history. Admittedly, continued amalgamation would not entirely eliminate the racial distinctions resulting from environmental differences. "But as a whole," wrote Quatrefages, "mankind will be perfected" by ongoing amalgamation. He believed, moreover, that improved communications techniques promised a new era of increased miscegenation and growing interracial cooperation.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, in 1894, Franz Boas, a pioneer in applying statistical methods to anthropometry, published an important study challenging the assumption that hybrid races were less fertile than pure stock and therefore not likely to survive. Boas found that, on average, half-blood Indians were actually more fertile than full-bloods. Boas's discovery that the stature of the mixed-bloods exceeded that of both parents also strengthened the idea that intermixture favorably affected the human physique.<sup>21</sup>

Nineteenth-century American fiction was nearly as diversified, ambivalent, and contradictory in its handling of Indian-white miscegenation. Both the truly gifted and the lesser novelists addressed the subject, and a remarkable range of attitudes and



viewpoints characterizes their treatment. William J. Scheick perceptively observes that the half-blood's confused portrayal in nineteenth-century American fiction "emanates from uncertainty as to his malign or benign relation to white society. . . ." <sup>22</sup> But on one matter American novelists generally agreed: The mixed-blood male was congenitally flawed. Walt Whitman portrayed him as both physically and mentally deficient. Whitman admired the handsome physiques and physiognomies of pure-blood Indians, but his novelette, *The Half-Breed*, introduced a "monstrous abortion" named "Boddo," who personified the defects of miscegenation. This "strange and hideous creature" was a hunchbacked dwarf who "was not very bright." <sup>23</sup>

Mark Twain, no admirer of Indians, made the mixed-blood Injun Joe the embodiment of evil in Tom Sawyer's world. When this "bloody-minded outcast," the presumed murderer of five villagers, was entombed alive in a cave whose entrance Judge Thatcher had sheathed with boiler iron and triple-locked, Tom felt "a vast weight of dread" removed from his shoulders. <sup>24</sup> And the immensely popular dime novel Westerns of the time reinforced the stereotype. A stock villain in these potboilers was the white renegade connected with Indians or the mixed-blood who combined the worst vices of both races without possessing a trace of their redeeming virtues. <sup>25</sup>

Notwithstanding the majority verdict, however, there were enough dissenting literary opinions to raise doubts in some readers' minds. Thus William J. Snelling, an early romanticist of the frontier, created William Gordon, a virtuous hero of French-Indian parentage. Snelling informed his readers that "the half-breeds of the North-west are physically a fine race of men. The mixture of blood seems an improvement on the Indian and white. By it, the muscular strength of the one, and the easy grace, and power of endurance of the other, are blended." <sup>26</sup>

Ann S. Stephens, who authored the first of the famous Beadle dime novels, produced a more complex treatment of miscegenation. Stephens concocted William Danforth, an engaging half-blood possessed of intellectual as well as physical prowess. Raised by his wealthy white grandparents and educated abroad, the charming youth exhibited "even in his air and walk peculiar traits of high breeding and refinement." All indications pointed to a happy marriage between Danforth, unaware of his Indian blood, and the virtuous Anglo-American heroine, Sarah Jones.

But the author chose not to violate the taboo against such unions. Upon finally learning that his mother was a full-blood Indian, Danforth predictably took his own life rather than give "my stained hand to a lovely being of untainted blood."<sup>27</sup> But then, in a new twist, Stephens told how Danforth had learned his anti-Indian prejudices, which the author denounced as irrational, from his Euro-American grandfather.

Fictive prejudices against the half-blood, normally the offspring of an Indian woman and a white man, were less evident in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. By then the Native Americans, virtually conquered (save for the Apaches), dwindling in numbers, and geographically remote, were sufficiently powerless and inaccessible for benign treatment. Accordingly, southern writer Prentice Ingraham focused his novel *The Phantom Mazeppa* (1882) on a half-blood called Sancho, who in the last half of the story became what Scheick calls "a complete romantic hero."<sup>28</sup>

Of course, in the period's romantic frontier fiction, the mixed-blood Indian woman was more often endowed with estimable attributes. In *Silver-spur* (1870), dime novelist Edward Willette produced a bonafide half-blood heroine called Dove-Eye, alias Kate Robinette, who actually married the Anglo-American hero, Fred Wilder. From a battle-axe wielding virago, Dove-Eye became, under Fred's tutelage, a polished ornament of refined society.<sup>29</sup> More importantly, Helen Hunt Jackson, the American Indians' Harriet Beecher Stowe, supplied the era's most famous half-blood heroine in her novel *Ramona* (1884). "A gentler, sweeter maiden never drew breath" than the strikingly beautiful Ramona, daughter of a Scotsman and an Indian.<sup>30</sup> In her saintly nature, Ramona combined the finest qualities of both races; she became an ideal wife to the full-blood Alessandro and, after his death, to an aristocratic Spanish Californian.

More often than not, however, the mixed-blood woman of late nineteenth-century romantic Western fiction was a volatile temptress and a formidable rival to the Anglo-American heroine. Daryl Jones's fine study of dime novels reveals that they normally include "a dark and alluring woman of mystery who, tempting the hero away from the path of virtue, constitutes an implicit threat" to the realization of the ideal society. The fiery and passionate temptress, readily identifiable as the moral opposite of the blonde and fair-complexioned heroine, tends to be a Latin or

a half-blood Indian. The white hero conventionally spurns her affections and she is left to die either by the villain's hand or her own; or else she endures the remainder of her tormented life as a fallen woman.<sup>31</sup>

Full-blood Indian women were rarely regarded as suitable lovers or brides for fictive heroes. In James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* (1841), Natty Bumppo, proud that he had "no cross in my blood," told Judith Hutter why he would not marry an Indian woman: "I am white—have a white heart and can't, in reason, love a red-skinned maiden, who must have a redskin heart and feelin's."<sup>32</sup> Natty's sentiments were almost invariably shared by later Anglo-American heroes of nineteenth-century Western novels. Louise K. Barnett is substantially correct in asserting that "among major characters in the frontier romance, no Indian girl acquires a white husband."<sup>33</sup>

One revealing exception to this generalization is the Indian heroine of Ann Stephens's immensely popular dime novel *Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter* (1860). This penny dreadful, whose sales of 65,000 in a few months ensured the success of the house of Beadle and Adams, furnished a sterling example of an Indian wife's virtues. To be sure, Malaeska was a "princess," "young and healthy," and "so lovely." Furthermore, she was a devoted wife and mother who embraced Christianity and civilization and became "white in education, feeling, every thing but color."<sup>34</sup> Such flawless credentials made Malaeska a fit wife for her white husband, in the minds of countless Americans. That the house of Beadle and Adams, keenly attuned to popular tastes and aiming "to instill a pure and elevating sentiment in the hearts and minds of the people," permitted the treatment of Indian-white intermarriage in its publications suggests that the issue was less offensive to public opinion than has been supposed.<sup>35</sup>

For many Americans seeking authoritative opinions on all aspects of the "Indian question," the views of army officers serving in the West carried much weight. Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, whose book, *Our Wild Indians* (1882), distilled the experience of thirty-four years on the frontier, was among the most influential. Laudatory toward the pioneering white trappers and traders who took Indian wives, Dodge had only contempt for the later "squaw men." This term of opprobrium was attached to white men who married Indian women and lived with their wives' tribes. Dodge viewed these men as "the veriest outcasts,

refugees who dare not set foot in any State." Some were penniless adventurers who profited from Indian "improvidence." Others were cattlemen who, through their Indian wives, acquired grazing lands on reservations. Most despicable of these scoundrels were those who lurked about the agencies, "sending their squaws to draw rations," buying and selling the same and, even worse, engaging in the clandestine sale of guns and liquor to their native hosts. These knaves were the compliant tools of corrupt agents, instigators of Indian violence and thievery, and atrocious role models for the Native Americans. "Squaw men," according to Dodge, had no compunction whatever about abandoning their families. The tribe, with its meager resources, was unable to provide for these castoffs adequately. Often, abandoned women were forced to sell themselves and their children. Could he have done so, Dodge would have expelled all "squaw men" from the reservations. Because that was impossible, the only remedy left was "that Congress shall pass laws for the regulation of whites in Indian Territories, making marriage with a squaw a civil contract, voidable only by death, or by divorce for cause, adultery a misdemeanor, and bigamy a felony."<sup>36</sup>

Oliver O. Howard, the one-armed "praying general," who fancied himself a true friend of the Indians, took issue with Dodge's condemnations of "squaw men." Howard disliked the odious connotations of the term and argued that it should denote only the white husband of an Indian woman. In his view, such men were by no means invariably disreputable. Indeed, among them were "judges of the United States courts, members of Congress, generals in the army, officers of the general staff, prominent merchants, and hundreds of citizens of the best standing in the community where they lived." In addition, the army found "squaw men" and "half-breeds" extremely useful as interpreters and guides. The "Christian Soldier" conceded that their moral character "was not always of the best," but he compared them "favorably with our own citizens who had white wives and growing families, who clustered around the numerous Indian reservations and were evidently there for what they could make." Still, Howard maintained that "in many respects" a civilized man "lowered" himself by marrying a Native American woman. His personal cleanliness, dress, and self-esteem tended to suffer. But his Indian wife, generally "a true friend and companion to her husband," often learned from him the basic

amenities of civilized living. Many worthy children also emerged from mixed marriages. Though it was commonly charged that mixed-blood offspring were morally deficient, Howard insisted that "as a general statement this is far from true."<sup>37</sup> Dodge and Howard typify the breadth, complexity, and dissonance of army officers' attitudes toward Indian-white intermarriage. How could the average American know where to stand on the subject of Indian-white miscegenation when the experts were in such disagreement about it?

Undoubtedly, however, the overwhelming majority of military officers clearly shared army surgeon Rodney Glisan's opinion that "educated gentlemen" like themselves ought to marry "elegant and refined women, if they marry at all." Of course, unmarried officers long deprived of female company at isolated military posts sometimes married below their social standing. Such officers, wrote Glisan, committed an offense that was "rarely forgiven; for the social code of ethics in garrison life is, that, as all commissioned officers and their families are really but one military brotherhood, no member of the coterie has any right to thrust upon them any uncongenial companion."<sup>38</sup> Rare indeed was the officer prepared to violate this unwritten code by marrying an Indian woman.<sup>39</sup>

A less compelling but important deterrent to such interracial marriages was the officers' deferential attitude toward fellow officers' wives and, for that matter, toward any women of good breeding. Gallantry dictated that a chivalrous gentleman pay such women homage. As General Richard Johnson wrote, "Among educated and refined people in America she is queen, and all men bow to her as they should."<sup>40</sup> At Western garrisons, officers' wives were pampered by their attentive and indulgent husbands and by fellow officers grateful for female society. Such was the treatment accorded Elizabeth Bacon Custer at Fort Lincoln in Dakota Territory in the mid-1870s. "A woman on the frontier is so cherished and appreciated," wrote Custer ". . . that there is nothing that is not done for her if she be gracious and courteous. In twenty little ways the officers spoiled us: they never allowed us to wait on ourselves, to open or shut a door, to draw up our own chair, or to do any little service that they could perform for us."<sup>41</sup> The treatment shown to an officer's lady would have been regarded as totally inappropriate—a symbolic surrender of civilization to savagery—for an Indian woman.

For enlisted men, marriage was not encouraged. Those wanting to marry had to obtain permission from their company commanders. Permission was normally given only when the regiment needed an additional laundress. The enlisted man hoping to marry had, in Libbie Custer's words, "to await the discharge of some other soldier from the company, whose wife held the appointment of laundress."<sup>42</sup> From Custer's account, it also is patently clear that officers' ladies critically scrutinized enlisted men's wives. Admission into the elect company of wives at Western forts would have been enormously difficult for an Indian woman.

Undeniably, both single and married army officers and enlisted men had sexual relations with Indian women; this is evident from many bits and pieces of the historical record. The frequency and nature of these liaisons is extremely difficult to determine, however, because of the official disinclination to document them. The extent of "immorality" at frontier posts has been examined by several historians and is not within the purview of this essay.<sup>43</sup> Suffice it to say that army officialdom did not condone sexual involvement with Indian women and tried, as did the United States Congress, to discourage the practice.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the army's social policies and its formal opposition to soldier-Indian miscegenation, many officers endorsed amalgamation, either implicitly or explicitly, when it did not involve military personnel. High-ranking officers often openly expressed their admiration and affection for those hearty frontiersmen who had taken Indian women as wives and mistresses in the West's formative years. Colonel Randolph B. Marcy proudly claimed mountain man Jim Baker as a personal friend and characterized him as "a generous, noble-hearted specimen of the trapper type."<sup>45</sup> Marcy relished recounting anecdotes about the stormy relationship between Baker and his Snake Indian wife. With equally high regard, General Hugh Lenox Scott spoke of Ben Clark, the dependable chief of scouts for Custer in the 1868 campaign on the southern Plains. Scott often visited Clark at his Fort Reno home, "which was scrupulously cared for by his Cheyenne wife."<sup>46</sup>

Many officers identified with frontier scouts and interpreters and dwelt lovingly on their picturesque eccentricities, including their marriages to and entanglements with Indian women. But some officers gave more explicit support to Indian-white inter-

breeding. In 1860, an inebriated Colonel Peter A. Sarpy disclosed his remedy for "civilizing" the Indians to Lewis Henry Morgan. In all seriousness, Sarpy informed Morgan that the Indians could be "tamed" only by infusing them with white blood. Morgan noted that the colonel "thought the government could not do a better thing than to send [white] men among them for that purpose."<sup>47</sup> And General Henry B. Carrington expressed regret in 1884 that the Indian's dismal fate was sealed, "for there is no amalgamation of the Indian with any other race."<sup>48</sup> But General S. C. Armstrong foresaw a quite different fate for America's aborigines. In an 1885 address to the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, Armstrong contended that amalgamation was going on all the time and would ultimately result in the biological absorption of Indians by Euro-Americans. Moreover, the general raised no objections to this process and avowed that he had no prejudices against the "mingling" of the races.<sup>49</sup>

As products of their time and culture, army officers were imbued with the prevailing range of often-conflicting attitudes about Indians. They also harbored dualistic attitudes about their own role on the frontier. Viewing themselves as genteel paladins, the vanguard of civilization in the wilderness, they were unable, with a few exceptions, to seriously consider marriage to an Indian woman. On the other hand, officers also saw themselves as virile adventurers, prominently involved in the great romance of westering. In this role, they empathized with the hearty frontiersmen who took Indian consorts, and they fantasized about or sometimes actually engaged in amorous affairs with Indian women.

Firsthand experience with Indians might or might not shatter romantic illusions. Captain Charles King, who had actually fought Apaches, later wrote *An Apache Princess* (1903), a romantic frontier novel whose officer hero flirted with but did not marry the Indian heroine who loved him.<sup>50</sup> In the case of James W. Steele, however, personal contact with the Southwestern tribes left him bitterly disillusioned. To Steele, there was "no more beauty to be found among Indian 'maidens' than there is among gorillas." Steele pilloried the current poetry that romanticized wilderness love affairs with dusky beauties: "The man who invented those charming but phenomenally false Indian ideals, and first crowned the universal squaw—squat, angular, pig-eyed, ragged, wretched, and insect-haunted—with roses of love, ought

to see the woman once, and, as a punishment, to be subjected for a season to her indescribable blandishments."<sup>51</sup>

Whereas the army represented one solution to the Indian problem, late nineteenth-century American humanitarians endeavored to replace military force with a reformed Indian policy designed to acculturate and assimilate the Native Americans. These reformers, considered by many to be authorities on the "Indian question," held strong if also inconsistent and contradictory views on Indian-white intermarriage and its related issues. Reformers were in overwhelming agreement that the reservation system must be abolished, for it was an insuperable obstacle to the Indians' "Americanization"; that the tribal structure must be destroyed; that reservation lands must be allotted in severalty; and that Indians should be intermingled with whites, the more rapidly to become full citizens of the United States. The reformers, most notably Captain Richard H. Pratt, founder of the famous Carlisle Indian School in 1879, repeatedly insisted that the Native Americans could be civilized only by integrating them into white society.<sup>52</sup>

In 1897, at the fifteenth annual Lake Mohonk Conference, the most important periodic forum for the self-proclaimed "Friends of the Indian," Reverend J. A. Lippincott articulated the consensus strategy of the reformers. Lippincott argued, "There is one way to solve the Indian problem: it is the absorption and assimilation of these aborigines into the body of our people. When that is accomplished, and not till then, will this whole question be closed, never more to be opened."<sup>53</sup> Intermarriage, when it promoted the integration of Indians into white society, was entirely compatible with the reformers' primary objective and therefore encountered little or no opposition.

At the fourth annual Lake Mohonk Conference (1886), Philip C. Garrett, a prominent reformer, summarized his associates' views on Indian-white intermarriage. Garrett acknowledged that there was "some prejudice" against biological fusion, with its attendant loss of racial identity, but declared that such opposition was in vain, because it was impossible to prevent miscegenation. Moreover, the amalgamation of Indians and whites would not be detrimental to the latter. Given the Indians' numerical insignificance—only about 250,000 pure-bloods in a population of 50,000,000 Americans—"the infusion would amount to 1/2 per cent of the whole." By contrast, the Negro infusion would total



nearly 10 percent, and, in Garrett's words, "the Indians are possessed of noble traits not shared by their African brethren." The infusion of Indian blood in tiny doses might actually prove beneficial to the white race. Garrett felt compelled to add that he did not recommend the biological "intermingling" of the races, but neither did he fear it.<sup>54</sup>

Like Garrett, the reformers were not inclined to recommend intermarriage openly. Their disinclination to do so was less a measure of their racial prejudices than an indication of their determination to avoid being considered visionaries. Stung by the ridicule of those who contemptuously dismissed them as maudlin sentimentalists, the reformers defensively advanced only "practical" solutions to the Indian problem.<sup>55</sup> James Bryce, always penetrating in his analyses of United States society and politics, was on target when he wrote, "In America ridicule is a terrible power. Nothing escapes it. Few have the courage to face it."<sup>56</sup>

When intermarriage involved the integration of Euro-Americans, normally men, into Indian society, it was far more disquieting to the Christian reformers. Instead of becoming agents of civilization, the white husbands of Indian women too often became thoroughly Indianized. The same was said about their mixed-blood offspring. Most objectionable to the reformers were the men's alleged attempts to live without labor off their wives' rations or to profit from their access to tribal resources and entitlements. Herbert Welsh and Francis E. Leupp, prominent representatives of the influential Indian Rights Association, lobbied Congress in 1897 to prevent mixed-blood children from inheriting the tribal rights of their mothers. Welsh and Leupp, typifying the reformers' outlook, distinguished the earlier trappers and traders who had married Indian women from later white men who were thought to have married "merely for the purpose of being adopted into a tribe and enjoying its communal rights and privileges. Or, in cases where adoption of the husband has been out of the question, he has had charge of the children sprung from the marriage, and had the use of whatever was theirs by virtue of their tribal membership."<sup>57</sup> The reformers, thoroughly imbued with the work ethic and generally disposed to regard honest toil as the "open sesame" to individual and social progress, deplored the shiftless indolence conventionally ascribed to one category of men who took Indian wives. A second category,

no less worthy of censure, allegedly devoted their energies to enriching themselves at the expense of the Indians' advancement and well-being.

Coexistent with these stereotypes, though less publicized, was a much more positive image, in the minds of reformers, of the white husbands of Indian women. After an 1892 visit to the Sioux reservations as a civil service commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt praised these men before the Lake Mohonk Conference. Roosevelt argued forcefully that they stabilized and supported many Indian families and that the mixed-bloods were generally a progressive element among the Sioux.<sup>58</sup> Even Herbert Welsh, who concluded that the intermarried white men were generally parasitic scoundrels, acknowledged important exceptions. On an 1892 visit to a day school at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Welsh was charmed by the white schoolmaster and his mixed-blood wife, a graduate of Hampton Institute. To Welsh, their marriage was "very happy" and illustrated "one of the best and most natural methods of solving the Indian problem." Like Roosevelt, Welsh regarded the half-bloods on the Sioux reservation as progressives. Welsh cited an agency physician who maintained that compared to the full-bloods, the mixed-breeds were "healthier, more intelligent, enjoy life better, are physically stronger, have larger cleaner houses, and approach the domestic condition of the white man."<sup>59</sup> In sum, the Christian reformers failed to provide definitive answers to the important questions related to Indian-white intermarriage.

Prominent among the humanitarian reformers, Protestant missionaries to the Native Americans also exhibited contradictory attitudes toward such intermarriage. Like the rest of the reformers, the missionaries sought to "Americanize" the Indians. But the standard prescription for assimilating the Indians raised serious doubts in the minds of many missionaries. The reformers' conviction that the Native Americans would be civilized as a result of contact with the white world rather than in isolation from it ran counter to actual missionary experience. Historian Robert Berkhofer, Jr. observes that "so pernicious did missionaries consider most white influence on Indian behavior that the majority of missionaries believed the less contact Indians had with the white race the more favorable the prospects of missionary success."<sup>60</sup>

Unhappily, contact with civilization, without which acculturation was impossible, meant exposure of the Indian to the worst,

as well as the best, that Euro-America had to offer. Under the circumstances, a missionary could only try to shield his charges from the worst, inculcate the best, and hope. Hopefulness is evident in an 1877 report from Stephen R. Riggs, a missionary who believed that Indians could be suitably acculturated without intermarrying with whites. Riggs referred to "the growing evidence that the more civilized and Christianized portions of our Dakota [Sioux] people are coming more and more into contact with the better class of white people. Many families and individuals are becoming detached from their own people and merged with the whites. . . . This is not miscegenation, but a proper and desirable mixture of the races, the inferior being elevated and finally absorbed and lost in the superior."<sup>61</sup>

Whatever the missionaries' attitudes were toward miscegenation, they were generally prepared to use the language skills, personal connections, and cultural understanding of half-bloods to promote the spread of the gospel. And frequently, contrary to missionary expectations, white husbands of Indian women proved to be enormously useful instruments in converting their red brethren. At the 1890 Lake Mohonk Conference, Reverend Thomas L. Riggs of the mission at Oahe, South Dakota, extolled these men for their progressiveness and helpfulness: "The squaw men in the past, among the Sioux at least, have been an element of civilization. I know that theory is not generally accepted; but we should never have succeeded in getting so far with so little effort but for the presence of these despised squaw men. Some of our best friends are among them. They would do anything or bear anything for any one of us." Riggs also pointed out that these white men were responsible providers for their Indian families and that they almost always dwelt not in tipis but in frame houses better than those of the full-bloods.<sup>62</sup> Riggs said absolutely nothing critical about them.

On the question of missionaries' attitudes toward miscegenation, nothing is more revealing than the extent to which their own family members intermarried with Indians. This was especially true of those living among the "civilized tribes." Alice M. Robertson, the daughter of a missionary at Muskogee, Indian Territory, pointed out this phenomenon to the fourth annual Lake Mohonk gathering. Robertson claimed to know a great many missionary families raised among Indians; she stated, "I have yet to know one in which at least one member has not in-

termingled with the Indians. I have one sister whose husband is an Indian and an aunt whose husband is an Indian. This shows that there is nothing inferior in the Indian. I don't know any such general rule of marrying among the negroes. The Indian takes on all the refinements of intelligence. They are just like us, only a little prouder." A teacher of Indian girls, Robertson proudly pointed out that many of her students had married young white men.<sup>63</sup> For missionaries, then, Indian-white intermarriage was a many-sided question that defied facile or categorical judgments.

No less diverse were the attitudes of public officials entrusted with the enactment and administration of United States Indian policy. At one end of the spectrum were views exemplified by Francis A. Walker, commissioner of Indian affairs in the early 1870s. Walker adamantly held that strictly enforced segregation of the races would safeguard the Indian from civilization's corruptions and would facilitate the government's management of reservation affairs. Unfortunately, the inevitable consequence of social interaction between the races was that Indians learned the vices of the most debased whites. Additionally, in Walker's opinion, Indian tribes were homogeneous and highly integrated societies easily "governed and controlled" by agents when "alien and discordant elements" were excluded. Indians must not be allowed to leave their reservations and mingle with whites "except upon express authority of law." Agents should be empowered to arrest and return violators. Unless Indians and Euro-Americans were kept apart, American Indians as a pure race would soon become extinct. Nothing, from Walker's perspective, "could be more disastrous than this method of ridding the country of an undesirable element." Amalgamation would be "more cruel to the natives than a war of extermination" and would burden many Western states with "vice, disease, pauperism, and crime." Walker regarded the intermarried white men as reprobates "so low in natural instincts, or so alienated by misfortunes and wrongs" as to seclude themselves among savages who knew "no artificial wants" and who expected nothing "in the way of achievement or self-advancement." The Indian custom of adopting aliens must be "severely discountenanced by law" or these men would "find their revenge upon humanity" or live beyond the pale of law and order. The numerous half-bloods also caused Walker much anxiety; according to him, they were an unprogressive element who had great influence among the warlike tribes

and showed a distressing proclivity for mischief. Walker also argued that most of the regrettable miscegenation on the frontier was initiated by white ranchers who lured Indian women off the reservations to serve as cooks and concubines. Nor was legislation likely to end this odious practice.<sup>64</sup>

As a rule, officials in the Indian Service were more narrowly focused than Walker in their condemnation of the results of miscegenation. Indian agents, pivotal figures in the nation's effort to "civilize" the Native Americans, constantly complained about the conduct and character of the "squaw men" and "breeds" on or near their reservations. The agents' most frequent complaints against the white husbands and the mixed-blood males—the mixed-blood women were almost always exempt from criticism—were the following: On the one hand, they were morally depraved fugitives from the law, offscourings of civilization, and a blend of the worst of civilized and savage societies on the other; they were lazy hangers-on who lived on the dole; they were obstinate opponents of all government efforts to make the Indians self-supporting; they engaged in mercenary schemes to enrich themselves at the expense of their Indian hosts; and they bitterly resisted any official attempts to reduce their considerable and generally malignant influence among the pure-bloods. In 1882, Valentine T. McGillicuddy, agent for the Oglala Sioux at Pine Ridge and a favorite of the reformers, offered a concise appraisal that covered most of the standard complaints:

The policy of the half-breeds and squaw-men is not for the Indians to advance toward self-support. The squaw-men realize that as soon as the Indians become self-supporting they will have to support their squaws, just as if they were married to white women, and it has been my experience that the squaw-men are opposed to everything like advancement, and do not want to work; they have taken up with the squaws, and come here because too lazy to work in the East, or they have escaped justice. They as a rule govern the Indians in these treaties, and in everything they desire to do with very few exceptions.<sup>65</sup>

Seven years later, still struggling against the "nonprogressive" faction at Pine Ridge, McGillicuddy wrote to Senator Henry L. Dawes in like spirit: "The squawmen and half breeds and chiefs

may be expected on general principles to oppose the opening of the reservation, land in severalty, and anything else that tends to interfere with their present non-progressive condition or break up their herding privileges. . . . Poor old Red Cloud is simply a tool in all these men's hands."<sup>66</sup>

McGillycuddy's words not only exemplify the conventional charges against the accused; they also reveal that, as William T. Hagan has concluded, "an agent's view of a squaw man [or for that matter a mixed-blood] related most closely to whether the man was working with the agent or against him; per se there was nothing wrong with squaw men from an agent's point of view."<sup>67</sup> McGillycuddy's determined struggle to reduce the size of the Great Sioux Reservation and to promote its allotment in severalty earned him the enmity of the Sioux conservatives, who included many white men who had married Indians.

Allegations against mixed-bloods and intermarried white men afforded policy makers convenient pretexts or legitimate justifications, depending on one's point of view, for dispossessing Indians of their tribal lands and treaty rights. A case in point is the prolonged political struggle to liquidate the Indian Territory, allot the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes in severalty, and dissolve these nations' tribal governments. This course of action was warranted, argued Senator Orville H. Platt and the reformers, because rapacious white land monopolists, who had become "Indian" merely by intermarriage, had deprived the full-bloods of their rightful patrimony. Furthermore, Indian governments were allegedly dominated completely by oligarchies of white husbands whose corrupt and inept rule effectively precluded the protection of life, liberty, and property. The consequences of this deplorable situation were that bona fide Indians were retrogressing, and the Indian Territory had become both a sanctuary for desperadoes and a realm where American citizens' legal protections were nonexistent.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately Congress and the reformers succeeded in liquidating the Indian Territory; the charges against the white men and the mixed-bloods facilitated the outcome.

And when the Interior Department found it expedient to approve the leasing of two-thirds of the allotted lands on the Standing Rock Reservation to cattle syndicates for grazing, the resident white husbands and mixed-bloods were again targeted in justification. Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones (1897-1905) defended leasing with the argument that it was manifestly

unfair to the Sioux "to permit a few intermarried whites and progressive mixed-bloods to monopolize practically all the common lands of the reservation to their own advantage and profit, whereas, if the lands were leased for the benefit of the tribe, all would share alike in the financial results derived."<sup>69</sup> Thus, when white husbands and mixed-bloods obstructed the formulation or administration of the government's Indian policy, they were, fairly or unfairly, castigated.

Less conspicuous, but of considerable value to agents and other Indian Service personnel, were the many forms of assistance furnished by intermarried whites and mixed-bloods in the government's dealings with Indians. As interpreters, informants, mediators, conduits of cultural exchange, and models of white standards, among other roles, they were enormously useful. Some agents praised these men for their contributions to the "civilizing" process. For instance, Captain D. C. Poole, agent for the Sioux at Whetstone on the Missouri River (1869-71), wrote that "the white men with Indian wives had been reasonably industrious, and fair crops were the result of their labor. At the same time they had by their example and influence given a lesson in agriculture to their brothers-in-law and other Indian relatives."<sup>70</sup> The able James McLaughlin, agent to the Sioux at Devil's Lake and later at Standing Rock, acknowledged that Indianized whites "frequently attached themselves to the agency staffs, were extremely valuable to the officials, who too often were appointed from stations in civil life which had left them totally without knowledge of the people whom they were sent to control."<sup>71</sup>

Not all commissioners of Indian affairs were cut from the same cloth as Francis A. Walker, the strident voice against miscegenation in the 1870s. In the first decade of the twentieth century, former commissioner Francis E. Leupp, no longer confronted with frontier warfare or the factious quarrels over severalty, offered a balanced verdict on the germane issues. In polar opposition to Walker, Leupp regarded racial fusion as the solution to the Indian problem. This solution was inevitable and benign for, as he saw it, "the intermarriage of Indians and Caucasians has nothing to condemn it." The half-blood offspring of mixed marriages derived from each of the parents "certain traits which work well in combination." Leupp offered no surprises: Inherited from the Indian parent were acute powers of observation, stoicism under suffering, love of freedom, and contempt for con-

trived wants; from the white came competitive instincts, individual initiative, resourcefulness, and a hardy constitution. To Leupp the conventional, unflattering images of "squaw men" and mixed-bloods were "as unjust as most such generalizations." Many of these men, particularly the pioneer frontiersmen, were "good citizens" whom the former commissioner was proud to count among his best friends. Euro-Americans were "as true husbands and as faithful fathers as the best in our social centres." Admittedly, there were those deserving of contempt. Some, in fact, were dissolute, dishonest, treacherous, and a constant irritant to government officials. Some actually did marry Indian women only to escape labor or to engross Indian lands. But these men were no more despicable than white men "who marry heiresses of their own race for the sake of an idle life." As for the mixed-bloods, fair generalizations about them were "equally impossible." They were both good and bad, but, as was the case with the intermarried whites, the bad had given a nefarious reputation to all. Based on his own "large" acquaintance with them, Leupp concluded that "the good mixed-bloods outnumber the bad."<sup>72</sup>

Once again it is apparent that one group of people playing a major role in Indian affairs was by no means in agreement on issues relating to miscegenation. A striking indication of the paradoxical attitudes of Indian Service employees toward intermarriage is that, despite their carpings about "squaw men," it was from the ranks of agency employees that most of these men came.<sup>73</sup>

Not surprisingly, historians of America's westward movement also disagreed about whether Indian-white amalgamation was beneficial or harmful to those involved and to the nation. In his monumental, *The Red Man and the White Man in North America* (1882), George E. Ellis maintained that wherever Indians and whites intermingled on America's frontiers, the consequences were generally unfortunate. "Hundreds of white men have been barbarized on this continent for each single red man that has been civilized." On the other hand, Indians in contact with whites learned to use profane language, developed the taste for "fire water," and acquired "the white man's guile and fraudulency." Miscegenation produced "foul and debasing diseases" of "desolating virulence." Ellis conceded the usefulness of intermarried whites and mixed-bloods as go-betweens, interpreters, scouts, and guides, but negated most of this utility by stressing



the harm done to both the United States government and the Indians by the incompetency or dishonesty of many of these individuals. Ellis left no doubt that race-mixing was deplorable and that the white husbands of Indian women were generally "recruits to civilization"—outlaws, adventurers, and prisoners.<sup>74</sup>

For a more favorable verdict on Indian-white intermarriage, readers of the history of America's westward movement could turn to the writings of Theodore Roosevelt. In his *Winning of the West* (4 vols., 1889-96), Roosevelt claimed to know "some very charming men and women, in the best society, with a strain of Indian blood in their veins." He likewise knew "many very wealthy old frontiersmen whose half-breed children are now being educated, generally at convent schools."<sup>75</sup> Roosevelt clearly identified with the stalwart men who won the West and often the hands of Indian women, and he allegedly even regretted that he did not have a strain of Indian blood in his own veins.<sup>76</sup>

For romanticists enamored of their idealized West, having a trace of Indian blood, having an Indian wife, or having dallied with Indian women validated their identification as authentic participants in the great westering adventure. Roosevelt's only viable option was to claim Indian blood; men like the artist Charlie Russell, the writer James Willard Shultz, the poet Joaquin Miller, the cowpuncher "Teddy Blue," and many others chose to marry or associate with Native American women.<sup>77</sup> Roosevelt's choice is not surprising. The potential for romanticizing Indian life had greatly diminished by the time he went west. The reservation Indian evoked more pity and disgust than admiration. Mark Twain described the "real" Indian as "nothing but a poor, filthy, naked scurvy vagabond, whom to exterminate were a charity to the Creator's worthier insects and reptiles which he oppresses."<sup>78</sup> To be linked by "blood" to the wild and free Indian of the thrilling past was one thing; to be identified with the later "squaw men" was quite another. Late nineteenth-century white men, who for various reasons—usually expediency—defied social conventions and took Indian wives, recognized the contempt in which they were generally held and often avoided disclosing their marriages.<sup>79</sup> Once again Anglo-American attitudes toward Indian-white intermarriage defy facile generalizations. Such intermarriage was far more acceptable for frontier legends like Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, and William Bent than it was for the men who arrived on the

scene after the outcome of the heroic struggle to open the West had been determined.

Imperialists and anti-imperialists also added their thoughts on race-mixing in the 1880s and 1890s. Congregational clergyman Josiah Strong, whose enormously popular book, *Our Country* (1885), rationalized Anglo-Saxon territorial expansion, argued that "the superiority of this race is due, in large measure to its highly mixed origin." But Strong's book also radiated a sense of impending disaster for America. Burgeoning cities imperiled morality, politics, and religion; class conflict threatened to engulf the nation. All of these dangers were exacerbated by immigration. Despite Strong's avowed faith in American Anglo-Saxons' capacity to amalgamate "inferior" races, *Our Country* betrayed the author's doubts that the eastern and southern European immigrants could be assimilated.<sup>80</sup>

Strong reflected the anxieties of a growing number of Americans who questioned whether their nation could absorb peoples deemed inferior, whether they were immigrants, inhabitants of colonies, or, for that matter, Native Americans and Blacks. The vehemence of this sentiment is obvious in the writings of John W. Burgess, a professor at Columbia University and an outspoken white supremacist. Burgess ranted that the United States was being "polluted" with "non-Aryan elements." He urged Americans to preserve their "Aryan nationality" and to admit to "membership" only "such non-Aryan race elements as shall have become Aryanized in spirit and in genius by contact with it" in order to build "the ideal American commonwealth."<sup>81</sup>

Burgess's diatribe was directed at southern and eastern European immigrants, but he and other Anglo-Americans felt no differently about Native Americans and Blacks. No one was more negative about efforts to assimilate the Native Americans than the iconoclastic journalist Ambrose Bierce. In addressing himself to the matter of annexing the Philippines, Bierce lectured that "not all breeds of men have possibilities of civilization." Among those who did not, in his vitriolic opinion, were "the red Indian," who could no more be civilized than a bulldog could be trained to retrieve or a dachshund to herd sheep.<sup>82</sup>

The doubts about America's ability to absorb, culturally or biologically, the nation's racial minorities and disparate outsiders surely impinged on the issue of Indian-white amalgamation.

Those uncertain that Native Americans could be "Americanized" were not likely to advocate intermarriage as the instrument of acculturation. Besides, conventional wisdom held that savagery's attractions were more compelling than those of civilization and that the civilized individual who mixed with savages was more apt than not to "go native." Such retrogression, some believed, was due in large part to the corrupting influence of Indian women, who were considered particularly recalcitrant savages. This viewpoint is apparent in Captain Pratt's 1881 report to the commissioner of Indian affairs. Pratt accused Indian mothers of clinging to their "heathen rites and superstitions" and passing them on to their children. Pratt regarded Indian women, in their uneducated condition, as unfit wives even for acculturated Indian men.<sup>83</sup>

By contrast, other Anglo-Americans who sought to civilize the Indian were inclined to base their hopes on the celebrated industriousness of Indian women. On a journey from New York to San Francisco, Horace Greeley penned his impression that hardworking women constituted the hope for Indian improvement: "Degraded and filthy as they are, beyond description or belief, they bear the germ of renovation for their race, in that they are neither too proud nor too indolent to labor."<sup>84</sup> But from this perspective, the white man who married an Indian woman could be discounted for depriving tribal society of a progressive agent, while denying himself the refining influence of a "civilized" wife.

The dispute over Indians' capacity to become "Americanized" seemed irrelevant to the school of thought that held that as a distinct race, Native Americans were doomed to extinction. This inevitable fate would be the result of the biological amalgamation of Indians with whites.<sup>85</sup> John Wesley Powell, director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, predicted in 1885 that within three generations it might not be possible to find "a drop of pure Indian blood" on the North American continent. In Powell's words, "Civilization overwhelms Savagery, not so much by spilling blood as by mixing blood, but whether spilled or mixed, a greater homogeneity is secured."<sup>86</sup> And to many reformers, notably Theodora Jenness, the "harmonious blending of the two races" represented "the great solution to the Indian question."<sup>87</sup>

Predictably, other Anglo-American observers felt profound regret that America's picturesque aboriginal race was doomed to extinction. Amalgamation, the abettor of the Native Ameri-

cans' imminent demise, could hardly be appealing to those who mourned the prospect of their disappearance. Some who foresaw the Indians' passing opposed amalgamation for less sentimental reasons. Daniel Garrison Brinton believed the Indian's melancholy fate was unalterable. "If he retains his habits he will be exterminated," Brinton predicted. "If he aims to preserve an unmixed descent, he will be crushed out by disease and competition." Amalgamation with Euro-Americans might alter his destiny, but Brinton categorically rejected this solution. Pity must not deter whites, especially women, from marrying their own kind. "That philanthropy is false, that religion is rotten which would sanction a white woman enduring the embrace of a colored man."<sup>88</sup>

Brinton's repugnance for miscegenation was directed primarily at the Black-white variety. In this revulsion, Brinton reflected the feelings of many of his countrymen. Indeed, beginning with Tennessee in 1870, every Southern state enacted laws against the intermarriage of whites and African-Americans. Brinton and other Anglo-Americans refused to countenance Indian-white amalgamation, fearing that to do so would encourage the more objectionable Black-white version.

Once again, however, there were significant divergences from this attitude. Although Black-white intermarriage and its Indian-white counterpart were linked in some minds, the dominant view drew distinctions between Blacks and Native Americans that were generally favorable to the latter. For countless Anglo-Americans, the Indian had long symbolized freedom (he was considered too proud to submit to slavery as had the African) and other admirable attributes. Historian Brian W. Dippie maintains that "[r]ed-white amalgamation was seen as a marriage of common types because the natives' fabled independence and love of freedom were in line with core American values."<sup>89</sup> Of course, conquered Indians confined to reservations and dependent on whites for their very subsistence were more difficult to view with such admiration and thus were less attractive as marriage partners.

To conclude, generalizing about late nineteenth-century Anglo-American attitudes toward Indian-white race-mixing is quite perilous. The more one scrutinizes the historical record, the more evident it becomes that, overall, these attitudes were remarkably diverse, ambivalent, contradictory, subjective, and changeable

over time. A range of antithetical ideas about Indian-white race-mixing contended for supremacy in antebellum America. Some natural scientists held that biological amalgamation threatened the mental and physical endowments of the "superior race" and jeopardized cultural progress. Others were convinced that dark-skinned peoples would remain uncivilized so long as their blood remained pure.

For proof of the harmful effects of race-mixing, some natural scientists and others pointed to Hispanic America. But Anglo-Americans, whose society was deemed to be the great "melting pot," were unable to disavow all forms of race-mixing without repudiating their own identity. Hence, biological amalgamation came to be viewed as salutary when it involved fusions of kindred races and unsalutary when races with contrasting natures were combined. Disagreement arose over whether the Indian was akin to whites or markedly different in the manner that Blacks were generally thought to be.

The amount of Indian-white amalgamation on the frontiers made its wholesale condemnation awkward. Too many prominent individuals were either practitioners or products of such mixing. Besides, Indians were thought to be too few in number to dilute "white blood" appreciably. The more numerous Blacks were viewed in a different light. Indian-white mergers were not to be condoned if such mixing might encourage the more objectionable Black-white variant.

Class-conscious army officers sought wives who personified the cultural ideal of the Victorian lady; the same officers, however, identified with the stalwart frontiersmen of the Old West who had taken Indian women as wives and mistresses. Furthermore, like the reformers, missionaries, and Indian Service personnel, the army officers disagreed among themselves as to whether the "squaw-men" and mixed-bloods were helpful or detrimental to the dominant culture in its efforts to "Americanize" the Indian.

Novelists could not decide if renegade whites and mixed-bloods were malign or benign. Nor could authors make up their minds whether to eschew Indian-white miscegenation as an affront to Victorian sensibilities or to exploit its full romantic potential. For many Anglo-Americans, the goal of assimilating the Indian implied amalgamation—increasingly seen as the solution to the "Indian problem." But though the absorption of Native Ameri-

cans into white society was comparatively undisturbing, the movement of whites onto the reservations provoked much indignation. Imbued with the Protestant work ethic, moralistic nineteenth-century Anglo-Americans found in the intermarried white men, usually depicted as indolent parasites, the work ethic's utter repudiation.

Imperialists eager to absorb new domains were not disposed to dwell on the problems associated with biological amalgamation; anti-imperialists and immigration restrictionists were. In sum, although the era's pertinent and most magisterial attitudes reflected a white, middle-class, and largely androcentric agenda for remaking America, the power elite could reach no consensus on the relative merits of Indian-white race-mixing.

#### NOTES

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24. Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875), 299-301.
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26. Quoted in James K. Folsom, *The American Western Novel* (New Haven, CT: College & University Press, 1966), 169.
27. Ann Sophia (Winterbotham) Stephens, *Malaeska, The Wife of the White Hunter* (New York: John Day Co., 1929), 211, 243.
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29. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 127-28.
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32. Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), 117; Louise K. Barnett, *The Ignoble Savage: American Literary Racism, 1790-1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 127.
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34. Stephens, *Malaeska*, 69, 222. Other full-blood Indian women, though not major characters, were married to white men in Beadle dime novels. Star Eye, a Pawnee princess in Prentiss Ingraham's *Buffalo Bill, the Buckskin King* (1880), became the "squaw wife" of a virtuous white youth with a minor role in the story. See Jones, *Dime Novel Western*, 153.
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36. Richard Irving Dodge, *Our Wild Indians: Thirty-Three Years Personal Expe-*

rience *Among the Red Men of the Great West* (Hartford, CT: A. D. Worthington & Co., 1890), 600-606.

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38. Rodney Glisan, *Journal of Army Life* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1874), 452-53.

39. An exception was Lieutenant D. H. Rucker of the 1st Dragoons who married a "civilized" Cherokee woman. See Sherry L. Smith, "Beyond Princess and Squaw: Army Officers' Perceptions of Indian Women," in *The Women's West*, ed. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 72.

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41. Elizabeth B. Custer, "*Boots and Saddles*," or *Life in Dakota with General Custer* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 101.

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43. See, especially, Smith, "Beyond Princess and Squaw," 69-73; Patricia Y. Stallard, *Glittering Misery: Dependents of the Indian Fighting Army* (Fort Collins, WY: Old Army Press, 1978), 69-70.

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49. *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 1886), 27-28.

50. Charles King, *An Apache Princess: A Tale of the Indian Frontier* (New York: The Hobart Company, 1903), 16, 282.

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52. The masthead on the Carlisle Industrial Training School's stationery succinctly expressed Pratt's philosophy: "To Civilize the Indian; Get Him into Civilization. To Keep Him Civilized; Let Him Stay." See also *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (Philadelphia: The Lake Mohonk Conference, 1897), 101-102.

53. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (Philadelphia: The Lake Mohonk Conference, 1897), 98.

54. *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1887), 9.

55. *Proceedings of the Second Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 1884), 23.

56. James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 3d ed. (New York, London: Macmillan and Co., 1899), 2:287.

57. Francis E. Leupp and Herbert Welsh, *Let There Be No Backward Step*



(Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1897), 1-4. It is noteworthy that trappers and traders of the formative period on the frontier had often hesitated to marry Indian women on the grounds that to do so would obligate them to support a host of their wives' relatives. See Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*, 113.

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